Logic, Argumentation & Reasoning 12

Giovanni Scarafile
Leah Gruenpeter Gold *Editors*

# Paradoxes of Conflicts

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# Paradoxes of Conflicts

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# Introduction

This volume collects some essays originally submitted in the 2014 IASC Conference on *Paradoxes of Conflicts*, held at the University of Salento, Lecce (Italy).

The starting point of the conference was the following Jaspers thought:

> We cannot avoid conflict, conflict with society, other individuals and with oneself. Conflicts may be the sources of defeat, lost life and a limitation of our potentiality but they may also lead to greater depth of living and the birth of more far-reaching unities, which flourish in the tensions that engender them. (Jaspers 1997: 326–327)

There is a detail of the *Legend of the True Cross* by Piero della Francesca which seems to sum up the meaning of this volume. Located in the Basilica of San Francesco in Arezzo, the fresco is dedicated to the different moments that the Christian tradition considers relevant in the finding of the wood, which is considered sacred, with which the cross of Christ was built.

The highlight of this cycle is the reconquest of the cross, where the emperor Heraclius returns to Jerusalem after the battle of 628 AD against the Persian Empire. In front of the sacred relic, the faithful flock and kneel.

It is interesting the way in which Piero della Francesca represented a believer who, even before kneeling to worship the sacred relic, decides to take off his hat. Taking off the cap and laying down the helmet is an icon of nonviolence, the attitude of suspension in the affirmation to make room for another, known as mystery, impenetrable reality, perpetually on the verge of being called but never definitively said, trying to place oneself in the best perspective from which to consider the positions of others.

In the fresco by Piero della Francesca, the position of this man does not suggest that his act is accomplished as a blatant demonstration for the benefit of his companions. In fact, he is the last in line and his action cannot be seen by anyone.

The gesture of this man, its sense of openness to the other, represents the original dimensions to which every conflict can and should be reduced. It is a difficult task, complex, articulated into several layers, and not deferrable, especially by those who know that the conflict is not a mere academic exercise.

**Fig. 1** Piero della Francesca: *Legend of the True Cross – Exaltation of the Cross* (c. 1452–66, Fresco, San Francesco, Arezzo, Italy). https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Piero_della_Francesca_023.jpg

Dwelling on the importance of reflecting on the conflict in contemporary society seems particularly pleonastic. Just a quick look at the news coming every day to realize that conflict is the same figure of the contemporary. The urgency of such pressure must be constantly considered as a compass.

However, to solve the problems raised by these urgent needs, one needs to momentarily escape from reality to analyze the many theoretical issues that underlie those needs.

On the one hand, each conflict indicates the original tension of life itself and is, as such, indispensable; on the other hand, if one could, one might willingly defuse each conflict because it is the basis of many misunderstandings. In general terms, a conflict shows some level of incompatibility, disagreement, and lack of harmony. It can affect intraindividual life (the so-called conflict between faculties), individuals (e.g., marital conflicts), and groups (social and political conflicts). At this latter level, conflicts may relate to identity, interests, and/or values. The opposite of con-

flict is cooperation, collaboration, and agreement. In general, conflict also reveals difference (of opinions, approaches), a value in itself indispensable.

An important dimension related to conflicts is peace research or conflict management and resolution. We are interested in understanding the implications of nonviolence to the level of affirmation of a different model of rationality. In this sense, the elements that make it possible to transcend a conflict are of the most importance. Crucial in this regard is the contribution of creativity and imagination, which are then redeemed by their being often considered as secondary attributes of an approach exclusively toward a model of rationality considered as hard instead of soft reason, as indicated by Marcelo Dascal in his writings.

IASC members share a keen interest in the phenomenon of controversy, as relevant directly to their own disciplines, as an object of research, or as to its importance in human life.

Controversies are the underlying matrix of various forms of misunderstanding between human beings. They are the basis of conflict, indicating lack of listening and the absence of communication. The study of controversies, therefore, cannot be regarded as a mere individual exercise, but as a contribution that each of us provides for the betterment of the world in which we live. The IASC, as an NGO dedicated to the study of controversies, supports these values through its strong presence in the academic life and as a member of the FISP, the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie.

Some questions accompany this volume: What are the conditions to ensure that a conflict can be converted into cooperation? If the conflict between interests can be solved by a compromise, what happens when a conflict involves nonnegotiable values? In the management of a conflict, what role is played by argumentation? What are the latest perspectives in conflict management? How does the theory of controversies allow us to recognize and resolve conflicts?

Leah Gruenpeter Gold
Giovanni Scarafile

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# Chapter 1
# Religious and Cultural Tensions and their Overcoming in Contemporary World

**Adriano Fabris**

**Abstract** In my paper I will try to describe, first of all, today's religious and cultural tensions, in the frame of the so-called "return of religions" in contemporary world. I will discuss the common idea of "religion, what do we mean with this term and – connected with this topic – how a fundamentalistic development of religion is possible. My task will be to define a more specific strategy to manage religious and cultural conflicts. How is it possible to develop a true communication among religious worlds? Which motivation shall be at the basis of this practice? How is it possible to use language for the sake of an agreement, of an understanding between religious women and men? At the end of my essay I will try to answer these questions.

**Keywords** Dialogue • Ethics in communication • Fundamentalism • Inter-religious communication • Liturgical practice • Pietas • Religious conflicts • Religious relationship

## 1.1 General Introduction

In my paper I will try to analyze the particular situation in which we are living today, in our contemporary world. In this world cultural and, above all, religious conflicts are in fact more and more widespread. It is a common experience. But it is not only a matter of fact. We cannot only describe and explain today's globalization of conflicts, for example, from a sociological, historical, or political point of view. In my opinion it is more important to discuss the mentality by which these conflicts are supported. It is necessary to understand the *logic* of conflict: the hidden reason by which conflicts can arise and can be argued.

This will be the aim of my paper. I will try to describe this logic. I will try to discuss some elements that can help us to understand our contemporary situation. I

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will try to outline another perspective which can show other solutions, other pattern of relationship: in which conflicts are not unavoidable.[1]

I have divided my paper in three main parts:

First of all, I would describe today's religious and cultural tensions, that is I wish to analyse some aspects of the so-called "return of religions" in contemporary world.

My second step will be devoted to discuss what is precisely "religion" in our world, what do we mean with this term and – connected with this topic – how a fundamentalistic development of religion is possible. In a word: what is, which is the structure and how can arise fundamentalisms.

The third and last step of my text shall be devoted to a more specific strategy to manage religious and cultural conflicts. I will discuss the idea and the practice of dialogue as a true form of communication. But how is it possible to develop a true communication among religious worlds? Which motivation shall be at the basis of this practice? How is it possible to use language for the sake of an agreement? At the end of my essay I will try to answer these questions.

## 1.2 Today's Religious and Cultural Tensions

In our world again religious beliefs play a fundamental role in the make-up of a cultural group and of a society. This is due to the fact that religious beliefs give definition to a society as a whole, or better, to the specific social group existing within it. This "definition" consists in the shaping of behaviour, of one's way of thinking, and of common values, both in terms of the relationship between the human being and the Divine sphere, and that which regards the relationships between the human being and the world, others, and himself. In the first case, that is, the relationship between the individual and the One, we can consider religion – this will be dealt with more thoroughly later – in a strict sense, while, in the second case, the individual's relationships with the world, others, and himself have to do with the inherent ethical aspects of these religious beliefs.[2]

However, it is not only in the spheres of religion and ethics that religious beliefs deeply influence a cultural group. One must take into consideration the *political* aspect that bears influence on culture. Religious beliefs, in fact, not only influence the cultural make-up of a society, but also interact with social institutions. Moreover, these beliefs usually lead to the creation of more specific institutions, which operate autonomously in society. For example, in Christian cultures, there are Churches, in Judaism, as far as the State of Israel is concerned, there are religious parties, and in

[1] Marcelo Dascal developed the same problems that I am discussing now. His work was very important for my own reflection and, above all, the following essays: (Dascal 1981, 2007, 2012; Scarafile 2010).

[2] See for example, for a general overview, (Riesebrodt 2010).

Islam, there are various Religious Councils (such as the *ulema* Councils) or religious parties.

As it is often seen, these numerous interactions provoke tension on different levels. Let us list the various tension levels that can be encountered in present-day caused by the impact of religion present in society.

First and foremost, let us look at the tension that exists *within the life of a religious human being* which takes into consideration one's beliefs, that is to say, that which one's religion imposes, and one's tendencies, one's preferences, one's "nature". We must note, that on this subject, when considering f. e. the three main monotheistic religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam), the religious human being is called upon to contrast a certain "nature". The orders imposed by God (the Ten Commandments and the various precepts of these three religions) must be agreed to by the believers, who obey them, struggling against their tendencies and impulses. This is, by the way, the first and most generic definition of "struggle", to which the Arabic word "*jihad*" refers: the struggle against anything that separates one from the obligation to one's divine duties, more important even than the "holy war".

Secondly, there exists the tension that is created between the behaviour expected of a believer by a certain religion and the social behaviour expected in a group or in a community. In short, there is possible tension between *religious ethics* and *social ethics.* An example of this contrast may be the use of the Islamic veil (the *hijab*) in some Western societies.

A further point of analysis is the tension between the political sphere and the conduct that is expected from a religious faith, even on a public level. This concerns mostly Western societies and their real claim to autonomy, which was progressively gained in the modern age and sanctioned by the French Revolution, as regards to the public impact of religions. It is in this perspective that the tension between the "*secular*" and the *"religious"* unfolds.

Finally, tension arises from the contrast between *State institutions* and religious institutions, that is, from *Churches*. The entire history of modern Europe is marked by the process of separation of the State from the Church. This process is connected to the acquisitions of a great deal of ecclesiastic property by the State. Such an act is referred to as "secularization", that is, the passage to the *saeculum* of what was considered sacred (churches, convents, ecclesiastic property). Subsequently, the term "secularization" refers to, in a general sense, the loss of religious meaning in that which at one time was characterised by it (feast-days, places, human relations, etc.).[3]

It is typically said that, contrary to Europe, more specifically to Western Judaism and Christianity, *the Islamic world has not experienced*, in the modern era, the phenomenon of secularization. It is for this reason that, with the global spreading of Western values, some groups of Islam have had specific reactions that could be considered conservative or downright fundamentalist.

[3] About the various types of "secularization" in Western World see (Taylor 2007).

## 1.3 Religious Relationship

So far, we have shown the interplay between culture and religion and the tensions that may arise. These tensions require deep and careful attention so that they can be controlled and managed. The various types of mediation and communication approaches, both on the intercultural and inter-religious levels, serve precisely this purpose, notwithstanding all of the problems involved. Nevertheless, we should be aware that if communication among different cultures and religions fails, if dialogue ceases, what is left is space only for indifference and violence.[4]

However, before discussing this topic, we have to clarify what is religion, what is religion in its proper meaning, and what religions are and can be in our contemporary world. In order to answer the first question – What is religion? – it is necessary to start with a brief etymological digression. In fact: what is the origin of the term "religion"? The Latin *religio* – hence "religion" as it is termed in various European languages – particularly suggests two etymological meanings. Cicero's definition in *De natura deorum* (II, 72), where the term "*religio*" is related to the verb *relegere* which means diligently putting into practice that which is necessary to worship the gods, defining as religious those who carry out these deeds. In other words, this etymology highlights the constant repetition that marks certain types of deeds, emphasising the fact that religion is always tied to specific cultural and ritualistic practices. Ritualistic and ethical practices adequately develop in the political dimension of human beings.

The other etymology, that is even more engraved in our concept of religion is offered by Lactantius, a Christian writer, in the *Divinae institutiones* three centuries after Cicero. In Lactantius's work (IV, 28) the term "*religio*" is made to derive from the verb *religare*. In other words, religion is shown as the attitude creating a specific bond – *religamen* – which connects human beings to God. Lactantius describes this bond as connected to *pietas*, as similar to the respect and the obedience that are due to the God of the Holy Scriptures who sent the Son to redeem us. This way the aspect of public practice is left in the background, while acceptance and preservation of the bond with God become very important.

These etymologies therefore identify two sides which are present in the religious practice: the public dimension of ethic and liturgical practice, that is emphasised by Cicero, and the inner character of that bond which through the experience of *pietas* unites human beings to God. Both, however, reveal and emphasize the specific character of a religious attitude. "Religion" involves particular forms of *relationship*: relationship between God and human beings; relationship among human beings.

[4] See Dascal (2005).

## 1.4 Religious Fundamentalisms and their Logic

Religion expresses relationship. This is the proper meaning of the concept. But in our contemporary world this meaning seems to be forgotten. Another, opposite concept of "religion" is widespread: religion as fundamentalism.

What is fundamentalism?[5] In order to clarify this point, it is necessary to distinguish between two types of fundamentalism: "legalistic-literalistic" and "charismatic-utopistic".

The first is related to the past. Its source comes from the sacred text, which is literally "the word of God". In so being, the text cannot be interpreted, but simply accepted. One is expected to obey that which is expressed in terms of precepts, duties and models of conduct. The past, therefore, weighs on the present and forces submission. The believer, in this case, is literally "subjugated".

The second type of fundamentalism, instead, refers to an eschatological fulfilment, which, at the end of time will give salvation to only true believers. This view looks towards the future. In the present, a community guide, whose strong impact on the believers announces the fulfilment and gives the necessary guarantee. This gives way to further developments today, but only if one trusts in this prophet-like figure.

In reality, these two types of fundamentalism almost never co-incide in a pure form, but they are interlaced with one another and with the religious traditions on which they are founded. A common ground, however, can be identified. It can be identified in the common hidden logic of both types.

What is, in fact, *the secret logic of fundamentalism*? How do fundamentalisms originate? Where do they come from?

Essentially, the response to such questions can be found by considering the simple observation that various religious contexts, even those which have undoubtedly *common aspects* – the sharing of sacred books, the common reference to a single God, the requirement of conduct dictated by compassion and love – are conceived and experienced *in different ways*. Each of these ways is considered to be the *only legitimate and suitable one* that leads to salvation. Therefore, this means that *one specific path*, one specific divine experience is assumed in many religious contexts to be *immediately and necessarily valid for all people.* In this way, other paths, other interpretations are excluded. Synthetically, we are dealing with a series of steps that should be briefly explained:

(a) It is a universal value to have a specific religious perspective.
(b) By placing oneself immediately at such a universal level through the application of various confirmation strategies, one puts aside that very peculiarity, that particular interpretation, from the initial position.
(c) Consequently, there is no longer a connection to *one* religious perspective *beside* another, but rather, *one and only true religion*.

[5] For answering this question see above all (Riesebrodt 2001).

(d) Therefore, it is necessary to establish and consolidate the identity of this religion, by defining what corresponds to the right doctrine and what does not.
(e) From this starting point, the relationship with those who do not accept this clearly-defined religion, whose right doctrine distinguishes it from others, is subject to either assimilation or destruction: the possibility to convince or the will to destroy.

It is here that we see the root of fundamentalism. The logic behind fundamentalism, in other words, is in its insistence on underlining elements of *exclusion* rather than elements of *convergence*, based on the conviction that one's own religion is *immediately the only right and suitable way* to interpret the relationships that a human being has with God, the world, and others.

## 1.5 The Paths to Inter-Religious Communication

It is important to understand the "logic" of fundamentalism if dialogue between religions is to be discussed as a necessary solution for overcoming conflicts. But, how is it possible to achieve this form of communication in a serious and effective way?

First of all, in my opinion, it is necessary to act *from within* each specific religious situation. It is necessary to appreciate all the elements present in each religion, that could help to overcome tensions and open up dialogue. It is necessary to regain the proper meaning of 'religion', the idea of relationship, and emphasize this aspect as the true core of the religious attitude. In other words, fundamentalism *cannot* be eliminated *from the outside*, but rather, *from within* the religious dimension: when one chooses to underline, on the part of the religious individual of various creeds, the common elements rather than the differences.

The second step is to support concretely these common elements. It is necessary to build together a common space, to make universality, to share our identity. Communication can help us.

But what is the meaning of the word "communication"? What normally do we do in our practice of communication? What are we doing now, in the communicative interaction we are experiencing through this book?

Usually, in semiotics manuals and in linguistic treatises, communication as such is defined as the conveyance of a message (or information) by the "addresser/sender" to the "addressee" (or "receiver"). Communication, understood as such, clearly requires elaboration by both the "sender" and the "receiver". The former, in order to be understood, must give the message a form that is accessible to those who will receive it. The latter, wishing to understand, always tends to reconstruct the sender's intention, interpreting and contextualizing the message.

It is in fact believed that this communication pattern can work in managing processes that not only pertain to human beings, but extend to the different spheres in which information is conveyed, transmitted, and where it constitutes research

grounds for specific disciplines, from sociology to biology, from politics to information technology.

In this way, inter-human communication is in danger of being restored to quantifiable standards, thereby sacrificing all which can, unlikely, be predetermined, such as creative ability and the capability of adapting to a set context. So, it is believed that devising specific methods and techniques, on the basis of such a pattern, will give results: in other words, a "target" will be reached, proving a certain degree of efficacy.

This concept of communicating is certainly very common.[6] But, we must insist, this *is not the only pattern* we should refer to when thinking of communicative processes. Something very different is at stake in these processes, verifying which is quite difficult; it has to do with adequately understanding what it means to implement the intermediation of a message or information. This is what the model of "data transmission" takes for granted when interpreting what occurs amongst human beings, as simple interaction that can be measured in terms of efficiency and efficacy. Instead, it is the specific *mediation* which is at work in the communicative processes that must be investigated.

At this aim, we may be guided by a brief etymological analysis of the term "communication". As it is known, "communication" derives from the Latin word "*communicatio*", which stands for "to inform about", "to acquaint" others with what is in our possession. The clear metaphor in this notion is that of "participation" which, not by chance, is explicitly offered by the German language: the word "*Mitteilung*" may be translated literally, rather than with the term "communication", as it normally is, precisely with "sharing jointly".

Besides this, Latin offers something more. The reference of the term "*communicatio*" to the concepts of "*communis*", as "common", and of "*munus*", as "gift", is obvious. What is shared is, in the end, something which is given so that it can truly be common to all, so that everyone may take part. "*Communicatio*", therefore, originally means "putting in common", "creating a common space".

What does all of this mean? It means that communication is *not only* transmitting messages. Communication is *creating a common space*, a shared space, within which the interlocutors can reach a true understanding. This type of understanding cannot be pre-determined, since it is the result, unforeseen and unforeseeably, of the ability to mediate that characterises the participants in the communicative process and that is applied, from time to time, to various contexts. In other terms, here interaction cannot be conceived as merely mechanical, because it requires the ability of human beings to select the most suitable way to produce an agreement, the ability to identify with a certain context, the vocation to mediate between universal and particular: the interest to realizing relations.[7]

[6] This is the model that was developed first by Shannon and Weaver, then that was extended to the realms of animals and machines in his "cybernetics" by Wiener and finally that was applied to the linguistic debate by Jacobson.

[7] See: (Fabris 2014a, b; Scarafile 2014).

## 1.6 Communication and Dialogue

Certainly all of this opens an array of possibilities: the possibility of considering an interlocutor as the interlocutor of a dialogue, or simply as a target, even within the sphere of relationships among followers of different religions. This again means that communicating is *always a risk*. Precisely, its success is always at risk *either* because the speaker may not be clear or enticing, *or* the listeners may not understand or not want to understand. Dialogue is not possible if two or more interlocutors are not present to carry it out. But if this does occur, communication reveals itself as a *creative act* in the precise sense that it aims at the creation of a common space between two or more interlocutors.

I have spoken of *dialogue* several times. What does "dialogue", in the true sense, mean? How can it be achieved? The answer to this question means setting the conditions for which even inter-religious dialogue is possible and conflicts can be managed.[8]

In order for it to effectively take place, dialogue suggests the recognition, by each the interlocutors, of the other's "good will". This means that each participant in the dialogue recognises that his/her position is not absolute, final and unmodifiable. On the other hand, a dialogue in which the speaker – who in addressing others, recognises their right, and the "space" due to them – acted only for narcissistic reasons, using the interlocutor as a "mirror" to reflect him/herself, would not be a dialogue in the true sense. In dialogue the motives of the interlocutor are not at all simply functional to confirming one's position, but may induce a change in ideas.

In effect what is basic to the successful outcome of dialogue is the willingness to stake one's all, the ability of exposing oneself from the beginning and without calculation to the words of another, without the guarantee that one's positions will be confirmed, even granting the interlocutor. If this fails, there will not be an authentic dialogue but only the pretence of it, more or less concealed by politeness.

The successful outcome previously mentioned must apply, if speaking about dialogue, to inter-religious dialogue. This, rather, is what is difficult about inter-religious dialogue. This, more precisely, is the difficulty that we are experiencing today.

## 1.7 Ethics in Communication

I am approaching the conclusion. The final questions are: *Why*, then, must we engage in dialogue? Why must we create common space for communication and not simply use language to impose our ideas on and convince our interlocutor of their goodness? In a word: Why must we prefer dialogue instead of conflict? We outline the decisive question of moral *involvement*.

[8] On this topic in Buber, Rosenzweig and Ebner see (Casper 2002).

A response to such questions could come from an in-depth look at the basis of language and communication, intended as structural conditions of the human being. A German philosopher, Karl-Otto Apel, has elaborated a theory in which a specific moral uniformity is found within the use of the language itself.[9] From the moment in which, according to Apel, all of us, as speakers, belong to the "community of communication", *we find ourselves putting into practice, through the use of language itself, specific moral principles.* These are: the principle of *justice* (respecting the right of every interlocutor to speak); the principle of *solidarity* (the acknowledgement that others have the same communicative capacity that I acknowledge for myself and the intention to support their use of it); and the principle of *co-responsibility* (the interlocutors assume common responsibility and make sure that the communicative space remains open). By starting from the structure of language itself, it is possible to highlight the conditions of valid universal ethics: ethics *in* communication.[10]

It is specifically on this level – starting from the fact that within my own speech, there are, so to speak, specific indications of conduct – that the problem of the earlier mentioned term *involvement*, can be solved. Considering the prospect of ethics *in* communication, we can sustain that the conditions of a certain moral conduct, capable of involving all speaking individuals are already inherent in the same communicative processes. We have already seen this: it is connected with the idea of communication as the creation of common space (setting it up and keeping it up), which the interlocutors are responsible for.

Certainly, it is about conditions that must be actually achieved: this is the product of our free will. But our fundamental ethical capacity that is inherent to our language could guide this choice. So, then, in the structure of language itself the possibility of a real ethical communication conduct and a real experience of sharing is inherent. Therefore, the condition of sharing is that each person, separately, is able to say his own, and is acknowledged, right from the beginning, as having the capacity to do it: just as the one who can be helped and urged to do it.

## 1.8 Conclusion: Ethics, Communication, Religious Dialogue

This universal outlook, which can *motivate* our communicative actions in a precisely ethical sense, must now be applied in actual fact to inter-religious dialogue. With this, my presentation will be concluded. In fact, the idea of communication that I have tried to develop, with its ethical implications, could be a valid model for a successful dialogue among religions as well. There could be two aspects to take into consideration that we have already seen to be critical for adequately carrying out this dialogue in order to avoid conflicts: the aspect regarding the correct way of

[9] See Apel (1976, 1988).

[10] See Fabris (2014a).

understanding dialogue among religions; the aspect which relates to a correct handling of the relationship between the particular and the universal.

If we want to make sure that dialogue among religions is possible, it is necessary to start from two ideas: the idea of the particularity of every religion, which must be respected; and the idea of the common aim of every religion: both the relationship between human being and divine sphere; and, starting from this point of view, the relationship among human beings. In this setting, the structure of communicating, seen as a creation of common space among the interlocutors, may possibly enable, not only the respectful consideration of various needs originating from numerous local contexts – including those that offer resistance and can even react violently to the effects of globalisation processes –, but also, and above all, the adequate reformulation of the relationship between the universal and the particular.

I repeat: we have to reject the fundamentalistic idea of religion. According to this idea, only *a particular idea* of the universal – of the particular pattern of the relationship between human beings and divine sphere – must be imposed all over the world. Fundamentalists forget the particularity of their approach. They connect directly, immediately, they muddle up particularity and universality. We have seen that this, all in all, is the logic behind fundamentalism.

Instead, it is the reference itself to the idea of language and of communication that we have previously developed, that shows that the universal – which is expressed and carried out by the use of the word as a medium of an ever-growing sharing among human beings – is that which, on the one hand, proves to be applied, contextualised, and embodied from time to time in various spheres and, on the other hand, becomes the product of an authentic meeting between human beings, capable of creating new horizons. We can think not only about a static universality – expression of pride and arrogance which, in its conquests, Europe often showed – but also, and above all, about one that offers a process, never to be taken for granted, of continuous creation, among all interlocutors, of a possible dimension of universality, in which the sharing of that common space among the diverse spheres increases.

All of this, once again, is made possible and is guided by *the spirit of language whose ethical features are of primary importance, and whose test-bed is the dialogue among religions.* But not, as mentioned earlier, by assuming an external outlook toward the religions themselves and from here, by trying to make them engage in dialogue. Instead, it is necessary to make the common elements pertinent to collaboration, emerge from within religions, from life and from the individual's religious experience.

Finally, we have to move in the direction of acknowledging the fact that there are some ethical aspects that are shared by various religious groups. In order to carry out this task, we must be aware that through the way itself, in which the possible comparison between religions, and through the manner of communication, can we open up a common space: a space that works because definite ethical principles are carried out. Only in this way, is it possible to open paths to the achievement of universal sharing among religions.

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# Chapter 2
# Paradoxes of Political Conflicts. Case Study: The Eclipse of the Belgium First Prime Minister (Belgium 1830)

**Varda Furman Koren**

**Abstract** While trying to understand paradoxes of political conflicts, the reading of an historic document could be revealing. What seems to be an apologetic letter, happens to be an incitement to a political revolution through dictatorial regime.

The meteoric fall of the Belgian first Prime minister, De Potter, reminds a mystery. Why does a national hero fall from the tops of Politics to an exile position? And why is he subjected to the worst sanction for a political figure: to be forgotten, erased from the national history?

No Belgian nowadays remembers the name of the first Prime minister.

And yet, only 33 days elapsed from his triumphant entry to Brussels, the 28 September 1830, and his famous resignation letter from the provisional government.

In the present paper we will be on the look-out of his mysterious fall. Our study is based on a close up lecture of his resignation letter, in light of his whole political writings. From the rhetorical-pragmatic analysis we will try to understand the Politician loss of power.

Beyond De Potter interesting case, our objective will be to reveal some profound characteristics of the Belgian political culture and to think on a more general level about the contribution of a pragmatic analysis to the understanding of political conflicts.

Our methodology develops two of the models proposed by Marcelo Dascal, about *moves* and *counter moves* and *roots metaphors*, by adapting them to the specificity of political discourse. We propose to enlarge the complete classical rhetorical analysis based on rhetorical intentional strategies, by a study of its implicit and unconscious rhetorical forms, which are different from the declared intentions and sometimes opposed to them. We propose to designate the latter by the term ***rhetorical mold***.

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**Keywords** Ambivalence • Belgian revolution • Enlarged rhetorical-pragmatic approach • Oxymoronic molds • Political conflicts

## 2.1 Introduction

I claim that Louis De Potter's apparently innocent letter appeals to establish a dictatorial regime in Belgium in 1830. That position, which will become explicit in De Potter political writings 20 years later, appears, in an implicit level, in 1830.

The structure of this article: In the introduction I shall present the problematic and the historical context. In the first part I will discuss my approach and my methodology. In the second part I will analyze the explicit aspects of De Potter's demission letter. In the third part, I will analyse the implicit aspects of the letter and explain how De Potter replaced, unconsciously, one paradox with another. The conclusion will be a close up on De Potter's defeat.

### *2.1.1 The Historical Context*

The wave of revolutions which swept through Europe in 1830, first in France and then in Belgium Spain, Italy, Poland and Germany, drastically altered the political order which existed in Europe since the Pact of Vienne. On the one hand, the revolutionary forces, represented by the camp of *Movement,* who aspired to liberate Europe from the remains of the Old Regime and to establish in Europe Republics and universal suffrage; on the other hand, the *Reactionary* forces, with Russia, Prussia and Austria at the head, who sought to re-establish *Order.* In this battle, the neo-babouvist revolutionary movement has a moment of grace.

The neo-babouvist socialist movement emerged as an alternative to the terrorist guerrilla actions of the blanquism (Auguste Blanqui), on the one hand, and the utopian socialists, on the other. It paved the way to a new form of socialist action based on the idea of revolution without violence; based on a wide network of political and social associations, and on the persuasion effort through multi-faceted polemics. In the neo-babouvist movement, who had groups all over Europe, the Italian **Buonarroti** played a pivot role. Buonarroti's project was that Brussels would become a strategic centre of the revolution in Europe, a real cross-road.

Who was Louis De Potter? He was a Belgian neo-babouvist, close to Buonarroti. De Potter held a key position in the Belgian History of the 1830. During a brief but important period in Belgian History he assumed a central role in the sphere of Politics. He was Belgium's first Prime-minister. He participated in the writing of the Belgian Constitution and inaugurated the national Congress in the name of the Belgian people.

## 2.2 Part I: Approach and Methodology

The body of this research is comprised of 400 revolutionary texts, which have not been re-published since the 1830s.

The research is situated at the crossroad between pragmatic and rhetoric studies on the one hand, and political philosophy and history on the other. Adopting a holistic approach to the historical and philosophical study of politics, inspired by Claude Lefort's and Pierre Rosanvallon's theories, it aims to re-construct the political and cultural *experience,* which is inherent to the Belgian neo-babouvism, in a synchronic perspective. This is achieved by attempting to understand the manners in which the Belgian revolutionaries gave form and meaning to their political thought. It revolves around the notions of "mise en forme", "mise en sens" and "mise en scène" introduced by Claude Lefort (1986). The methodological approach of this study elaborates some of the *New Rhetoric* and pragmatic instruments. It develops some of the models proposed by Marcelo Dascal, by adapting them to the specificity of political discourse.

It leans on three principal objectives: studying the rhetoric's morphology through a holistic approach; investigating the rhetoric's *dynamic*, the ways in which the political thought unfurls through the language. In order to obtain these objectives, we propose to broaden the complete classical rhetorical analysis based on rhetorical intentional strategies, by a study of its implicit and unconscious rhetorical forms, which are different from the declared intentions and sometimes opposed to them. We propose to designate the latter by the term rhetorical *mould*. We should stress that by "conscious/unconscious" we don't refer to the speaker's *real* meaning, but to a text artefact, to general organization principles which manage the relationship between the different textual elements. In order to reveal the real "point" of a political text, it seems important to confront the rhetorical-pragmatic analysis on the explicit rhetorical forms, by a study focused on its implicit elements.

An enlarged political-historical-pragmatic and rhetorical approach.

Following the perspective and some methodological principals developed by Marcelo Dascal I propose to develop them one step further.

Let us sum up first six methodological tools elaborated by Dascal:

1. *The importance of the controversy and the continuum: dialogue……controversy……dispute*

Controversy should be viewed on a spectrum which runs from dialogue, through controversy, to disputes. He insists on the fact that there is no dichotomy between them (Dascal 1995).

Dascal accords particular importance to the controversy, which he proposes to characterize by markers of opposition. In the controversy, there are polemical changes related to different points of view, attitudes and affinities. At the end of the controversy, there is a possibility to decide by rational means, which is right (who is the winner).

2. *The context and the co-text*

While trying to interpret and to analyse a text, argue Dascal and Cremaschi, one should take into account the historical context and the inter-discursive co-text. They argue that the "'the dialogical co-text is ESSENTIAL to reconstruct the meaning of a text. (Dascal and Cremaschi 1999)

We are speaking about an enlarged context (as opposed to segmental and punctual information).

In his researches lead with Elda Weizman, Dascal develops further the interpretation processes, which is not a linear one but a complex one. The only way to avoid a false interpretation is to take into account **contextual elements as a whole** (Dascal and Weizman 1991; Dascal and Weizman 1987).

3. *Analyzing cycles of correspondence rather than isolated or limited texts*

Dascal and Cremaschi propose the study entire cycles of correspondence between Malthus and Ricardo (for instance the cycle of correspondence between June 1814 and January 1815).

They speak about "'chunks of correspondence".

They believe that these differences result from a number of different factors that can and should be discerned through a careful analysis of the actual unfolding of the controversy.

The terms of moves and counter-moves are related to the controversial dynamic: a question requires a reply, an objection, a rebuttal (or concession etc.).

4. *Two levels of analysis a micro level and a macro-level*

In order to achieve a richer interpretation, the researchers propose to alternate between two levels of analysis: a micro level and a macro-level.

In the micro level the reader follows the dynamic of moves and counter-moves. He must be aware of not only what is said but also of the silences and inner-contradictions.

In the macro-level he looks for **patterns of argumentation**, mainly recurrent sequential moves, in order to get to an arsenal of stratagems. (Ibid, p.1147, 1151).

5. *Root metaphors*

One of the most innovative aspects of Dascal and Cremaschki's methodology is the manner in which they propose to interpret the figurative language. As opposed to the traditional rhetoric, they claim that the author's style is inseparable from his character and his conception. Some of the metaphors he uses are revealing of the essence of his reasoning. They propose to use the term of *root metaphors* to designate this type of metaphors, intrinsically related to the global orientation of his rhetoric's, the way in which the *rhetor* conceives and organizes his movements, in order to achieve his objectives.

Now, let me present **my suggestions** for each element explained before:

1. *The continuum: dialogue……controversy……dispute*

On the continuum dialogue-controversy-dispute what seem important to me is the process through which a dialogue becomes a dispute. I am interested more spe-

cifically with the reversal from a discourse of progress to a reactionary one. Actually this kind of reversal happens very often in politics when the patterns speak about peace, for instance, but some inner force in them pushes them to a rigid and conservative discourse.

2. *The context and the co-text*

I propose to further broaden Dascal's definition of *context* while applying it to a political discourse. When we try to understand the *historical experience,* which is inherent to a philosophical movement, we should take into account the **on-going interaction** between diverse elements which participate in the creation of a political culture, such as the History of a state its Constitution, its political establishments, political practices, conceptions and values.

Furthermore, the context includes not only explicit elements, but also **implicit ones, such as presumptions and taboos.**

**Leaders are not always sensitive to the implicit elements of their partner while dealing with a negotiation process. Consequently, a lot of political negotiations implode at the very beginning**.

To resume, I am speaking of a broader context, a dynamic one and a changing one, composed of explicit and implicit elements.

3. *The two levels of analysis: micro and macro*

I propose to introduce between the two levels an intermediate one. This intermediate level is the process through which politicians give shape and meaning to their rhetorical forms of expression. We are interested in rhetoric, in rhetorical strategies but also in verbal forms the actors use unconsciously. The intermediate level of giving meaning plays a central role in the creation of new nations and national communities, as in the case of Belgium in 1830.

4. *Analyzing cycles of correspondence rather than isolated or limited texts*

The corpus of this study consists of a long sequence: the whole political Belgian writings published between 1830 and 1839. It is based also about the whole political French writings published at the same period.

While analyzing a very long sequence I use three principal questions: Which rhetorical and pragmatic forms appear frequently in the studied writings? Which sense is associated with these forms? How could these forms be interpreted within the historical context and through the pragmatic analysis.

5. *Moves and counter-moves*

I claim that counter-moves appear not only between two people, but within the thought process of each of them. The Reasoning and the verbal expression rarely progress in a linear way but through waves. I am referring to inner counter-moves not on a psychological level, but on a linguistic level, which is rooted in the words.

6. *Root metaphors and rhetorical moulds*

I propose to further enlarge Dascal's term "root metaphors" and to speak on the one hand about (voluntary) root metaphors and on the other, on rhetorical moulds.

Among the rhetorical moulds those which appear frequently play a central role. They actually function as a mine sweeper.

For instance, the oxymoron forms in the Belgian revolutionary discourse of 1830, is a detector of the Belgian ambivalent position to their own political revolution.

## 2.3 What Is the Paradox in Pragmatic Terms?

According to Marcelo Dascal a paradox is a statement to which we can't accord a value of truth.

In her book Paradoxes (Biletzki 1996), Anat Biletzki claims that a paradox is an argument (a statement) which includes probable presumptions and which leads us, through probable modes of reasoning and implications, to a conclusion which seems to us improbable.

To clarify these presumptions, the modes of reasoning and the implication **appear to be** probable.

Biletzki insists on the fact that the paradox contains an inherent contradiction. It 'proves' something we have the conviction of being false.

### *2.3.1 Between Oxymoron* and Paradox

Let us consider three essential differences between oxymoron and paradox:

***Condensation/abstraction*** – The oxymoron appears in a condensed form and is primarily a linguistic feature, while the paradox functions on an abstract level. It is related to the development of ideas or of principles.

***Association/dissociation*** – In the paradox, the emphasis is on the insoluble nature of the problem. In contrast, the oxymoron creates from two irreconcilable elements, a new and unexpected sense.

***Pure reason/a complex experience*** **–** The paradox is purely rational, while the oxymoron implies a jump from the rational to a complex experience, which includes sentiment and imagination. The oxymoron interpretation requires a transition from a rational level, where contradiction can't exist, to an experience where ideological tensions, inner contradictions and ambivalences can exist.

## 2.4 Part II: A Close Up Reading of the Prime Minister's Letter of Resignation

### *2.4.1 The Explicit Rhetoric of the Document*

*The* explicit rhetoric of the *Letter to my fellow citizens* aims to reveal that the Belgian revolutionaries' balance of reason is actually a paradoxical balance, the source of their failure to act. No politician in Belgium in 1830 was more profound, almost prophetic than Louis De Potter.

In all his writings, De Potter reproaches the Belgian people for their "staggering (retracted) revolution" ("révolution escamotée"). His criticism is exceptional in its radicalism: it is neither by an external obstacle, nor by a bad management that he explains the failure of the Belgian revolution. According to the Prime-minister the problem is the profound inability of the Belgian people to act, in other words the lack of revolutionary spirit in the country: "[…] the revolution dragged on slowly. It quickly became unpopular. It was wasting away and was about to vanish without results" (De Potter 1830). When Louis De Potter published his letter, in November 1830, he believed that, in spite of the differences between him and the Belgian people, the revolution could be revived.

During the decade between 1830 and 1839 and during his exile, De Potter had an even more lucid and profound vision of the shortcomings of his compatriots. He highlights the Belgians' weak points: "'easy going", the importance they accord to the material comforts - "the worship of the golden calf" and above all the lack of voluntarism or of "revolutionary flame". To summarise his point of view he says that the pendular movement of the *balance of reason* could be compared to the "'convulsive movements of a galvanism' (De Potter 1838). Thus, he unmasked the essential paradox of the Belgian revolution: a balance of reason (Dascal 2001) which becomes a balance of death.

What actually is the revolutionary conception of Louis De Potter? I propose to examine this through 3 topics: revolutions of 1830, political and social revolution, Republic:

***The revolution of 1830:*** Louis De Potter, unlike his compatriots who wished for an autonomous status, wanted revolution. He "had a determined idea of this revolution: "My least idea was to push Belgium into a war of independence." (De Potter 1830).

***Political revolution and social revolution:*** According to De Potter, the political revolution should not be separated from the social revolution: "I have said that the revolution made by the people must be completely to their benefit" (Ibid, p.25, note).

Thus the resignation of the Prime-minister is presented as a natural consequence of the way in which the revolution of 1830 proceeded and of the choice of a monarchic regime. But what exactly was this revolution? What were its foundations? "The

people that we are, we are thanks to you; what we do, we do through you"[1] – the epigraph poses the principle of the popular sovereignty as the foundation of all representative regimes. The author links this principle with the idea of a successful the revolution: ''the economy is for the people the net product of their revolution. It should benefit the lower classes" (p.15).

Nevertheless, De Potter remains laconic when speaking about the nature of his project.

How can we ensure the revolution? De Potter is opposed to the idea of a regulator State (Etat régulateur) and he is critical of this kind of politics in France. As an alternative he adopts the politics of *laissez faire,* found in the liberalism of counterbalance. By this he is inspired by Anglo-Saxon models, and distances himself from the French models.

The idea of social and political revolution seems inspired by a famous text, written by the founder of the neo-babouviste movement in Europe, **Buonarroti.** The text is the *Conspiracy of Equals* (*le Manifeste des Egaux*) (Dandois 2013).

Before speaking about this source of inspiration, let me start by talking about the relation between De Potter and Buonarroti: De Potter had direct contact with Buonarroti from 1824. He received Buonarroti in Belgium. He helped him to publish the famous *Conspiration des Egaux dite de Babeuf.* The two men were very close. And yet they had ideological difference mainly on the Belgian issue. Bunarroti believed that Belgium could easily become an important centre of the revolutions in Europe. De Potter, from the very beginning, is very sceptical about the possibility that it could lead to a real revolution in Belgium.

Let us return to the *Manifeste des Egaux.* According to Buonarroti, the **associations** are the main means by which the working class can liberate itself. Buonarroti himself is inspired by the *Social Contract* of Rousseau, in order to proclaim the right of the associations and their function: to battle the order based on egoism. According to Buonarroti it's the associations which enable the political revolution: the installation of a republic through a social revolution. By calling on the workers to gather, he is inspired by the model of association de G. Babeuf. In this context, violating the law is considered as legitimate when the Power has betrayed the sovereignty of the people and the Constitution of 1793 (the most egalitarian in France).

*The Republic* Louis De Potter proclaims his republican project several times in his *Letter.* There is an interesting play between the text and the notes: an allusion in the text and then a long digression in the sub-text. This game between the theme and its variations rise to a crescendo as the *Letter* progresses, culminating in the last note: "[…] as a simple citizen, my principles are well known. I am democratic. I have never hidden it."[2]

[1] The epigraph in French: « peuple que nous sommes, nous le sommes par vous; ce que nous ferons nous le ferons par vous »

[2] The republican idea also appears in pages 26, 27, 28, 30, 35–36. It also appears seven times in the Appendix, p. 41.

How to justify this controversial idea in Belgium in 1830? De Potter's arguments are based on a unique synthesis between contemporary themes in French political writings of this period and some stereotypes about the qualities of the Belgian people.

> Believing that the republic was the best form of government, I was obliged to try to establish one in Belgium […] I demonstrated that it was necessary among a worker population, of simple manners, rich, without great differences of fortune, and having a moderate character, not used either to exaltation, or to exaggeration. (*Ibid*, p. 24–25.)
>
> I have said that the revolution created by the people had to be entirely to their benefit. This can be achieved only after giving them back the power to nominate the judges (magistrates), we should introduce a tax system which really benefits the people […] Otherwise there can be no possible economy under the monarchy. So, no more Monarchy. No more succession. (*Ibid*, p. 25, note).

In this examples we can see two arguments frequently used in French republican and socialist writings to which the author adds a third argument which is an amalgamation of French and Belgian arguments and finally a ''Belgian" argument: (1) One should adopt the republican regime in the name of social justice; (2) The republican regime is the less expensive one; (3) The republican regime is the only conceivable option in Belgium in 1830; 4) By choosing the republican regime Belgium would become a model country. This last argument concerns the external image of Belgium: ''physically weak as a monarchy we could become strong, from a moral point of view, as a republic. We should be respected, venerated, as a *model country* […]."

The controversy between Louis De Potter and his compatriots was deeply rooted. The question was who would decide on the nature of the regime? Most of the members of the provisional Government thought that Congress should decide. On the other hand, Louis De Potter thought that in times of war, the government should decide. In other words, under exceptional circumstances, the legislative power must be subordinated to the executive power. This last point leads us to the next issue of our study.

## 2.5 Part III: The Implicit Level of De Potters Discourse

The implicit level of De Potter's discourse goes against his explicit statements. In other words, if the Prime-minister claims that: I am a democratic Belgian revolutionary. I am a progressive liberal, while you, my people, are trapped by your own revolutionary paradoxes; his discourse contains an incitement to a dictatorial regime. The slide from the neo-babouviste model of the controversy to a dispute model now undergoes a second transformation: from a dispute to a paradox. When this occurs, De Potter's liberal, democratic and republican thoughts become anti-liberal, anti-democratic and anti-republican.

### 2.5.1 How Can We Illustrate this Reversed Position?

In later writing of De Potter, published during 1850 the anti-democratic position is explicit. De Potter tired by the lack of revolutionary spirit in his people, says that: "If the Belgian people are not yet prepared for their independence and a democratic and republican regime, they should live in an ultra-royalist regime."

I claim that this position also appears in the apparently innocent resignation letter, published in 1830. It can be revealed by careful reading of the notes of the letter and the reference to famous texts of his period, mainly the references to Buonarroti and to Louis Auguste Blanqui's writings.

I will limit this part of the article to the micro-analysis of one significant sequence of the famous letter.

### 2.5.2 The Incitement to the Dictatorial Regime – An Example

The idea advocated by Louis De Potter is that the Belgian revolution (of 1830) should be saved through a dictatorial regime and by starting a war against the Netherlands. The word "dictatorship" doesn't appear in the text, but the idea does appear indirectly, in the choice of certain expressions as well as in activation of a system of references:

> The government had neither an opinion, nor a colour, neither a system nor a character. Consequently the government was condemned to die.
>
> Being supported by my friend Tielemans, I was the only one, in the central commission, who wanted the government define itself politically. I wanted it to choose a position. I wished it because, in my opinion, we were the real representatives of the revolution and the duty to overcome the obstacles and to prepare its triumph was imposed on us; because, if we left it to a future Congress, who's opinions and character were unknown to us, the mission to decide blindly the fate of our homeland, would be a very imprudent, and it would probably have been a great mistake; because in fact we were still in a state of revolution, and by leaving it to the Congress to establish in a lawful manner, through the promulgation of a fundamental law and the determination of an executive power, one should, while waiting for this Congress, govern in one sense or another, in spirit or a defined way, knowing that congress has only to ratify the actions of the revolution and to establish its principal and its doctrines (*Lettre à mes concitoyens, op.cit.,* p.15)

What actually was Louis De Potter's political project? This paragraph is characterized by the rhetoric of suspense and camouflaging. Some syntactic and lexical choices create this effect:

Firstly, we can see the absence of balance between, on one hand, a long list of subordinate clauses (of cause and of objective) and on the other, two short principal propositions ("I was the only one … who wanted…"'; "I wanted it"). Actually, the author speaks more about his motivations than on the nature of his choices. This heaviness of the syntax attracts our attention given that De Potter's style is generally clear and straightforward. Secondly, the author obscures the object of the verb

"wanted". He says less about his concrete political plans. After the first preposition, we wait for the verb's direct object ('to want the republic regime' for instance), but we are instead faced with two subordinate clauses in which the semantics are very vague: What does De Potter mean by "to define itself politically" or ''to choose a position". The repetition of the verb ''to want"' in the next sentence reinforces the mystery: ''I wanted it…" In this kind of sentences, when we use the pronoun ''it", the object of the pronoun is normally defined in the previous sentence, but in this case nothing is clear. It is through a game of 'hide-and-seek' that the author introduces his revolutionary ideas.

Let us look at the semantics. First, the word ''dictatorship" doesn't appear explicitly in the text. Nevertheless, the idea is suggested by a series of expressions: "…we were the real representatives of the revolution and the duty to overcome the obstacles and to prepare its triumph was imposed on us"; 'we were still in a state of revolution, and by leaving it to the Congress to establish in a lawful manner […] one should, govern […] in one sense or another…"

These terms revive a revolutionary imagery known to the Belgian and to the French revolutionaries of this period. They refer not only to the French Revolution, but also to two famous texts of their time: the *Project for a Republican Constitution* of Charles Teste and the *Conspiracy of Equals as described by Babeuf* – the famous text published by Buonarroti. It is through a series of references that a picture of the French Revolution and the Terror appears.

Examining De Potter's strategies of disguise in the context of the Belgian political culture of his period we get the impression that there was no place for the idea of a coup d'État or a dictatorial regime.

The implicit level of De Potter's discourse goes against the explicit statements of the (ex) Prime-minister. The sliding from the neo-babouviste model of the controversy to a dispute model now undergoes a second transformation: from a dispute to a paradox. While dispute becomes a paradox, the liberal, democratic and republican thought of De Potter becomes anti-liberal, anti-democratic and anti-republican.

### *2.5.3 How Could We Reveal this Reversal?*

In later writings of De Potter, published during the 1850th the anti-democratic position is explicit. De Potter tired by less of revolutionary spirit of his people, claims (says): "If the Belgian people are not yet prepared to its independence and to a democratic and republic regime, he should live in an ultra-royalist regime."

I will close this part by saying that the reversal in De Potter's text also reveals itself through inter-textual correspondence with Blanqui's writings. I will analyse it in a further article.

## 2.6 Conclusion

### *2.6.1 De Potter's Irreversible Defeat*

The letter *'To my fellow citizens'* didn't achieve its objectives. Louis De Potter will be forever seen as guilty. "You will spoil everything by your presence", one of his most intimate friends told him, "your arrival will be a declaration of war; we will lose in one second the fruits of our long prudence and of our painful work."

Confined to act behind the scenes, he ended by disappearing.

Which are the reasons for the sudden fall of the Belgian first Prime minister?

It is a tough question for the politician who has irrevocably fallen from power and a delicate one for the philosophers and historians **trying to understand the fall of a political leader.**

### *2.6.2 De Potter's Explanation*

While editing his letter of resignation, De Potter feels that his voice is a "cry in the desert". I would say that what is correct in this interpretation is that in 1830, when De Potter writes his famous letter, its content is completely inconceivable. Only 9 years later, in the summer of 1839, when the Belgian people faced the danger of losing Limbourg and Luxembourg, would they become radical.

Was it simply a gap between a pioneer and his generation? This was the Belgian ex-Prime- minister's opinion: "I was wrong by being right too soon"', he said in his letter to King Guillaume.

Thus, **in a paradoxical way [and here we have another paradox..] when De Potter finally returned to his homeland, he is more irrevocably exiled than before.**

### *2.6.3 The Explanation of His Neo-babouviste Fellows*

Another explanation is given by De Potter's fellow Adolphe Bartels (an important member of the neo-babouvist movement). Bartels was a liberal and he often assumed the role of a mediator or judge: "For the moment, Brussels is not as advanced as Paris in the republican issue" (Bartels 1834).

According to this interpretation, it was the *global orientation* of the Prime-minister's rhetoric which was questioned by De Potter's fellow. In other words, the *strategy* was not adapted to his people, he was not in-tune with his audience.

### *2.6.4 The Historians' Interpretation*

Two famous historians of the twentieth century, Galante-Garonne and Kuypers, explain even more clearly the gap between a "'naive and idealist" thinker, and a politician confronted with a political reality". Actually, after publishing his famous letter, De Potter is politically a lost person. He will explain his frustration and anger by apocalyptic visions about the fate of his country.

### *2.6.5 Our Enlarged Pragmatic -Political Interpretation*

There is no doubt that De Potter made some strategic and rhetorical mistakes. Instead of persuading his countrymen, he aroused their anger. **But why was there such an insurmountable wall between the orator and his public? What was the cause of such resentment on both sides?** Instead of looking at the arguments, we should closely examine the political and cultural **presumptions** of Louis De Potter and of his audience. When De Potter publishes his letter, in the winter of 1830, the clash between the French revolutionary culture and the Belgian one is particularly hard.

De Potter was rejected by the Belgian people because unconsciously and involuntarily he replaced one paradox (the balance of reason turned into a balance of immobility) by another one – trying to impose a violent revolution model on a liberal and non-violent culture.

His dramatic failure, is the result of not only, the contradiction between his way of thinking and his action, but emerges from a paradox in his way of thinking

It is through an in-depth pragmatic analysis of his letter that we can bring to the surface the deeper reasons for his failure.

Louis De Potter, the Philosopher and the Politician, went against the trend of the Belgian political culture of his period. His positions, his actions and his rhetoric break the taboos of Belgium in 1830. De Potter's intransigent attitude and his cry for a violent revolution, challenged the local political culture, based on a pluralist liberalism as on the ideas of transaction and of non-violence. The Prime minister's failure turned out to be an inherent contradiction in his thinking.

Louis De Potter couldn't exist, in the political culture of his time, without these ideological tensions. His attempt to impose the French Revolutionary model on the Belgian people seemed to be unavoidable, as should be perhaps also an **impossible** one.

The Belgium's first Prime-minister didn't take into account the circumstances of his people and of his country. He didn't know how to adapt his action as the sophist's *kairos* requires. As a result, while the Belgian Prime minister gained some popularity in France, his popularity and prestige in Belgium soon dropped dramatically.

### *2.6.6 From the Belgian Case to Some Political and Pragmatic Reflexions*

**On a more general level**, the Belgian *case* study, illustrates the contribution of pragmatic analysis to political and historical research.

The question is whether we are able to see what exists for a long time in embryonic form surface only later on**.** For instance, detect a contradiction, which will later become a paradox.

Is it possible to anticipate a Gordian knot in political negotiation at its very beginning or, even better, before it even starts?

**Being sensitive to these inner counter-moves will enable us to understand how a controversy becomes a dispute even before negotiation has started (because of these paradoxes).**

If a *root metaphor* can reveal the global orientation of a discourse, its profound cohesion, as proposed Dascal and Cremaschi, I would suggest, that it can also reveal its profound contradictions and paradoxes.

From an historical and political perspective, we can see how a political experience arises both as a horizon and as an abyss (Rosanvallon).

What can we say about the first Prime-minister of Belgium on the perspective of time? Nobody was more intelligent than Louis De Potter on understanding the essential paradoxes of the Belgian revolution. However, nobody has been blinder than him as to the concrete outcome of the revolution.

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# Chapter 3
# Leibniz, Bayle and the Controversy on Sudden Change

**Markku Roinila**

**Abstract** I will give an overview of the fascinating communication between G. W. Leibniz and Pierre Bayle on pre-established harmony and sudden change in the soul which started from Bayle's footnote H to the article "Rorarius" in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697) and ended in 1706 with Bayle's death. I will compare the views presented in the communication to Leibniz's reflections on the soul in his partly concurrent *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain* (1704) and argue that many topics in the communication with Bayle are discussed with more details in *Nouveaux essais*. I also argue that the communication helped Leibniz to respond to Locke's views concerning uneasiness in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II, xxi. Bayle himself, however, was not able to completely understand Leibniz's views on spontaneity as he was unaware of the contents of the *Nouveaux essais*, especially the systematic role of *petites perceptions* in Leibniz's philosophy of mind. I will also reflect on whether the controversy could have ended in agreement if it would have continued longer.

**Keywords** Pleasure and pain • Pre-established harmony • Principle of continuity • Spontaneity • Substantial form

## Leibniz, Bayle and the Controversy on Sudden Change

Leibniz's metaphysical views were not known to most of his correspondents, let alone to the larger public, until 1695 when he published an article in *Journal des savants*, titled in English "A New System of the Nature and Communication of Substances, and of the Union of the Soul and Body" (henceforth New System).[1] The

[1] When discussing the New System, I will refer to the post-publication revised version in GP IV 477–87 and the English translation in Leibniz 1997 (WF 10–20). I use the following abbreviations

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article raised quite a stir. Perhaps the most interesting and cunning critique of Leibniz's views was provided by a French refugee in Rotterdam, Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) who is most famous for his *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (1697). The fascinating controversy on Leibniz's idea of pre-established harmony and a number of other topics lasted for five years and ended only when Bayle died. In this paper I will give an overview of the communication, discuss in detail a central topic concerning spontaneity or a sudden change in the soul, and compare the views presented in the communication to Leibniz's reflections in his partly concurrent *New Essays on Human Understanding* (1704) (henceforth NE). I will also reflect on whether the controversy could have ended in agreement if it would have continued longer.

## 3.1 The New System

Let us begin with the article that started the controversy, the New System. It starts with Leibniz's objection to the Cartesian doctrine of extension as a basic way of explaining motion. Instead, one should adopt a doctrine of force which belongs to the sphere of metaphysics (GP IV 478). This is because one cannot find the principle of unity in mere matter, as material things cannot be at the same time material and perfectly indivisible. Leibniz combined his new theory of forces or dynamics with the old scholastic doctrine of substantial forms, arguing that their nature consists in force in the sense that from it follows something analogous to feeling and desire which relates them to souls.[2] To put these together, substantial forms are, in a sense, souls which contain not only actuality or the fulfilment of possibility, but also an originating activity which Leibniz calls primary force (GP IV 479).

According to Leibniz, the difference between minds and bodies is of kind rather than degree. Bodies or natural machines are machines, whatever change occurs in them (such as a caterpillar turning into a butterfly); whereas rational souls are above the changes in nature, as they are images of God. They possess unities, the ability to say "I", which is never possible for machines of nature, even for animals (GP IV 481–483). Thus spiritual machines are real unities with self-consciousness and moral identity; that is, they can systematically strive for happiness and perfection.

In the second part of the article Leibniz strives to show how these two kinds of machines work together. His explanation is founded on his doctrine of pre-established harmony, which God created with the substances, determining by an single act the relations between the substances, including the human soul and the aggregate that is its body. Leibniz also gives a lucid formulation of a spiritual automaton: a substance with an active principle (primitive force), reason (self-consciousness, will to good) and spontaneity (freedom). It strives automatically to the good, but is nevertheless

of Leibniz's works: A=Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe (Leibniz 1923), GP=Die Philosophischen Schriften (Leibniz 1961) and WF=Leibniz's New System (Leibniz 1997).

[2] Leibniz published his theory of forces in an article called *Specimen dynamicum* (part 1 appeared in *Acta eruditorum*, 1695).

free as it possesses intelligence and spontaneity. In addition, the representations of the substance are fairly accurate, and this is the reason why it is able to strive to perfection in imitation of its creator, God (GP IV 486).

There were quite a number of critics of the New System, but I will here limit myself to Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), arguably the sharpest of them all. Bayle was a professor of history and philosophy in Rotterdam and was known primarily for his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* and his journal *Nouvelles de la république des lettres*. Leibniz's discussion with Bayle was very important and led partly to his only published work *Theodicy* (1710). The communication started when Bayle added an extensive footnote H on Leibniz's views to the article "Rorarius" in the first edition of his *Dictionnaire* (1697). Leibniz's response was published in *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* in 1698, but Bayle's reflections did not appear until 1702 when the second edition of the *Dictionnaire* was published (WF 68–69). Naturally Leibniz was eager to read the edition once it was published and quickly he wrote a reply to Bayle, choosing not to publish it despite Bayle's wish for him to do that. The reply was not published until 1716 in another journal called *Histoire critique de République des lettres*. Thus the discussion on New System took a very long time. In addition, Leibniz was privately busy reflecting Bayle's and others comments and several drafts of replies and letters were left unfinished. Thus there are several versions of letters he sent and did not send to Bayle and also his private notes on the article "Rorarius" (WF 69–70).[3]

## 3.2 Note H of "Rorarius"

Let us start with the footnote H to "Rorarius", where Bayle presented a counter-example to Leibniz's pre-established harmony between the mind and the body. He asks how a dog's soul can operate independently of its body if there is no direct interaction between them. If a dog is thought to be more than a mere physical machine, a sort of intermediate level between machines of nature and spiritual machines, one would suppose that it has some sort of spontaneity, freedom to do what it chooses to do. Therefore Bayle cannot understand the series of spontaneous internal actions which could make a dog's soul feel pain immediately after having felt pleasure even if there was nothing else in the world:

> I can understand why a dog passes immediately from pleasure to pain when, whilst it is very hungry and eating some bread, it is suddenly hit with a stick; but that its soul should be constructed in such a way that it would have felt pain at the moment that it was hit, even if it had not been hit, and even if it had continued to eat the bread without being disturbed or prevented, that is what I cannot understand (Bayle 1697: 697; WF 73–74).

Bayle argues that according to Leibniz's views, the dog would feel pain even if there is no cause for it because the state of pain is "programmed" in its substantial

[3] A selection of the documents concerning the discussion following the publication of the New System is conveniently translated to English in WF.

form. Related to this question is the relationship between spontaneity and negative feelings. If we suppose that the soul has spontaneity or activity, how can it feel passivity or negative feelings such as pain? (Bayle 1697: 697). The assumption behind Bayle's argument is clearly that the natural continuation from pleasure is toward more pleasure and that a sudden change in the body would not necessarily take place in the soul at all (see also Rutherford 2005: 170). It is also evident, as Pelletier notes (2015: 165 & 170), that Bayle's take on spontaneity here is related to external factors, which was the common received view of the time; whereas for Leibniz the change is related to internal activity or passivity.

Bayle is in fact arguing that Leibniz's pre-established harmony is not really very different from Malebranche's and others occasionalism, as there would have to be God who guides the substances, that is, intervenes to produce the sudden change from pleasure to pain. Surely one cannot imagine that these kinds of sudden changes can happen simultaneously in the mind and the body if it is supposed that they follow their own laws?

## 3.3 Leibniz's Letter to the Editor, July 1698

Leibniz replied in a letter to the editor of the journal *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* in July 1698. He made a distinction between spontaneity and voluntariness. Everything voluntary is spontaneous, but there are spontaneous actions which are not chosen, and which consequently are not voluntary. The states of the soul are always connected to its past states (WF 81). By this Leibniz means that the past states are present in the soul in the form of dispositions, as minute, insensible perceptions (*petite perceptions*). We do not know distinctly the future states of the soul, but there are in each soul traces of everything that has happened to it before certain moment in its history and traces what will happen to it later (WF 83). Thus the substance's complete notion or substantial form "marks" the soul with tiny traces of its complete history. The spiritual machine has in this way a sort of complete program written by symbols, which to the agent herself looks like confused gibberish. Only its author, God, can interpret the code, hack the message (WF 83).

Because of this cognitive chaos in the soul there has to be an external principle in the production of one's actions. But this is not *deus ex machina*, as Bayle argues, because all the cognitive states of a substance follow from each other naturally (although we do not always notice it). There is always a continuity between states of the soul which is due to the confused little perceptions which we are not aware of because there is an infinite multitude of them and we cannot tell them apart (WF 83). Because of this there are only natural, not miraculous consequences in the soul.

While Bayle holds that according to occasionalism, God acts according to general laws, Leibniz understands the term *miracle* in the sense that it exceeds the power of created things. This makes all of God's actions miraculous, however

general they are thought to be (see also Jolley 2013). Leibniz thinks that if there is some occasion which is thought to be a general law, there must be a simpler or architectonic law of nature for one to avoid the charge of God acting miraculously: as an example Leibniz mentions gravity (WF 82). Finally, Leibniz comments on the simplicity of a substance, emphasizing its complexity. He argues that there are parts in the soul, though in itself it is a simple substance. These parts make up the affects or feelings of the soul. They are composed of several simultaneous perceptions.[4] In addition, there is a law of order which exists in perceptions as much as in movements; each preceding perception influences succeeding ones, as we saw above.

The perceptions which are simultaneously together in the same soul involve a truly infinite multitude of small indistinguishable feelings that will be developed in what follows, so one should not be astonished at the infinite variety of what emerges over time. All of this is only a consequence of the representational nature of the soul, which must express what happens, and indeed what will happen, in its body; and, because of the connection or correspondence of all the parts of the world, it must also express in some way what happens in all the other substances (WF 84–85). Thus each substance not only expresses its own body but through it all the other substances as well (WF 85).[5]

## 3.4 The Second Edition of Bayle's Dictionnaire

We have reached the stage in the discussion where the second edition of Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique* was finally published in 1702. In the note H to the article "Rorarius" he further commented on Leibniz's views. In general, Leibniz's painstaking efforts at defending his system of pre-established harmony have been successful – Bayle is much more positively inclined to his views, saying that "I now consider this new system to be an important breakthrough, which advances the frontiers of philosophy" (Bayle 1702: 2610; WF 86). However, Bayle still does not admit that Leibniz's accusation towards occasionalism being a constant miracle is true, and therefore he has no need for Leibniz's new system of pre-established harmony. He also considers the view that substances are active in themselves problematic (Bayle 1702: 2610).

Bayle does not return to the dog-example,[6] but presents another one concerning the union of soul and body of Caesar, in order to argue that the pre-established harmony greatly surpasses the imagination of men. If Caesar is given a substantial form or active primitive force which includes his whole history, does this notion really cover all the related little events during the course of his life without God's intervention? How can this be conceived at all? The problem is even more incom-

[4] Here Leibniz anticipates his view in *New Essays* II, xx, §6 as I will argue later.

[5] This idea is quite Spinozistic. Compare *Ethics* 2, p17.

[6] I will return to the example later.

prehensible because of the infinite number of organic parts in the human mechanism which all are subject to effects of all the other bodies in the world:

How can we make sense of the fact that this pre-established harmony is never upset, and always stays on course through even the longest life of a man, despite the infinite variety of actions of all these parts one on another, surrounded on all sides by an infinity of corpuscles, sometimes cold, sometimes hot, sometimes dry, sometimes wet, always active, always pricking at the nerves, in this way or that? I think that this multiplicity of parts and of external agents is essential for the almost infinite variety of changes in the human body. But could this variety be as perfectly ordered as this system requires? Will it never disturb the correspondence between these changes and those of the soul? This is what seems to be quite impossible (Bayle 1702: 2611; WF 88).

When this function of the natural machine is connected to the spiritual machine, the picture is even more incredible to Bayle. As Leibniz claims, the two machines are both guided by the active force and correspond perfectly without any direct cooperation. This is simply not acceptable (Bayle 1702: 2611). Bayle proceeds by comparing the soul of Julius Caesar (understood as an immaterial automaton) to an epicurean atom which is surrounded by a void on all sides, never coming into contact with any other atom. According to Bayle, this comparison is very close, as the atom has a natural power of self-movement, and the soul of Caesar is a mind which can produce its thoughts without any influence from any other mind or body. Leibniz had earlier argued that a moving body will always retain its movement or progression if nothing occurs to make it change. Similarly the atom will keep on moving uniformly and regularly along the same straight line (Bayle 1702: 2611).

When this idea is applied to the soul of Caesar, we can see that if the first thought it gives itself is a feeling of pleasure, it is hard to see why the second thought should not be a feeling of pleasure as well. Bayle argues:

> We could never make sense of the possibility of bizarre changes from black to white or from yes to no, or those wild leaps from earth to heaven which are quite common in human thought (Bayle 1702: 2612; WF 91).

In the second moment of its existence, the soul of Caesar does not acquire a new ability to think, but only keeps the ability it had in the first moment, being as independent from any external affect as in the first moment (Bayle 1702: 2611–2622). Thus Bayle still cannot see how in Leibniz's theory sudden changes are possible. If Caesar is suddenly pricked by a pin, how can the soul turn from pleasure to pain in a moment without being prepared for this sudden change?

He tries to hammer the point home with yet another example. Let us say that God has designed a bird which sings all the time a certain score. In order for that to happen, the score has to be imprinted in the memory of the animal or its muscles are arranged in such a way that mechanical movement produce that score. When this analogy is applied to man's soul, it is not enough, according to Leibniz, that the soul is able to give itself new thoughts, but also that it follows a certain sequence in its thoughts which correspond to the continual change in the body-machine. It does not seem believable that the soul cannot foresee the following states or the musical

score it will experience in the future. But this is what Leibniz claims, as he holds that the soul senses the future perceptions only confusedly (Bayle 1702: 2512).

## 3.5 Leibniz's Last Reply

Leibniz's public last word was published in *Histoire critique de la république des lettres* in 1716, ten years after Bayle had died. To Bayle's argument that from pleasure there necessarily follows more pleasure, Leibniz argues that if we could predict the future states of the series of a substance, we could build a perfect robot (WF 109). Leibniz's final word is that even if the ideas of man are dispositional in the sense that they arise from previous ones, due to confusedness we cannot predict the future states and therefore they can be totally opposite to preceding states. Only God, whose cognition is infinite can analyse the complete history of the substances. In fact, that is the reason we exist in the first place, as God has chosen this set of substances to create. And the creation includes the idea that the substances are compatible; that is they harmonize with each other. Leibniz is ready to admit that with respect to bodies, his theory is mechanical, but with respect to soul, it is nothing like that:

So according to this second half of my theory, everything happens in the soul as if there were no body; just as, according to the first half, everything happens in the body as if there were no soul (WF 113). Therefore even if the soul represents the states of the attached body, it acts independently of it. Concerning the soul of Caesar and the question of sudden change, Leibniz argues that there is a great variety in the soul, unlike in an atom. Although like the atom, the soul is indivisible, it contains

> A compound tendency, that is to say a multitude of present thoughts, each of which tends towards a particular change, depending on what is involved in it, and which are all in it at the same time, in virtue of its essential relatedness to all the other things in the world (WF 115).

The change from pleasure to pain may look sudden, but in addition to the continuous series of intermediate *petite perceptions* discussed above, there are a great number of different inclinations present at the same time in the soul, and the difference between the pleasure and pain is not as great as one might think. Leibniz argues: "So we need not be surprised by this change; it sometimes seems that pleasure is only a complex of small perceptions, each of which, if it were large, would be pain" (WF 116). Therefore the balance between pleasure and pain is very delicate.[7]

[7] In *New Essays* (II, xx, §7) Leibniz argued that we can be cheerful when we are being tortured and feel depressed when we are having fun (A VI 6 166).

## 3.6 Leibniz's Unpublished Comments and Notes (1705)

It is easy to see from the above that the communication between Bayle and Leibniz ended unresolved. Bayle was still confused about the question of sudden change, and, while accepting Leibniz's pre-established system as an alternative solution to occasionalism, he still supported the latter.

However, there is a lot of interesting material preserved by Leibniz which did not end up in the communication and which sheds light to the topics. Let us first see Leibniz's unpublished comments and notes to the second edition of the *Dictionnaire*. In the comments Leibniz returns to the example of the dog. He says that the pre-established harmony means that pain comes into a dog's soul when its body is hit. If it is not hit, there is no mental event in the dog's soul related to that physical event, as God would have seen the event through his foreknowledge. Therefore the law-of-the-series of the dog's soul is perfectly synchronized to that of the aggregate that is its body. Bayle's problem, as Leibniz sees it, is that he cannot see how the sudden change takes place without God causing it directly, as in occasionalism (through particular laws). In other words, Bayle fails to grasp the consequences of the pre-established harmony (GP IV 530). It is also important to see that the change is not so sudden as it seems:

> The causes which move the stick (that is, the man stationed behind the dog, getting ready to hit it while it eats, and everything in the history of the material world which contributes to his being in that position), are also represented in the dog's soul from the outset, exactly and truly, but feebly, by small confused perceptions and without apperception, that is, without the dog's knowing it – because the dog's body also is affected by them only imperceptibly. And just as in the history of the material world these dispositions eventually produce the blow firmly on the dog's body, so similarly the representations of these dispositions in the dog's soul eventually produce the representation of the blow of the stick; and since that representation is prominent and strong, the dog apperceives it very distinctly, and this is what constitutes its pain. So we don't have to imagine that in this encounter the dog's soul passes from pleasure to pain arbitrarily, and without any internal reason. (GP IV 531–532; WF 77).

So in the dog's soul there is a feeble disposition of getting hit by a stick; when this happens the obscure little unconscious perceptions or *petite perceptions* become more clear and when this development is heightened to its ultimate degree (the dog experiences the full effect of the hit), the dog perceives the pain distinctly. Because the hit of a stick received by the dog is only a disposition, the dog cannot know the future pain:

> The principle of change is in the dog, the disposition of its soul moves imperceptibly toward giving it pain – but this is without its knowing, and without its wanting it. The representation of the present state of the universe in the dog's soul produces in it the representation of the subsequent state of the same universe; just as in the things represented, the preceding state actually produces the subsequent state of the world. In a soul, the representations of causes are the causes of the representations of effects. And since this subsequent state of the world includes the blow on the dog's body, the representation of that subsequent state in its soul includes the pain which corresponds to that blow (WF 77).

When the dog is hit, the soul represents the cause (the hit) and the effect (pain). But before the first event and between these two events there are many intermediate insensible little perceptions. The soul of the dog is imperceptibly on its way to pain, but it is not aware of it (for some unknown reason, Leibniz uses terminology of human beings, such as apperception and distinct cognition when describing the states of the dog). Only when the blow takes place, the soul feels the pain ("subsequent state of the world") which has encountered its body due to pre-established harmony. In another unpublished note of 1705 we can find a similar case:

> The soul sometimes passes from white to black or from yes to no, without knowing how, or at least involuntarily, for what its confused thoughts and its feelings produce in it we attribute to the body. So we should not be surprised if a man who is stung by some insect when eating jam should, despite himself, pass immediately from pleasure to pain. For, in approaching the man's body before stinging it, this insect was already affecting it, and the representation of this was, albeit unconsciously, already affecting his soul (WF 103).

Here a felt pleasure changes to pain suddenly, but again Leibniz emphasizes the great role of unconscious little perceptions in one's mental life:

> In the soul as in the body, little by little the insensible becomes the sensible…nothing new happens in the substance of the soul which makes it feel the sting; for what happens is confused presentiment, or, better, insensible dispositions of the soul, which represent the dispositions of the body with regard to the sting (WF 103).

Therefore the events of hitting the dog or stinging the jam-eating man are processes of which only some stages are perceived clearly. I think Leibniz's explanations are satisfying in terms of understanding the sudden change, but it is also easy to agree with Rutherford that the dog is acting here as a patient rather than an agent and that it would not spontaneously move from pleasure to pain (Rutherford 2005: 171–172; Rutherford 2015: 204).[8] The same holds true in the example of the jam-eating man. I think this fact cannot be resolved, but it can be understood – there are unfortunate events in the world and they are part and parcel of the history of the beings, evident to a supreme being who can analyse the law-of-the-series of the substances, but unpredictable to the substances themselves.

## 3.7 Some Reflections on the Outcome of the Controversy

The correspondence with Bayle is essential in understanding Leibniz's mature views of the soul and the psychophysical parallelism. Unlike many other critics, Bayle understood Leibniz's views fairly well and was sympathetic to them. Thus it is certain that the controversy was conducted under a spirit of tolerance which,

[8] However, in another comment of 1705 Leibniz says that he does not think the soul gives itself its first feelings. They are received with its existence from God at the moment of creation and from the first feelings all the others follow (WF 102). Leibniz agrees here with his early view in *De Affectibus* (1679) where he, influenced by Hobbes, argued that affects follow from each other. Change in the series takes place only when a greater apparent perfection is encountered. See Roinila (2015).

according to Marcelo Dascal, is the first component of a positive attitude toward human difference (Dascal 2010: 27).

Bayle considered Leibniz's pre-established harmony as a viable alternative to his preferred system of occasionalism, but this is not to say that he would probably have been persuaded to adopt it. As we have seen, there remained the problem of the nature of God's action on the world which the philosophers could not agree on. Bayle's criticism well represents the reactions to Leibniz's idea of pre-established harmony. Most thought of it as an interesting hypothesis which was very much estranged from reality.

It is certainly true that Leibniz could not demonstrate his hypothesis any more than Malebranche or other occasionalists could theirs. In this sense his pre-established harmony is not an improvement to Malebranche. In fact, to contemporaries it might have been more believable to think that God connects all things in the world from moment to moment (through laws of nature) than that he has created the substances in such a way that they perfectly correspond with each other from the start until the end of the world. In the eyes of the learned reading public, it seems probable that Bayle was the winner of the controversy. Be that as it may, the victory of occasionalism was not to last long – when Leibniz's *Theodicy* became fashionable in the first half of the eighteenth century, the supporters of occasionalism were few.

The case may be different with respect to spontaneity. Leibniz struggled to show to Bayle that the soul functions largely in terms of insensible *petite perceptions* and that the continuity of events is founded on them. But he had not yet published his *New Essays* at this point where he would explain their significance in detail. Leibniz discusses "small indistinguishable feelings" in his reply to Bayle, but does not really explain their importance in his doctrine of the mind. Bayle was probably not aware of the systematic value of Leibniz's doctrine at all, as the insensible perceptions were implicitly mentioned only in his 1684 article *Meditationes de cognitione, veritate et ideis*, and the systematic presentation in NE was not published until 1765. This conjecture is supported by the fact that Bayle does not comment on the little perceptions in the correspondence at all – perhaps he took Leibniz's view as metaphorical. For him it may have looked as unintelligible as the hypothesis of pre-established harmony. One would suspect that if Leibniz had sent Bayle drafts of the *New Essays* (even the Preface), Bayle would have taken the doctrine more seriously.

In fact, I think that the *New Essays* is essential in understanding the communication between Bayle and Leibniz and that this has not been properly acknowledged.[9] There are a number of common topics between the two sources, and many of them are discussed more extensively in NE. I will here mention only one example.

In NE II, xx, §6 Leibniz discusses passions in the context of Lockean concept of uneasiness; he argues that pleasure can be divided to minute semi-pleasures and only when they accumulate we can have the genuine pleasure. The same is true for pain – as Leibniz explained to Bayle, the pain the dog experiences is not a sudden change in metaphysical respect. It is a development of minute semi-sufferings which, put together, create the feeling of pain which the dog perceives. Although the process

[9] A notable exception is Bolton (2013).

takes place in split seconds, it nonetheless is gradual. In his reply to Bayle in 1698 Leibniz already anticipated this view in NE, but his description of it is shallower and he does not use the terms *semi-pleasure* or *semi-suffering* of NE. One might suspect that Leibniz is here answering to both Locke (for whom passions are overwhelming states of unease which are difficult to resist) and Bayle – he wrote *New Essays* around the same time as the comments and notes to the second edition of *Dictionnaire*.

However, in NE he presents a theme not to be found in the communication. The process of minute semi-sufferings which starts when the stinging bee approaches the jam-eating man leads to a feeling of imperfection or mental pain in the man when the bee stings him. The pain can be divided into innumerable semi-sufferings, and Leibniz argues that we can fight against the pain by replacing the semi-sufferings eventually with semi-pleasures. The direction of the affective process changes slowly, leading back to pleasure again. Therefore even though the man has experienced an unexpected and involuntary setback, he can systematically continue striving toward the good through semi-pleasures which will eventually accumulate to genuine pleasure (A VI 6 165). The mind is able to dig its own sources, with its appetite toward the good, and eventually experiences joy again (see also Rutherford 2015: 217–218). In this way the soul can evolve from imperfection to perfection, or in emotional terms, from harmful passions to intellectual emotions of joy, hope and love (for details, see Roinila 2012).

This discussion reflects the fact that Bayle is not really interested in Leibniz's complex theory of mind and its dynamics, due to the fact that he prefers occasionalism to the Leibnizian idea of a system of active substances. For him, the mind represents the external senses and the problem consists only of the uniform response to outer effects in the pre-established harmony. But for Leibniz, there are an infinite number of little, unconscious perceptions from the senses present at all times in the soul and they form "appetitions", imperceptible inclinations toward pleasure or pain which may conflict with each other. In addition to these inclinations in the soul which arise from the perceptions of the external senses, there is the internal appetite or endeavour toward the good (NE II, xxi, §5). So it seems to me that by his repeated observations on the infinite complexity of the mind Leibniz is really trying to explain to Bayle that while the mind does represent the states of the body, their effect on the mind is not as simple as he thinks. This view is much more prominent in NE than in the communication.

As Leibniz's last extensive reply remained unpublished until ten years after Bayle's death, we can never know how the debate would have ended. One could speculate that at some point Leibniz could have given parts of his *New Essays* for Bayle to read and this would probably have greatly helped the discussion, as Bayle was also aware of Locke's thoughts and would perhaps have agreed with some of Leibniz's criticisms against them. In this way the conflict could have been converted to co-operation, although the topics of the controversy would perhaps have changed in the process. But I suspect Leibniz would not have been prepared to do this after Locke's death in 1704, as he decided to suppress the publication of NE. Sharing its contents would inevitably have led to exposure of the project, which would have been against his resolution to abandon it. On the other hand, Leibniz was keen to win Bayle's support – in NE he frequently boasts of Bayle's acceptance of his hypothesis of pre-established harmony.

However, it is likely that Leibniz was not prepared to give up any of his views. He had been opposing occasionalism for a long time due to arguments presented above. But I think one can say that both Leibniz and Bayle not only tolerated each other, they also understood each other in the sense that they were aware of each other's intentions.[10]

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[10] On tolerance leading to understanding each other within a controversy, see Dascal (2010: 27–32).

# Chapter 4
# Citizenship and Religion: Inclusions and Exclusions in the Ancient World

**Francesco Lucrezi**

**Abstract** The essay tries to explain what was the meaning and the function of the three broad categories (the so called *status*: *familia, civitas, libertas*), which were built in the Roman antiquity and were utilized to include and exclude human beings, defining the person's legal condition and what the subjects could do, what they could own, what they could attempt to achieve, in what they could succeed, and to what they could be submitted.

**Keywords** Civitas • Familia • Libertas • Status

Legal historians believe that the Romans based the existence and use of rights on three broad general categories, which were utilized to include and exclude human beings. These divisions defined a person's legal condition and what the subjects could do, what they could own, what they could attempt to achieve, in what they could succeed, and to what they could be submitted.[1]

The legal terminology that is most frequently used to define these categories is *status,* which means condition or situation. Concerning the *ius Quiritium*, full legal subjects were only those men who benefitted from a position of privilege in terms of their *status personae,* which was tested by three different questions. First, the *status libertatis* investigated whether the person was free, a slave or a *libertus.* Second, the *status civitatis* queried whether he/she was a *Roman* citizen or a foreigner or "almost Roman". Finally, the *status familiae* addressed questions regarding whether a man is a *pater familias* or a man or woman is *sui iuris* or *alieni iuri subiectus.* All three categories involve a type of conflict that relates to the logical antithesis between the people who are "inside" or "outside" and the natural

[1] See F.M. d'Ippolito, F. Lucrezi, *Profilo storico-istituzionale di diritto romano*, III ed. Napoli 2012, 129 ff.; Lucrezi, *Al di sopra e al di sotto delle leggi,* in *Sodalitas. Scritti Guarino,* Napoli 1984, 683ss.; Id., *Leges super principem. La "monarchia costituzionale di Vespasiano",* Napoli 1982.

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opposition between the people who are interested in making the fence strong and eternal and the people who, on the contrary, would like to trespass or destroy it.[2]

To analyse the genesis and historical development of these categories, as well as the nature of the conflict that they create, we should attempt to comprehend if and in which way they were effectively understood, accepted and barred in actual life by real people who lived for over a millennium in the vast ancient Roman Empire. The question arises whether these categories were created only for the use and benefit of a small ruling élite, i.e., the Italian aristocracy, or whether through centuries they also formed part of the culture of the large masses of *provinciales, i.e.,* the multiform peoples of Mauritania, Gallia, Egypt, and Germania. These people's destiny was to enjoy the *pax Romana,* with its connected benefits and limits, after they had lived through a variety of military and political events in the *limes* – and it remains uncertain whether they were happy about this.[3]

The answer to the above question appears to be simple regarding the *status libertatis* and *status familiae,* although for opposite reasons.

It is well known that all ancient peoples without exception practiced various forms of personal enslavement, which divided all human beings on the basis of Gaius' *summa division,* between *liberi* and *servi* (*Inst.* 1.9-12). Although we know that the forms of coercion an owner could use on an enslaved subject differed widely in place and time, to be enslaved in ancient Israel was unquestionably a lesser evil than to be enslaved in ancient Greece or Rome. In the time of Crassus, the slave's position was far worse than in the time of Hadrian or Marcus Aurelius.[4] In the ancient world, everyone understood what it meant to be a slave and would do everything possible to avoid this fate. There may have been some exceptions because Plautus wrote that some slaves begged their *dominus* not to free them and abandon them on the road without home, job and assistance.

It is widely believed that the institute of *patria potestas* belonged exclusively to the Roman tradition.[5] *Patria potestas* originated during very ancient times because the *pater familias,* the head of the family, was attributed the role of religious mediator between the world of the living and the world of the dead in the interest of the *familia*, which was considered, as Franco Casavola has said, an "isola sacra", a sacred island.[6] Gaius has proudly emphasized that no other ancient people but the Romans knew this or any similar institution or had ever any interest in following it (*Inst.* 1.55).

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[2] d'Ippolito, Lucrezi, *op. cit.* 129 ff.

[3] d'Ippolito, Lucrezi, *op. cit.* 129 ff.

[4] See Lucrezi, *L'uccisione dello schiavo in diritto ebraico e romano. Studi sulla 'Collatio'* I, Torino 2001, *L'uccisione del proprio schiavo nella 'Collatio',* in *'Iuris vincula'. Studi Talamanca,* Napoli 2002, *L'asservimento abusivo in diritto ebraico e romano. Studi sulla 'Collatio'* V, Torino 2010.

[5] See d'Ippolito, Lucrezi, *op. cit.* 131 ff.

[6] *Fondamenti del diritto antico,* in M.V. del Tufo, F. Lucrezi (Eds.), *Vita/morte. Le origini della civilizzazione antica,* Centro Studi sui Fondamenti del diritto antico, Un. "Suor Orsola Benincasa", Napoli 2016, next publication, and in *Iura & Legal Systems* 2 (2015).

For many centuries, only a small part of the population of the Roman Empire built their lives, as individuals and as organized communities, on the strong supremacy of the *pater familias.* Not only was the *pater familias* the owner of the patrimonial property and the holder of subjective rights, he was also the only person who was authorized to exercise power over the individuals under his authority. *Pater familias* could include *filii familias* of 50 or 60 years old, and they may be fathers or grandfathers and consuls or senators; their most extensive powers included an arbitrary *ius vitae ac necis.*[7]

For several centuries, the *patria potestas* generated a hidden, fierce conflict between *patres* and *filii familias,* which reflected the dark "prohibited dream" of the sons to violently overthrow the supremacy of the despot in contrast to the "fear of the fathers". Connected to this conflict was the cruel *supplicium singulare* of the *poena cullei.* This punishment was set for the son who was convicted of murdering his own father, and he was condemned to die by drowning in a horrible animal tangle by being sewn in a sack with a dog, viper, cock and monkey, whose characteristics were all present in him.[8]

However, sons could often obtain significant advantages and benefits from their condition. In contrast, the high number of *emancipationes* demonstrates that many fathers frequently wanted to free themselves from this heavy burden. However, most of the inhabitants of the empire were not concerned with *patria potestas* and many of them likely did not know what it meant. No citizen of Syria, Iberia or Britannia would ever desire to become a *pater familias.*

The *status civitatis* is more complicated because it is not easy to define if, how, when, to what degree, and for which persons or peoples the achievement of the condition of *civis Romanus* could be a goal that involved real privileges.

Many sources depict an image of *civitas Romana* in a rhetorical and propagandistic manner as a condition of superiority, completion and perfection on the civil, cultural and legal levels. This status was progressively and incrementally extended – sometimes passing through the middle *status* of *Latinitas* – to increasingly larger groups of foreigners, *peregrini* and *barbari* to allow them to enjoy the Roman *felicitas* until the ecumenical donation of Antoninus Caracalla. The so-called *constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 A.D. generously extended citizenship to all inhabitants of the empire.[9] However, there are actually no truthful indications that the *peregrini* always strived to achieve the deeply desired goal of the *civitas Romana.* It is more realistic that the ancient sources give us an absolute and untrue picture through an abstract and timeless representation. Without exact frames of time and space, some specific problems of legal capacity and private autonomy have been described and generalized. These problems relate to the acquisition of property and the formation of contracts, which originated and existed only in specific contexts and particular historical times.

[7] d'Ippolito, Lucrezi, *op. cit.* 132 ff.

[8] See Lucrezi, *Senatsconsultum Macedonianum,* Napoli 1992.

[9] d'Ippolito, Lucrezi, *op. cit*. 83 f.

As a political problem with wide-ranging implications, the *civitas* question would become prominent for the first time when the *libera res publica* was under threat. Thus, during the *bellum sociale* of 90–89 B.C., the *leges de civitate*, the *lex Iulia de civitate Latinis et sociis danda* of 90 B.C. and the *Plautia Papiria* of 89 B.C. were rapidly promulgated and extended the *civitas* to the *socii* who had not raised arms against Rome. Subsequently, a specific *quaestio extraordinaria de civitate* was established in 65 B.C., which was charged to judge the *crimen* of *usurpatio civitatis.* However, the real causes of the war appear not to have been the simple request by the Italian allies of Rome to be granted *civitas*, because it seems that on the contrary, many of the *socii* were openly opposed to this inclusion.[10] Moreover, it is a fact that the *quaestio de civitate* seldom sat; we know the famous defence by Cicero of the poet Archia, who was accused of *usurpatio civitatis* in violation of the *lex Plautia Papiria*, but we do not have many other sources concerning this field. Thus, when during the last century of the republic, the problems of ownership and the extension of citizenship were addressed by juridical and political regulation, these questions had already lost much of their importance.[11]

Not much later, the great battle between the West and the East would be decided – on the one side the republican, secular, pluralist and polytheistic tradition and on the other side the autocratic, absolute and mystic models of power; the government of Rome would become the government of the world. In the new, ambiguous system of the *principatus*, the prince was the preserver of the republic and at the same time, as Antoninus Pius said, also "*toù kòsmou kyrios"*, the lord of the universe.[12] In addition, as Giorgio Luraschi explained,[13] in this new world, relevance was no longer situated in the inclusion in or exclusion from an abstract concept of *civitas Romana*. Relevance involved the level of civilization, autonomy, and institutional strength that was conquered and defended by the various nations and regions, and the thousands of *civitates, coloniae, pòleis, municipia* of the Roman world were the deciding factor.

Arnaldo Momigliano has written that the question of citizenship may well be considered the "royal road" in understanding the history of Rome.[14] However, primarily, municipal citizenship was the most important factor, and the history of the Roman Empire is overall the history of a multitude of local citizenships. This situation does not mean that the *civitas Romana*, as *status personae,* had no significance; it was very relevant, for example, in criminal prosecutions, because only Roman citizens could *provocare ad Caesarem* against the capital sentences of local tribunals. Saint Paul used this possibility, although without success,[15] but Jesus did not

[10] See Lucrezi, *Cicerone in difesa di Archia in un processo di 'usurpatio civitatis',* in F. Amarelli, F. Lucrezi, *I processi contro Archia e contro Apuleio* (*Quaestiones* 1), Napoli 1997, 17 ff.

[11] See Lucrezi, *Cicerone in difesa di Archia* cit.

[12] d'Ippolito, Lucrezi, *op. cit.* 77 ff., 207 ff.

[13] "*Foedus ius Latii civitas". Aspetti costituzionali della romanizzazione della Transpadania,* Padova 1990.

[14] *Quinto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico,* Roma 1975.

[15] D'Ippolito, Lucrezi, *op. cit.* 327 ff.

have this opportunity if he would have wanted to use it.[16] However, concerning the possession and exercise of civil rights and political and economic power, citizenship had little importance. Many inhabitants of the empire were not concerned at all regarding the kind gift of Antoninus Caracalla; many people were probably unaware of it, whereas many others viewed it as a 'promotion' from a citizen of their own nation to a subject of Rome.

A century later, another, more important, event would determine a definitive change in the history of the ancient world and, concomitantly, in the history of citizenship. After the victory of Christianity, which was related to the definitive strengthening of the empire as a monarchic and absolute institution, the unique emperor, in the name of the unique God, would address a unique people: the people of God.[17] The words of Saint Paul, the apostle of the gentiles, that there would exist "no free man and no slave, no Roman and no Greek, but only brothers in Christ" (*Gal.* 3.28), did not admit any citizenship but that which belonged to the *civitas Dei* of Saint Augustin.

The *civitas Romana* becomes in this way the *civitas Christiana,* which was no longer regulated by rules of voluntary inclusion and exclusion but rather by forced and compulsory inclusion.[18] This forced inclusion involved a total and violent delegitimation of all individuals who – for whatever reason and resolve – were in a position of antagonism, distance, and irregularity regarding this new universal category. New types of conflict were also generated, which would be much stronger and more enduring than the conflicts regarding the previous problems concerning citizenship. These conflicts raged for many centuries against these "different citizens." In this category, pagans were obstinate citizens of a past world who were destined to a quick dissolution. Heretics were dangerous holders of an evil "virus" of "false citizenship". Jews were the citizens *sui generis* of a glorious but lost world whose function had ended with the arrival of the Messiah. Jewish citizens were in

[16] d'Ippolito, Lucrezi, *op. cit.* 334 ff.; F. Amarelli, F. Lucrezi (Eds.), *Il processo contro Gesù* (*Quaestiones* 2), Napoli 1999, spanish ed. (Eds. A. and F. Fernàndez de Bujàn): *El proceso contra Jesùs,* Madrid 2002.

[17] See d'Ippolito, Lucrezi, *op. cit.* 89 ff., 341 ff.

[18] See Lucrezi *Haruspicy in the Constantinian Legislation,* in Gambaro, Rabello (Eds.), *Towards a New European 'Ius Commune',* The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999, 9ss., italian edition: *Costantino e gli aruspici*, in *AAN.* 97 (1986 but 1987) 171ss., also, with changes and other title, in Lucrezi, *Messianismo regalità impero. Idee religiose e idea imperiale nel mondo romano,* Firenze 1996.

See Lucrezi, *Roma e gli ebrei nel Tardo Antico*, in *SDHI.* 80 (2014) 726ss.; Id., *Teologia, politica e diritto nelle relazioni diplomatiche fra Santa Sede e Stato di Israele,* in *Studi in onore di Antonino Metro,* Milano 2010, III. 563ss., also, with changes and other title, in Lucrezi, *Ebraismo e Novecento. Diritti cittadinanza identità,* Livorno 2009, 117ss.; Id., *I cristiani di fronte alla nascita dello stato di Israele,* in M. e N. Ben Horin, J. Des Rochettes, B. Di Porto, S. Levi Della Torre, F. Lucrezi, *La terra di Israele ci interpella* (XII Colloquio ebraico-cristiano di Camaldoli, novembre 1991), Camaldoli 1992, 170ss.; Lucrezi, Amarelli, *Postfazione* in Amarelli, Lucrezi, *Il processo contro Gesù* cit.

eternity and without distinction completely guilty for not having recognized the son of God and for having put him to death.[19]

The Roman *civitas* was never based on an evaluation of the conscience. The sole defender of the ancient values of the Roman *civitas* and a proud and lonely voice against the new idea of absolute and compulsory citizenship was the pagan senator Symmachus, who declared at the end of the fourth century: "*suus cuique mos, suus ritus est"* (*Rel.* 3.10). However, very few heard and followed this philosophy. A new rule was adopted regarding the new "strangers". This rule was derived from the parable of the banquet that was found in the gospel of Luke, namely, "*compelle eos intrare"* (14.23), force people to enter my home. This rule was never applied regarding the old *peregrini.*

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[19] See Lucrezi, *Roma e gli ebrei nel Tardo Antico*, in *SDHI.* 80 (2014) 726ss.; Id., *Teologia, politica e diritto nelle relazioni diplomatiche fra Santa Sede e Stato di Israele,* in *Studi in onore di Antonino Metro,* Milano 2010, III. 563ss., also, with changes and other title, in Lucrezi, *Ebraismo e Novecento. Diritti cittadinanza identità,* Livorno 2009, 117ss.; Id., *I cristiani di fronte alla nascita dello stato di Israele,* in M. e N. Ben Horin, J. Des Rochettes, B. Di Porto, S. Levi Della Torre, F. Lucrezi, *La terra di Israele ci interpella* (XII Colloquio ebraico-cristiano di Camaldoli, novembre 1991), Camaldoli 1992, 170ss.; Lucrezi, Amarelli, *Postfazione* in Amarelli, Lucrezi, *Il processo contro Gesù* cit.

# Chapter 5
# Polarisation in Extended Scientific Controversies: Towards an Epistemic Account of Disunity

**Gábor A. Zemplén**

**Abstract** The essay focuses on controversies where the debated issues are complex, the exchange involves several participants, and extends over long periods. Examples include the *Methodenstreit*, the Hering-Helmholtz controversy (Turner 1994) or the debates over Newton's or Darwin's views. In these cases controversies lasted for several generations, and polarisation is a recurring trait of the exchanges. The reconstructions and evaluations of the partly (but not only) polemical exchanges also exhibit heterogeneity and polarisation. Although I pick an early example of the Newtonian controversies, Darwin's argument in *The Origin of Species* can also be variously reconstructed (Morrison 2000: 192–196). When scientific controversies that involve complex utterances (i.e. not single claims) are investigated, a specific problem arises, as in these situations the protagonist presenting a bundle of claims to a non-unified audience cannot fully control meaning-attribution of his utterances, and, given what we know about individual cognition, the more heterogeneous audience he succeeds in persuading, the less clear the meaning becomes. While the acceptance of a position increases potential for action, the growth in consent comes together with a fuzzy content. To problematise the role of polarisation, the significance of this description with respect to knowledge-production is investigated from both an individual and a social epistemological standpoint to answer the question: How is rhetoric epistemic in cases when at least two views on a given issue are seen as persuasively supported by communities? If engaging in a controversy is a means-to-an-end activity aimed at persuasion, directed at achieving *attitude-change* in recipients, how does the argumentative goal of an individual translate to *epistémé* in extended scientific controversies?

**Keywords** Argumentation • CCE • Controversy • Dichotomisation • History of optics • Newton, Isaac • Polarisation • Principle of charity

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## 5.1 Are There Epistemic Benefits of Polarisation?

In scientific controversies differences of opinion are necessary in the first place for a controversy to emerge, as an Introduction to a well-known volume noted:

> Many major steps in science, probably all dramatic changes, and most of the fundamental achievements of what we now take as the advancement or progress of scientific knowledge have been controversial and have involved some dispute or another. Scientific controversies are found throughout the history of science. This is so well known that it is trivial. (Pera et al. 2000: 3)

The triviality of the existence of controversies, however, does not inform us of the epistemic role these controversies play. Under some happy circumstances the exposition is followed by a period of controversy that ends in acceptance. A conclusion is adopted by the recipients of the message: the exposition as a rhetorical act persuaded the audience. In science, general consent is confirmation, and it shows that in the series of moves in a dialectical exchange, where the gradual construction of explicanda can be temporally reconstructed as a process of communal justification, one position in the controversy was explicated in a way that it could become part of the consensus practice of a community. In other words, closure has been attained.

Under other, more interesting circumstances the exposition is followed by acceptance as well as rejection, a conclusion is partly adopted and partly rejected by the recipients of the message: the exposition as a rhetorical act not only persuaded an audience, it also dissuaded another audience. In such cases the closure is partial with respect to the whole community, and multiple as we have to take into consideration at least two audiences that disagree when we give an account of the controversy.

It is far from straightforward that the disunity of the community is epistemically fortuitous in extended controversies. As has been observed, such controversies can be seen as detrimental to knowledge-production for a number of reasons. In a recollection on the *Methodenstreit*in economics Schumpeter, for example, notes:

> The first thing to be observed about all controversies between scientific parties is the large amount of mutual misunderstanding that enters into them. … hence a great amount of the fighting is directed against positions which are indeed hostile fortresses in the imagination of the warrior but which on expection turn out to be harmless windmills. Secondly, this situation is made worse by the fact that methodological clashes often are clashes of temperament and of intellectual bents. … Third, we must never forget that genuine schools are sociological realities – living beings. They have their structures – relations between leaders and followers – their flags, their battle cries, their moods, their all-too-human interests. (Backhaus and Hansen 2000, orig.; Schumpeter 1954: 814–5).

Some controversies can, in light of this view, be seen as *distorting* positions, and the 'sociological realities' can exaggerate the differences of positions. Can this be epistemically *beneficial* for science, and if yes, in what way? Or, in other terms, how can the polarisation of communities with respect to a specific issue be conducive to knowledge production?

The question is not whether the controversy can be seen as having a functional role in producing knowledge, as a means to an end, a period that is followed by a new consensus, but whether the period of polarisation itself can be seen as beneficial, an end in itself. This is one of the problematic aspects of controversies that one has to tackle in order to understand the role this 'trivial' and recurring phase in scientific endavours plays in the growth of knowledge.

### *5.1.1 Individualism*

Let us start with the traditional and arguably 'natural' starting point to analyse controversies, the focus on the actors taking part in them. There is a lot that speaks for an individualistic approach. At the birth of Modern Science in the seventeenth century, epistemological individualism was common, and it stayed widespread if not generally accepted well into the twentieth century. Ronald Giere is one of those who proposed to give a psychological account, stating that:

> The most promising approach to a general theory of science is one that takes individual scientists as the basic units of analysis. It follows that we must look to the cognitive sciences for our most basic models, for it is these sciences that currently produce the best causal models of the cognitive activities of individual human agents. (Giere 1989: 8)

The position easily leads one to think that "rational" cognitive agents, when facing the same data and arguments make the same decisions. As Francis Bacon – typically for the Early Modern period – stated in the *Novum Organum*:

> But whenever two persons make opposite judgments about the same thing, it is certain that at least one of them is mistaken, and neither, it seems, has knowledge. For if the reasoning of one of them were certain and evident, he would be able to lay it before the other in such a way as eventually to convince his intellect as well. (Machamer 2000: 95)

This stance implies that during a controversy we should suspend judgments concerning knowledge, and wait until one party convinces the opponent, so extended controversies are extended periods of 'not knowing', where it is yet to be ascertained which parties are mistaken. This view also has rather pessimistic implications concerning the cognitive agents who take part in extended controversies. Positing uniform rationality of individuals runs the risk of portraying most scientists as repeatedly irrational as opposite judgments are regular. As individualism does not appear easily maintainable with the additional supposition that individuals are or should be uniform with respect to their reasoning, it appears commonsensical to accept that individuals are not identical and that scientists – even when facing the same data – might reason differently or accept different hypotheses. What convinces one group of scientists need not convince another. Attempts have been made in the last decades to account for scientific knowledge-production within an individualistic framework, but taking into consideration the "accidents of training and experience" (R. Giere, 1988: 277), thus moving away from the strict uniformity of rationality of individuals.

Assuming *some* form of homogeneity of reasoning 'devices' in agents, but allowing for various initial views of the world, or even 'styles of thinking' can explain how certain controversies trigger *polarized* reception of a controversial issue, without considering any of the parties irrational. This less stringent individualism assuming some heterogeneity of reasoning agents does not help in answering the question but it suggests that recurring 'traits' of controversies can be analysed. Polarisation is a trait of some expert-disagreements, and it also appears when non-expert audiences evaluate debating experts. As Mercier noted in a recent article on expert-disagreement and argumentation:

> Debating in front of a neutral audience may reduce the quality of the arguments used by experts and the quality of the outcome. But the outcome can be much worse with a partisan audience. Take a debate between two experts, expert Simon supporting opinion S and expert Margo supporting the contradictory opinion M. A layman in the audience who favors opinion S is likely to accept what Simon says without much by way of careful scrutiny. In fact, she's even likely to simply adopt his arguments as reasons to bolster her opinion. By contrast, she requires good arguments if she is to change her mind about M. Margo may be in a position to offer such arguments, but she will suffer from two problems. The first… is that her arguments may not be the most appropriate for a layman. The second is that if Simon cares more about the audience's opinion than about that of Margo or his other peers, then he will often be able to muster some counter-arguments. Even weak, his reply is likely to satisfy an audience member very much willing to believe that there are good arguments against a position she dislikes. The debate is likely to have failed to reach a good conclusion. It will also have provided partisan audience members with arguments for their previous opinion, as well as the certainty that arguments against it can easily be refuted. This biased processing of information is then liable to lead to *polarization*. When participants are presented with evidence both for and against a view they strongly hold, they are likely to discount the discomforting evidence and only accept that which is congruent with their views. The outcome is a more extreme attitude. There is some evidence that presidential debates can have the same effect, merely making more extremes the strong partisans for the candidate, without affecting much those in between. (Mercier 2011: 323)

Although the polarisation of communities when faced with conflicting positions during controversies can be accounted for without recourse to mistakes, the epistemic role that these periods play remains bracketed in the literature on social psychology. What kind of a cognitive division of labour is exhibited when people debate over distorted positions, fight strawmen, and build opposing camps?[1]

### *5.1.2 Contextualism*

In science, the process of communal justification is achieved via rational persuasion, general consent of the expert community is confirmation. If for a discovery to count as knowledge, the acceptance of the results by the peers is important in the

[1] In Solomon's framework of the cognitive division of labour if there are some empirical decision vectors for some view, it is rational to maintain it (Solomon 2001). This and other frameworks stress the benefit side of controversies, but little the cost side: how much effort is used to defend a difference of opinion that is exaggerated, thus the distortion of position is unaccounted for.

validating and credentialing, then persuasion of the right audience, the expert community is a necessary step in the process of justification. Yet the right audience is more and more seen as non-uniform, and shaped by context. Recent studies on research groups (Dunbar 2002) underscore the role of the cultural environment on thinking, and historical accounts of scientists, like the magisterial work on *Styles of scientific thinking* (Crombie 1995) acknowledge the spatiotemporally diverse Denkkollektiven (Fleck 1980) that together constitute our science in historical development.

But should the cases of polarisation be treated as no consent and thus no confirmation, or rather as consent to multiple views, and thus a confirmation of opposing views? To investigate this issue in more detail, the analysis should account for or even utilize social mechanisms that appear to repeatedly effect uptake of positions by a heterogeneous audience. Is it possible that polarisation, as a trait of certain controversies can be utilized in a normative social constructivist theory of knowledge-production? This approach is much akin to Helen Longino's critical contextual empiricism (CCE). As she writes:

> What I propose … is a much more thoroughgoing contextualism than the one which urges us to remember that scientific inquiry occurs in a social context, or even that scientists are social actors whose interests drive their scientific work. What I urge is a contextualism which understands the cognitive processes of scientific inquiry not as opposed to the social, but as themselves social. This means that normativity, if it is possible at all, must be imposed on social processes and interactions, that is, that the rules or norms of justification that distinguish knowledge (or justified hypothesis-acceptance) from opinion must operate at the level of social as opposed to individual cognitive processes. (Longino 1992: 201)

At first sight the most obvious candidates for social processes are closely connected to some evolving institutional constraints and discursive practices. Maneuvering around in a world of topoi and argumentative moves, the success of a novel position is closely connected to a loosely understood rhetorical account of belief change. If there are persuasive arguments for a certain claim presented in front of the right expert group, then that claim is accepted – as, by definition, persuasiveness means exactly this – and it appears commonsensical to assert that the most persuasive arguments are for claims that we take to be true.

Although it is generally through publications and controversies that views become uncontested (and become "knowledge"), social constructivist frameworks are not too clear on the relationship between knowledge and *polarized opposition*, a recurring mark of scientific controversies. To set the seemingly simple rhetorical query of this essay: How is rhetoric epistemic in cases when at least two views on a given issue are seen as persuasively supported by communities[2]? In Perelmanian parlance, where rhetoric is also a mode of truth (Gross 2000): can there be many ideal audiences in extended controversies or are there none? And to sharpen the

[2] Most notably Robert L. Scott claimed that rhetoric is epistemic (Scott 1967), but after several rounds of debate it is hard to say what this exactly means (Harpine 2004), and it is even less clear how to proceed if granted that rhetoric is epistemic, as the claim was never meaningfully substantiated.

normative edge of the question[3]: Should we infer that in extended controversies in the academic domain both views are cogently expressed, and both protagonists and antagonists were successful in persuading an audience, or should we deny success, epistemic merit, and persuasive power, as the audience, after all, was not won over by any faction?

### *5.1.3 Translating Argumentative Goal to Epistémé*

Polarisation is a form of speciation (Kuhn 1990, 1993), where some form of antagonism enters and divides groups, first affecting the *lexicon* in assigning different truth values to propositions, later often developed into alternative lexicons, world-views opening windows on Nature, but not on what the other camp says. Otto Neurath, the Vienna Circle positivist noted that "Dichotomies … are not only crude intellectually, but also mostly the product of scientific pugnacity" (Neurath 1983: 15), and scientific controversies are all too often characterisable this way. Neurath, studying the history of optics, commonly depicted as a debate between emission and wave theories, suggested that scientists themselves were often unable to locate the important aspects in contemporary debates. Why would polarisation be beneficial epistemically, or why and how is it detrimental to knowledge-production? Longino's contextualism implies that the social processes that are reconstructed as processes accountable for justification are somehow adequate to give an epistemic account of the polarising effect of some argumentative moves that occur during many controversies. When is the division of consensus communities beneficial and when is it detrimental to knowledge production?

The burden of proof is shifted, once a *mereological* question is posed as we realise that polarisation, or, in other words dichotomisation, is in need of an account both in rhetoric and social epistemology. Which genre-constraints and stylistic choices facilitate polarisation, and which ones mitigate the effect? The question is all the more pressing, as recent research shows how intrinsic and environmental factors influence the dynamics of debates, how the timing of consensus conferences can influence the outcome, or how specific scenarios can strengthen the band-wagon effect (Solomon 2006). We can engineer the contexts that erupt or mitigate processes of polarization, yet it is unclear whether science progresses in the one or in the other environment more adequately. Dichotomisation could also be a *neutral* trait, without a role or function in the communal processes of justification, but this appears to be a minority view.

Social studies of science reconstruct social causes, but for a full-blown account of the epistemic role of polarisation it needs to incorporate rhetorical and dialectical aspects. Rhetoric's original function was to see the available means of persuasion in

[3] As Kauffeld recently noted: "…rhetoricians ought to dedicate clearer, more explicit attention to the normative dimensions of persuasive argumentation than has traditionally typified their studies." (Kauffeld 2002: 115).

a given case (Hohmann 2002), and as such it was converted from a toolbox helping the generation of persuasive speeches and texts into a toolbox for the analysis of these. Traditionally a rhetor had his goals (be it deliberative, judicial or demonstrative), but the art of civic discourse provided a means to an end and not automatically a justification of this end. The mereological problem we have been developing did not appear in the pragmatic approach of the Ancients (Haskins 2004) as polarisation implies that both speakers can persuade part of their audience, they both succeeded in finding some available means of persuasion.

The transition of the rhetorical tools from developing successful perusasive capacities into modern hermeneutic devices that are used to understand and analyse attempts at persuasion is not unproblematic, especially if rhetoric is also used to account for the *justificatory* aspect of argumentation. If engaging in a controversy is a means-to-an-end activity aimed at persuasion, directed at achieving *attitude-change* in recipients, how does the argumentative goal of an individual translate to *epistémé?* Even if we are convinced that a toolbox used for production of persuasive speeches in Antiquity reapplied to analyse texts can provide us with *a sufficient account* of knowledge-production, the relationship of this account to those of social causes is rather opaque. Can a psychological effect factorise on social causes? If polarisation is a trait of some controversies, and also of some moves, can we assign functions to it in a social study of scientific knowledge-production?

## 5.2 Dedichotomising the Individual and the Social

If we look individual and social epistemological models of the development of science, we see a number of interconnections and influences (although partisanship is often propounded). Examples include the use of *individualistic* approaches to explain *social level* phenomena. The Viennese psychologist Karl Bühler, for example, has exerted a strong influence on the young Karl Popper, whose methodological individualism in turn influenced both strictly individualistic accounts (as by J. W. N. Watkins, supposing human beings as the only moving agents in history) and institutional individualism, already granting more room for the social, as in Joseph Agassi's work (Udehn 2009: 212). A similar move from the individual towards the social is visible in the well-known "Gestalt-switch", Thomas Kuhn's constitutive metaphor used to explain radical differences ("paradigmatic" differences) between perspectives of scientists (Kuhn 1970). But explanations of individual memory-patterns by Cambridge psychologist Bartlett have been admitted to be the source of the Strong Programme notion of symmetry (David Bloor 1997: 379). The many instances the individual has trigerred thinking about the social *et vice versa*, show that key insights, metaphors and analogies as well as approaches can travel across the once dramatic divide between individual and social approaches to epistemology.

It becomes hard to understand some of the tension,[4] when in fact the two traditions are closely interwoven.

The "collectivist" tradition has originally surfaced in anthropological, ethnographic and sociological work. For most analysts of science in this tradition, important sources include Durkheim (especially his work with Mauss), who postulated a "collective consciousness"and discussed the way social categories influence categorisation of natural phenomena. It is this latter view that has been taken up by the programmatic Edinburgh "Strong Programme" (D. Bloor 1976). Bloor and his colleagues also built and radicalized the *Wissenssoziologie* (sociology of knowledge) as it was originally developed by Karl Mannheim (Mannheim 1936), extending the "weak" sense of existential connectedness between social reality, categories of thought, and knowledge claims ("Seinsverbundenheit") to the natural sciences. These sociological approaches were *aimed at* reconstructing the "ideological" elements of knowledge, restricted for the social sciences and humanities in Mannheim's work, and later extended to include natural sciences and even mathematics (Barnes et al. 1996).

The fact that ideological elements exist in every text is clear, but this does not mean that *only ideological* elements are in texts. Now of course it is theoretically possible that *all* epistemic success of science can be explained this way (mostly invoking interest, power-relations, ideologies, and institutional structure), but in a controversial scientific text there is also a *novelty*, a claim to have found something unknown. This clearly can be influenced by ideologies, but can it be constituted only by these? At first sight it is non-trivial that the study of tribal societies, aimed at collecting cognitive "universals", a mostly unified and stable set of beliefs would be suited for the analysis for science – singled out for its *changeability* and known for the individual differences of the scientists.

### *5.2.1 The Epistemic Subject*

How is it that the analyst gets to reach collective representations? Clearly there are many ideas that people share in a given culture (and time), but how are we to reach this information? How are we to aggregate data to reach the "common" elements? Generally, data from *individual* actors are used to arrive at what is believed to be common elements. In an influential article, for example, Bloor (1982) takes the basic tenet of Durkheim and Mauss – that classification of things reproduces the

[4] Around 1985 Latour still agreed with the proposal in the Postscript to the second edition of *Laboratory Life* (Latour and Woolgar 1986: 280) that there be "a ten-year moratorium on cognitive explanations of science" with the promise "that if anything remains to be explained at the end of this period, we too will turn to the mind!" In a less frequently quoted passage, the proposal continues: "If our French epistemologist colleagues are sufficiently confident in the paramount importance of cognitive phenomena for understanding science, they will accept the challenge." The kind of cognitive explanations being rejected are those to be found in the works of Gaston Bachelard or in more general appeals to a scientific *mentalité*.

classification of men – and uses this to reconstruct the belief-system of *single individuals*, like Newton or Boyle. In a recent debate with Latour, Bloor repeatedly argues for his social outlook with reference to individual differences when classifying observation (Bloor 1999a, b). The examples could be extended to cover the works of Mach, Piaget, etc. Other approaches have developed to a large extent as a methodological necessity. The problem of providing descriptions of belief-systems of tribal cultures required a methodology in anthropology, where from the data-sets inferences could be drawn. A common perspective of these socialising approaches is that "knowledge" is seen as communal, and is generally defined as "what people believe", and the collective representations are acquired through studying the utterances of individuals. By taking a Strong Programme approach, the individuals with novel knowledge-claims do not possess knowledge, only groups with shared beliefs do, but the individual views can be used to reconstruct communal perspectives.

How does the way a scientist claims novelty translate to what we believe to be the collective representation of reality? We know that individuals (or groups thereof) put forward knowledge claims, influenced by their cultural background, and we also know that somehow, some novel views become widely shared among members of a scientific community, or even wider social groups or layers of societies. As the methods developed for the analysis of e.g. tribal societies have been grafted onto the science-studies tradition, analysis of utterances of various actors to reconstruct a set of beliefs has been shown to open up Pandora's Box (Gilbert and Mulkay 1984).

A fully socialised view of knowledge in itself evades rather than solves the problems. But it appears that turning back to individualism is not an option any more. Strict individualism has been challenged even within the traditionally individualistically focused cognitive science, resulting in a gradual move away towards social or communal approaches to understand cognition, reasoning, and scientific knowledge-production. As in a review article even Giere acknowledges: "In recent years, a few people *within* the cognitive sciences have reached the conclusion that there is an irreducible external and social component to cognition." (R. N. Giere 2008: 262). This recognition has become visible in all areas of cognitive sciences: infant learning models put increased emphasis on the social learning process (Csibra and Gergely 2009), with data suggesting that with purely observational learning mechanisms much of the cultural knowledge cannot be acquired. This trend affected both ontogenetic and phylogenetic accounts of language – and cultural – development (Donald 1991, 2001; Tomasello 1999), and made the traditional(ly misunderstood) nature-nurture dichotomy obsolete (Pléh et al. 2014). Human culture including reasoning can not be almost exclusively innate (Richerson and Boyd 2005) and for cultural innovations such as modern science or technology we need to be able to accumulate information faster than is possible through genetic inheritance. These developments could be used to argue that the sociological turn is desirable if our aim is to understand knowledge-production.

Recent work in history of science and science studies opened up new vistas to analyse 'messy' laboratory work that involves tinkering and the inventive reuse of earlier traditions, and portray science in a way that individuals can be seen as merely components of a cognitive system, together with other humans or even instruments

(Hutchins 1995). Knorr-Cetina holds that the lab is the principal site of validating and credentialing scientific work (Knorr-Cetina 1981: 8-9), and in her work on high-energy physics, she is willing to go as far as to claim that "the erasure of the individual as an epistemic subject" is needed (Knorr-Cetina 1999). One can also turn to research traditions inspired by neural networks and parallel distributed processing, where cognition is seen as distributed among humans and external physical representations (Magnus 2007). But note that the group of humans, their "inscription devices" and the "epistemic things" (Rheinberger 1997) they study produce knowledge, but not new communities. These novel tools were developed to study the emergence of novel consensus practices in communities, and not the role of dissensus, a force that shapes and forms the boundaries of communities, the emerging new *epistemés*. The epistemic subject can transcend the individual, but what kind of information the set of polarised views provide that controversies trigger and how it is part of our adaptive knowledge-accumulation are not the focal questions of these traditions.

### *5.2.2 Steady States and Polarisation*

Although communitarian approaches made a radical move from the Western European philosophical tradition which generally treated knowledge to be individual, some form of "justified true belief", not surprisingly both individual and social approaches assume steady-state systems: a stable individual mind, a grown-up's mature view of the world, or a stable community with a gradual influx of new pieces of information and praxis, where some, gaining credit in the community, settle as collective representations. Polarisation, however, is a state of apparent non-resolution, and putting aside the question whether this implies non-resolvability or not, it is a state where the community's boundaries change, and an internal division creates new entities, 'sociological realities', the opposing camps.

Can a partially accepted view be justified? It seems that unless polarisation is seen as a form of justification of multiple truths during the 'division of knowledge', this social perspective eerily resembles the individual, as they both prefer to assume apparent resolution of an issue (internally and collectively), holding on to the Baconian view that unless there is some form of decisive victory, we can only speak of opinion and not knowledge. To recall Marcello Pera's distinction, metaphoric victory is just as essential for knowledge in an individualistic framework, where nature defeats the false position, as literal, dialectical victory is required in a constructivist framework, where "refutation and persuasion are needed in an essential, constitutive way, that is, not in order to overcome resistance to an answer, but in order to construe the answer itself." (Pera 2000: 52). Fathers and sons, or, in Longino's case daughters appear to think along the same lines.[5]

[5] "Since, for the Fathers, according to their three acts of faith, (I) A and B address nature directly, (2) there are means for revealing its order, and (3) the use of such means is regulated by universal rules, they had an easy way (easy to define, if not always easy to apply) of settling this controversy.

This becomes evident when we look at how normative and communitarian approaches attempt to substitute individual cognitive processes of justification with social ones. The proper function of argumentation was originally also the aim of science, "to overcome, not an adversary in argument, but nature in action". (Bacon 1620: 42).

In social epistemologies some form of creative norm-following in an institutionalised social arena connects the individual's credit-seeking behaviour with collective representations. Although recent approaches put increased emphasis on connecting the individual and social perspectives (R. N. Giere and Moffatt 2003; Gorman 2005), the state of social dissent is a mostly uncharted territory (Sunstein 2003). A substantial minority assumes that for healthy deliberative societies the *dissoi logoi* is essential. J.S. Mill, P. Feyerabend (Farrell 2003), and Steve Fuller in some of his moods are prominent examples, but the public opinion is that polarised science is generally not good science, and that extended controversies should be kept to a minimum, as it hinders informed policy-making.

To give an epistemologically informed account of the role of polarisation one can trace the history of how individual representations become multiplied in the social processes triggered by non-agreement and maintained via partial agreement. Some form of fit, trajectory, or mapping is to be found between collective representations and the views of the individuals:

> Recent developments in the debate about methodological individualism suggest that the strong version of this doctrine is untenable, while the weak version is more promising. Turning to the ontology of historal objects, a definite conslusion is much harder to produce. While the arguments for the existence of institutions and structures are quite persuasive, the ideas of collective intentions and plural subjects are less convincing, at least to the extent that they imply the irreducibility of these entities to the beliefs and intentions of individuals. Supervenience may be a more promising formulation of the relationship between the two levels. (Udehn 2009: 217)

I take recourse to a short case study in the following to analyse how one level (the beliefs of polarised communities) supervenes on an individual's actions to secure a position in a scientific controversy.

## 5.3 Escape Trees and Disagreement-Spaces

The most common scientific controversies are complex disagreements, and thus played out in texts that defend various positions, in complexly organized supportive media: propositions are backed by figures, charts, arguments, references to experts, *endoxa*

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A wins a victory over B = A proves T or falsifies T. In this context, "victory" is a *metaphoric* concept. … For us, the Sons, the situation is different. As our loss of faith has induced us to maintain that there is neither a nature "out there'," speaking for itself nor neutral means or universal rules for discovering its structure, we have no other means of settling the controversy between A and B than the resources offered by the ongoing discussion between them. Our way, then, is like this: A wins a victory over B = A refutes B' s arguments. Here "victory" is *literal-it* is a victory. It refers to the fact that A engages in a real discussion, a real exchange of arguments and counterarguments." (Pera 2000: 52).

etc. An original article might boil down to stating a single claim (shorter communications, like articles in *Nature* seem to follow this pattern), but if controversy is allowed, attacks can come from various perspectives, and various defences need to be construed. A contemporary journal where these dynamics can be studied is *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* (BBS), where longer (30–50 page) target articles are sent out to about 10 000 possible commentators, and applicants are selected to write short tracts commenting on the theory proposed. As some commentaries are in favour of the target article (authors can invite participants), the Response of the authors usually shifts the burden of proof on some points, generally lumps critiques together to respond to several objections as one general issue, where, however, they can phrase the critique in a more convenient form. Concessions can be made, hedgings can be (re)introduced. Science is commonly portrayed as uncontroversially *fact-based* (*Nature*-style), but *theory-based* (BBS-style) science is controversial, and makes one quickly realise that scientific arguments are enthymematic, elliptic, and even the logically cogent elements are but parts of argumentative exchanges with a rich and complicated structure.

The disagreement space carved out in a multi-party controversy can be embarrassingly complex and hard to reconstruct, let alone evaluate, especially as even in the mostly data-driven sciences the language use is somewhat lax: abstracts usually state a stronger thesis than the one expounded and elaborated in the discussion, the responses rarely admit defeat, yet often weaken and restate the claims. As deductive inferences are the exception rather than the norm in knowledge-production, the air of unmistakability one could claim for a rigorous logical analysis is already lost in the process of formalisation, and it is not uncommon to think that all substantive claims to new knowledge are contingent (Toulmin 1958). Most arguments can be reconstructed in a deductively valid form with enough creativity and determination,[6] but this does not inform us either of the strength of the arguments, or their (pragmatic) function. As constancy of meaning is presupposed by formal approaches, shifts in meaning can generally not be dealt with. Charity becomes a hard-to-implement concept, thus the appropriateness of the reconstructive enterprise can be called into question.

### *5.3.1 Reconstructive Charity and Framing*

It is at the speech act level that the controversy appears as an entangled network of discourse-elements: a simple question implicitly challenges a theory (and demands a response), a comment acknowledges the correctness of a position, a query asks for further arguments concerning the debated issue. Utterances have functions in controversies, they are used to persuade the audience that someone is right about an issue, and also to convincingly buttress an argumentative structure against which an opponent cannot build a convincing case. The rhetorical approach has generally neglected to study the pragmatics of controversies (Dascal and Gross 1999: 107),

[6] In Aristotle's Rhetoric the enthymeme is an argument in a rhetorical speech - does not have formal qualities, like the scientific demonstration of the dialectical syllogism.Rhetorical proof is reasonable proof. (Bons 2002).

rendering the speech-act level orchestration of controversies invisible. Pragmatically informed theories of argumentation and other forms of verbal conflicts are also among the resources on which a theory of controversies can be built. In this domain most well-entrenched views build on similar simplifying assumptions:

- exchange is between two parties and complex social scenarios are analysable as composed of simple, two-party conflicts, with possibly several antagonists, and a number of (as of yet) passive listeners[7];
- at stake is a difference (of opinion, perspective, etc.) unproblematically graspable in a propositional form;
- there are normative standards on the analysis and evaluation of moves;
- contestable reconstruction of the utterance-level of the exchange can be given with an evaluative edge.

The third common assumption, the normative standards on the analysis and evaluation of moves is instantiated variously. Some models devised for argumentative exchanges focus more on dialectically, some on conventionally set standards, while others on universally set ones. The three levels, the dyadic 'agreement space' that enables to discuss a disagreement, the conventional 'institutionalised space' that specifies and selects procedures and goals for orchestrating the social process that grew out of a disagreement, and the universal notions of what things constitute arguments need to be modelled together to provide a sufficiently meaningful analysis, one that allows for the evaluation of utterances.

In the local setting, the agents taking part discuss a disagreement while they establish points of agreement, such as principles, methods, admissible moves, or procedural terms. In this sense rational argumentation hinges on the success of a negotiation procedure. If significantly novel ideas are expressed, the analysis based on a specific 'scientific method', a set of institutionalised norms often runs into regress on the utterance-level of analysis:

> Here is where dialectical and rhetorical analysis proves to be more flexible and adequate than the methodological one. Unlike method, at least the method as conceived by the early modems, styles of reasoning have to be taken as changing over the time; even logic itself has changed over time. Efficient in certain circumstances, certain methods may be inefficient or even inapplicable in others. For example, "arguing from evident principles" by using a deductive model of reasoning is an effective means of conducting a controversy in a community that takes geometry as the paradigm of science, but it is quite ineffective for another community that works according to Baconian standards. And the same holds with such styles as "deducing from phenomena" or "deriving consequences from hypotheses" or their modem cognitive science counterparts. (Pera 2000: 12).

Competition implies coordination on some level, and competing views are not settled unless both parties find their opponent reasonable. For a controversy to persist some of the practices of the parties need to be shared and granted, and most argumentative exchanges are constrained and canalised, as human societies evolved conventional settings (genres) where argumentative activities (tokens of dialogue types) take place, such as courtrooms, scientific journals, expert-panels. This elimi-

[7] See e.g. (Bonevac 2003; van Rees 2003).

nates some of the difficulties encountered when only dialectical rules are set, yet fails to provide a clear classificatory demarcation, unless everything uttered in those specific settings count as argumentation. As we sense some derailments in many conventional settings, it seems clear that we must also assume some universal standards of evaluation, not just to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate moves, but also to select which utterances form parts of argumentative exchanges and which do not.

It certainly is not a trivial question how to disentangle and 'factorise' the three levels, and framing or choice of perspective becomes crucial once the analysis of a complex multi-party controversy reaches the propositional level. Contestable reconstructions can be given with an evaluative edge both in a product-view on argumentation, and in a process-view, yet the position as 'research-result' may significantly differ from the reconstructed position emerging via the temporal sequence of utterances of a verbal conflict (Zemplén and Demeter 2010). The finer grain-size of the analysis of the controversy makes the reconstruction of the protagonist's position a rather problematic task, and grasping the 'difference of opinion' unproblematically in a propositional form appears especially daunting.

### *5.3.2 The Function of an Omission*

One controversy, from which fragments will appear in this section, illustrates the difficulties that a reconstruction of scientific controversies faces. The *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society published in 1671/2, Newton's first scientific article, a letter that contained a

> New Theory about Light and Colours: where Light is declared to be not Similar or Homogeneal, but consisting of difform rays, some of which are more refrangible than others: And Colors are affirm'd to be not Qualifications of Light, deriv'd from Refractions of natural Bodies, (as 'tis generally believed;) but Original and Connate properties, which in divers rays are divers: Where several Observations and Experiments are alleged to prove the said Theory. (Newton, 1671-1672: 3075).

As Newton went against an *endoxon*, a reputable piece of common knowledge, opponents could stress different concerns, depending on their interpretation of the *endoxon* so various statements of the journal article were criticised in various ways. Even though much of the content had already been accepted and taught in schools, analysts debate even today how to reconstruct the positions in the controversy. His was a groundbreaking theory of light and of colour, yet this persuasive success granted, it is odd that the controversy has been studied for centuries, and interpreters present very polarised pictures of the roles of the contributors (Gruner 1973; Schaffer 1989; Shapiro 1996). It is clear, that Newton's theory was persuasive, but was the conversion rational? Did he actually have convincing arguments for his case? The controversy itself has not been settled, yet the debated theory has become standard textbook knowledge hundreds of years ago.

The 'escape tree' that Newton developed soon became entangled – some concessions he made (to satisfy Hooke) could be used to construct syllogistic proofs

against Newton's position (by the Jesuit Lucas), so Newton resorted to banning some parts of the controversy. In this controversy, one of the first ever to play out in a scientific journal, multiple closures were made: Newton wrote some utterances that he publicly claimed to be his position, and some others, that remained 'private', but sent via mail, received and read.

Already the (editorial) omission of an utterance can have wide-reaching repercussions on the reconstruction and evaluation of the position and of the controversy. From the journal article by Newton only a few sentences have been removed by the Editor,[8] most noteworthy were these (printed text in *italics*, manuscript-omissions in **bold**, editorial additions in ***bold-italics***):

> *I shall now proceed to acquaint you with another more notable diffformity in its Rays, wherein the Origin of Colours is infolded [unfolded].* **<A naturalist would scearce expect to see ye science of those become mathematicall, & yet I dare affirm that there is as much certainty in it as in any other part of Opticks. For what I shall tell concerning them is not an Hypothesis but most rigid consequence, not conjectured by barely inferring 'tis thus because not otherwise or because it satisfies all phenomena (the Philosophers universallTopick,) but evinced by ye mediation of experiments concluding directly &wthout any suspicion of doubt. To continue the historicall narration of these experiments would make a discourse too tedious & confused, & therefore>** ***<Concerning which>*** *I shall* **<rather>** *lay down the Doctrine first, and then, for its examination, give you an instance or two of the Experiments, as a specimen of the rest.*

If Newton retracted the claim (asked Oldenburg to cut the utterance-part out from the printed version), then why did he do it? Did he *change his mind?* Did he consider it unsupported? Maybe this is a sign of a temporal development of his ideas, and as such of clear epistemological significance. Or did he just decide not yet to publish an obvious claim to fame, and the decision has a rhetorical significance? Oldenburg, the editor could have cut the passage for a number of reasons. He might have considered it too boisterous, but he could also have helped Newton by decreasing the rather heavy burden of proof Newton already took on, when instead of describing his telescope he claimed that some generally held view, a view on which his contemporaries based their own theories of light and colour, was wrong, and further claimed that his theory is on a methodologically more stable footing, and is as certain as mathematics.

Interpretation of the printed letter is significantly altered if the passage is not analysed in the reconstruction, and there are several ways in which the utterance can be seen as playing a role in the argumentative structure of the paper. With respect to the omitted passage we can posit that by *design* the utterance was *expressive.* Or we can consider it rather as a *conventional* trope, an add-on that had little to do with the main thesis of the paper, utilizing other tropes (Lehoux 2003) organized in an argumentative structure. The 'mathematical' way started to become fashionable (Gross et al. 2000), and the minority of authors conventionally framed their work in similar veins. The passage could also have been *rhetorical* by design, aimed at reaching out

[8] Just as sentence-variations changed the readings of Newton's first letter, a similar sentence variation caused quite a stir in the reception of his major work, as some printed version contained and extra *tanquam* in a sentence on God (Koyre and Cohen 1961).

to persuade the audience. Any of the three design-options can be entertained, and either Newton (unlikely) or Oldenburg (more likely) could have reasonably considered risky to print the claim (and possibly it had something to do with Hooke' reaction to the original version).

Studying the details of a controversy, the reconstruction, interpretation, and meaning-attribution can appear a daunting task. In an earlier letter Newton portrayed his discovery as "the oddest, if not the most considerable detection w$^{ch}$ hath hitherto been made in the operations of Nature".[9] It is plausible but not certain that the omission that was edited out of the printed version could have been a part of the crucial 'novelty'-claim, and thus can be reconstructed as focal content, in which case arguments in support of it organise the reconstruction, but this is only one of the trajectories that an analyst can make. In a later phase of the debate during the controversy with Hooke, against a mathematically less educated opponent, Newton stated the claim in a response:

> a Mathematician may determin all the Phaenomena of colours that can be caused by refractions, & that by computing or demonstrating after what manner & how much those refractions doe separate or mingle the rays in which severall colours are originally inherent; *I suppose the Science of Colours will be granted Mathematicall & as certain as any part of Opticks*. (Turnbull 1959: 187)

Is this the same presentational device in a clarified, expounded form, or is it a different one? The decision on the identity of claims further complicates the reconstruction. Is it a supposition as a mathematician uses the term,[10] or a hedging to somewhat *weaken* the claim? We have to make decisions on how to interpret a certain move, and to see it as functional in a debate, yet we have no uncontroversial frame of interpretation. The previously quoted omission has an influence on both the way Newton's theory was to be understood, and also on how the antagonists in a debate could frame their critiques. As the claim stated the mathematisability of colours, not only Newton's theory of colours, but also his views on mathematics could become controversial. It also framed the discovery; put it in a specific perspective, a reading mode.[11]

As all *widely read* scientific novelties are read by discourse communities that partially differ with respect to their standards,[12] both the understanding and the evaluation of the scientific communication is variegated. If analysis is so

[9] Turnbull 1959: 83.

[10] Oldenburg also deleted the following passage from a later letter (21 September 1672): "To comply wth your intimation … I drew up a series of such Expts on designe to reduce ye Theory of colours to Propositions & prove each Proposition from one or more of those Expts by the assistance of common notions set down in the form of Definitions & Axioms in imitation of the Method by wch Mathematitians are wont to prove their doctrines" (Turnbull 1959: 237).

[11] Here I assume some form of minimal theory of framing, as is developed in (Wohlrapp 2014).

[12] As opposed to diachronic 'styles of thinking', an historical approach connected to the eary Kuhn's work on paradigm-shifts, my interest is in the synchronic, coexisting 'styles of thinking' that results from, to use the late Kuhn's phrase, the 'speciation' of lexicons. Foucault also first focused on the diachronic shifts in epistemé, and later allowed for the coexistence of these.

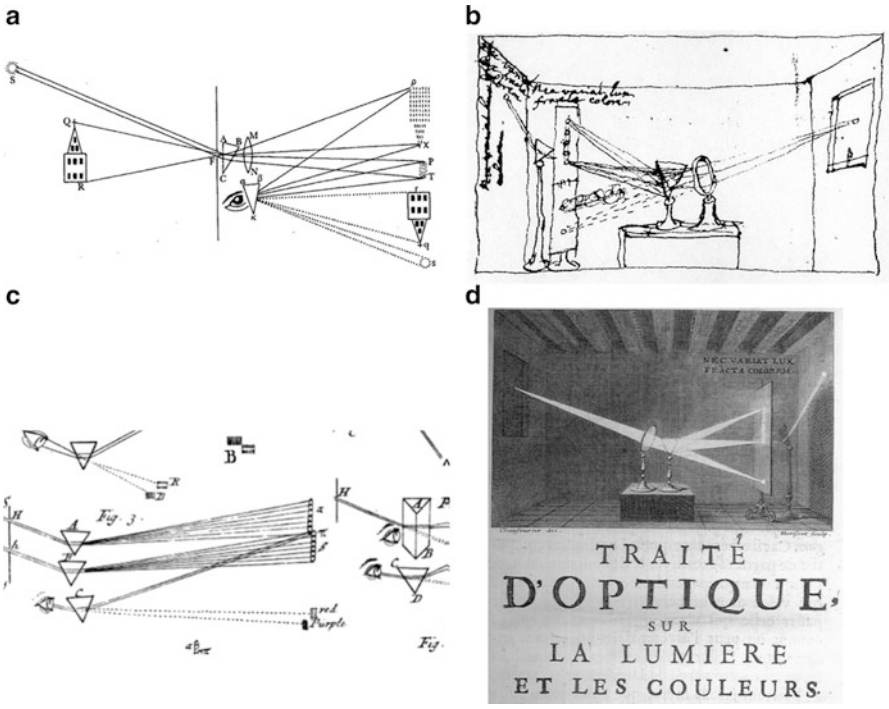


**Fig. 5.1–4** Heterogeneity of presentational devices include (**a**) an image from the Optical Lectures (manuscript. 1670–1672), that shows how rectilinear propagation of light assumed by Newton conflicts with the camera-obscura tradition; (**b**) Newton's drawing for the frontispiece of a French edition (1721–1722), conforming to camera-obscura tradition but with parallel bundles after refraction at the second prism; (**c**) Desaguliers's Newtonian experiments (1714–1716) with parallel bundles stressing the rectilinear propagation aspect; and (**d**) The French frontispiece conforming to camera-obscura tradition

indetermined,[13] would we expect all minds to understand the same text the same way? If a novel, and at points a radical point of view is to become a 'shared' piece of communal knowledge, it is to be engraved in multitudes, with a plethora of mindsets *convincingly.* The meaning is multiplied, as the same theory is variously represented. (Fig. 5.1–4)

[13] For the Duhemian indetermination-underdetermination distinction, see (Darling 2002, 522): "there are some cases in which indetermination is never completely overcome in practice and, … Duhem argues that the physicist always works with a mathematics of the approximate, in which the theoretical consequence of an approximately true proposition must be approximately exact (and the range of these two approximations must be delimited) in order to be useful."

## 5.4 Contextualism and Socio-discursive Holism

The previous section has implied that if many accept a view, the 'view' becomes multiplied – consent is underdetermined, as we lack clear textual evidence on what x meant by accepting a complex argumentative utterance. For similar reasons, the meaning also becomes indetermined, both rational reconstruction and non-reflexive meaning attribution can yield multiple interpretations of a single utterance. Yet if meaning is multiplied, and non-uniform, then how is it that we generally think of controversies as somehow conducive to knowledge-production?

### *5.4.1 Meaning-Attribution and Disunity*

Convincing a heterogeneous audience means that many individuals accept someone's point of view in many various ways. If x won the debate, his view became heterogeneously, that is partially adopted. When scientific controversies that involve complex utterances (i.e. not single claims) are investigated a specific problem arises, as in these situations the protagonist presenting a bundle of claims to a non-unified audience cannot fully control meaning-attribution of his utterances, and, given what we know about individual cognition, the more heterogeneous audience he succeeds in persuading, the less clear the meaning becomes.

How do controversies play a constitutive role in the development of scientific knowledge, if an individual contribution can be (charitably) read in several ways? Are they all advancements? If we take a theory to be an entity, the spread of this entity comes together with the multiplication and change of the entity. While advancement increases potential for action, the growth in consent comes together with a fuzzy content. *Je suis Charlie* – millions wore proudly T-shirts with the proposition, and it is hard to believe that we all meant and felt exactly the same. And multitudes proclaimed proudly 'I am a Newtonian' in the long eighteenth century, and we know that they did not mean the same propositional content by stating the claim. The ideas generating consent also generate varieties, partial difference, and potential dissent: Enlightened Chemistry developed from competing Newtonian factions, each utilising their form of Newtonianism in the debates (Shapiro 1993). The plurality of meaning-attributions implies heterogeneity, thus disunity. That is, a winning position emerges as a vague and fuzzy set of representations.

In a dialectical analysis of controversies, polarisation can be seen as a trait that is part of the solution to the problem. The many readings of a controversial position coalesce into only two camps, a *pro* and a *contra* side, directing the reading of authorial intent, and attributing rather stable meanings through conventionalisation and abbreviation. The omitted paragraph from Newton's article was an ellipsis that helped decrease the already existing conflict between Baconian naturalists of the Society (including Hooke), and mathematically minded natural philosophers (like Wren), a camp to which Newton was eager to belong, even though his philomathe-

matism was somewhat idiosyncratic (Guicciardini 2009: 21). The abbreviated confrontation stage lacked the assertion in which Newton openly declared his sympathies, in this sense the position became less clear, but easier to defend. The debate could thus be channelled to the fact-level, much as in the case of *Nature*-style science. After some decades the replicability of the experiments helped the position become 'facticized', and light was accepted as decomposable to irreducible components (Ducheyne 2012: 193), even though the methodological issues have not been clarified. The original polarization of the community on the normative canons of successful research did not disappear, but partly transformed and reappeared in the eighteenth-century Newton-wars.

### *5.4.2 Functional Description of Controversy-Traits*

To understand how a multiplication of readings can constitute a decisive stage in scientific knowledge-production, we can start from various entry points, as we no longer have a uniform view of what knowledge is. Some prefer the traditional individual-centred approach, some, however, opt for a social epistemology, and aim to study shared beliefs. Just as reducing knowledge-production to the individual level was shown to obfuscate many of the important factors, a similarly reductionist attempt at the social level results in inferior understanding of the complexity of the issue. The contextualist approach tentatively sketched in the essay recognises that if a position is multiplied as it is received, the significance of the social processes become crucial in the construction of 'content' of a theory as traditionally assumed. Starting points for a study of controversies can focus on the complex exchange and need not be based on the simple disagreement-model:

- exchange is between at least two parties and various audiences act as judges;
- at stake are differences (of opinion, perspective, etc.) indeterminately and multiply reconstructable in a propositional form;
- various normative standards on the analysis and evaluation of moves provide contestable but conflicting reconstructions, and framing affects the propositional level;
- the argument-structure of the exchange requires creative reconstruction, some utterances have fuzzy meaning.[14]

Contextualism on the propositional level implies that during scientific progress a vague set of representations supervenes on an indeterminate argumentative structure. Polarisation of communities on certain issues are in need of an epistemic account, but polarisation, a phenomenal trait of some extended scientific controversies, can also be ascribed agency, with specific roles and functions if one looks for superhuman agents or factors at work in history, as sought by sociological holism. Tracing its instantiations allows one to think of it as a social or cognitive attractor, emerging from specific argumentative situations. Justifiably forcing discussion-rules on past scientists (however intuitive they may appear) is highly problematic

[14] Dascal (2003); Wroblewski (1983).

for the study of controversies as one realizes that in explicating these we put unjustifyable constraints on the actors, but recognizing that charity can be optimized variously we understand that in many cases at least two cogent readings offer themselves (Mamiani 1991). All three levels of norms, the 'dyadic', institutional, and universal norms are required to trace and understand the functions in particular situations, where reproduction of a set of ideas gives rise to a variety of mental representations.

Polarisation is one of the attractors of verbal disputes, a content-changing constraint that emerges once dichotomies have carved trenches in discourse-communities. It has a generative function, as the schisms of schools often evolve into alternative lexicons of separated communities, and it has an unifying function, as the polarisation on the issue groups factions under banners, flags and battle-cries: abbreviated and simplified simulacra of the position, variously represented in the minds. Staying with an optical example, two images, like the 'double image' (birefringence) of the Icelandic spar is still more of an image than a bundle of diffused and scattered rays. Polarisation is epistemically relevant as it both distorts knowledge, via the emergence of simplified collective representations, and it also retains knowledge, as earlier polarisations of communities are generally transformed but maintained as new sets of ideas reach new audiences, and new controversies carry the driftwood of the earlier unresolved issues, like how to do science.

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# Chapter 6
# The Dark Side of Pursuing Self-Esteem and Identity: Socio-cognitive Biases in Conflicts Over Locally Unwanted Land Uses

**Terri Mannarini and Michele Roccato**

**Abstract** Building on a social psychological perspective that is centered on intergroup relations, the chapter focuses on analyzing Locally Unwanted Land Use (LULU) conflicts, i.e., conflicts that oppose the siting process of facilities, such as nuclear stations, incinerators, transport infrastructures, or facilities for stigmatized groups. It is argued that ordinary intergroup socio-cognitive processes impact the actors' proclivity to engage in pro-ingroup actions, and that the knowledge of such processes is crucial for advancing understandings of LULU conflict dynamics. The effects of three intergroup bias manifestations are discussed, specifically the ingroup over-exclusion tendency, the false consensus bias, and outgroup infra-humanization. Research found that all of these biases impact the development and radicalization of LULU conflicts and are exacerbated by perceived threat to residents' identities. Moreover, these processes are symmetric for people who are in favor and against building the facility. Implications for managing LULU conflicts are discussed.

**Keywords** LULU • Intergroup bias • Ingroup over-exclusion effect • False consensus effect • Infra-humanization

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## 6.1 Approaching Conflicts from a Social Psychological Perspective

The literature converges to show that most social conflicts' causes can be traced to four main factors: (a) different perceptions of the same reality in which there is resistance accepting that other individuals or groups perceptions are as real and legitimate as our own perceptions; (b) stereotypes and prejudices, i.e., simplified and biased images of ourselves and the others, which drive group-related behaviors; (c) values and beliefs that appear incompatible and are bound to clash; and (d) imbalances in power and control between opponents (Napier and Gershenfeld 2004). From a socio-psychological perspective, social conflicts can be analyzed through an intergroup dynamics lens, which most social psychologists believe developed from basic social categorization processes and result from group relationships that are built on a "we-versus-they" mentality. The term group refers to collectives that have a shared identity and the potential for coordinated action, which may appear – and actually are – very different: political factions, workgroups, community organizations, and large collectives, such as nation-states (Pruitt and Kim 2004).

Social psychologists' early attempts to explain social conflict postulated that groups develop mutually hostile behaviors because they aspire to attain limited resources; hence, they engage in contentious tactics to pursue their goals. These resources may be tangible, such as money, land, or material rewards, or intangible, such as status, power, rights, or acknowledgement. This theory, known as *realistic conflict theory* (Campbell 1965), has been empirically confirmed in many experiments, among which the most renowned is the Robbers Cave experiment (Sherif et al. 1961). This theory postulates that when groups have a common superordinate goal to achieve, they are likely to adopt cooperative behaviors, thereby reducing mutual prejudice and hostility.

A complementary and presently prevailing vision is more alarming. Following the basic tenets of *social identity/social categorization theory* (Tajfel and Turner 1979), social psychologists argue that awareness of the presence of an outgroup ("they") is sufficient for provoking contentious or discriminatory reactions from the ingroup ("we"). This is because at least some groups to which one belongs contribute to defining one's identity. Therefore, individuals who value their belongings and have introjected a belonging within their self-concept need to positively view these groups to gain self-respect and self-esteem. As a result, the need for enhancing one's own image through a subjectively valuable membership produces an intergroup bias: people discriminate in favor of their own group members as opposed to members of the other group. Although this response does not necessarily provoke open conflict, the categorization process (i.e., an ordinary cognitive process) that allows us to see ourselves and the others as part of a "we" or a "they" prepares the ground for conflicts of different types and intensities. We may categorize ourselves and the others as members of categories that have different levels of abstraction. At the interpersonal level, we view people as individuals with a personal identity; at the

intergroup level, we view ourselves and the others as members of categories/groups (such as students, Jews, conservatives, etc.) that have a social identity; and at the inter-species level, we see ourselves and the others as members of humankind, with a shared identity that is superordinate to personal and social identities. The context influences the level of categorization that we use and, consequently, the types of interactions that we will develop with the others. When the intergroup level drives individual and group behavior, there is a high potential for conflict.

Decades of socio-psychological research have demonstrated that the tendency to positively evaluate the groups to which one belongs (i.e., the ingroup) and negatively evaluate external groups (i.e., the outgroup) is a general phenomenon. Nevertheless, this tendency, which is referred to as intergroup bias, can be intensified by several factors, including ingroup identification, ingroup and outgroup status, experiencing deprivation and injustice, and threat (for a review, see Hewstone et al. 2002). These factors account for different forms of intergroup hostility, from moderate (such as verbal attacks and avoidance) to severe expressions (specifically discrimination, physical violence, and even extermination).

As such, to understand why intergroup conflicts arise, we must also consider group characteristics and processes. Groups have ambitions that are grounded in their members' underlying needs, such as security and recognition. Moreover, groups can also feel that they are deprived in comparison to other groups and that they lack either the material or immaterial goods from which other groups benefit (*relative deprivation theory*: see Runciman 1966).

## 6.2 Conflicts Over Locally Unwanted Land Use

The siting process for facilities, such as power plants, landfills, waste incinerators, and transport infrastructures, often fuels social and political conflicts at the local community level, with possible ramifications than may scale up to the national level. These conflicts are not new or unusual in history. However, they remain one of the most complex issues that affect communities; indeed, they are a worldwide phenomenon and a social and political problem that many countries have to address (Saint et al. 2009).[1]

In many cases, the prospect of a new installation serves as a *trigger event* that arouses the population (Azar 1990), and allows people with latent interests to mobilize and resist hosting the planned facility. Either when the resistance involves the majority of the population or when opponents and proponents are evenly distributed among residents, a conflict develops, which may vary in intensity and duration, and its nature and resolution will both depend on the policy approach to the decision-making process and the procedures that are used to manage the conflict.

[1] In Italy, the number of conflicts over Locally Unwanted Land uses has systematically increased since 2005. In 2012, the Nimby Forum Observatory (www.nimbyforum.it) surveyed 354 conflicts, 151 more than in 2011.

The often-intractable nature of the conflicts over Locally Unwanted Land Uses (henceforth LULU) and the challenges they pose to decision makers and communities have animated political debates and elicited a substantial amount of scientific research. According to early reviews, these types of protests are characterized by distrust for proponents, insufficient information about the siting issue, local and parochial attitudes, and an emotional orientation towards the conflict (Kraft and Clary 1991).

Consistent with this perspective, the first scholars in this area labeled these protests as NIMBY (Not in My Backyard) (e.g., Dear 1992), and charged residents with ignorance, irrationality, and/or selfishness. However, empirical findings jeopardized the descriptions and explanations for LULU conflicts (Wolsink 2006), by showing that they may have rational bases (Takahashi and Gaber 1998) and that attitudes toward the unwanted facility do not necessarily depend on the knowledge of its details (Diez et al. 1989), or on the distance between the site and the area in which the residents live (Martin and Myers 2005). Finally, egoism is not among the main reasons for these mobilizations (Zald and McCarthy 1987).

The most convincing literature indicates that the main roots of LULU conflicts may be developers and residents' different perceptions and evaluations of the project's value and the fairness of the facility siting process. Indeed, residents may (reasonably) feel that they are responsible for the costs of the facility, while the alleged benefits will be enjoyed on a far larger scale (Takahashi 1997). As such, LULU conflicts are connected to environmental justice concerns (Wolsink and Devillee 2009). Moreover, residents may legitimately expect to be treated fairly by developers and authorities and be significantly involved in all decisions (Bullard 2000). Residents may also feel that the health and environmental risks are beyond the acceptable threshold (Wu et al. 2014) and, thus, mobilize to oppose foreseen detrimental changes in quality of life and well-being (Schively 2007). Finally, because residents are attached to their place of residence and such attachment may be a basic component of their identity, they may feel threatened by the planned facility, and react defensively against such a threat (Devine-Wright 2009; Jacquet and Stedman 2014).

## 6.3 Socio-cognitive Biases at Work

The characteristics of LULU conflicts definitely call for an intergroup approach. In these conflicts, the attitude toward a planned facility generates opinion-based groups, whose members are actively engaged in defending their shared position, which forms the basis for a collective self-definition (Bliuc et al. 2007). As such, belonging to opinion-based groups can become psychologically meaningful for their members and be the foundation of a specific portion of their social identity. Thus, consistent with Gray (2003), these ingroups may be an important source of self-esteem, membership and safety. In contrast, the outgroups that are defined by the other opinion may elicit competition and opposition, and be perceived as one

single "enemy," despite the diversity of positions that are typically held by their members. In LULU conflicts, this type of friend-enemy pattern can engender not only ingroup favoritism, but also outgroup derogation and harsh intergroup bias.

Despite its relevance, the intergroup perspective and the effects of biases on the conflicts' dynamics have only recently been attended to in the LULU literature. Here, we will focus on three manifestations of intergroup bias – false consensus, ingroup over-exclusion, and outgroup infra-humanization – and review research that has explored their role in LULU conflicts to highlight the social consequences of individuals' socio-cognitive functioning when they categorize themselves and the others as members of a group rather than as individuals. Finally, we will discuss the implications of the findings for managing LULU conflicts.

### *6.3.1 The False Consensus Effect*

The false consensus effect (FCE) is the tendency to overestimate the commonness of one's own responses (opinions, preferences, and behaviors) (Ross et al. 1977). This tendency has two unintended consequences. First, the propensity to assess the correctness and the validity of these responses is based on the number of people who share them, and those who agree with them are viewed as "on the right side." Second, there is a specular inclination to view other and different responses as less correct and valid, and, thus, discredit those who hold them.

This bias has four main bases (see Marks and Miller 1987). First, individuals tend to overestimate the consensus for their own opinions due to *selective exposure and cognitive availability*. Normally, people tend to interact with people who are similar to themselves; thus, examples of agreement vs. disagreement are more readily and frequently accessed from memory. The second basis is *salience and focus of attention*. When individuals focus on their preferred position rather than consider alternative positions, they are likely to inflate the perceived support for that position because it is most salient in their immediate consciousness. The third basis is *logical information processing*. The FCE may be viewed, at least in part, as resulting from a causal attribution process, in which people explain their behaviors and opinions in reference to situational, as opposed to dispositional, causes. This tendency should result in a perceived augmented consensus for the considered opinion or behavior. Fourth, and most interesting in this context, is *motivation*. People tend to use the positioning of the self and others to validate the accuracy and correctness of their position, strengthen perceived social support, and maintain or restore self-esteem. As such, the FCE may have self-defensive or self-enhancement functions and may increase under the effects of situational factors, specifically threat. Indeed, when individuals perceive a threat to the self or their ingroup, they are motivated to seek support for their own positions and, therefore, perceive increased consensus (Sherman et al. 1984).

In LULU conflicts, the false consensus effect is related to the perception that many others (more than they actually are), in the community or in public, share the

same attitude as the perceiver on the controversial facility and are either in favor or against it. Especially when embedded in a conflict, this cognitive mechanism splits the individual's social world into two opposing parties, one of which – the ingroup, i.e., those who share the same opinions as the perceiver – is perceived to be more numerous and legitimate than the other for expressing and supporting its ideas.

### 6.3.2 The Ingroup Over-Exclusion Effect

The ingroup over-exclusion effect is an intergroup bias that is based on people's inclinations to classify individuals who have ambiguous identities or opinions as members of the outgroup rather than the ingroup. Thus, when people are not certain about who someone is, or what their ideas are, they are likely to place them outside their group.

Researchers have proposed two major explanations for this bias. The *vigilance hypothesis* reflects individuals' ability to accurately and correctly identify outgroup members. Specifically, prejudiced people are particularly skilled at this task because they are more alert to outgroup members and more often attend to anything related to the outgroup than non-prejudiced people (Dorfman et al. 1971). The *motivational hypothesis*, which was formulated by Leyens and Yzerbyt (1992), is based on *social identity/social categorization theory* (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Because people are motivated to create and maintain a positive identity by creating and maintaining positivity in the ingroup, they also want to protect it from possible contamination. The ingroup over-exclusion effect occurs because people fear that negatively valued outgroup members may intrude. Due to this bias, people are very cautious, take great care, and need a relatively large amount of information before accepting someone into their group. They are more concerned with falsely labeling a person as an ingroup member than with falsely identifying a person as an outgroup member (Yzerbyt et al. 2000). This tendency is more likely to occur when people perceive that group identity, values, goals, status, or distinctiveness is materially or symbolically threatened (Castano 2004).

In LULU conflicts, the ingroup over-exclusion effect, by perceptively removing moderate and intermediate positions on the controversial issue, is likely to reduce the range of opinions to the extreme poles. This creates a rigid boundary between those who oppose and those who favor the planned facility and polarize the opinions, fomenting the parts' juxtaposition. Thus, this bias can activate and increase the salience of a friend-foe scheme.

### 6.3.3 The Outgroup Infra-humanization

In the socio-psychological literature, dehumanization is a recently identified consequence of intergroup bias that results from viewing people who belong to the outgroup as outside of the human community. This bias can assume different forms, with the most extreme in the context of violence, genocide, and war, to more subtle

and ordinary forms, such as infra-humanization, which is the tendency to view outgroup members as more animal- and less human-like than ingroup members.

Leyens and colleagues (2003) defined and operationalized outgroup infra-humanization as a function of different allocations for secondary (i.e., uniquely human) emotions (for example, shame, optimism, sorrow, etc.) to the ingroup and outgroup. These authors demonstrated that people more often attribute these emotions to the ingroup than the outgroup, regardless of their positive or negative valence. Outgroup infra-humanization emerges in different intergroup domains and may affect overt behaviors (Capozza et al. 2014), from reducing willingness to help a social target when in trouble (Carella and Vaes 2006), to fostering discrimination, aggression, and violence toward outgroup members (Greitemeyer and McLatchie 2011; Viki et al. 2013). The literature attests to a vicious circle between conflict and outgroup infra-humanization: conflict increases the probability of infra-humanizing the outgroup which, in turn, constitutes a crucial mechanism for continuing the conflict (Leyens et al. 2007; Oren and Bar-Tal 2007).

LULU conflicts are no exception to this effect. The factions in favor or against the planned facility strengthen their positive image and reinforce their position's righteousness by discrediting their counterpart. Moreover, because they are inclined to view their counterpart as not capable of using higher-order mental capacities, such as self-reflection and retrospection, they also to view the outgroup members' position about the facility as the product of lower mental states, and, consequently, as less legitimate and sound than that of the ingroup members.

## 6.4 Review and Summary of the Main Findings

The studies that we briefly review were conducted by the authors of this chapter along with other colleagues and focused on two major Italian LULU cases.[2]

[2] The first two studies we review focused on an Italian movement against constructing a high-speed railway (HSR) in Susa Valley, in the Turin district (North-Western Italy). This railway should link Turin and Lyon in the context of a European plan for a high-speed railway network. The anti-HSR movement arose in the early 1990s in the Susa Valley, and progressively became more and more widespread across the Turin district, with an exponential increase in the fall 2005, when the work was scheduled to start. Residents succeeded in preventing the digging, and there were clashes with the police. Protests involved ordinary citizens, experts, environmental, cultural, and political groups and associations that were rooted in the community, and even local administration representatives (such as mayors and their staff). By the end of 2006, a survey on a representative sample from the Susa Valley residents showed that approximately two-thirds of the population were against the new railway site, and about one-third actively took part in actions (e.g., public demonstrations, petitions, public meetings) against the HSR in the 12 months prior to the study (Mannarini, Roccato, Fedi, and Rovere 2009). The conflict continues. The government tried to negotiate some project changes with the communities, but the opposition movement never stopped protesting, and sometimes turned to illegal forms of protest, such as sabotaging the construction sites. Presently, work has started but at a very slow pace. The third study focused on a conflict involving the construction of a bridge over the Messina Channel, which divides mainland Italy from Sicily. The first plan to build this bridge dates back to the age of the Roman Empire, and periodically re-emerged in the following centuries (Jorio 1999). After an international competition

We found evidence that residents tend to overestimate the number of people who held their same views on the planned facility, incurring in the false consensus effect (Mannarini et al. 2015). This proved true both for people who approved and opposed the project. Among people who opposed the facility: (a) the tendency to incur in the false consensus bias was higher for those who perceived the facility as highly threatening, and (b) overestimating consensus strengthened the motivation to engage in protest behaviors against the facility site. These results suggested that the false consensus bias in LULU conflicts functioned as a defensive or adaptive response to a real or perceived threat, represented by the new facility and its supporters. Our findings also indicated that perceiving broad consensus around one's own opinion (regardless of whether it was real or not) mobilized people to defend or make their ideas highly visible.

Similar effects were observed for the ingroup over-exclusion bias (Roccato et al. 2015). We discovered that when people perceived a threat, the tendency to protect the ingroup from the intrusion of potentially negatively valued people fostered collective action both for those who opposed and favored the facility. This evidence suggested that motivation to defend the ingroup was robust in LULU conflicts because the actors were defending two distinct ingroups: the opinion-based group, which was composed of those who shared the same attitude towards the project (against or in favor), and the ingroup, which was composed of the community to which they belonged and identified.

Finally, our study on outgroup derogation (Roccato et al. submitted) showed that outgroup infra-humanization affected attitudes and behaviors that were directly aimed at discrediting or damaging the alleged or real enemy, as well as the outcome of the intergroup comparison, which acted as a motivator for potential mobilization. Again, this effect was symmetrical and applied to both parties involved in the conflict.

## 6.5 Implications for Conflict Management

The territories in which LULU conflicts develop are characterized by difficult confrontations between residents in favor and against the planned facility. Each part is convinced that they have the monopoly of rationality, legitimacy, and knowledge, most likely for a mix of cognitive and motivational reasons (Fedi and Mannarini 2008; Roccato and Mannarini 2012). In this chapter, we discussed the socio-psychological

in 1969, the often-changing Italian government displayed contradictory behaviors toward the facility: The right-wing government tried to start the work, while the left-wing ones stopped the procedures that were aimed to start the project. Currently, there is a definitive project, in which the bridge would be 3660 km long and 60 m wide, with four railway lines, six highway lanes, and two hard shoulders. Despite this plan, the work has never started. In the last decades, the Italian public opinion polarized on its attitude toward the bridge: in 2006, 47.1 % of the Italians were in favor of and 52.9 % were against the facility (Campana et al. 2007).

causes of this difficult confrontation by focusing on ordinary socio-cognitive processes that are rooted in social categorization. Before proceeding with the implications for conflict management, there are three points that are worth highlighting. The first is related to socio-cognitive biases' symmetrical nature: both positions fighting for their ideas are subjected to perceptive and cognitive distortions, which make both feel as the only ones who hold the true, correct, and complete view of the issue. This belief is strengthened and exacerbated by identifying with an opinion-based group and consequent confrontations with differently minded individuals who are categorized as members or representatives of other groups. The reciprocal nature of this mechanism demonstrates the difficulties that are associated with identifying a "correct" position.

Second, either directly or indirectly, all three manifestations of the intergroup bias we have discussed are likely to fuel and radicalize the conflict. Even when cognitive processes may not be at the origin of the specific conflict, they contribute to keeping it alive even when there is no realistic reason for competing. As explained above, the ingroup over-exclusion tendency leads individuals to emphasize the rigidity of group boundaries and to polarize the opinions, while the false consensus effect promotes an implicit delegitimizing of the counterpart by classifying it as less reliable than the ingroup. The explicit derogation of diversity is brought about by infra-humanization, which is a subtle form of dehumanization that has been thoroughly analyzed in several social and political settings as one of the most detrimental obstacles to a peaceful resolution of the conflict (Oren and Bar-Tal 2007). Analyzing these three biases effects allows us to concretely see how a clash of ideas can turn into a clash of people, with negative consequences for the interpersonal and the intergroup relationships within a community.

Third, to provide a complete analysis of the phenomenon, it should be noted that these mechanisms might also engender positive effects. Indeed, although potentially detrimental for the relations between groups, they might benefit the relations within the groups and the groups themselves. They enhance cohesiveness, promote shared identities, create a common ground for collective action, and can offer a basis for social legitimization to minorities and disadvantaged groups. As social psychologists, we are well aware that groups have the potential for social innovation and change as well as for resistance and discrimination. However, setting the analysis at the intergroup level, this chapter attends to the risks associated with group belonging than the intragroup benefits.

In conclusion, there is one general indication that can reduce the negative effects of the intergroup bias on the persistence of conflict and help the parts develop more favorable attitudes towards their adversaries. This indication is not meant as a panacea or a recipe for resolving all types of conflicts, but as a practical suggestion that institutions could use to prevent LULU conflicts from escalating or ending in a stalemate. Reducing the false consensus, the ingroup over-exclusion, and the infra-humanization tendencies could be pursued by increasing contact with diverse information and opinions (Woicieszack and Price 2009), through public debates and

public meetings, in which all positions and actors have equal visibility and legitimacy. This simple strategy may generate multiple positive effects. First, it may effectively contrast selective exposure and the disproportionate self-focused attention that contributes to inflating the perception of consensus around one's own opinions. Second, it may also create a favorable setting for self-disclosure, which may facilitate an overt expression of ideas and, thus, reduce ambiguity, uncertainty, and the related sense of threat that leads groups to reject and label those individuals whose positions differ from the desired standard as "enemies." Finally, repeated contacts between the parts, when embedded in institutional settings that support equity and reciprocity norms, can help undermine the stereotyped and derogatory images that provide the cognitive basis for viewing someone as less valuable and human than someone else.

As noted by Susskind (2001), for the sake of democracy, people should be exposed to diverse information and people who they do not choose and do not like over and over again. These unwanted encounters are the only way to reduce social fragmentation and political and ideological extremism, which are likely to occur when people are only used to meeting and talking to like-minded others.

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# Chapter 7
# Conflicts, Bounded Rationality and Collective Wisdom in a Networked Society

**José Francisco Álvarez**

*The language a decision maker uses to verbalize his preferences restricts the set of preferences he may hold*

(A. Rubinstein 2000: 55).

*The diverse many are often smarter than a group of select elites because of the different cognitive tools, perspectives, heuristics, and knowledge they bring to political problem solving and prediction*

(H. Landemore 2014:184).

**Abstract** The adoption of an individualistic perspective on reasoning, choice and decision is a spring of paradoxes of conflicts. Usually the agents immerse in conflicts are drawn or modelled as rational individuals with targets well defined and full capabilities to access to information, without both temporal limitations and perfect reasoning abilities to obtain their preferences are taken account.

However, other models of agent, in the bounded rationality perspective, could help to understand better the interrelationships. I adopt embedded argumentative reasoning processes as satisfying criteria to analyze the expert function in a new socio technical environment that has changed deeply the mechanism and tools to access and to aggregate information. The open access to information and institutional arrangements addressed towards team knowledge could offer other kind of tools to affront the conflict, even its possible benefits.

The "crowd expertise" is emerging as an actual possibility and it must be incorporated to affront with conflicts. The very possibility of obtaining knowledge generated by "many minds", collective wisdoms, brings up a real challenge to the conservative or elitist conception of the masses, because masses now emerge as a

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smart collective user, with new mechanisms to select and produce quality knowledge. These new collective actions differ deeply from the traditional modes of social organization. A new mass society is emerging now as a hybrid one that breaks some conceptual traditional models, such as Ortega y Gasset's ones, and induces a structured way of flourishing both new practices and new knowledge with transforming capabilities.

**Keywords** Argumentative reasoning • Bounded rationality • Collective wisdom • Networked society • Smart mobs

The language we speak and use to transmit information or to show our feelings is something more than a mere adequate means to codify and transmit information.

It may seem paradoxical that one of the instruments that appear to be most suitable to transmit information between humans also seems to be a source of conflict, which can be used to lie and, in particular, to strategically use arguments in benefit of our own positions, as for example Jon Elster (1995, p. 248) has pointed out in *Strategic uses of Argumentation*. To our surprise, it turns out that one of our basic instruments of communication also appears to be a fundamental part of misunderstandings, with special cognitive capabilities that allow us to take advantage for our own benefit from these same processes of misunderstandings. Silences, rhetorical components in the language, direct lies, white or altruistic lies, are pieces incorporated into the social use of language as persuasive tools which constitute a large part of our communicative practices.

Yael Melamede, producer of the documentary *Inocente*, directed by Sean and Andrea Fine and winner of the 2013 Academy Award (Oscar) for Best Documentary Short, contemplates many of these questions in her new project "Dis(Honesty): The Truth About Lies", created with Dan Ariely as executive producer (Melamede and Ariely 2015). They encapsulate their proposal with the slogan "The truth is, we all lie - and by 'we', we mean everyone!"

Dan Ariely, along with other behavioural economists, has developed a series of experiments in which he's shown that although we lie with great frequency and ease, and at times even do so for altruistic reasons, this doesn't mean that we're surrounded by lies but, rather, precisely because we don't act in accordance with the strict model of rational choice supported in a cost-benefit analysis and in the choice of supposed optimized behaviour, it happens that "we don't cheat and steal as much as we would if we were perfectly rational and acted only in our own self-interest"(Ariely 2012: 6).

My aim consists mainly in showing that, to analyse diverse situations in which conflicts emerge apparently as a result of mistakes in communicative processes, a wider notion of our conception of language is necessary, one more extended than the cost-benefit analysis that is often at the basis of much theorizing on language, from the principles of Grice to the suppositions of Sperber and Wilson or in the ideas of Optimality Theory. It could well be that conflict, similar to lies, isn't an

exception, but rather a more or less attenuated form of habitual communicative practices done by means of language.

This is why it is very important, as Marcelo Dascal has pointed out, to firstly understand language as a cognitive technology. At the same time, and offering our other suggestion made also by Marcelo Dascal, it is essential to review our very idea of reason and rationality. In "Argument, war, and the role of the media in conflict management" Dascal said:

> Let us dub "Hard Reason" a conception of rationality that admits only the use of rigorously defined concepts, of experimentally controlled data, and of logically valid arguments. On this view, all solvable problems and disputes can be solved by strict adherence to the above requirements, which provide a decision procedure determining which side is right and which is wrong. Hard Reason also believes it is the only form of rationality deserving its name. Anything that deviates from its requirements is Non-Reason. Nevertheless, there are those who hold a conception of rationality that admits also the use of concepts that are not definable in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, the occasional reliance upon data and propositions that are only presumably correct, and the existence of a variety of ways of resolving controversies which do not necessarily amount to a decision procedure. Let us dub this conception of rationality "Soft Reason" (Dascal 2004:241)

To understand why, in spite of all the communicative distortions and limitations and even at times of great tension or conflict, moments of fluid communication, of dialogical, conversational or controversial communication happen, set apart from direct and explicit conflicts, it can be extremely useful to try to understand that there is an interesting connection between considering language as a cognitive technology and our models of human beings related to their capabilities as agents. We are bounded agents, as it were, rather different of those who derive from instrumental or consequential rationality.

With this connection between our cognitive technology and our bounded rationality, a good number of cooperative moments could well occur, although they happen by accident more than by intentionality, and especially, perhaps, with more frequency than a simple cost-benefit calculation would show. That connection is also related to the formulation of very basic aspects both of the theory of rational choice and of our characterisation as rational agents.

My interest is strictly philosophical; therefore I do not pretend to enter *in extenso* in technical problems of economics or linguistics studies. However, I will try to signalize that certain conceptual precisions, like those referring to the difference between satisficing, optimality and maximization of results, are particularly significant when we analyse the state of the art in language studies and its relation to the broad field of economics studies. In particular, it seems to me that making a suitable distinction between these three ideas (satisficing, optimality and maximization) can be very clarifying to analyse the space of negotiation and conflict.

Starting from the idea of negotiation between rational and intentional agents who explicitly bring into play their preferences in practices of intentional interaction distracts from the practices. In this respect, Ariel Rubinstein reminds us that the models of agents that we assume in our intentional interaction games don't usually take into account that language (and the values incorporated in this language) is

conditioning the same formal structures that seem to be shown by the negotiating agents.

At the least, our interactions involve adaptive agents that strategically use all their communicative capabilities, their silences, their argumentative capabilities, their knowledge and any type of information that may constitute an advantage over whoever we're negotiating with, in an attempt to persuade this person, and with whom we could enter into direct conflict.

As I have suggested on other occasions (Álvarez 2002, 2005) the majority of approaches to dialogic interaction have been built on a very special model of human being, i.e., the rational optimizing decision-maker. This is a very special agent that we ideally endow with at least three unbounded capabilities: of having all possible information, all computational abilities and with a practically infinite memory. Because of this, the agent has no limitations and is able to achieve an optimal degree of communication, which supposedly will allow to obtain an optimal level of satisfaction of its preferences, even if we take into account diverse constraints on its feasible set of actions.

I mean that the adoption of that formalistic and individualistic perspective on reasoning, choice and decision is a spring of paradoxes and conflicts, because agents immersed in conflicts are drawn or modelled as rational individuals with well-defined targets and full capabilities to access information. It isn't taken into account that the agents don't have all the time needed, their capabilities of calculation and memory are limited, and as such they can't make their preferences be taken fully into consideration.

The model of agent that is behind our conceptual construction of language is decisive when rebuilding these aspects of linguistic conformation and evolution.

The need to understand language as a cognitive technology from a wide concept of distributed cognition that allows dealing with pragmatic problems from the very specificity of language itself has been proposed by some cognitive and computer sciences theorists who have developed the line of distributed cognition theory. (A. Clark, E. Hutchins)

All technologies that have been produced by human beings suppose, without any doubt, important cognitive work, whether being viticulture, bikes or the telephone. Although, as Marcelo Dascal has noted, the cognitive component does not convert a particular technology into a cognitive technology. Dascal proposes a characterization of 'cognitive technology' (CT) as every systematic means – material or mental – created by humans that are significantly and routinely used for the performance of cognitive aims. By 'cognitive aims', he means either mental states of a cognitive nature (e.g. knowledge, opinion, belief, intention, expectation, decision, plan of action) or cognitive processes (e.g. perception, memorization, conceptualization, classification, learning, anticipation, the formulation of hypotheses, demonstration, deliberation, evaluation, criticism, persuasion, discovery) that lead to cognitive states or help to reach them.

The main objective of Dascal's proposal is to criticize the very idea of communication as a primary function of language: The old idea that language serves to

convey thought or other forms of cognitive content, but need not play any role in the formation of the thoughts it conveys.

Therefore I think it is convenient to deal with the question of epistemic agents and the kind of model of human beings we will formulate.

To analyse natural language as a system it is advisable to adopt some model of bounded rationality that goes beyond the notion of optimization with constrictions (Selten *dixit*), seeing how this is pertinent to understanding epistemic agents.

On several occasions, Amartya Sen has established a net distinction between maximizing behaviour and non-volitional maximization. "The formulation of maximizing behaviour in economics has often paralleled the modelling of maximization in physics and related disciplines. But maximizing behaviour differs from non-volitional maximizing because of the fundamental relevance of the choice act" (Sen 1997: 745). In my opinion, it is particularly useful to improve our understanding about the users that select information, take part in conversation and inevitably adopt a decision. "A person's preferences over comprehensive outcomes (including the choice process) have to be distinguished from the conditional preferences over culmination outcomes given the acts of choice" (Sen 1997: 745).

In natural sciences maximization occurs without a deliberate "maximizer", but when the choice is associated with some kind of responsibility, our ranking of outcomes can be changed. "Choice functions and preference relations may be parametrically influenced by specific features of the act of choice (including the identity of the chooser, the menu over which choice is being made, and the relation of the particular act to behavioural social norms that constrain particular social actions" (Ibid. 746).

Sen warns us that "Whenever the act of choice has significance", the comprehensive analysis of outcomes can have very extensive relevance to problems of economic, political and social behaviour. I consider that this is what persistently happens in acts of negotiation and conflicts, because sometimes very important aspects are lost when an attempt at analysis is made, as if there were an institutional vacuum between intentional agents. In these standard modellings, situations often appear in which the conflict turns out to be paradoxical because it is conceived as a simple transitory state that is conducive to the balance achieved, as it is supposed that a clear situation exists in which both win or because the opponent is completely defeated. Usually, cooperative characteristics aren't incorporated, even cooperation to cheat, which can develop between the agents although they have opposing interests. Also institutions, for example, that shield against situations of mutual damage and can contribute to fixing and maintaining decisions (for example, constitutional systems) are normally forgotten. It is important to incorporate the institutional situation, among others its own language, used both to intermediate and to assure agreements, that forming prominent components of the negotiation context.

I claim that the consideration of language as a cognitive device (instrument), in terms very close to those that Marcelo Dascal has proposed, compels us to consider that the act of choice has a decisive significance.

The problem is not only reduced to the importance of introducing the act of choice, the process of choice in what is chosen, but moreover it is necessary to consider the act of choice as an inescapable act. As Amartya Sen has said:

> A chooser, who may have to balance conflicting considerations to arrive at a reflected judgement, may not, in many cases, be able to converge on a complete ordering when the point of decision comes. If there is no escape from choosing, a choice decision will have to be made even with incompleteness in ranking (Sen 1997: 746).

The question of dependent choice, including the act of choice, leads to an interpretation of certain forms of sequentiality that could be useful to a non-standard rational understanding of the relevance that frugal and simple heuristics (Gigerenzer and Selten 2002) could have in decision processes.

Sen has repeatedly explained the importance of taking into account chooser dependence and menu dependence in preference relations. From this point of view, I mean that argumentative activities are dependent on arguers and we need an analysis of argumentative actions, with parametric dependence of speakers.

It is possible to wonder if the binary relations in which Rubinstein is interested are precisely the same, or a subset of, the permissible preference relations. Any of them must be reflexive, that is to say, that every alternative is seen to be as good as itself. Thus, according to Sen it can possible to establish some very interesting consequences. First, a best alternative must also be maximal, but a maximal alternative need not be best. In particular, this can occur when the set of best or optimal choices is empty but the maximal set, however, is not empty. A classic example, described by Sen, is given by one interpretation of the story of Buridan's ass, but in a very interesting interpretation. The ass could not rank the two haystacks and had an incomplete preference over this pair. It did not, therefore, have any optimal alternative. Both x and y were maximal – neither known to be worse than any of the other alternatives. In fact, since each was also decidedly better for the donkey than its dying of starvation z, the case for a maximal choice is strong. As Amartya Sen says: "Optimization being impossible here, I suppose we could "sell" the act of choice of maximization with two slogans: (i) maximization can save your life, and (ii) only an ass will wait for optimization". (Sen 1997: 765).

I mean, that if we connect explicitly the binary relation with the function of choice and its binariness, the contextual dependence of a menu becomes pertinent. In addition it seems that in the case of language one of the essential elements is precisely this kind of menu dependence. Therefore, these questions arise in optimality theories if they do not deal with the importance of distinguishing between optimization and volitional maximization.

Even more, the sequential order and its uses in solving problems is a well-known device in bounded rationality. So, the sequential selection, the definability, and the "language" that a decision maker uses to verbalize his preferences restricts the sets of preference he may hold (Rubinstein 2000: 55), all of them prove that we must include the act of choice in the set of alternatives.

But also, I would like to point out another question that creates conflicts and irresolvable situations that generate tensions and false dilemmas. The individualis-

tic and isolated vision of the agents, who supposedly try to optimise their preferences, leads to a misunderstanding of collective activity by considering that we have the masses on one side and on the other the leader, the expert, the big man who is born like Athena from Zeus's head and is the agent capable of managing conflicts. Conflicts are presented, as it were, as it were, as fights between gods and, in any case, between groups allied with the gods. It seems that there would be conflicts between agents trying to confront their dialectical weapons, but they face off with a universal reference of what is rational behaviour, and try to search for the real truth. But conflicts are earthly. And as such, the importance of the metonymic consideration of argumentation as war, beyond an exclusively metaphoric consideration, as Dascal has proposed in the cited article.

However, other models of agency, in the bounded rationality perspective, could help to better understand and deal with the conflicts. I mean that an embedded argumentative reasoning process to satisfy criteria, perhaps enhancing D. Sperber and H. Mercier's proposal on the argumentative theory of reasoning (Mercier and Sperber 2010, p. 57), would let us analyze the expert function in a new sociotechnical environment that has changed deeply the mechanism and tools to access and aggregate information (Rainie and Wellman 2012). It involves a possibility of facing the paradoxes of conflict by pointing out the false dilemma between conflict and peace, between truth and lies.

I considered that the emerging intertwined society produces the affordances to facilitate expansion of collective wisdom, but at the same time is a source of conflicts because of the appearance of very diverse procedures that limit the full expansion of these capabilities. Attempts at regulation, for example, trying to impede the neutrality of the internet, show large areas of tension among those who play with traditional subjects of power.

Tensions between the interests of elites that enter into conflict with the opinions of the masses now provoke an authentic paradox of collective action.

*Reputatio* is a social, collective component, of interaction between human minds, while the *refutatio* process appears as a relationship between knowledge (Zeus) and the object of knowledge itself, making the individual disappear as a subject and as a critic, as Dascal put forth very clearly in his interesting article "Reputation and Refutation".(Dascal: 2000) Or as Mercier and Sperber have suggested: "No act of communication among humans, even if it is only of local relevance to the interlocutors at the time, is ever totally disconnected from the flow of information in the whole social group" (Sperber et al. 2010, p. 379).

The idea is to set conflicts on their feet in order to contribute to their resolution and move beyond false dilemmas and paradoxes. Reasoning systems don't begin in our heads and then settle into the earth, but rather begin in communicative contexts and later expand, although as Sperber points out:

> We are not claiming that reasoning takes place only in a communicative context. It clearly occurs in solitary thinking, and plays an important role in belief revision. We would like to speculate, however, that reasoning in non-communicative contexts is an extension of a basic component of the capacity for epistemic vigilance towards communicated information, and that it typically involves an anticipatory or imaginative communicative framing (Sperber et al 2010: 379)

The insufficiencies of the intentional rational action model have been much studied, principally it has been seen that it is important to study the conformation itself of preferences, that is, to discuss the ends of the action and also to incorporate certain components of causal determination of behaviour (from the institutional framework to adaptive conformation of preferences). But, regarding what interests us here, the most important correction is that it is necessary to articulate in a more complex way the individual as a support and actor in these actions. We are active choosers of information; we interact in a determined socio-institutional context. Information is transmitted between choosers, but new information is also produced in deliberative and argumentative processes.

A notion of rationality that is more attentive to procedures and that tries to satisfy specific objectives (instead of supposed optimisations) could be a more flexible and "more efficient" guide to action. If, in addition, the importance of subjects considering themselves agents of their action (expressive rationality) is emphasized, it can help to resolve some situations of direct conflict that appear to be unsolvable.

From the discussion on rationality, it seems important to me to retain the idea put forth quite a few years ago by H. Simon on procedural rationality by satisfaction. The basic issue is that the optimising proposal, which leads to a type of Olympic rationality (in the sense that if it was characteristic of someone, it would be of the gods on Olympus), is rejected.

As A. Rubinstein says, economic models don't usually explain the procedures by which the corresponding economic units take their decisions. We should try to build models in which procedural aspects on making decisions are explicitly incorporated. In Rubinstein's terms:

> I wish to include models in which decision makers make deliberate decisions by applying procedures that guide their reasoning about "what" to do, and probably also about "how" to decide. In contrast, evolutionary models treat agents as automata, merely responding to changing environments, without deliberating about their decisions".(Rubinstein 2000: 2).

Open access to information and institutional arrangements directed towards team knowledge could offer other kinds of tools to confront conflict, even possible benefits which, indirectly and not wanted, could be obtained from the existence of the conflict itself.

"Crowd expertise" is emerging as an actual possibility, and it must be incorporated to confront conflicts. The expertise function works in deliberative, argumentative and motivational contexts and courses of action; it is not an isolated activity.

The very possibility of obtaining knowledge generated by "many minds", collective wisdom, brings up a real challenge to the conservative or elitist conception of the masses, because masses now emerge as a smart collective user, with new mechanisms to select and produce quality knowledge. These new collective actions differ deeply from the traditional modes of social organization. A new mass society is emerging now as a hybrid one that breaks some conceptual traditional models, such as those of Ortega y Gasset, and leads to a structured way for the flourishing of both new practices and new knowledge with transforming capabilities (Álvarez 2014a, b).

A crucial change is the one that refers to the relationship between the group approach and the individual one. We are learning, including in a practical way, that the grouping of human beings can produce results we didn't expect and that, as a product of the interaction, the action of collectives goes much further than the capabilities that each one of its members has.

Something that Aristotle had already pointed out in *Politics* (III, 10, 1282a15) when he said: «Since each may be a worse judge than those who know, but a better or no worse one when they all come together».

Recognising and taking advantage of the knowledge the masses can create leads to organising new ways of producing knowledge which, in part, are being dealt with by specialists in computational theory, experimental psychologists and behavioural economists. The connection between people has undergone important transformations over the past decades, brought on by the generalisation of information and communication technologies. These new forms of interconnection create very important change in the capabilities of the masses who, in contrast to old arrogant and derogatory conceptualisations, are now being analysed as *Smart mobs* (in the terminology of U.S. essayist Howard Rheingold) (Rheingold 2002, p. 17), from which something very tangible and not at all mystical appears to emerge that could be characterised as collective wisdom.

Things are changing in practice in our societies, and it is the work of the social sciences to analyse this evolution. On a theoretical level things have already somewhat advanced, and there are those talking about a third phase in theorisation on the multitude and the masses. In the first phase, the masses were considered an irrational and dangerous agent. This is how Gabriel Tarde and Ortega y Gasset thought.

In the second, the masses are taken as a driver of change and drivers of a rational protest formulated by elites, who rely on the strength of the masses and not on the cognitive capability of the masses. Until arriving more recently to a third phase where the masses are considered as a source of knowledge and wisdom. «Structured masses», «massive collaboration», «open innovation» and «user innovation» – in the words of Eric von Hippel, a professor of technological innovation at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology – are now common terms.

The masses, instead of seeming to be a creator of problems, today are seen as a source of collective intelligence. As such the possibility opens up to creating unexpected solutions to complex problems, solutions that are efficient, less costly and original. These are matters that require new frameworks for reflection. This third phase of the presence of the masses in an interconnected society allows us to reformulate the wisdom of the multitude in terms that follow in the Aristotelian wake, as has suggested the economist Mark N. Wexler of Simon Fraser University in Canada (Wexler 2011, p.7).

We find ourselves facing a possible democratic management of complexity, which has begun to be called open government, and it involves taking advantage of the new possibility of cognitive expansive democracy.

In my opinion, widening mass participation in debates that are often restricted to experts or political representatives, who supposedly represent our interests, is a possible condition to confronting some paradoxical conflictive situations, mainly those

where it isn't comprehensible that confrontations continue when it seems that on the horizon they are impossible to resolve without definitively eliminating the enemy and, on the other side, we know that the supposed enemy is indestructible.

Massive inclusion will bring with it the advantage of cognitive diversity, as well as scrutiny of people's direct suffering in flesh and bone, making the justice of the transition essential for them, independent from what might be the justice of the final state. Although we all die in the end, the balance of concrete situations, the justice (or injustice) of methods and intermediary states, are essential for finite beings, who aren't Olympic in their rationality, full of feelings, aspirations, objectives, strengths and weaknesses.

Defenders of Olympian rationality and optimization, especially if they hold positions of power, won't easily understand the difficulties of flesh and bone human beings, whose imperfect rationality is a condition of their own existence.

As I said (2005), a great number of philosophical approaches to language are also built on a standard notion of rationality that shares some kind of optimization idea and some kind of generic principle that speakers try to optimize. The idea is very similar to utility in neoclassic economic theory. If we try to understand the dialogic process only as a means to obtain an optimum of communication, whatever this is, we lost the main function of social interaction. I think the epistemic vigilance (Mercier and Sperber 2012) can be better understood as a procedural device, a rule of thumb that the participants in a dialogic interaction are usually satisfied to some degree. With these ideas we are developing some digital tools to organize and improve our argumentative capabilities. For instance, my research group has developed a free plugin that allows to incorporate Oxford-Style debates on websites from https://wordpress.org/plugins/oxford-debate/.

We are showing that the argumentative acts (as individual and social acts) are intertwined with heuristic tools (among them, the argumentative tools) and some meta-devices as epistemic vigilance could help to understand better our argumentative capabilities that conform human traits mainly if we use a non optimizational approach to argumentative procedures.

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# Chapter 8
# "In Order to Argue, You Have to Agree" and Other Paradoxes of Debate

**Adelino Cattani**

**Abstract** "Opening a discussion" is an act that gives rise to two opposite moods. Indeed, the discussion, due to its tension between dialogue and debate, tolerance and intransigence, has a double face: a reassuring face and a worrisome face.

Some people think that it is good to avoid a clash of opinions; by contrast, there are those who believe that precisely by means of the clash of opposing opinions we can derive the best solution. Discussion is then evaded and discouraged or alternately enhanced and promoted. The ideal unanimous agreement, the consent, and the compromise are good but only when they constitute a genuine reconciliation of differences at the end of a debate that has not concealed or canceled these differences.

Sometimes we forget that almost every human activity is competitive in nature to different degrees, ranging from the agonistic sport to the social conflict, and that conflict and cooperation are mutually connected. It is an observation that behind every conflict, there is an element of cooperation because "you cannot argue if you do not agree", that is, agree at least on a starting premise and on some minimal rules. "*You cannot argue if you do not agree*" is precisely the paradox of the good debate.

Because the discussion is a mixed genre that includes dialogue and controversy, it involves intertwining a "positive wire" and a "negative wire" on the borderline between war and peace.

**Keywords** Argument • Debate • Dialogue • Paradox • Polemic

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"Opening a discussion" is an act that arouses opposite states of mind. Sometimes, discussion is avoided and discouraged in the name of an ideal harmony and conciliation, with the aim of preventing a lack of agreement that would turn into a clash. By contrast, it is typically from the clash of opposing opinions that the best solution, that is, the most appropriate one, can arise, not only in trial but also in science, because "science manifests itself in its history as a sequence of controversies; these are, therefore, not anomalies but the 'natural state' of science: controversies are the locus where critical activity is exercised, where the meaning of theories is dialogically shaped" (Dascal 2000: 165).

Agreement, consensus, and unanimity are all well and good but only when they constitute a genuine reconciliation of differences, when, at the end of a debate, these differences have not been masked or canceled. The "positive" wire of the debate is inexorably intertwined with the "negative" wire. Furthermore, debating is two-faced: crucial and optional, invaluable and treacherous.

This aspect is one of the paradoxical aspects of discussion. The concept of paradox is used differently based on the speaker and situation. In this paper, I utilize a broad definition of paradox, in its literal meaning, namely: "contrary to (*para*) the common opinion (*doxa*)" or contrary to the generally expected or accepted perspective. A conclusion that seems absurd but that may be true is paradoxical. Some paradoxes are simply fallacies, namely arguments invalid or unsound, which seem acceptable when in fact they are not. Our interest is on the genuine paradoxical utterances that appear both true and false. Apparently, this issue may be confusing and worrisome but, defying logic, our lives illustrate that many conflicting proverbs are true. We may find a rude confirmation in contradictory sayings, such as "out of sight, out of mind" and "absence make the heart grow fonder", as it has been frequently noted (McKeachie and Doyle 1966: 9). It is not necessary to refer to sophisticated theories such as the recent view known as "dialetheism" – maintaining that contradictory statements in the form "A & Â¬ A" may be true – to realize that "union is strength because many hands make light work" and its negation "If you want something done, do it yourself" are both acceptable statements.

## 8.1 *First "Paradox" of Debate:* "In Order to Argue, You Have to Agree"

This is the first paradox of debate because we do not expect that a person who argues with somebody should agree with him:

> A very important aspect of audience is to understand what beliefs you share, what you have in common. Many scholars, notably Chaïm Perelman 1958, Wayne Brockriede 1972, Dale Hample 2007, Charles A. Willard 1989 and Chistopher W. Tindale 2004, among others, emphasize that without some shared values and beliefs, argument cannot proceed. This means that if we don't have at least some minimum values and outlooks in common, we have no basis on which we can get started. Moreover, when arguing, what you really want to do is begin with shared beliefs, and build from them to the contentious point - *you always*

> *want to begin with agreement.* ...When the union and management are negotiating and they both agree that economy is in trouble and that the business is suffering, they can work from the starting point. In a persuasion dialogue, finding common ground is also essential: you need to find that common ground in order to begin building your agreement from that point... pleasure is better than pain; education is good; family obligations are paramount; life is better than death. Such beliefs are called *loci*... and do not normally come into dispute (though note, like everything else, they might) (Gilbert 2014: 78–79).

Indeed, paradoxically, you cannot argue (meaningfully, profitably, or judiciously) if you do not agree. We know that a debate is entirely unproductive if, at the least, the two parties do not agree on a common starting point and on the definition of the key terms. It is important to determine whether you agree on the *observations*, the *principles* and the *values* relevant to the current debate. Otherwise, it would be similar to attempting to take a measurement with two different rulers: we would never be able to agree on the size of the object to be measured. Furthermore, no debate is more hopeless than the debate between two arguers who do not realize that their original premises are different, perhaps incompatible. In the best case, the result would be something akin to the Monty Python sketch on *Argument Clinic*; in the worst case, the result is what is known as the clash of civilizations and clash between different extremisms and fundamentalisms.

Agreement is not the goal of a good debate, but it is the starting point in every type of argument. You should always start with a shared starting point that is accepted and respected by both parties. This guideline applies to all types of dialogue (persuasive dialogue, research dialogue, and polemic).

Indeed, when there is no shared ground, as in the case of Thomas Kuhn's incommensurability between paradigms (Kuhn 1962), discussion with other people is in vain. If each side bases its argument on premises that the other side rejects, then this situation generates a particularly distressing type of controversy that leads to opposition without resolution due to a substantial irreconcilability.

## 8.2 *Second "Paradox" of Debate:* "It Is Better to Accept, Or to Give In, In Order to Win"

In a situation of disagreement, one is instinctively inclined to react by attacking frontally and by creating a barrage of fire against the opponent. The tendency is to argue blow by blow: if your opponent says something, you feel compelled to deny it and to claim otherwise. Very often, however, the wisest move and still the move that must be attempted first – although less spontaneous and more instinctive – is to ask whether you can take advantage of what the opponent says. A clever disputant, as long as possible, attempts to assimilate, to reconvert, to bend to his own ends. Only in the second instance, if it is not possible to make strategic use of the data or the evidence offered by the other party, does he attempt to demolish the opposite argument.

The rule of transforming the other's arguments in your own argument, of using the antagonist's premises to build your own conclusion is the discursive equivalent of the technique taught in martial arts, especially aikido, of unbalancing the opponent so that he rolls on the ground by his own energy and not by an active intervention of the attacked. Debate skills follow the same pattern of judo and aikido, whose first principle is not to resist your opponent; instead, move with him and redirect his power.

A simple and clear example is as follows: if my opponent says "If these are roses, they will bloom" and I do not agree because I believe that they are vegetables, not flowers, what can I do? I can challenge the statement by saying: "Be careful, they are cabbages, not roses!" Or better, I can accept the premise that "they are roses" and draw a very different conclusion, replying: "If they are roses, they will wither in a day".

The situation is well illustrated by the following case. Reagan's project for a missile defense system, the so-called "Strategic Defense Initiative" or "Star Wars", immediately met with considerable opposition. The movie "The Day After", directed by Oliver Stone, which staged the disastrous effects of a nuclear attack, was presented and interpreted as an attack on the initiative. During a public discussion, Secretary of State George Schulz, rather than censor and attack the film, as expected by all the proponents of Reagan's strategic plan, shared the concern over the alarming scenario outlined in the film, saying: "Just so! This is exactly what we want to avoid!" This instance is a great example of the technique "embrace in order to reject".

This type of move is beneficial in many ways.

1. It signals a lack of animosity and, on the contrary, a readiness to agree. The speaker presents himself as an open-minded interlocutor, not a biased opponent. This stance is an attitude that is appreciated by the person who has to judge much more than a dogmatic position or an aggressive rudeness.
2. It creates embarrassment because it puts the antagonist in the uncomfortable position of not being able to deny what he previously claimed or of doing so at the cost of an expensive reversal.
3. It causes a state of imbalance in the counterpart, who is attacked at the hips; simultaneously, it shows the audience the ability to bypass obstacles.

The technique of embracing (the *principles* of the opponent) in order to reject (the *conclusions*) can be usefully employed when one is able to prove that the counterpart's thesis does not conform to those principles or when he is able to demonstrate that, by starting from those principles, we can derive a different and better thesis.

Therefore, as long as you can, it is recommended to concede something to the opponent and take advantage of a momentary or apparent acquiescence.

## 8.3 *Third "Paradox" of the Debate*: "Everything Can Be Discussed" vs. "Not Everything Is Debatable"

Is debate possible on any topic, or is there a limit to the possibility of debate? Not everyone is willing to admit, as Protagoras does, that "on every issue, there are two arguments opposed to each other", namely that everything can be put under discussion, that to every *pro* there can be opposed a *contra* and that, for both, one can find a justification and a reason (Schiappa 1991: 90). Apparently, there are some *facts*, some *rules* and some *values* that are "beyond question."

It seems there are at least three categories of things that cannot be discussed: facts, taste and orders. "A fact is a fact," "de gustibus non est disputandum" (in matters of taste, there can be no dispute) and "an order is an order" proverbially express this belief.

There is no need to discuss when you reach what Perelman calls basic agreements, namely the original premises shared by the interlocutors. Furthermore, neither the theses nor the statements that you can defend against all possible opponents are questionable. This notion of "the totality of opponents" is a formula that incorporates the seventeenth-century idea that "contra principia negantes disputandum non est" ("you should not discuss with people who deny the principles"), which means that theses that are unanimously believed to be true and that therefore can be defended in front of all those who wish to challenge them are not an eligible matter for discussion.

> The universal audience is imagined by someone starting from what he knows of his fellows, in such a way that it transcends the opposition of which he is aware. So every culture, every individual has his own concept of a universal audience and the study of these variants would be very instructive because it would make us know what men have regarded throughout history as a real, true and objectively valid (Perelman 1969: 35).

A lack of reasons for doubting makes it impossible to discuss the issue: "Those who are in doubt whether the gods should be honored and parents should be loved, or not, they need to be blamed, but those who are uncertain if the snow is white, or not, they need a sensation" (Aristotle, *Topics*, I, 105 a 4–7). One wonders whether an excess of reasons for doubting may even make it untenable. The answer is yes. Whoever believes that the question of squaring the circle is an unsolvable problem definitely considers it out of question. The same holds for the so-called "ignorabimus" ("we always ignore") of nineteenth-century memory. According to Stephen Toulmin, the limit of the possibility of discussing is the possibility of producing reasons. The threshold beyond which it is no longer possible to produce reasons is also the threshold of the debate. Fortunately, this limit is very broad. There are questions of boundaries ("limiting questions") that go beyond any possibility of giving a rational response: no response will satisfy those who pose a question that surpasses human understanding. A discussion would not lead to anything because no answer would ever be satisfactory.

## 8.4 *Fourth "Paradox" of the Debate*: "Rhetoric Is Good, Rhetoric Is Bad"

Cicero himself often wondered whether rhetoric is more beneficial or harmful to men and cities. If something inherently good can be made to be seen as bad by a gifted speaker, then the good man gifted in speaking (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*, as Cato and Quintilian put it) become a bad man.

Also under discussion is whether debate forms good disputants or simply attract disputants who by nature are proficient. Certainly, debate is a workshop in which you acquire a number of skills. Proponents of debate training carefully list all of its advantages: mental, social and practical. For example, they list the *mental* habit of weighing the pros and cons of each issue, thinking quickly and critically and organizing subjects, ideas, and insights; the *social* habit of to strive to understand the nature and the function of a democratic society and realizing how, in democracy, ideas are enforced; get used to respect the ideas of others; the practice of appealing to reasons and arguments to resolve conflicts; the habit of coping with the judgment of the community and accepting it a healthy competition. From a *practical* perspective, debate promotes the art of asking questions, the technique of putting into words, of dividing and framing concepts, the readiness to replicate; the habit of public speaking; the self-control.

However, in debate, it would be sufficient to save the feature and the value of the confrontation, even when the disagreement becomes a battle: confrontation/comparison with someone who thinks differently. Therefore, among all the possible portents of debate, we welcome the promotion of tolerance, if only in the literal sense of the term, that is, "mere endurance", when there is no hope that the different perspectives will be integrated or annulled.

Certainly, *to be right* is different from *to convince someone that we are right*. We are told that truth always triumphs. Perhaps that is the case. However, we can help the truth to be established if we accept a debate in which the confrontation is not between two individuals but between two positions, if we accept that the winner is not the clever supporter but the thesis supported. Perhaps this too is a utopian ideal. However, this goal can be pursued even in the presence of the so-called and notorious "debate of the deaf". Indeed, typically when we discuss, each party states and restates his position, without any intent to actually compare his reasons with the reasons of the interlocutor, who is often viewed as an adversary to be defeated. However, even if the two disputants do not recede an inch from their initial positions, the audience – which is the third party, an important party of the public debate that is often forgotten – can change its mind.

The function, minimal but realistic, of a good debate is clarity, a double type of clarity: the clarity of our thesis and the clarity of the reasons in support of our thesis. The audience should leave a debate saying: "Now I see a little more light on'" rather than: "He spoke and defended himself very well!" or worse: "I do not know what he said, but he seems to have said it very well." Debate training aims to instruct us to express our reasons clearly but mostly to attempt to have them recognized, perhaps

not by the counterpart, which is a very rare and difficult result, but at least by the public, by the audience, by the judges. This type of debate is respectful of some rules, which are applied by the two parties and are the evaluation criterion for the jury and the public. Essentially, the rules are the four listed as follows:

1. Quality of arguments
2. Quantity of arguments
3. Relevance of arguments
4. Communication style

This training initiative retrieves and highlights the centuries-old tradition of Latin *disputatio* and the so-called *Trivium*, composed of the three components of logic, dialectic and rhetoric. Historically, dispute was a teaching method, a tutorial exercise and a procedure apt to discover the truth. It was a strictly regulated discursive exchange that required following a strict and, therefore, controllable procedure, and it was also a public event of great appeal.

Today, as in the past, this activity aims to combine the duty and the right to debate with the pleasure of debating and the pleasure of participating in discussion with the firm belief that this commitment is a valuable exercise that allows us to acquire the skills that are useful to tackling the most important personal and social challenges.

## 8.5 Conclusion

Why does debate have a double face, a reassuring face and a disturbing face, a tolerant face and an intransigent face? First, those who participate in a debate may do so with the disposition of one who is in search of the best solution for a controversial issue or in the spirit of those who want to prevail, who have dogmatic, unshakable certainties. Second, discussion can be viewed not only as a means to raise truth but also as a means to raise doubt.

However, controversy, in all its forms, from the virulent controversy to the quiet discussion, may be the engine of progress in every field, from the social to the scientific.

At the end of a dialogue or a debate, you may not even reach a conclusion, but this result is not necessarily a failure. One of the reflections of Joseph Joubert 1838, who in his *Pensées* (n. 115) notes that “It is better to debate a question without defining it than define it without debating it”, seems very wise.

Four reasons in favor of free discussion are offered by John Stuart Mill in his essay *On Liberty*, a libertarian manifesto centered on the belief that “If there are any persons who contest a received opinion...let us thank them for it, open our minds to listen to them, and rejoice that there is someone to do for us what we otherwise ought, if we have any regard for either the certainty or the vitality of our convictions, to do with greater labour for ourselves” (Stuart Mill 1989: 46).

Reason 1. To deny that an opinion can be true and force it to be silent means presume being infallible. In fact, human truths are, for the most part, half-truths. Thus, diversity is desirable, and unanimity will be advantageous only when it is the result of a comprehensive and free exchange of opposing opinions.

Reason 2. Even if the opinion silenced was indeed an error, it may contain, and often contains, an element of truth, "since the general or prevailing opinion on any matter is rarely, if ever, the whole truth: it is only through the clash of opposing opinions that the real truth has a chance to emerge."

Reason 3. If the standard opinion is true, if it is all true, if we do not allow criticism, then its acceptance will be plainly unconvinced, without recognition of its rational foundations.

Reason 4. This type of acceptance of an idea as an unchallenged dogma will ensure that is something purely formal, dead, an obstacle to the development of any conviction, living and lived as those derived from reasoning and personal experience.[1]

These are a few good reasons that support the desirability of listening to the other bell.

Training in debate, which is simultaneously an exercise, a procedure and a discipline, is a powerful accelerator of personal and collective change processes. "Skill" has become a buzzword in our day, especially the so-called soft skills, namely the general skills, the functional skills, those that help us live and work, those that are needed for our own and for others' well-being. Combined with the disciplinary expertise, they should give their best. The key skills, experts say, are the following:

1. The ability to solve problems by using the wealth of resources acquired
2. The ability to analyze and synthesize information
3. The ability to make judgments independently
4. The ability to communicate effectively
5. The ability to learn continuously
6. The ability to work in a group
7. Initiative and resourcefulness

All these different skills can be unified under a single heading: the *ability to argue*. A good debate encompasses all these skills, in the sense that it generates and stimulates all of them, without necessarily presupposing them, because it improves the ability of subjects who are not even naturally predisposed to debate.

Debate training is useful in school and in life. In particular, the verified advantages of this type of training are the following.

[1] "First, if any opinion is compelled to silence, that opinion may, for aught we can certainly know, be true. To deny this is to assume our own infallibility. Secondly, though the silenced opinion be an error, it may, and very commonly does, contain a portion of truth; and since the general or prevailing opinion on any subject is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied. Thirdly, even if the received opinion be not only true, but the whole truth; unless it be suffered to be, an actually is, vigorously and earnestly contested, it will, by most of those who receive it, be held in the manner of a prejudice, with little comprehension or feeling of its rational grounds....fourthly, the meaning of the doctrine itself will be in danger of being lost, or enfeebled, and deprived of its vital effect on the character and conduct: the dogma becoming a mere formal profession." (Stuart Mill 1989, 53–4)

1. It enhances and channels skills.
2. It makes us more attentive to our and to others' bad reasoning, encouraging the passage from the associative and emotional process of reasoning to the logical and inferential process.
3. It forms experiential 'researchers' of knowledge, not just receivers of knowledge.
4. Like a game, it has amusing and challenging components.
5. It combines the search for reasons, the ability to express them and the will to have these reasons recognized by others.
6. It creates a cooperative feeling and induces us to work as a team in order to achieve a common goal.
7. It determines a stable state of competition in a framework of cooperation, as in life, promoting recognition and respect for the views of others.

Even if, at the end of a debate, you do not reach any conclusion, you will obtain a result: "you will be less harsh and gentler to your associates, for you will have the wisdom not to think you know which you do not know" (Plato, *Theaetetus*, 210 c). Whatever happens, having a dialogue or debate is never done in vain. Furthermore, the deplored debate of the deaf, in which everyone only cares about the triumph of his argument, without the slightest willingness to review the initial opinions, makes sense. If neither of the two antagonists can prevail, it may be that, in the end, the impasse induces a tolerance that was unthinkable at the beginning. The importance of the audience is emphasized by Roland Pennock: the most useful debates are not those whose purpose is that one of the two contenders convinces his opponent but rather are those supported by the idea of allowing a third party, the audience, to reach a more solid conclusion that otherwise could not have been reached (Pennock 1950: 229).

Regardless, the manner in which problems are addressed is more important than the manner in which they are resolved. Certainly, the result counts, but even more important is the attitude by which we face problems. For this reason, in a democratic society, in all situations where important values are at stake, the decision-making instrument is the debate: in the parliamentary assembly, which has to issue laws, legislate and regulate social behaviors; in elections, which decide the future of the country; in the courts, in which the stakes are the freedom of the accused and the safety of the community. Both in deliberations and in personal reflections, when you have to make a decision, the collective tool of choice is the rational and critical debate, an internal debate or a public debate.

A resolution adopted after a debate benefits from the mark of quality, the quality of the controlled denomination of origin guaranteed, namely the guarantee of having been taken critically and in agreement or after a confrontation with the other.

Someone may say that the problem with debate is that those who participate aim more to win than to find a just, fair, true solution that in itself is preferable. However, if someone wants or needs to communicate something that is better, then he employs the means of the debate rather than advertising, the interview, the proclamation, the appeal or order. The debate is a form of communication, but it differs from all of

abovementioned forms because it involves three participants: the proponent, the opponent and the audience.

To sum up, in the words of John Stuart Mill: "Truth, in the great practical concerns of life, is so much a question of the reconciling and combining of opposites", such as co-operation and competition, democracy and aristocracy, luxury and abstinence, sociality and individuality, liberty and discipline. As in politics,

> a party of order or stability, and a party of progress or reform, are both necessary elements of a healthy state of political life... Each of these modes of thinking derives its utility from the deficiencies of the other; but it is in great measure the opposition of the other that keeps each within the limits of reason and sanity (Stuart Mill 1989: 48–9).

This notion suggests a revision of the dialectical tension between the pairs of concepts of agreement/disagreement and cooperation/conflict. Life has much of both. We can agree strongly and we can disagree just as strongly; eventually, we ponder, and we deliberate, using logical reasoning and, for the most part, analogical reasoning (see: Hofstadter and Sanders 2013).

> We are happy to think that there are many controversialists, within and outside the International Association for the Study of Controversies – IASC, who are not troubled by the paradoxes of the conflict and of debate, both unavoidable conditions of democratic life, because "thinking about the conflict simply as an *opposition* makes us lose sight of an essential element in order to be able to understand it, namely *cooperation*" (Arielli and Scotto1998: 1).

Opposition, antagonism, and controversy are also essential in peaceful society and, as noted above, are not anomalies but the 'natural state' of science as well, without any paradox, because

> ...resolution of argumentative conflict is a particular kind of peace – a peace that can be established only through conflict. It is not the kind of pacification that allows all form of being-in-the-world to coexist indifferently. It is not the end of all argumentative conflict; that would be the opposite of conflict, a kind of hegemonic peace, the peace of indifference and of skepticism (Crosswhite 1996: 104).

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# Chapter 9
# Academic Nursing: An Epitome of a Conflict-Prone Domain

**Pia Vuolanto**

**Abstract** Since the 1960s, many profession-oriented domains such as nursing, social work and education have entered universities. The article focuses on a controversy in one profession-oriented discipline, nursing science during the 1990s. The aim is to understand the discipline and to highlight its characteristics in a controversy situation. The article is rooted in science and technology studies which have focused on controversies in science. The article first discusses what nursing science was like as an arena of controversy and what made it controversy-prone in the 1990s. It then analyses which actors took part in the controversy in this profession-oriented discipline, and what the different actors' goals were for nursing science. The aim is to understand the discipline and to highlight its characteristics in a controversy situation. In this way, the article produces understanding of this and other profession-oriented disciplines in the academic setting.

**Keywords** Academic nursing • Conflict • Controversies • Nursing science • Profession-oriented disciplines

## 9.1 Introduction

Since the 1960s, many profession-oriented domains such as nursing, social work and education have entered universities. They have been established as academic teaching curriculums at master's and doctoral level, and they have also been set up as research programmes (Spitzer and Perrenoud 2006). Their entry into academia has not always gone smoothly; rather, these disciplines have met resistance, and they have conflicted with older disciplines, the professions and certain societal groups.

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This article investigates such conflicts in Finnish nursing science.[1] The article focuses on a controversy in this profession-oriented discipline 20 years ago, during the 1990s. The aim is to understand the discipline and to highlight its characteristics in a controversy situation. In this way, the article produces understanding of this and other profession-oriented disciplines in the academic setting.

The article is rooted in science and technology studies which have focused on controversies in science. The controversy in question – which I will call the therapeutic touch (TT) controversy –arose when a book based on a master's thesis in nursing science received the Finnish Association of Sceptics' Humbug Award. The award led to a crisis in the department where the master's thesis had been accepted at the University of Tampere, and some of the books that the students had used were subsequently banned by the departmental committee. The controversy unfolded in newspapers, scientific journals and other documents, and although it was a relatively minor and short-lived episode, it was rich in definitions of and aspirations for nursing science as an academic domain.

After introducing the tradition of controversy research in science and technology studies, this article first discusses what nursing science was like as an arena of controversy and what made it controversy-prone in the 1990s. It then analyses which actors took part in the controversy in this profession-oriented discipline, and what the different actors' goals were for nursing science.

## 9.2 The Tradition of Controversy Research in Science and Technology Studies

To study controversies in science, the multidisciplinary research field 'science and technology studies' combines various approaches from philosophical demarcation studies, historical enquiries into different controversy episodes, and sociological and rhetorical perspectives on scientific conflicts[2] (e.g. Bloor 1976; Nelkin 1979; Collins 1981; Pickering 1981; Brante and Elzinga 1990). Within this field, the role of social interests and the negotiations between science and different societal actors in controversies have been emphasised. In particular, controversy studies related to this tradition have drawn attention to 'the social processes which determine the outcome of the debate' (Collins 1981, 53). This approach has sought 'to locate the controversy in its wider social context, to outline the social interests and determinants which may lie behind it and to analyze the political consequences of various solutions of types of closure' (Brante and Elzinga 1990, 42). These studies have concluded that controversies can arise from inside science, outside science or from both directions, and they can be initiated by researchers, administrators, politically

[1] Throughout the article I use the concept 'nursing science', because the Finnish community of nursing scholars use this term for their discipline.

[2] For a full review of the controversy research tradition in science and technology studies, see Taylor (1996), Gieryn (1995, 1999) and Vuolanto (2013, 17–33).

and socially aware public actors (such as companies or policymakers), different lay actors or the general public (Taylor 1996; Gieryn 1999).

Science and technology studies have concentrated on controversies in the contexts of the natural sciences, technology and medicine. They have analysed large, contentious topics in public debates, such as climate change, or ethical dilemmas in medicine or technological development – issues that are regarded as having the potential to destroy life, undermine the economy or create environmental problems. The sociologist of science Thomas Gieryn encapsulated much of this tradition in his book *Cultural Boundaries of Science: Credibility on the Line* (1999; and earlier works 1983; 1995). This approach to controversies analyses the arenas together with the actors and their goals and interests in the controversial episodes. The idea is that when the actors – who could also be called stakeholders – act in the controversy, they are simultaneously doing 'boundary work' between science and other spheres of life or 'other territories in the culturescape' (Gieryn 1995, 440).[3] Gieryn developed his approach in case studies such as the natural sciences, phrenology, cold fusion and organic farming.

This article applies this approach to a controversy in nursing science, studying the arena, the key actors and their goals within it. Controversies in the social sciences and humanities have been studied less than those in the fields of natural sciences, technology and medicine. Although some attention has been given to the social sciences in general (Gieryn 1999), and to anthropology (Salmon 2000), psychology (Ashmore et al. 2005) and archaeology (Fahnestock 1997), the newly emerged profession-oriented disciplines and their controversies have gone largely unexamined. This article aims to provide a deep analysis of one controversy in one profession-oriented discipline. Thus it both disentangles the controversy dynamics in these types of scientific field and sheds light on the characteristics of the unexplored territory of nursing science.

The analysis in this article is based on the rhetoric of science and its core principles (Gross 2006; Keith and Rehg 2008; Lyne and Miller 2009; Fahnestock 2009; Segal 2009). First, the analysis takes into account that nursing science is defined not only by researchers, but also by various societal actors around it. Here the analysis comes close to Taylor's (1996, 15) suggestionthat we should analyse not only those actors that have an established status in science, but also different voices from other societal actors. Second, the analysis stays on the rhetorical level and does not attempt to say anything about the motives and personal histories of the actors. In this respect, the analysis differs from Gieryn's historical-sociological analysis, which takes motives and personal histories as part of the story behind controversies. Due to space limitations in this article, I will not present any quotations or citations from the original texts as is traditionally done in rhetorical analysis. These are available in Vuolanto (2013 and 2015).

[3] For more on the concept of boundary work, see Vuolanto (2015).

## 9.3 The Arena of the Controversy over Therapeutic Touch

The arena of this controversy – namely, Finnish nursing science in the mid-1990s – was prone to controversy for many reasons. First, at the time of the controversy it was still an emergent discipline. Several science and technology studies emphasise that the development of new disciplines entails controversy. I will offer some examples.[4] Thomas Brante, writing in particular on social work, nursing research and police research, highlights that new disciplines aim to change some aspects of the scientific system, which means that they are vigorously debated and thus are not readily accepted as genuine science (Brante 1987, 30–31). Klein (1996) points to the development of new disciplines as situations that involve negotiation and conflict. Mario Small (1999) investigates the legitimation of African-American studies and shows how the 'emerging intellectual enterprise' entailed radically different conceptions of the new discipline. Kacey Beddoes (2014) investigates methodological discourses in the new field of engineering education. In detail, Olga Amsterdamska (2005, 18) studies epidemiology in three phases of disciplinary development, including conflict particularly when epidemiology was becoming an academic discipline. She finds that the early phases of the discipline's development involved discussions about the status of epidemiology as science. These discussions activated definitions of disciplinary identity and the spelling out of disciplinary distinctiveness (ibid., 19, 35).

Nursing science was in its early stages at the time of the TT controversy, and this generated a lot of debate about nursing science's academic status, the nature of its research and its research methodology, to name but a few topics. The department of nursing science in question at the University of Tampere, Finland, was establishing its research and the first PhD theses had been completed, but the methodology was still at an early developmental stage. This can be seen, for example, from the number of methodological articles by researchers in the department that sought to justify and promote qualitative methodologies, and from the first dissertations, many of which used qualitative methodology.[5] The methodologies were especially important because the nursing science department was located within the same administrative unit as medicine. The methodologies that were used in the first nursing theses departed from the line of empirical and natural science-oriented research within the medical sciences, which formed the majority of research in the faculty. Thus the nursing scholars had to justify their choices in the face of the medical research tradition. The theories in the new discipline also differed from those in the medical sciences, which necessitated the discussion and in-depth justification of its theoretical underpinnings. These discussions are exemplified in the wealth of discussion articles by the department's researchers justifying the new discipline theoretically and clarifying its theoretical roots.[6]

[4] For more examples, see Lamont and Molnár (2002, 179–180).

[5] In more detail, these are introduced in Vuolanto (2013, 39).

[6] These are detailed in Vuolanto (2013, 39–40).

The year 1996 was a time of lively exchanges of opinion in the context of what was then the only Finnish scientific journal of nursing science, which contained a discussion column. In this column there were unusually many contributions during that year, some – but not all – of them pertaining to the TT controversy. In fact, the majority of discussions in the column took place during the mid-1990s. For comparison, the discussion column has been mostly silent since 2000, which may indicate that this developmental stage was particularly susceptible to debate. This brings the TT controversy into perspective as a controversy in an emergent discipline where controversy was bound to occur.

Secondly, nursing education has undergone several reforms across Western countries during past 30–40 years. In the United States, Great Britain and the Nordic countries the field was rapidly academised, while in Central European countries such as Germany, Austria, France and Luxembourg, academisation was much slower (Spitzer and Perrenoud 2006; Salminen et al. 2010[7]). In the Nordic countries, the field was academised from the late 1970s onwards, but at the time of the controversy in the mid-1990s, Nordic (including Finnish) nursing science was clearly still at an early development stage, and it could be called an emerging field by comparison with established fields such as medicine or law.[8] In terms of teaching culture, for example, the first Finnish professorships had recently been established, and the first doctoral theses had just been published. Also the methodological approaches taught by professors of nursing science were still in development and under negotiation. At that time, the discipline was small in size, with few full professorships, although positions were emerging at several Finnish universities (AF 2003).

It was specific to the discipline's academisation in Finland that not all nursing education became university education: only the higher degrees were academised. This created a lengthy educational path for nurses: first they had to acquire a professional nursing certificate at a lower 'polytechnic' level (three and a half years after upper-secondary school), and then they had to apply to university to complete a master's degree (about four years), after which they could also obtain a doctoral degree (about four years) (AF 2003). This long educational path – the dual higher-education model – also applies to nursing education today, but at the time of the controversy the lower-level education was in flux: it was being reorganised to become a part of higher education and its institutions were being renamed as universities of applied sciences, which created a tension between the two levels of education. As a consequence, for example, teachers in the universities of applied sciences faced increased pressure to gain university degrees at master's and doctoral level in order to meet the requirements of higher education, whereas formerly they had been required to have practical experience in nursing and lower-level teaching qualifications. Hence there were differences of opinion about the organisation of education at a macro level, but the developments affected individual nurse educators and their

[7] For the development of nursing science in the Nordic countries see Laiho (2010), and for Finland in particular see Laiho (2012), Laiho and Ruoholinna (2013), Råholm et al. (2010).

[8] A similar use of the concept 'emerging field' is made by Beddoes (2014) in relation to the discipline of engineering education.

personal educational pressures at the micro level too. Besides the early developmental stage of university nursing science, these lower-level reforms made academic nursing prone to controversy.

Thirdly, there has been continuous debate about the direct link between the nursing profession and nursing science, revealing the new discipline as an intersection of professional and scientific boundaries, and thus increasing the controversy. In Finland as well as in other countries, the closeness of the link becomes apparent when one considers that professors of nursing science in universities simultaneously held subsidiary posts as nursing administrators, typically as chief nursing officers at university hospitals (AF 2003, 10). These dual roles were introduced in Finland in the early 1990s and were in formation at the time of the controversy. For professors and hospital staff alike, this situation created new opportunities but also challenges for the cooperation between academic nursing and the practical domain. At the time of the controversy and to this day, the tensions in this cooperation are obvious. It has been reported that the reception of nursing research among nurse practitioners has not always been welcoming, and there is a wealth of discussion in the field about the theory-practice gap, both in Finland and abroad (Gallagher 2004; Maben et al. 2006; Nieminen 2008). In Finland in particular, the trend towards academisation has met with resistance from nurse professionals, leading to 'anti-academic' discourse (Laiho and Ruoholinna 2013). Nursing science has been criticised for being either too practical and professional to be academic, or too academic and theoretical to serve as a ground for nursing practice and practical training (Rinne and Jauhiainen 1988, 161; Gallagher 2004; Maben et al. 2006; Nieminen 2008; Findlow 2012).

Fourthly, the gender dynamic of the academy added to nursing science's susceptibility to controversy during the mid-1990s. Traditionally research has been a male-dominated domain, and most scientists in the traditional established disciplines have been males, as is noted by the wealth of feminist scholarship on 'women in science' (see for example Lederman and Bartsch 2001). The word 'science' has had masculine connotations (Keller 1995, 81). Nursing science is by many indicators a female-dominated field: its professors are usually women, men are rarely encountered as researchers, and the field is mostly occupied by female students. This also applied to the nursing science department at the University of Tampere. This is a departure from the traditional gender division and gender balance of the established sciences, and that is not a helpful dynamic for an emerging discipline. It has been claimed that nursing science is 'invisible' and 'inaudible' and that it has not been able to find its own voice within academia because it is a female-dominated domain (Meerabeau 2005; Findlow 2012, 121).

In sum, the arena of the TT controversy – Finnish nursing science – was somehow ripe for a controversy to appear: it was a small, emerging and profession-oriented discipline, occupied by women, and its status had already been questioned and challenged from the outset. In the mid-1990s Finnish nursing science was also in a unique position internationally, since it had acquired some status but could not yet be called an established field in its own right. Furthermore, some debate over TT and the theorists promoting it had also appeared in the context of nursing research,

at least in the United States and Great Britain (Rosa 1995; O'Mathúna et al. 2002). Thus the Finnish debate could be seen as reflecting similar controversies in other countries.

## 9.4 The Actors and Actions in the Controversy

The whole episode of the TT controversy – its progression from the master's thesis to the book, the Humbug Award, a ban on certain theories and books, and a subsequent discussion – lasted for a few months, and then the discussion faded. The key actors in the controversy were six nursing scholars, the author of the TT book, two medical specialists, the sceptics as an association with active individuals (such as the secretary of the association), two students of nursing science, and one publisher that published the TT book. The nursing scholars were not a homogenous group: there were scholars from different positions and from two different universities; some had more powerful formal positions than others, and some no longer held formal positions in nursing science at all (they had retired or moved to another organisation outside the university). The nursing science students were a group who were both studying nursing science and transferring knowledge from nursing research to practice at the same time. The book's author had written the TT book, but she was also a teacher of nurses and a former nursing science student. The nursing scholars, students and author were generally nurses by background, because professional qualification as a registered nurse was a requirement for nursing science students and thus also for nursing scholars. The other societal actors included the publisher of the TT book, medical specialists and sceptics. The publisher was a respected one, well known for its textbooks aimed at healthcare practitioners. The medical specialists became interested in the controversy after the Humbug Award was announced. The sceptics were a heterogeneous group of researchers and laypeople committed to keeping science free of unscientific elements. In the controversy, the Association of Sceptics as a whole gave the award, and some individual sceptics (e.g. a secretary of the organisation) wrote texts challenging nursing science as an academic discipline.

The TT controversy occurred at the end of 1996 in the nursing department at the University of Tampere. A master's thesis on the concept of TT had been accepted in nursing science in 1993 with a good grade, promoting this therapy in which the nurse does not touch the patient, but holds his or her hands above the patient. The energy fields are supposed to cure the ailment. The master's thesis attracted no reaction when it was completed. The conflict arose after the master's thesis was published as a book by the publishing house Kirjayhtymä, which was well known as a reputable publisher of textbooks for social and healthcare professional education. The publisher received the annual Humbug Award given by the Finnish Association of Sceptics. This award is considered an indication of poor and unscientific research. It had previously been given to publishers or educational institutions that had, for instance, published books or given courses on astrology and numerology. It had also

been given to the main Finnish public television channel for uncritically presenting unscientific claims in science programmes. According to the rationale provided for the Humbug Award, the TT treatment was unscientific and the book itself poorly grounded in scientific research.

As a consequence of the Humbug Award and immediately after it, the department of nursing science made a decision that theses using certain theories or books would no longer be accepted in the department. This defensive action on the part of the nursing science department literally meant a ban on certain books and theoretical frameworks from master's and doctoral theses in this department of nursing science. The master's thesis on TT had used the books in question, but had not relied on them exclusively. In general, the departmental committee's decisions were about the practical organisation of teaching and research at the department, and thus the minutes of its meetings were important guidelines for the department's professors, staff and students. Furthermore, the minutes are public documents, and were also important for the department's communication with the larger bodies to which it belonged to at the time, namely the faculty of medicine and the administrative board of the whole university.

When the Finnish Association of Sceptics announced the award, there were supporting voices from three directions: the scepticism movement, nursing scholars and medical specialists. The award was introduced in *Sceptic*, the journal of the scepticism movement. A journalist from the scepticism movement, in support of the award, wrote an editorial in *Sceptic* and did an interview with the professor. She also wrote to a university bulletin of the University of Helsinki.

Some nursing scholars, represented by incumbent professors and lecturers of nursing science, supported the award and simultaneously protected their own positions in a variety of forums. One professor of nursing science, who was also the head of department, answered questions regarding TT and nursing science in an interview with the journal *Sceptic*. She commented on and interpreted the book in several forums, to sceptics, nursing scholars and nursing students at the University of Tampere. She also presented her views, with colleagues, in a newspaper article written for the general public. This meant that she became a central figure in the controversy.

Additional support for the Humbug Award came from a couple of medical specialists, one of whom was active in the scepticism movement. They wrote about the TT book, critiquing its methodology and revealing its connections to unscientific spheres, in a Finnish professional journal for medical doctors. The journal is targeted at medical practitioners, medical students and other healthcare professionals, and contains refereed articles about original research, review articles, news from the Finnish medical association, discussion articles and book reviews. The contribution by the two medical specialists was a discussion article on healthcare. The article was published half a year after the Humbug Award. The medical specialists first defined 'belief medication' as a term, and then discussed TT and its basis.

In addition to these supporting voices, there were also criticisms of the departmental committee's decision to ban certain theories and books. These expressed the writers' personal feelings about the Humbug Award and the consequences of the

book ban for their studies or views about nursing science. One of these critics was the author of the TT book, who was also a former student at the department of nursing science at the University of Tampere. She presented her criticisms in a publication from the University of Helsinki. Her article responded to an earlier article in the same publication by a journalist from the scepticism movement. In an article entitled 'Spiritual healing for nurses?' the journalist had evaluated the unscientific character of the TT book. The book's author answered the criticisms and defended both her master's thesis and her book. Her response rejected the journalist's claim that the book focuses on New Age thinking.

Two nursing scholars who no longer held formal positions at the university did not support the Humbug Award, unlike the incumbent nursing scholars. They expressed views in articles (in the professional journal for nurses, and in the student newspaper) that could be interpreted as a critique of the ideas of those nursing scholars who had supported the Humbug Award. In particular, they were critical of the book ban and of the closed, restricted community the ban entailed for the field. They were of the opinion that studies on TT and other such therapies could be included in nursing science.

Students in the department of nursing science at the University of Tampere also reacted to the committee's decision. An article in the journal of the University of Tampere's student union outlined the weaknesses of the norm production process in nursing science. The aim of this journal is to act as an advocate for students of all disciplines at the university, and to give a voice to students in the scientific community. The journal is a forum for the free expression of students' feelings, for criticisms of university teachers and departments from students' points of view, and for the discussion of themes that are ofconcern to students at the university. The contributors to the journal are usually students seeking to promote students' status at the university. The article explored the norm-producing process from the point of view of a student of nursing science.

## 9.5 The Goals of the Actors

Nursing scholars participated in the controversy in many ways, with strong voices. They were the most represented group in the debate, and they discussed their discipline in many forums. The controversy offered them an opportunity, albeit presumably an unpleasant one, to clarify and demarcate their discipline and to highlight its practices and norms. In particular, the nursing scholars aimed to legitimate the status of nursing science by presenting it as an indisputably strong, precise and scientific discipline. The nursing scholars also located their discipline on the academic map by relating it to other disciplines, especially medicine. They presented the significance of their discipline in society as large and impressive, in order to justify the discipline's existence. They also aimed to distance their discipline from unwanted knowledge production. Thus their goal was to protect the autonomy of their discipline (Gieryn 1999, 17) and to identify and strengthen its position.

However, the nursing scholars were not a uniform group. In the controversy, one nursing scholar who had retired and another who had moved to another organisation outside the university stressed that nursing science should be seen as a platform where multiple voices could flourish and where many actors could define research themes and objects. They also understood that treatments such as TT could be researched inside nursing science.

For medicine, represented by two medical specialists, the controversy was just one case among many in which complementary and alternative medicine try 'to gain acceptance from science' (Degele 2005, 113). Even though they wrote only a few texts, those texts were powerful. From medical specialists' point of view, complementary and alternative medicine actors are 'strangers in the community of medical scientists' (Derkatch 2008, 384). Thus the controversy was a chance for medicine to do its own boundary work between the discipline and other knowledge systems (Vuolanto 2015). It was also an opportunity to propagate this boundary work to other disciplines, particularly the 'little sister', nursing science. The medical specialists tried to support nursing science's attempts to protect itself from invasion by unscientific outsiders, but at the same time they downgraded nursing science to a lower status from the powerful position of an established discipline. Moreover, for the medical specialists the controversy was an opportunity to separate nursing science from medicine, both as a young discipline in need of care and as a social science. The medical specialists presented nursing science as a new and unstable field that needed acceptance from other disciplines and was subordinate to medicine in particular. As such, the medical specialists' actions strengthened the social sciences' overall subordinate status in the medical sphere (Albert et al. 2008, 2009).

The sceptics had a strong voice in the controversy. Their action – the Humbug Award – started the controversy, and they continued to propagate the award in many texts. It must be borne in mind that the scepticism movement in Finland is not entirely comprised of scientists, but also includes amateur scientists and laypeople as participants. This can be seen in the TT controversy, during which the main actor from the scepticism movement was a journalist. For this group, the controversy provided an opportunity to popularise their world view. They performed their basic task to combat non-science and simultaneously praise empirical methods (Forstorp 2005) at the boundary between science and other knowledge systems. Through the controversy, they reinforced their position as the police of science and protectors of the scientific world view (Forstorp 2005). It seemed that the sceptics had been waiting for a long time for a chance to put nursing science in its place. A book based on a master's thesis in nursing science provided an ideal opportunity for this. In a revolutionary manner, the sceptics cleansed science of unwanted elements.

For the author of the TT book – a TT therapist and former student of nursing science – the controversy was an occasion to promote therapies and conduct research on them. In this respect, she can be identified as the initiator of the controversy: her master's thesis was successful, and subsequently she had the courage to go on and publish a book with a prominent publisher. However, ultimately her research was excluded from science as bad science, imperfect and contaminated (Douglas 1984; Nader 1996). The individual therapist was in this way a victim of the controversy;

her attempt to conduct research was rejected. For the alternative treatment movement, the failure of this individual therapist was a sign that nursing science was not a good terrain for their activities. As a group they were placed to one side from nursing science in the controversy, which was purified ofsuch treatments and traditions.

All actions in the TT controversy can be understood as aiming for the good of patients. However, patients were 'silent implicated actors' (Clarke and Montini 1993, 68) in the controversy. Their well-being was the subject of debate, even though they themselves did not raise their voices. They were brought to the fore during debates about the most purified norms of science that could be used to produce their well-being. The question was about the discipline's reputation and its use in professional practice to do good for patients. Patients came into the picture in order to provide justifications for conducting research and distributing information that might equip the general public with an awareness of the differences between dubious and commercial activities on the one hand and professional, scientific, evidence-based knowledge on the other. The issue was also about the danger to the well-being of patients of knowledge based on, amongst other things, beliefs, magic and religion. From the point of view of patients, especially the terminally ill, in extreme situations, anything that helps might be regarded as a relief or cure, but this was not taken into account in the controversy. Instead the well-being of patients was discussed without the patients' own voices being heard. Nonetheless, the patients were essential actors in the controversy because they were the dependants of science. Without these silent, invisible actors, there could not have been a controversy at all (Hacking 2000, 229).

## 9.6 Conclusions

This small episode of controversy in a marginal academic discipline in the context of Finnish nursing science gives an insight into nursing science. Overall, nursing science in the controversy appeared as mouldable territory, vulnerable in itself, and as such the analysis of the controversy reveals it as the epitome of a conflict-prone field. For many actors, the controversy offered an opportunity to present their eagerness not only to let the discipline develop on its own, but also to use their power to mould it. Simultaneously, they advanced their own interests through the debate within this mouldable territory – for example, to increase the authority of the already authoritative field of medicine, or to promote therapies that are not usually accepted and to try to obtain legitimation for them. This article renders visible the incompatibilities between the interests of the different actors (Nowotny 1975; Clarke and Montini 1993).

These incompatibilities are essential for understanding the dynamics of science and especially of less-studied profession-oriented disciplines such as nursing. The kind of legitimation crisis that the Humbug Award and the consequent discussion caused within and around nursing science could happen in other profession-oriented

disciplines or other newcomer academic disciplines. In order to understand this kind of unexplored territory, it was essential to look at the actors who held stakes in the controversy and at the kind of arena that nursing science inhabited in Finland during the 1990s. Gieryn's approach offered a good toolkit for this analysis. This article opens up a way to understand in depth how controversies in science reach out to broader cultural values and cultural disagreements that are hidden in everyday life but activated in controversy situations.

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# Chapter 10
# Conflict: The Possible Dialogue

**Alberta Giani**

**Abstract** The hypothesis underlying the reflections contained in this paper concerns conflict viewed as closely linked to the Other. For this reason the focus is on the processes of construction/recognition of the Other. The constructs of intersubjectivity, immediacy of perceiving/feeling the Other, and the body as an ambivalent unit, are used to this end. We analyze the contextual dynamics that facilitate implicit knowledge, which regulate somehow the quality of intersubjective relations during their development. It is the very quality of feeling the Other emotionally with all its undertones that organizes a more or less deep openness to dialogue so as to tackle the conflict in a creative way. The theoretical assumptions concern the so-called *second person* in the theory of mind (Reddy 2010), the *construct of intersubjectivity* in its neurobiological and dynamic aspects (Ammanniti and Gallese 2014; Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia 2006), as well as Stern's concepts of *now moment* and *implicit knowledge* (2005).

**Keywords** Body • Dialogue • Emotion • Implicit knowledge • Intersubjectivity • Other

## 10.1 Introduction

The concept of conflict encompasses implicitly the concept of the Other. Common sense and classical logic tell us that, if everyone is right, we are no longer able to make decisions. This condition is particularly true when we consider simple systems in which everyone shares the same implicit premises. If we want to take a step forward, we should hypothesize that "really" everyone is right. It does not mean rejecting our own judgments; rather, it means starting from our judgments and

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moving toward perceptual evaluation matrices or frameworks – whether ours or others' – of which we are not always aware. It is these frameworks that organize and direct people's actions.

## 10.2 How to Make Implicit Knowledge Explicit?

Bateson claimed that we cannot think well without the cognitive contributions of emotions – without a dialogue between unconscious and conscious parts of the mind (Bateson 1976). Emotions provide us with information about *how* we look, rather than what we see.

This paper is intended to show that, if we view conflict assuming that the Other must be known through a process of generalization, starting from our subjective experience, or from the outside, through observation and inference, the Other inevitably remains an *object* and not a subject to whom it is worth listening. The hypothesis is that we can know *Others* as *persons* only through direct emotional participation (Buber 1994).

Buber claimed that there are two ways of knowing and engaging with things or persons: the "I-Thou" and "I-It" relationships. The former implies an attitude of openness toward the other without theorizations, reflections or expectations, in the "now" of the interaction, "by feeling the other emotionally". An authentic dialogue requires this type of *openness*, which implies emotionally seeing, feeling, listening to, perceiving the other as he/she is in that moment.

While the combination *I-It* (or *He-She*) is the way of experience, indicating a process of objectification, the combination *I-Thou* is the way of relation.

*I-Thou* and *I-It* relations do not represent parallel routes. Rather, they can meet, intertwine, collide, drift apart, and re-join, depending on the extent of direct emotional participation. The more the interaction is responsive, the more the Other is emotionally perceived so that the conflict can be managed.

In this paper, the theoretical references concern the so-called *second person* in the theory of mind (Reddy 2010), the *construct of intersubjectivity* in its neurobiological and dynamic aspects (Ammanniti and Gallese 2014; Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia 2006), and Stern's concepts of *now moment* and *implicit knowledge* (2005).

## 10.3 Conflict

Life and conflict are two faces of the same coin: one cannot exist without the other. In human life, there are some very troublesome periods. Puberty, for example, is characterized by a hormonal storm and adolescence by a charge of overwhelming energy and contrasts and ambivalences regarding the self, the others and the world. Generally speaking, such conflicts result in more or less radical *change*, which shows either lines of continuity with the relational styles of the cultural environment

or elements of newness. The body is, anyway, totally involved and engaged in emotional, affective, cognitive, motor and behavioral terms.

Further, there are the conflicts of our recent history, such as the never-ending Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the ethnic conflict between Christians and Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which ended in an authentic bloodbath. These events are the results of multiple causes, the origins and possible future developments of which are difficult to identify.

Whether individuals or social and cultural groups, the common denominator is the human being, who, through his or her actions, perceives and interprets the conflict by deploying all of his or her cognitive and emotional strategies to control, manage and govern the conflict itself. The attention, in this paper, is not so much directed toward the analysis of such strategies but toward *how* they arise, mutually intertwine, and are organized into listening and discussing to recognize and overcome conflict.

The intention of this paper is not to analyze "*The Words to Say It*" (M. Cardinal 2001) but to reason regarding how those words are attained. For this purpose, we will examine the manner in which we construe perceptual evaluation matrices – that is, the almost-often-implicit interpretative frameworks – of experiences perceived and lived in one's own cultural context. Not all issues will be studied exhaustively, but those that will be considered could reveal something more about dialogue or could at least allow us to view them from a different perspective.

## 10.4 The Re-signification of the Body

Let us start with the body and with how it has been "treated" in our western culture because I believe that it is crucial to give it a different place within our implicit, as well as explicit, knowledge. Looking at the body through different lenses to redefine it, in my opinion, is not a mere intellectual exercise; rather, it has enormous implications for our attempts to show to the extent to which the body is involved in recognition of the self in the other and of the other in the self. However, it is also essential for the identification of some elements in the process of generating conflicts, which by doing so itself has the potential to resolve problems.

Actually, the history of Western thought is characterized by an attempt to reconcile opposites: particular vs. universal; relative vs absolute; contingent vs necessary; unique vs. multiple; real vs ideal; and mind vs. body. Taking a closer look, each conflict within such "ambi-valences" manifests, materializes and explicates itself as an "equi-valence" (Galimberti 2002). However, if every single domain can take on a value that is equivalent to its opposite, it follows that it is only a matter of *prevalence*, that is, a matter of attributing a higher value to one domain than to another one.

Today, the discourse on the mind-body relationship and the resulting implications for psychology carry particular connotations because, following the extraordinary

development of neuroscience, there is a strong need for a *unitary understanding of the human individual*.

Starting from a new (or very ancient) signification of the body, we are likely today to resolve the dilemma – to see the body *as being ambi-valent*, which means that it is possible that political economy no longer regards the body as a workforce, sex economy primarily as a source of pleasure, medical economy as a disease in need of treatment, sign economy as a vehicle of meanings, or religious economy as a body in need of salvation. Actually, the body, by removing the *referent* from all these codes, becomes ambivalent in itself; in other words, *it is one thing but also the other* (Galimberti 2002: 21). Psychology has to come to terms with this fact by tracing in the etymology of the word *psyche* Plato's teaching, which identified in it the place of the recognition of the subject's unity and identity: "This place of identification already contains the principle of separation, since, as self-consciousness, the psyche starts to think by itself, and therefore to separate itself from its corporeality. The first metaphysical operation was a psychological operation" (Galimberti 2002: 22).

Historically, the term *metaphysics* originated from the need to identify Aristotle's writings, which were arranged after (*metà*) those on physics (*tàphysikà*), therefore bearing a classificatory meaning. Later, metaphysics acquired the meaning of the science of *absolute reality*, representing the immutable and eternal, as opposed to nature in its mutability and transience.

The separation of mind and body becomes radical with Descartes, who clearly distinguished between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, where the body is conceived of as an *object* that, as such, is governed by physical and mechanical laws, like any object. The *res cogitans*, or soul or mind, in its turn, because it is free from the body, becomes pure intellect, which expresses itself at the highest level through mathematical rigor. No longer is the observation of nature necessary in order to know it with all its differences and multiplicities but a reduction of reality to mathematical indicators.

In Descartes's view, the mind is an isolated disembodied entity, which can have access only to itself. Therefore, the other minds – i.e., persons – to establish relations, must overcome this gap or distance. Further, this distance also persists in the knowledge of and relation with the world that surrounds others. Through a process of abstraction from the experience, therefore, an ideal pole is constructed *a priori*, which has the function of being the norm for the real. The body, separated from the mind, begins its story as a sum of its parts without *interiority*.

Damasio stated that the main topic of *Descartes' Error* is the relationship between reason and emotions: "Emotion, feeling and biological regulation all play a role in human reason" (Damasio 1995: 5). From his studies of neurological patients affected by deficits in decisional activity associated with emotional disorders, the hypothesis advanced by Damasio (known as the somatic marker hypothesis) is that emotions are part of the reasoning circuit and – contrary to what is usually taken for assumed – they contribute to the process of reasoning, rather than being necessarily an obstacle. The body is divided into systems that are subaltern to reason.

Nevertheless, today in medical economy, as Galimberti defines it, the practice of focusing on the disease, rather than on the patient and his or her entire body, still prevails, and observation of the patient is not based on his or her biography but on the objectivity of his or her symptomatic signs. Such signs do not refer to an environment or to a multiplicity of habits in which a person could recognize him- or herself but to a constellation of signs that offer a clinical picture and thus allow for a classification that does not consider the individual differences of *that* person; therefore, they fade or disappear.

From a philosophical viewpoint, phenomenology, above all, has attempted not only to mend the "pieces" of the body but also to re-establish an alliance with the world. Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception* wrote, "For if it's true that I am conscious of my body via the world and if my body is the unperceived term at the center of the world toward which every object turns its face, then it is true for the same reason that my body is the pivot of the world, and in this sense I am conscious of the world through my body" (Merleau-Ponty 1980: 84).

The above means that the nature of the body is *intentionally open* to the world and its environment.

## 10.5 Intentions

We decided to consider the complex and widely investigated concept of intention because we believe that it represents one of the crucial aspects of the second person in the theory of mind, as well as because of the links that this concept has with other research constructs to which we refer in this discussion: the dynamic view of intersubjectivity, based on the recent discovery of mirror neurons and the concepts of implicit knowledge and now moments, which constitute the results of the extensive research conducted by Daniel Stern. Moreover, the second person in the theory of mind conceives of intention as "embodied", linked to the action and to a *response* to the action. Intention arises in an interactive context or in a relationship that gives it a meaning. It is a "we-centric" vision of intention (Ammanniti and Gallese 2014), which considers the interaction with the Other in the plural not the singular (Buber 1994).

## 10.6 Other Conceptions of Intentions

The concept of intention has been expressed in many forms and varieties. From a naive perspective, intention coincides with the "why", the reason that drives behaviors, actions and stories. In psychoanalysis, it is desire; in ethology, it is motivation, in cybernetics; it is the aim and its value. In all cases, intentions are always present and act as driving forces behind any action, story or mental activity.

Generally speaking, in psychology, intentions are conceived as determiners of our actions. They organize our mental plans, the function of which is to achieve certain defined objectives. This point of view is in keeping with Descartes' view of the world and knowledge. If we adopt this viewpoint, it becomes problematic to explain how people can establish shared engagement with the others' intentions if, every time this shared engagement occurs, there is the need to formulate some attributions and hypotheses about it. In essence, intentions are considered individual mental representations directed toward desired situations, and as such, they do not exist until considered. However, if intentions are not observable, they are not knowable, or they can be known through inferential processes. Therefore, it becomes difficult either to determine the moment at which they originate at the proprioceptive experience level or to determine when a person becomes aware of others' intentions.

Reasoning about intentionality, Gallagher argued that it is a crucial feature of consciousness and focused on explaining intentionality from the perspective of a first person, that is, from the point of view of the subject. He attempted to provide a description of the structures of conscious intentionality through an analysis of the relationship between mind and world, rather than the relationship between mind and brain (Gallagher and Zahavi 2009). The purpose of the present study is to show how a person sees another body and recognizes a *similarity* with him- or herself or something of him- or herself. It is through the analogy of our experience that we infer that other bodies might have mental states and representations of a similar nature. However, if this were the only way by which we come to know others and establish a relationship with the world, it would not only be a hyper-generalization of the individual experience, but it would also indicate that we are proposing Cartesian dualism once more. Because there is no direct access to other minds, interaction with the others is possible only through the mental representations originating and developing from subjective experience about the self.

Wittgenstein, in his deep reflections on the nature of language, strongly opposed the idea that "privileged access to the self" was the origin of knowledge of the mind. According to his arguments, *sharing mental experiences is a prerequisite* and not a consequence of knowing one's own mental states. In a famous passage of his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein suggested,

> Words are connected with the primitive, natural expressions of sensation and used in their place. A child has hurt himself and he cries; then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain-behavior. "So you are saying that the word 'pain' really means crying?" – On the contrary, the verbal expression of pain replaces, it does not describe, that of crying (1967, § 244).

It is only owing to our ability to share pain as a part of our interpersonal engagement that it becomes an entity – something that later can be named and shared.

A first-person approach, i.e., an approach that goes through the self to know the other, emphasizes the need to experience mental states to recognize them in others.

In developmental psychology, there are many versions of the theory of mind, but all of them have in common the idea that, to reach others' minds, a rational deductive mode is necessary. To grasp aspects of a psychological nature, we require a process of abstraction (whether concepts, hypotheses or theories) starting from sensorial data, which otherwise would be meaningless. Having a theory or any other reflexive skill becomes a prerequisite for interacting actively with others' minds and for knowing one's own mind as well. Basically, the pre-theoretical child cannot understand the intentions and meanings of others' actions. These would be perceived only as a sequence of behavioral patterns and, for this reason, the pre-theoretical child could neither play with nor respond to the psychological states of the other.

## 10.7 The Second-Person Perspective Approach in the Theory of Mind

There is, however, another way of understanding intentions: they can be immediately perceived through active participation in intersubjective exchange (Reddy 2010). This conception is less individualistic because it is grounded in *interaction* and in the idea of *directionality* toward an *object*. It is less disembodied because it emphasizes the *centrality of the body*, and it applies the French phenomenological approach as an epistemological reference (Merleau-Ponty 1980; Sartre 1992; Husserl 1965), as well as a more ecological and systemic view of the person (Bateson 1976, 1984).

This approach allows for an explanation of "how the developing 'organism' can perceive intentional actions as such and therefore can engage with them without having to 'attribute' or project intentions on to 'outward aspects of behavior" (Reddy 2010: 153). In a condition of direct engagement or in the *second person*, other people's intentions might be perceived *through the emotional/perception/proprioception of their intentions*.

We said that, in developmental psychology, the intentions are something similar to mental plans, resulting in *actions* aimed at fulfilling desires and goals. Underlying this conception is a dimension that involves the future, something that has not yet happened. Three-year-old children have difficulties in distinguishing between "what is going to happen" and "what is happening". This aspect is, however, in contrast with the observation of the behaviors of 2-/3-month-old infants, who seem able to anticipate the intentional actions of the caregiver even when they are not manifested (Reddy 2010). Intentions seem to be much more likely to emerge *during* actions, and they are often negotiated by the interacting agents. Therefore, the origins and causes of the intentions seem to be closely connected.

When we consider intentions as directionality toward an object and *actions* as intentional, it means that they are not only perceived and understood in a specific context, but they are also *something* in which others can actively *participate*.

## 10.8 Perceiving Intentions

Whether they are conceived as mental representations that lead to actions or as actions in themselves, intentions are influenced and constrained by the body, the surrounding environment, and the objects toward which they are directed. The intention of taking, giving or reaching something arises in a relationship that is organized among the person who has that intention, the object, and the recipient. No inference is needed. The significance of the intention depends on the relevance assigned by the body that perceives it and by its abilities and experience (Reddy 2010). If we attempt to trace a phylogenetic and ontogenetic origin of interpersonal intentions, they must not only be perceived by others but must also be capable of eliciting responses.

We will not focus on the five likely not exhaustive characteristics of intentional actions – directionality, form, singularity, voluntariness, expectation of change – because, within the scope of this essay, two aspects of intentional actions are more relevant: the *context* in which they occur and the engagement in *participation*.

The meaning of intentions is clarified by the context in which they are expressed. The context is not a mere background on which actions are inscribed. The acts of kissing or holding out one's hand to someone acquire specific meanings because of the events preceding these actions. Considering the time-space context reveals something more about the meaning of specific intentions. Additionally, intentions can be inferred from the context, if the people who perceive them participate actively. There must be involvement; in other words, it is essential to experience the intentional actions of someone else as if they were directed toward one's self.

This leads us to consider another issue: "There is an openness – an incompleteness in intentional actions which invites participation from others" (Reddy 2010: 162). This point is especially true when intentional actions are addressed to other persons, and the openness is justified by the response to a specific action being able to be changed, transformed according to the *way* in which the actors involved participate in the interaction. Sometimes only simple muscle tension can make a child cry, when the caregiver attempts to pick him or her up. Certainly, the first experience that a newborn child has of others' intentional actions involves the perception and memory of their appearance and the context in which they occur, as well as their motivations and emotions. Intentions influence others and can be affected by others: intentional actions ask for a response, and for this reason, they lead to forms of active engagement.

## 10.9 Is Language Necessary to Be Aware of Intentions?

Now we will focus on the *awareness* of intentional actions. According to Reddy, newborn infants imitate simple intentional actions and act on them: they respond and refer to them and even provoke actions if the adult stops doing them. Starting

from 2 months old, infants are able to distinguish between the mechanical and the intentional nature of actions, thus showing the ability to imitate the actions of a human being and not those of a mechanic toy (Reddy 2010: 187). In either case, imitation tells us something either about the motivations that lead infants to become engaged with other people or about the nature and the extent of the awareness they have of other people's intentions. Actual imitative exchanges of a conversational type can be observed in infants. It is well known that autistic children have difficulties in imitating because they lack the ability to identify themselves with the other.

When infants are 8/9 months old, they start to grasp others' intentions through words and tone of voice, even at a certain physical distance – i.e., without immediate involvement. Typically, the intentions of adults are aimed at controlling babies' behaviors. Adults attempt to control the intentions of children at a distance, instead of intervening physically. Autistic children show little interest in others' intentions. Special intensive programs, based on reinforcements and negotiation of awards, are designed for these children, who typically present difficulty in obeying, to promote their cooperation. This aspect implies, however, a type of responsiveness and obedience that are less flexible and spontaneous than authentic interpersonal engagement.

What are the elements of authentic interpersonal engagement that lead to a progressive development of awareness? According to Reddy, playing, joking, and teasing are activities in which "[…] each partner is drawing the other persons into their intentions" (Reddy 2010: 176). Everyone knows the game of peek-a-boo. At every stage in the interaction with their child, mothers rely on the perception of the child's emotional response, although unconsciously. They start the game with emphasis, repeating specific sequences of actions, which become events that are not only important but also familiar. After 2 months, the sequence becomes predictable and, therefore, acquired. A mother acts responsively during the interactive game as she evokes and manages the emotional reactions of the child.

> The mother's intention is felt by the infant because of the engagement, not in imitation, but through the infant's own response". When infants explore or play with their parents' actions or more deliberately tease them, a similar process (though not with a remotely didactic function) is apparent (Reddy 2010: 177).

Hypothesizing that the elements of intentional actions have *not* only a cognitive nature suggests that, in the process of awareness, even the emotional-affective dimension comes into play. As the second person in the theory of mind suggests, children experience intentions through those *actions* that are specifically addressed to their selves. At first, others' intentions are understood by experiencing them in the first person, that is, feeling the action in one's own body. Later, the child, by perceiving others' intentions as directed toward him- or herself, experiences them in the second person, through the subjective response evoked. Then, only gradually are intentions considered as abstract entities that are conceptually nameable, that is, in the third person. In other words, intentions are completely embodied in actions, and actions are perceivable in the actions of the world. In any case, *reciprocity* is fundamental.

## 10.10 Intersubjectivity and Neuroscience

Body, intention, action, openness, awareness, participation and reciprocity are the dimensions through which the human psyche is built and consolidated owing to an inter-subjective feedback loop between the self and the other. A relational conception of the mind emerges, which finds its nourishment and its possibilities for development through continuous interaction with the other.

In the domain of neuroscience, in early 2000 at the University of Parma, a team of researchers, including Giacomo Rizzolatti and Vittorio Gallese, discovered the existence of mirror neurons, which have the property of becoming active not only when an action is directly performed but also when observing an action performed by other people. This mirroring ability involves motor, perceptual and emotional spheres. A person can understand and feel what other people do and feel only by imitating and reproducing the others' actions and emotions with his or her own body. Gallese defines this process "*embodied simulation*".

"In the beginning is relation – as category of being, readiness, grasping form, mould for the soul; it is the *a priori* of relation, *the inborn Thou*" (Buber 1994: 38–9).

It is remarkable and, at the same time, very interesting that a neuroscientist such as Vittorio Gallese refers to this old intuition by Buber (from 1994), which the philosopher and theologian expressed in his work *Das DialogischePrinzip*. It is like glimpsing a new alliance between human sciences and natural sciences. Because the human being participates simultaneously in nature and culture and is the subject of history and of relations with the world, this type of alliance is really necessary. After all, we have seen how Reddy herself, to substantiate her empirical research and observations on the second person in the theory of mind, made explicit reference not only to Buber's work but also to phenomenological constructs, such as Husserl's or other French philosophers'.

Surely, to contextualize Buber's thought within a contemporary cognitive neuroscientific perspective, we could postulate that, if the relation is ontologically primary,

> The *Thou* could be initially viewed as the crystallization of the outcome of the appetitive motivational (or seeking) system (see Panksepp 1998; Solms, Panksepp 2012), coupled with a relationally programmed motor system (Gallese 2000; Rizzolatti and Gallese 1997; Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia 2006). Such a basic 'package' would enable the parallel genesis of the I and of the thing (Ammanniti and Gallese 2014: 9).

Because different types of emotional involvement are possible, what we perceive can vary depending on the degree and typology of participation. However, we can relate to others in the plural. There are at least two types of *other*. The first type concerns the cases in which we use the second person, addressing others and them addressing us, using the pronoun you. The second type is when we use the third person to talk about others and them about us using *he, she* or *it*. The latter mode is typical of an external observer. The third-person perspective is aimed at objectifying the content of our perceptions and predictions, reflecting and forming judgments, categorizing actions, emotions and sensations. What distinguishes these relations is

not their object but the specific relational *style* of the *I*. We can relate to another human being in the same manner that we do when addressing inanimate objects, and by analogy, we can relate to inanimate objects, such as a landscape or a 'work of art', as if it were a human being. What changes is our *attitudetoward* the object. Moreover, the type of relation with the same object can change at different times, and this disengagement from active and engaging participation provides knowledge with a valuable dimension. Even when exchanges of glances and mutual responsiveness are intense, there are moments in which attention is diverted and then turned to mutual engagement once again. This element is true even in 2-month old babies, who sometimes stop being attuned to adults (Reddy 2010).

## 10.11 Embodied Simulation

When engagement with others occurs in a second-person perspective, we are attuned to an intentional relation displayed by someone else (Gallese 2005), which means that others' actions, emotions and sensations are not unknown to us because we have the same actions, emotions and sensations. We can adopt a new approach to intersubjectivity by analyzing the neural bases of our ability to be connected to others' intentional relations. This connection enables acknowledgment of the other as a bodily self, exactly like ourselves – much more than a different representational system.

The neurophysiological study of the premotor cortex and posterior parietal cortex of macaques showed that the motor cortical system plays an important role in cognition. Such a system is functionally organized in terms of *motor purposes*. Area F5, lying within the frontal lobe of the brain anterior to the ventral premotor cortex, controls the movements of the hands and mouth (Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia 2006). The activation of most F5 neurons, like those of other regions of the cortical motor system, is triggered during the execution of movements linked to specific motor goals: grasping, tearing, and manipulating objects (Ammanniti and Gallese 2014). Moreover, a second category of motor neurons in area F5 consists of multimodal neurons, called *mirror neurons*. These neurons discharge when the monkey observes the same or a similar action performed by another individual (Rizzolatti and Gallese 1997).

Interestingly, the intensity of F5 mirror neuron discharges is much stronger during the execution of the action than during observation, indicating that the mirroring mechanism is not *opaque* to the issue of agency, that is, the issue of *who* is the agent and *who* is the observer within the dyadic social relationship (Ammanniti and Gallese 2014: 10). Surely, the presence of the mirroring mechanism, both in primates and in human brains, leads one to posit, either from a phylogenetic or ontogenetic viewpoint, a *motor cognition* from which human intersubjectivity arises. Gallese stated, "We do not necessarily need to meta-represent in propositional format the intentions of others to understand them. Motor goals and intentions are part of the vocabulary being spoken by the motor system" (Ammanniti and Gallese 2014: 14).

## 10.12 Mirror Neurons and Emotions

The mirroring mechanism does not work only in detecting the intentionality of actions, but it is involved also in the capacity of sharing emotions and feelings with others (Gallese 2003a, b; Goldman and Gallese 2000). When perceiving emotions in someone else's facial expressions, the observer's facial muscles activate in a similar manner and with a level of intensity that is proportional to the actors' empathic nature (Ammanniti and Gallese 2014; Sonnby-Borgstrom 2002). The feeling perceived is first constituted by and directly understood through the activation of the same neural circuits, constituting the primacy of intersubjectivity, a we-centric dimension, on which our sensory and emotional experiences are based. It is the otherness of others that ensures the objectivity that we normally attribute to reality (Husserl 1960, 1965; Zahavi 2001).

If we consider the ontogenetic point of view, we observe that newborns are able to reproduce facial gestures (Legerstee 2007; Meltzoff and Moore 1992). Between 5 and 8 weeks old, infants can mimic the movements of tongue protrusion if an adult performs such an action. In contrast, this response does not occur when the action is performed by a puppet or a toy robot (Legerstee 1991), which shows a selective neonatal behavior, as well as the early social nature of children, who are prepared to relate to their caretakers through imitation and affective attunement.

Legerstee suggested, "[…] infants communicate with eye contact, facial expressions, vocalizations, and gestures, while assimilating the rhythm of their interactions to that of their caretakers" (2009: 2). For example, infants show, through their body movements, a conversational structure (think of breastfeeding) based on an alternation of roles. Moreover, as Reddy showed, preverbal children, during social interaction, display self-conscious emotions, such as embarrassment, shyness, and pride. Reddy stated,

> […] the emotions typically called self-conscious are rooted in perceptions of the others' attention and emotion rather than in thoughts about the self. […] that the so-called secondary emotions are in fact the primary movers in the development of conceptualization of the self seems more plausible (2010: 148).

## 10.13 Implicit Knowledge and the Now Moment

Returning to the body, although throughout this paper it has been sometimes the protagonist and sometimes a meaningful background, we would like to quote from Daniel Stern's *ThePresent Moment*:

> Babies do not communicate in the verbal explicit register until after 18 months or so, when they begin to talk. Accordingly, all the rich, analogically nuanced, social and affective interactions that take place in the first 18 months of life occur, by default, in the implicit nonverbal domain. Additionally, all the considerable knowledge that the baby acquires about what to expect from people, how to address them, how to feel about them, and how to

> be-with them, falls into this nonverbal domain. (Nature was wise to not introduce babies to symbolic language until after 18 months, so they would have enough time to learn how the human world really works without the distraction and complication of words – but with the help of the music of language [Stern 1987:1989] (Stern 2005: 109).

Such social and affective interactions, which trigger mental processes of which they are both stimulus and nourishment, occur in the wide area of unconscious experience and learning that developmental psychologists call *implicit relational knowledge*. Bowlby's "Internal Working Models" (1975), Traverthen's "relational webs" (1993), and Stern's "schemas-of-being-with" (1987) all make reference to implicit relational knowledge.

The implicit dimension permeates the whole relationality. In fact, in each communicative act, we can distinguish between a level of content, which is explicit and declarative, and a relational level, defined mainly by non-verbal, analogic and emotional language. These data related to learning essentially correspond to affective and emotional memories and are stored in what neurophysiologists define as *implicit memory*, which is neurobiologically located in the subcortical nuclei, specifically in the amygdala. Implicit memory continues to work even when explicit memory emerges: "Rather than implicit relational knowing shifting into explicit knowledge with development, the two live side by side and continue to grow throughout life" (Stern 2005: 113).

In his research, Stern referred to intersubjectivity in general and to psychotherapeutic intersubjectivity in particular. His speculations, however, can also be used to reason about some implicit aspects of dialogue, conversation and communication. In a conversation between friends or in a dialogue between a student and a teacher, the explicit dimension corresponds to reflection expressed through verbalization, namely a linguistic report. Stern recognized its importance, yet he suggested that the role of implicit original experience has long been neglected. Regarding verbalization of this experience, Gallagher and Zahavi wrote:

> Can reflection make the pre-reflective dimension accessible to us or does it rather distort it radically? Does the reflective modification involve a necessary supplementation or an inevitable loss? On the one hand, we have the view that reflection merely copies or mirrors pre-reflective experience faithfully, and on the other, we have the view that reflection distorts lived experience. The middle course is to recognize that reflection involves a gain and a loss (2009: 63).

For Stern, self-reflective capacity and the onset of language are two sides of the same coin. Language modifies implicit experience, as phenomenology maintains: "Language forces a space between interpersonal experience as lived and as represented" (Stern 1987: 180).

Implicit experience is pre-reflective; it does not use concepts or symbols, and it includes procedural knowledge. Infants acquire such knowledge by imitation and repetition of observed behaviors. Implicit knowing is a very complex phenomenon and "[…] not solely concerned with motor procedures. It also includes affects, expectations, shifts in activation and motivation, and styles of thought – all of which can happen during the few seconds of a present moment" (Stern 2005: 114).

If implicit knowledge is pre-reflective and has a relational nature, the *present* for Sterns becomes a privileged time for experience, in which an authentic phenomenological, implicit, direct, non-verbally mediated experience becomes possible. It is the time for interpersonal relationship and change *par excellence*.

## 10.14 Toward Dialogue

We have repeatedly referred to two aspects that characterize an authentic dialogue capable of producing change: openness and mutual recognition. Both concepts are difficult to define and might be considered characteristics of the relationship, rather than of the individual. Dialogue and conversation are not predefined or predetermined; rather, they are capable of taking directions that cannot be predicted (Grice 1993; Duranti 2000, 2007). It is exactly this unpredictable nature of dialogue that enables participants to remain *active* in engagement with both the social and physical world. Buber, for example, discussing dialogue, emphasized some aspects of its being opened and a powerful tool for change:

> Now for what I call dialogue, there is essentially necessary the moment of surprise […] the whole charm […] is that I do not know and cannot know what my partner will do. I'm surprised by what he does and on this surprise the whole play is based (Anderson and Cissna 1997: 71).

When there is *openness*, the new, the surprise, or the unexpected can arise and characterize the dialogue with gratifying and conflicting aspects. In any case, dialogue creates what Stern called "lived story", i.e., a non-verbal story that does not necessarily need to be rendered into language: "It is of very short duration compared to most stories. It is made up of feelings that unfold, a sort of untold emotional narrative" (Stern 2005: 55).

Preverbal children are able to organize their experiences into a lived story and into a narrative format; that is, they experience and analyze the human world in terms of *intentions* (Stern 2005; Bruner 1992). We must consider that communicative intentions and meanings are not defined *a priori*, before communication occurs; rather, they unfold and change during the interactive process. Thus, they must be considered part of the interactive process itself (Shotter 1998; Fogel 1993).

The "now moment", as a lived story, can also be shared. It is the manner in which intersubjectivity is shaped. When two persons participate in each other's lived stories, or another story emerges, they establish a different type of human contact. It is an experience lived by each of the partners; namely, each partner participates intuitively in the other's experience, thus creating a new intersubjective field capable of changing the relationship.

> The [now or present] moment enters a special form of consciousness and is encoded in memory. And importantly, it rewrites the past. Change in psychotherapy (or any relationship) occurs by way of these nonlinear leaps in the ways-of-being-with another (Stern 2005: 22).

A final underlying point must be defined, although it is understood in what has been discussed previously. The authenticity of dialogue is also defined through the recognition and confirmation by others. Actually, in every interactive exchange, there is the risk of not being recognized by the other: only when the other recognizes us do we have the confirmation of being ourselves. If the conditions of engagement in early childhood display the characteristics of openness toward the other and, at the same time, of recognition by the other, then we can understand the effects that second-person relationships have on the lives of infants and adults.

Let us conclude with Stern's words:

> We are capable of 'reading' other people's intentions and feeling within our bodies […] we can directly feel something very like what they are feeling. […] Not in any mystical way, but from watching their face, movements, and posture, hearing the tone of their voice, and noticing the immediate context for their behavior (Stern 2005: 75–76).

## 10.15 Conclusion

Through the reflections developed in this paper, we attempted to reconcile two apparently opposing dimensions: conflict and dialogue. Paradoxically, throughout the essay, both dimensions remain opaque, as if they were placed in antithetical spaces on a large chessboard between two players who are not always aware of the conflict (which must be recognized as such) but are more often unaware of the *moves* chosen, the strategies adopted and their possible consequences. Dialogue is viewed as a possible meeting point, a space where *private lived experience is made public*. A dialogue, when it is *authentic*, is like an open game: the more we value our interlocutors, seeing them as clever and deserving our attention, the more the communicative process transforms from a unilateral way of listening to the Other, which establishes a process of unequal reciprocity, to a way of listening in which reciprocity occurs between equals, thus welcoming and valuing the complexity and diversity of the Other. In a dialogue, claiming the right to speak is useless without the right to *listen*. The right to speak by itself, in a complex and conflicting situation, does nothing but increase distress. Mutual listening transforms differences of opinions and misunderstandings into resources for better reciprocal understanding, as well as for a better understanding of the situation being experienced. An authentic dialogue enables both partners to play central roles because in them the Other is never taken for granted, and people recognize and address each other as *persons*, with their own stories, cultures, and narratives. Distressing situations should represent a starting point for new and never-definitive forms of understanding. In this way, the new (or old) words that should organize our interactions can become flexible, providing the self-awareness of the implicit schemata by which we interpret the world and ability to name emotions as a cue to know the world, others, and ourselves. Being always open to possible new worlds becomes the basis on which to draw deep listening and to find the words that may make the dialogue authentic.

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My scientific interest concerns mainly the communicative dynamics analysed in terms of active listening and trust in school contexts and in daily life situations.

# Chapter 11
# Analytic Controversies

**Aviram Sariel**

**Abstract** Marcelo Dascal's Theory Of Controversies is bundled with historical narratives, sometimes implicit, which emphasizes the role of dichotomist distinctions between Discussions and Disputes as an intermediate stepping-stone on the way to the ternary structure, which contains also Controversies. In the following paper, standard tools of the analytic trade, namely analysis of linguistic structure, are employed to propose a revised model of the dualist theory.

**Keywords** Controversies • Theory of controversies • Polemics • Argumentation • Argumentation theory • Dualism • Dascal • Buber • Gadamer

## 11.1 I-thou, I-it, and Controversies

> In human relations the important thing is, as we have seen, to experience the Thou truly as a Thou – i.e., not to overlook his claim but to let him really say something to us. Here is where openness belongs. But ultimately this openness does not exist only for the person who speaks; rather, anyone who listens is fundamentally open. Without such openness to one another there is no genuine human bond. (Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 1989: 355)

Let us read Gadamer and reflect on polemics. At first blush, it seems that the 'I-Thou' relation relates to polemic discussions but not only polemic discussions, since it also includes a certain type of agreement. In the same spirit, it may seem that the 'I-It' relation relates to Dascalian polemic *disputes* but not only polemic disputes, since it may also include its own form of agreement. As such, it seems that parties who practice 'I-Thou' would indeed end their polemic exchange by mutual understanding regarding the location and nature of the disagreement: they would screen

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the error out of their relationship, by endorsing either the point of view of one of them (or a new point of view now shared by both), which will be discovered as 'truer' or more valuable in some sense. On the other hand and in the same spirit, parties which are engaged in the 'I-It' relation are likely to come up with better understanding of their separation, and so on.

Therefore, the structures termed 'I-Thou' and 'I-It' are similar to *discussion/dispute* theories of polemic exchanges. These theories, of which much shall be said below, assume the existence of two fundamental relations, termed *discussion* and *dispute*. *Discussion* is related to rational and mutual criticism initiated by disagreement, which attempts to locate errors, and which is performed in a way accepted by both parties. *Dispute*, the other ideal pole, is something of a systematic negation of the characteristics of *discussion*: the disputing parties tend to disagree on the limitations of the inquiry, the definition of error, and so on. In other words, the disputing parties tend to deal not with truth but with power, or the attainment of victory. This is quite unlike the parties who engage in *discussion*: according to *discussion/dispute* theories, the discussing parties are involved in a joint investigation of truth. With this dualism in place, it is possible to formulate a *discussion/dispute* theory. An early formulation approaching such theory can be found in Plato, who distinguishes between rules of warfare which Greeks should practice between themselves, and rules of war applicable towards barbarian enemies (*The Republic*, V, 469c-470).

Let us return to Gadamer. Clearly, in this attempted reconstruction of a polemic theory, there is hardly a clue as to the position of the other party. That is, it is unclear if that party is employing a "Thou" relation towards "I", or if it treats the "I" as "It". Hence, it is theoretically possible that a person employing "I-Thou" relation, or inter-subjective intentionality, would come across a person who employs "I-It". It is possible that your Thou treats you like an It, or that you come across an It which treats you as a Thou. In other words, the polemic theory exemplified in the citation allows symmetric relations. A second spectrum of shades is associated with "I", a nontrivial choice of terminology. That is, in Gadamer's versions, the theory is associated with independence and autonomous identity, performance and ethics, necessary for the operation as 'I'. Furthermore, there are only two types of relations available within this framework: there is 'I-Thou', or *discussion* and 'I-It' (*dispute*). Therefore, this specific form of *discussion/dispute* theory, allows independent agents to partake in three types of polemic exchanges: (a) I-It vs I-It, (b) I-Thou vs I-Thou, (c) I-Thou vs I-It, and (d) I-It vs I-Thou. The first two types are symmetric, the third and fourth are asymmetric. The first two are quite like Dascal's *discussion* and *dispute*. Is Dascal's third mode of polemic exchange, *controversy*, somehow equivalent to the mixed, asymmetries of the later types?

Before tackling this question, there a result to be derived: *discussion/dispute* theories of polemic engagements were practiced by people whom we appreciate and even admire. But how are these views to be appreciated from within the theory of

controversies? In other words, can the Theory of Controversies undertake, in some abstract sense, a polemic exchange with its arch adversary?

## 11.2 The Theory of Controversies

Here is a brief reminder: as an alternative and expansion to *discussion/dispute* paradigm, and as a continuation of certain contributions offered by Leibniz towards the understanding and resolution of religious polemics,[1] Marcelo Dascal developed a theory of polemic exchanges known as the Theory of Controversies (TOC).[2] For Dascal and his successors, polemic exchanges are divided into three types. The first two are the *discussion* and *dispute* of the traditional paradigm, although their role is mainly taken as ideal poles.

In addition, a third polemic mode, termed '*controversy*', is proposed as central to the phenomenon of polemic exchange. In a controversial situation – in a *controversial* polemic exchange – the parties maintain their positions, but accept the possibility of the position of the other party, though to a lesser degree. As such, Dascal's controversy exists as a field of inventive investigation, and innovations and discoveries form its main cognitive products. As a historical phenomenon, a controversy may dissolve without the disagreement being resolved or solved in the classical senses, meaning without either victory or recognition of error. Therefore, the controversy may also re-surface. While controversy may come to pass following a logically clear disagreement, it makes an extensive use in a form of argumentation termed "soft rationality" or (with Leibniz) "soft logic". Soft rationality differs from "hard" deductive argumentation, most notably in its decision procedure, which takes into account claims including logical contradiction, or considered logically invalid or partially argued in a general sense. The metaphor proposed by Dascal is that of scales, in which contradicting arguments are weighted while acknowledging their mutual legitimacy.[3]

Unlike controversies, the Dascalian *discussion* represents a joint investigation which presupposes an agreement regarding certain baseline principles, both conceptual and phenomenological, and also regarding the methods used in the investigation, as well as its conclusions. The discussion ends with the identification of an error or when the divide between the parties is explained and the disparity solved. The Dascalian *dispute* reflects a situation in which there is no agreement on the general framework, goals, value of the dialog, or anything at all save for the fact of the disagreement itself. Hence, in the dispute the parties attempt to find and present claims and arguments which would fit conclusions known in advance, regardless of their reception by the other party. The dispute is therefore decided by factors,

[1] Leibniz & Dascal (2008), Chapter 2.

[2] Dascal (1998).

[3] Dascal (1987).

actions or powers external to the polemic exchange *per se*, and the manipulation of such powers is the goal of the speech acts performed by the parties. The cognitive gain of disputes is considered to be centered on identifying clear distinctions between the parties.[4]

Hence, the Theory of Controversies proposes an analytic framework that significantly expands the role of the middle zone, where a polemic exchange reshapes the world views of the parties by exploring the possibility of a redefinition of identity. That is, while in discussions the parties maintain a kind of joint identity, at least for the purposes of the polemic, and in disputes the parties characterize and acknowledge their differences, controversies are related to more fluid identities, whose aspects and characteristics are frequently reworked, and whose knowledge by the parties is furthered as the range of the polemic expands.

## 11.3 Listen!

I would like to start by noting a certain linguistic performance, that is, to the use of "listen" in the imperative; "listen!" As a linguistic phenomenon, it is hardly rare, singular or idiosyncratic: It is encoded in the Hebrew Bible ("listen, Israel"), and embedded in daily speech ("but, listen!"), and common to many languages, perhaps all languages. In a slightly modified form, it is even part of certain customary military drills ("attention!"). In the following, I will use some of these forms interchangeably, as manifestations of the same principle. My main point, however, is with "listen!", voiced in the context of a dialog. Essentially, it is a cry, an utterance followed by an unwritten period of silence. Essentially, therefore, it is a speech act which does not only demand listening, but in many ways brings it about. Though somewhat crude, it is considered effective. It challenges to boundaries of civilized conversation, informs us that there is more than one attitude present in the conversation, and sometimes hints there are severe disagreements between the parties.

Now, I argue that the meaningful and rational use of "listen" in the imperative should deserve our attention as theoreticians of polemic exchanges who study the Theory of Controversies.

## 11.4 Listening to Controversies

Clearly, in a *discussion*, there is no need to demand the other party to "listen!": discussion is all about open listening to the other party. Hence, the context of "listen!" is not a discussion. Somewhat naturally, *dispute* would mean the exact

[4] Dascal (1998) (above, fn3).

opposite. That is, there is no use in asking or commanding the other party to listen, since it does not listen anyway. Hence, if the choice of words is rational, the demand of focused attention is not supposed to occur in a discussion or a dispute.

Hence, "listen!" is a choice of words which – under suitable reservations – occurs only in a *controversy*. It is therefore a sign, or testimony, or a linguistic trace of a controversy. That is, there could clearly be controversies which do not make use of this choice of words. But if it is made, than – I think – we can safely assume that the polemic exchange we observe is a controversy. In a sense, this is a rather radical claim: if the argument is correct, than in these instances we do not need to know and understand the actual content of the polemic exchange we observe. These controversies could therefore be named 'Attention-Begging-Controversies', or ABC's, a special type of controversies, recognized as such by the demand for attention.

Clearly, ABC's are not unique in their ability to serve as testimonial signs independently of the content of the polemic exchange. In TOC, polemic gains may also serve as content-independent markers: *discussions* lead to identification and clarifications of errors, *disputes* produce clearer understanding of the differences between the parties, and *controversies* produce novel innovations and\or new discoveries. Polemic gains are applicable to all types of Dascalian polmic exchanges, and therefore are more general than ABC's as markers. However, polemic gains characterize an entire polemic exchange, or relatively long periods of such an exchange, while ABC's mark significantly shorter periods: a controversial moment as opposed to a controversial period. On the other hand, there is a clear limitation to the use of ABC as marker for controversies: imagine a polemic exchange consisting solely of ABC intervals: clearly, this exchange does not lead anywhere. While it does contain ABC intervals, it is neither a *discussion*, nor a *controversy*. Under extreme assumptions regarding context, it may perhaps fit as a fictitious *dispute* (imagine a power game won by the ability to cry 'listen!', and note that *any* exchange of words may mark a similar power game scenario, appropriately suited). Therefore, while ABC's can indeed mark a controversy, the controversy includes other performances besides an ABC interval.

## 11.5 Minutes of an Instantaneous Controversy: Demanding and Receiving Attention

Let us observe a possible scenario (though by no means necessary) for the occurrences of an ABC.

1. Let us assume that the parties are first in a joint *disputant* relation. In this mode, they do not actually listen to one another. However, the party which actually speaks uses this period of time so as to beg the other party to listen. That is, the speaking party cries "listen!" (or, sometimes, "listen, stupid!").
2. The next period is *discussionary*. In this period of time the other party – the one which was silent – could now speak up. But since the memory of the demand to

listen is still fresh, this party may say something like: "well, there is no need to yell: what did you want to say?"
3. Still in the *discussionary* mode, the first party now describes some argument or claim, while the second party listens.
4. The discussionary period is now over, and the second party is *disputing*. In this mode, in this relation to the other, there would be no listening. However, in the very recent past some listening did took place, and the stratagems and arguments to be made by the second party would be considerate of it.
5. The second party may now attempt to find a new direction of defense or attack, using the memories collected in the discussionary period.

Hence, in this specific scenario, the engagement resulted from successive (and symmetric) ***disputes*** and ***discussions*** may end up producing the cognitive gain which serves as testimonial sign, or trace, of a **controversy.**[5] Therefore, in the case of ABC's, ***controversy*** can be constructed from a proper mixture ***disputes*** and ***discussions***. More accurately, in the case of ABC-attested controversies, a very specific mixture of discussions and disputes may be what these controversies are made of, at least partially. In other words, while I argued before that ABC's cannot occur in rational *discussions* and *disputes*, I was using a language which referenced polemic exchanges in their entirety. However, ABC's can occur in instantaneous discussions and disputes, as a polemic move, justified by the possibility of alternating polemic attitudes.

## 11.6 A Controversy Regarding Controversies

Generalizing, I think it is possible, now, to consider discussions and disputes to be two polemic relations, which jointly make up the phenomenon known as controversy. Hence, we may debate with ourselves if controversy is indeed an independent human relation, or if it is a remarkable combination of the two ideal types previously identified by previous generations engaged in the study of polemics, whose work is to be classified as a *discussion/dispute* theory. That is, if confronted with Dascal's amazing result that large-scale incidence of either *discussion* or *dispute* were nearly never recorded, and with the logical possibility of *controversy* as an independent type of polemics, *discussion/dispute* theorists could, in principle, contain it within their worldview by arguing that controversy is a mixture of momentary discussions and momentary disputes.

This containment is not an easy task, since one also has to acknowledge that rarely if ever any of the two relations persists in time, meaning that their idealization would be non-realistic. Furthermore, the synchronization of the two relations is not

[5] I consider the controversial attitude – or controversial essence – as attested by successful new discoveries and inventions, but not limited only to successful undertaking. For the sake of the theoretical discussion, I assume that the efforts of the 'second party' are indeed successful.

accounted for in the description given above. Hence, it could be argued that it is unlikely. However, it does account for the way in which a ***discussion*** or ***dispute*** may transform into a ***controversy***. We therefore have a situation which calls for attention, and by the arguments presented above (regarding the demand of attention) it is therefore a controversial situation. It clearly needs to be further researched, hence it is a situation in which discoveries and innovations may occur, and arguments should be developed, deliberated and weighted.

We may also suspect that yet another theory of polemic exchanges may be relevant: one that argues that controversy is both a large-scale aggregate and an instantaneous human possibility to relate to the other. That is, that it is possible that the large-scale controversy – the one which results in innovative gains – may be sometime the result of long succession of controversial-moments, and sometimes the result of an elaborate and perhaps accidental mixture of discussions and disputes. That there is, in fact, a controversial attitude which exists in the microscale, while bearing enough similarity to the form of the polemic interaction on the more global scale. Indeed, this is exactly what we allowed when using the terms *discussion* and *dispute* both in the microscale and the macroscale.

This, I think, may provide grounds sufficient to answer the argument described above, in favor of *discussion/dispute* theories. The controversialist may propose that in the analysis of both discussions and disputes as momentary attitudes, the decision regarding the ways in which these attitudes came about is anything but analyzed. That is, both attitudes are supposed to simply occur without analyzing in detail the actual positions of the other party. In disputes, we are to negate these positions regardless of their content. In discussions, we are to pretend we have a framework sufficient to joint quest for truth, again without analyzing the other party in detail. Since those tremendously important decisions are taken a-priori to whatever occurs in the momentary episodes of the polemic exchange, they cannot be decided by the exchange itself: they are of a form of consideration which is neither disputive nor discussionary. In other words, the participants are likely to frame their attitudes towards the other party by applying a rudimentary form of soft logic, or controversial mood. What we just termed "attitudes" (discussionary, disputive) are necessarily widely varying results of a process of an internal controversy and internal use of soft logic. In the case of a disputiveattitude, the result was a seemingly clear identification of difference between the parties. In the case of a discussionary attitude, the result was a seemingly clear identification of unity. Furthermore, the controversialist may conclude, since the outcome of any exchange is unknown, both attitudes are essentially soft estimations of a macro scale, which operate in deciding a specific moment in the microscale. Hence, both soft logic *and* large scale reflexivity are present as the internal mechanisms of what we just termed "momentary" attitudes of discussion and dispute.

## 11.7 Conclusion

The controversialist rejoinder may be rebutted. *Discussion/dispute* theorists may point out the possibility of wholly random fixation of momentary attitudes, or any other extrinsic influences. They may point out that binary semantics are extremely powerful (say, by pointing towards binary computer files and binary computer codes): it is possible, therefore, that using, 'discussion' and 'dispute' to designate "idealized poles" means that these idealizations make an effective cognitive technology. It also implies that this technology is well suited to the study of and engagement in polemic exchanges. Pragmatically, this very situation is a good reason to accept them as truthful.

In response, the controversialist may point out to other possible semantics, based on fuzzier distinction between signs and references (say, the physics used in computers to *simulate* binary operation), which under the same pragmatic commitment entails accepting a controversialist framework as more truthful. My point here is not to argue in detail in favor of each of these arguments, proofs or stratagems, but to use them as loose placeholders, or soft exemplifiers, which show that the polemic– a polemic about polemics –may continue to expand, as controversies should.

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# Chapter 12
# The Paradox of Double-Bind Theory in Controversies: The Case of "Silence" in the Philosophical Questions that Abounded During the Eighteenth Century in Europe

**Leah Gruenpeter Gold**

**Abstract** The many controversies which take place in France during the eighteenth century and are usually viewed as the flag bearers of the revolution will be used by me to detect and prognosticate Double Bind situations which might shed a new light or add a different interpretation to some of the already known events. I will examine these events in light of the theory of controversies introduced by Marcelo Dascal as well as his contributions to Pragmatics. To detect the point in a controversy in which a Double Bind situation occurs offers an opportunity to untangle a stubborn knot, while applying a de-fixating antidote methodology. One of the speculations is a question I toy with for a while: Could silence be one of the detectors/cues for a Double Bind situation in intractable controversies.

**Keywords** Eighteenth century France • Argumentation strategies • Automated processes • Cognition • Context • Double Bind Theory • Intractable controversies • Paradox • Pragmatics • Silence • Special metaphors • Theory of controversies

## 12.1 Introduction

For more than 30 years Marcelo Dascal has been developing a typology of controversies claiming that such a typology is not only necessary but inherent to the goals the participants want to attain due to the paradoxical aspect of the discourse. This aspect as well as the goals of the controversies can be examined (with the aid of such a typology) while accessing the dynamic process of the controversies, where the examiner is prone to find paradoxes since the paradox is an inherent component

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of controversies. Following I quote two citations out of Marcelo Dascal's lecture "Observations sur la dynamique de controverses". These two citations emphasize the premise that the paradox is inherent in this type of communication, a communication which aims to win, persuade or resolve a conflict. I will focus on a specific kind of communication which can be defined as Double-Bind. In this situation one of the outcomes is a certain type of silence. In this specific typology I will be looking on only one part of the function of silence, which can be distinguished only in a dynamic observation by applying pragmatic principles. The role of silence, within this framework, is to persuade or to resolve the co-operative antagonistic conundrum. In other words, within this framework I will focus on the role of silence, which is derived from a certain type of paradoxical communication, which can be defined as a Double-Bind.

In this essay I will examine my hypothesis that paradoxical communication is not only common but inherent in the strategies that are used to control and oppress individuals, certain sectors of societies or societies as a whole. My approach to the dynamic process of controversies is based on Marcelo Dascal's point of view of the role and notion of interventions and strategies used in conversations as they are analysed in the study of pragmatics.[1] I will concentrate on the role and notion of "silence" in the dynamics of controversies and its complex interpretations by the participants of the controversy as well as by those who analyse the controversy if and when it reaches posterity.

I intend to take you along with me in my roller coaster experience when I embarked on this absolutely unpredictable quest. In a nutshell, I will develop my hypothesis by working out a step by step contribution towards a theory that is based largely on my research in visual pragmatics.

I will present the Double Bind Theory and how it was developed since this concept and the term was coined by Gregory Bateson and was developed with criteria in the theory of Paul Watzlawik on communication and pragmatics. I will mention R.D.Laing's expanded concept of the Double-Bind within the framework of "patient-doctor" relationship. Then I will briefly demonstrate the mechanism that allows creating double bind patterns following the methodology created by Carlos Sluzki and his team in 1967. I will mention briefly the Condorcet-Necker debate (1773–1774)

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[1] Ailleurs (Dascal 1989, 1990), fidèle à ma thèse (Dascal 1992, 1994) d'après laquelle l'enchaînement des interventions dans une conversation est avant tout d'ordre pragmatique, j'ai étudié les controverses de ce point de vue. J'ai relevé alors le rôle de la notion de "demande conversationnelle" (Dascal 1977) dans les controverses, l'existence d'interventions et de stratégies ("moves") typiquement employées dans une controverse, ainsi que l'exemplification de l'appel aux trois niveaux du contexte et du co-texte que nous avions distingués (Dascal et Weizman 1987). Ce type d'analyse a permis, entre autres choses, de comprendre l'interprétation que font les participants des silences des adversaires, l'appel souvent fait par eux à la notion de malentendu, les batailles au sujet du onus probandi et du status questionis. ainsi que d'autres propriétés pragmatiques typiques des controverses.

In M. Dascal, Observations sur la dynamique de controverses, TAU. Published 1995 in Cahiers de Linguistique **Française** 17 (2ème Partie), 99–121.

that initiates my quest into the notions of misplaced responsibility, no way out, silence or paranoia and spies. This controversy, where Condorcet was silenced, brought about the 1775 flour war and was the prelude to the French revolution.

I will map silence and silencing issues in the questions and controversies of the eighteenth century in Europe. Then I will develop two intriguing debates which are still very obscure and which were mainly misunderstood. I will try to detect where the silencing effect took place in the slavery controversy in France during the 2 years after 1789 when the eloquent society "Les amis des Noirs" had to close down due to accusations of its members' betrayal. Then I will concentrate on Bernard Mandeville's texts, which were part of the huge controversy at the Era regarding the nature of human kind. I will examine mainly Mandeville's paradoxical text that was published under a pseudonym in 1724, *A Modest Defense on Publick Stews*, and how it is related to Magdalenism and to the luxury debates. Then I will connect the outcome of this exposé with my research into René Magritte's visual pragmatics.

Following are two citations in M. Dascal, "Observations sur la dynamique de controverses", TAU which trace the direction of my speculations:

The aims of controversies:

> "Apparently each of the participants in a polemic exchange can have one (or more) of the following three aims: to win, to convince, or to solve the problem. One may also have other aims, of course, such as exposure of one's merits (rhetorical or otherwise), do written or voice exercises, succeed in an exam, get a price, humiliate opponents, etc. But these are incidental aims, and certainly not specific to the polemical exchange as such. The three main aims mentioned correspond roughly to the three types of polemical exchange that we discerned: Dispute, controversy and discussion, respectively".[2]

And the idea that paradox is an inherent component of controversies:

> "If the purpose of the controversy, therefore, is to convince or even lead to the solution of the problem under discussion, it seems - oddly - consistently miss its goal. One could of course explain this by appeal to the intervention of psychological or other factors that would operate against the success of the controversy, or by appeal to the inherent paradox of this kind of communication, both cooperative and antagonistic. But we can also try to see, using the empirical study of controversies, what still can be achieved through them - what are otherwise the goals, or at least the real functions performed by controversies".[3]

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[2] Apparemment chacun des participants dans un échange polémique peut avoir un (ou plusieurs) des trois buts suivants: vaincre, convaincre, ou résoudre le problème. Il peut aussi avoir d'autres buts, bien sûr, tels qu'exhiber ses mérites (rhétoriques ou autres), faire des exercices d'écriture ou de voix, réussir dans un examen, obtenir un prix, humilier l'adversaire, etc. Mais ce sont là des buts accessoires, et certainement pas spécifiques de l'échange polémique en tant que tel. Les trois buts principaux mentionnés correspondent à peu près aux trois types d'échange polémique que nous avons discernés: la dispute, la controverse, et la discussion, respectivement. M.Dacal, Observations sur la dynamique des controverses, TAU

[3] Si le but de la controverse, donc, est de convaincre ou même d'amener à la solution du problème en débat, elle semble – singulièrement – rater son but systématiquement. On pourrait bien sûr expliquer ce fait par appel à l'intervention de facteurs psychologiques ou autres qui opéreraient contre la réussite de la controverse, ou bien par appel au paradoxe intrinsèque de ce genre de communication, à la fois coopératif et antagonique. Mais on peut aussi essayer de voir, à l'aide de l'étude empirique des controverses, qu'est-ce qui quand même s'achève par leur moyen - quels sont donc, sinon les buts, au moins les fonctions réelles accomplies par les controverses. M.Dacal, Observations sur la dynamique des controverses, TAU

These two citations from M. Dascal's presentation in Tel Aviv University trace the direction of my following speculations: As a development of my research regarding paradoxical communications either verbal or non-verbal I will try to connect step by step the case of silence in controversies with the Double-Bind theory.

## 12.2 What Is the Double-Bind Theory?

Formulated in the 1950s by, amongst others, Gregory Bateson to create a theory about schizophrenia, Double-Bind theory is about relationships and what happens when important basic relationships are chronically subjected to invalidation through paradoxical communication. Such invalidation will cause damaged boundaries, its rejection is often disguised as acceptance. The verbal message may contradict the implied message therefore invalidates both.


'a sign which reads 'do not read this sign'.' Is a paradox - you cannot do what it asks and implies simultaneously (Image in Practice project of Nicolah Hay, MPhil Practical Submission, 3D artworks and animations, Portsmouth University UK http://www.illustration.port.ac.uk/IMAGES/CONTACT.HTM)

The term "Double-Bind" has entered the popular vocabulary and frequently refers to being in 'the horns of a dilemma' or to any difficult choice, but such usage ignores a crucial concept of the theory. The Double-Bind is not a difficult choice but rather the illusion of a choice within a relationship. The alternatives are illusory because they exist on different logical levels. For example, the command to "be spontaneous!" is paradoxical since spontaneous behaviour can-not be ordered; compliance with the order on one level violates it on another level. Such paradoxical injunctions are called binds not only because of the logical dilemmas they produce but also because they occur within an intensely important relationship that is essential to the subject' self-definition. In classic Double-Bind situations (the parent child is prototypic) the subject has no resource to clarification from outside the relationship. There is a prohibition against "leaving the field".

Since first presented in the 1956 paper "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia", by Gregory Bateson and others, the theory of the Double-Bind has been the subject of extensive comment, debate and amplifications. Today its significance is recognized

to be as a paradigm in behaviour and semiotic logic rather than as an etiology for schizophrenia.[4]

Looking more closely at the Double-Bind, Paul Watzlawick[5] has described four variations on the theme. The first and probably the most frequently used is what he calls the "Be spontaneous" paradox. A second variation of the Double-Bind involves a situation in which a person is chastised for a correct perception of the outside world. In this situation the child will learn to distrust his own sensory awareness in favour of the parent's assessment of the situation. The third variation on the theme is one in which a person is expected to have feelings other than those he actually experiences. The fourth variation, according to Watzlawick, occurs when we demand and prohibit at the same time. The parent who demands honesty while encouraging winning at any cost is placing the child in this kind of bind. The child is placed in a position of having to disobey in order to obey.

R.D. Laing (1927–1989), a Scottish psychiatrist, dealt extensively with mental illness – in particular, the experience of psychosis. Laing's views on the causes and treatment of serious mental dysfunction, greatly influenced by existential philosophy, ran counter to the psychiatric orthodoxy of the day by taking the expressed feelings of the individual patient or client as valid descriptions of lived experience rather than simply as symptoms of some separate or underlying disorder. Laing was associated with the anti-psychiatry movement, although he rejected the label. Laing expanded the view of the "Double-Bind" hypothesis put forth by Bateson and his team, and came up with a new concept to describe the highly complex situation that unfolds in the process of "going mad" - an "incompatible knot". Laing compared this to a situation where your right hand can exist but your left hand cannot. In this untenable position, something has got to give, and more often than not, what gives is psychological stability; a self-destruction sequence is set in motion.[6]

### *12.2.1 The Mechanism of Creating Double-Bind Patterns*

According to Carlos Sluzki[7] the Double-Bind has the following characteristics: (1) two or more persons; (2) repeated experience; (3) a primary negative injunction; (4) a secondary injunction conflicting with the first at a more abstract level, and like the

[4] Originally the paper is reprinted in Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of Mind (New York: Random House, 1972) pp. 201–227. A collection of significant essays and reviews of the theory can be found in the volume edited by Carlos Sluzki and Donald Ransom, Double Bind: the Foundations of the Communicational Approach to the Family (New York: Grune and Starthon, 1976) Also see the review article by David Olson, "Empirically Unbinding the Double Bind: Review of research and Conceptual Reformulations", Family Process II (1972), 69–94. Located in Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity by Alison Weber 1990, Princeton University Press, Princeton N. J. 1990 pp 45–46

[5] Paul Watzlawick, "A Review of the Double Bind Theory" was published first in Family Process Volume 2 Issue 1 in March 1963 pages 132–153

[6] See in R.D. Laing's *Self and Others*. Published in 1961 pages 125–129,131.

[7] Prof. (MD) Carlos Sluzki: Born in Argentina, lives in the US. He is currently Professor of Global and Community Health and of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University as well as Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at George Washington University School of Medicine

first enforced by punishments or signals which threaten survival; (5) a tertiary negative injunction prohibiting the victim from escaping the field; (6) finally, the complete set of ingredients is no longer necessary when the victim has learned to perceive his universe in double bind patterns. (1977: 209)[8]

Five methods for creating patterns of disqualification were detected:

In 1967 a team of researchers published the results of their further investigation of the Double-Bind concept. They proposed that the operational component of the Double-Bind should be its pattern of disqualification - the means by which one person's experience is invalidated as a result of the imposed bind. They cited five methods for disqualifying the previous communication. Evasion or a change of subject is the first method of disqualification. If the previous statement (a) does not clearly end a topic of discussion, and the next statement (b) does not acknowledge the switch of topics, then the second statement disqualifies the first statement:

(1). Evasion or a change of subject matter. (2). Sleight-of-hand (the response occurs but changes the content of the previous statement) (3). Change of frame -When the content of the previous metaphorical statement is changed to a literal level without acknowledging the change of frame (4). Status disqualification, happens when a person uses either personal status or superior knowledge to imply that the previous message is not valid. (5). Redundant questions are used to imply doubt or disagreement without openly stating it.

A Double-Bind situation can occur when one of the members in a relationship is experiencing confusion in defining relationships according to the perspective stated by Jay Hailey in his book *Strategies of Psychotherapy*:

> A person can avoid defining his relationship by negating any or all of the following four elements. He can (a) deny that *he* communicated something, (b) deny that something was communicated, (c) deny that it was communicated *to* the other person, or (d) deny the context in which it was communicated. (1990: 89)[9]

### *12.2.2 Mixed Messages*

People communicate at a multitude of levels. We can communicate with much more than just words. Our posture and gestures provide another level of communication as well as the pitch, tone and tempo of our speech. There are myriad possibilities for simultaneously relating to and denying relationship with another person. Schizophrenics are decidedly the masters at this craft, but examples abound in everyday life demonstrating how this is done.

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[8] Sluzki, Carlos E., Janet Beavin, Alejandro Tarnopolsky, and Eliseo Veron, "Transactional Disqualification: Research on the Double Bind." *The Interactional View: Studies at the Mental Research Institute, Palo Alto, 1965–1974*. Ed. Paul Watzlawick and John H. Weakland. New York: Norton, 1977. 208–227.

[9] Haley, Jay. *Strategies of Psychotherapy*. 2nd ed. Rockville: Triangle, 1990

It appears that, because of the early influence of repeatedly being caught in double binds, schizophrenics develop a defensive approach to communication which is tenacious in its ability to say something and say nothing at the same time. Their goal in life is not to be pinned down in any way. Unfortunately, they are as hopelessly trapped in their web of confusion as the people who come in contact with them.

Twenty years after the Double-Bind theory of schizophrenia was published, one of the authors, John Weakland, published a paper in which he suggested that perhaps they had focused too closely on schizophrenia. He suggested that the real significance of the theory was its viewpoint that behaviour and communication are closely tied. This theory was diametrically opposed to the established paradigm that emotional problems are a response to intra-psychic conflicts. Perhaps, he suggested, the Double-Bind has far reaching effects in many kinds of emotional disturbances, and its research should not be limited to cases with a diagnosis of schizophrenia. Carlos Sluzki seems to have come to the same conclusion in his paper with the provocative title *The Double Bind as a Universal Pathogenic Situation.*

I will not go into the recent study of the Double-Bind theory in social experiments and cases of logical inconsistencies resulted in discerned patterns. I would mention though that Double-Bind theory evolved into cybernetics, an interdisciplinary field, whose philosophical roots are to be found in the idea of *self-governance* which was formulated by Plato.

There are specific situations in societies where a mechanism of creating Double-Bind patterns is used. In order to be able to introduce the Double-Bind theory into the field of controversies I had to focus my research on those specific situations. I mapped several situations in which this mechanism is applied: situations of war, religious sects where a guru gets the persons to obey him or her without question, secret service, captives, trafficking in persons, slavery. I presume that there are more situations that can be detected but these eventually have allowed me to look for what I was searching in the specific period of the eighteenth century in Europe.

## 12.3 Pragmatic Approach to the Role and Function of "Silence" in Communication

### *12.3.1 How and Why Silence Is a Linguistic Act?*

In his article "Debating with myself and debating with others", Dascal points out that "The drive [is] to reduce cognitive dissonance in situations when there appears (sometimes only subjectively) no way out"'.[10]

An adequate demonstration of a "no way out" situation may be portrayed in the following example: When the coined oxymoron "Deafening Silence" is used it

[10] See Marcelo Dascal's article "Debating with myself and debating with others" in the book *Controveries and Subjectivity*, Pierluigi Barrotta and Marcelo Dascal eds.,John Benjamins Publishing, Amsterdam The Netherlands 2005, pp. 31–72.

means a lack of response that reveals something significant such as a refusal to participate in the game or a disapproval which cannot be stated otherwise.

Choosing the term "silence" as a detector for Double-Bind situations occurred to me when I examined one of the controversies that started in the eighteenth century which I researched in my last paper "Condorcet - satire, thought experiments and political economics". The place of "silence" is now thoroughly examined in the pragmatics field as well as in social anthropology and literary criticism, yet the study of silence as a notion with clear functions is rare both in linguistics and in other disciplines. The many controversies which take place in France during the eighteenth century and are usually viewed as the flag bearers of the revolution will be used by me to detect and prognosticate Double-Bind situations which might shade a new light or add a different interpretation to some of the already known events. To detect the point in a controversy in which a Double-Bind situation occurs offers an opportunity to untangle a stubborn knot, while applying a de-fixating antidote methodology.

### *12.3.2 Misplaced Responsibility – No Way Out – Silence/ Paranoia – Spies*

My research into the eighteenth century controversy regarding political economics and the silencing of Condorcet to the point that his name was obliterated from the history of Economics and the History of Political Economics led me to examine in more detail the period when Turgot, of the physiocratic school, was chosen by young Louis XVI to handle the economic troublesome situation of France in the year 1774 and just after 18 months in this ungrateful post Turgot was asked to leave, which Turgot did and never came back to the arena of Political Economics. I focused on this period to watch for elements that might convey the existence of a Double-Bind pattern, either in the controversy which was apparent in Eulogies, essays in journals, in pamphlets and in debates which occurred in the correspondences of the "salonniers" creating the context of this short period. I noticed that when Turgot was elected to office not only was he harassed by the parliamentarians (because his decrees would eventually reduce their means of livelihood) but also was attacked and subjected to all sorts of derogations from his "friends". However, nothing prepared me for the discovery of a specific "friend" of Turgot, Le Noire, who was elected chief of police at the same time as Turgot. Lenoir used a double method employing subversive means. Not only did he put in place a censorship system to avoid any "harmful" publications to the monarchy, controlled all commerce and used informers in every strata, but he also devised a method of monitoring all

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And Marcelo Dascal's cognitive theory of rhetoric and the use of the term 'Staesis' in "The marriage of pragmatics and rhetoric" in *Interpretation and Understanding* John Benjamins Publishing, Amsterdam The Netherlands 2003, pp 600–622

private correspondence and this achieved a "big brother" spying system that lasted until the twentieth century.[11]

Lenoir was not only the head of this spying service, titled "Cabinet Noir", which he perfected to become a secret service in the modern sense of the term. He also censured the press and tried to put into practice his personal hygienist concept of what should be social order. This explains the role of Lenoir, who opposed Turgot, in the Flour war in 1775. He understood that price liberalization would increase the price of wheat and would lead the people to riots in the street. The rest is history … As the head of Parisian Police, Lenoir would adopt dual method: acknowledge to contain, monitor without too much punishment. To do this, he must have helpers - Beaumarchais is one of them - and set up a whole network to control supply, control trade, track rapine and prohibit "bad books". Despite having more than a thousand books in his library, including the Encyclopedia of Diderot and d'Alembert, Lenoir made it his duty to censor print. In his memoirs, *Treaty and Defense of the Police*, he defends his personal concept of the hygienist doctrine where social order means to spy on everyone to protect everyone.[12]

## 12.4 Silence and Silencing in the Questions and Controversies of the Eighteenth Century

To examine and characterize a certain situation as a Double-Bind from a cultural and historical angle I mapped some of the questions that were controversial in the eighteenth century in Europe. In each of the fields (Theology, Education, Nature of

[11] The "cabinet noir", a specific service called the "Cabinet du secret des Postes" or the "Cabinet noir" was created for this purpose. It was provided with a special tool for reconstructing the original seal or cachet on a letter. With the decree of 10 August 1775, Louis XVI declared that private correspondence was inviolable from that time on and forbade the use of intercepted letters in a court of law. However, this measure did not put a stop to the censorship of private correspondence, a measure that was widely used by revolutionaries and Napoleon as well as political leaders during wartime.

[12] Quand les premiers troubles de la Guerre des Farines se manifestent le 3 mai, les journaux à la main et les gazettes lui reprochent sa mauvaise gestion des troubles populaires, pire, à l'instar de la *Correspondance littéraire secrète* de Metra (9 mai 1775), d'avoir participé à un complot, à un "pacte de famine" selon l'expression du temps. Il lui est demandé de donner sa démission le 4 mai. Joseph d'Albert, intendant de commerce chargé du département général des subsistances, « économiste très outré », proche de Turgot, est nommé pour lui succéder.

La crise passée, après la démission de Malesherbes, de Turgot et d'Albert, Lenoir retrouve la lieutenance générale de police le 17 juin 1776. Un mémoire imprimé adressé à Marie-Thérèse d'Autriche (*Détail de quelques établissements de la ville de Paris, demandé par sa majesté impériale, la reine de Hongrie*, 1780) témoigne de son activité dans le domaine de l'approvisionnement et de ses efforts en matière de salubrité et d'utilité publique. Il s'attelle à la création d'une école de boulangerie et d'ateliers d'ouvriers, à la création de halles au grain et de marché, marqué qu'il est par l'épisode de 1775. On lui doit aussi des mesures contre les incendies, pour la prohibition du cuivre et du plomb dans le transport et le conditionnement des denrées, l'établissement des piliers dans les carrières sud de Paris ainsi que l'éclairage continu des rues principales de la capitale. Toutes ses mesures révèlent les grandes lignes d'un programme hygiéniste et modernisateur qu'il défend dans ses *Mémoires*.

man, Science, Political Economy) were debates where the silence issue was manifested. Following is a list of several of these debates:

- Theological: Freedom vs. Providence - Rousseau vs. Voltaire
- Education: Rousseau vs. Madame d'Épinay
- The convents for the education and confinement of women
- Nature of man – Hume, Rousseau, Voltaire
- Science – The Vis Viva controversy: Madame Du Châtelet vs. French Scientists
- Political Economy – Mandeville's The Fable of the Bees prefaced and translated by Madame du Châtelet
- The Question of Slavery
- The Luxury Debates

Unfortunately the scope of this paper does not allow me to develop each of the listed controversies but one of the central threads must be mentioned: The thread of the silencing of women and female issues. I will show this thread in the controversies that I do portray: The question of slavery and the luxury debates.

### *12.4.1 Silencing the Question of Slavery in France During the Revolution*

Slave mask (Slave Mask: Image Reference, NW0191. Source: Jacques Arago, Souvenirs d'un aveugle. Voyage autour du monde par M. J. Arago…(Paris, 1839–1840), vol. 1, facing p. 119)

One of the most amazing revelations of my investigation into the Double-Bind effects of the slavery controversy in France during the revolution was my discovery of an enigmatic person unknown to me until today. Dr. Anna Julia Cooper.

Only recently (2006) her dissertation was published in the USA and nothing is mentioned about her in the French Academia except for her original French dissertation archived in the Sorbonne. A text that describes her life fails to explain what her PhD dissertation is about: "Anna Julia Haywood-Cooper was considered an enslaved person from birth. She was born in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1858. Over the 106 years of her life she was an education activist. After her marriage she dedicated her life to educating African Americans. She believed that education was a powerful tool having the ability to transform and empower African Americans and

people in general. She taught at Oberlin, Wilberforce, Lincoln, Universities, and St. Augustine Institute before a 39-year stint in the Washington, D.C public schools. At the age of 67 she received a PhD. in Latin from the University of Paris. At the age of 70 Dr. Cooper established the Frelinghausyen University evening schools where African Americans adults took college courses".[13]

The PhD dissertation that Anna Julia Cooper defended at the Sorbonne in 1925 was named «Attitude de la France À L'égard de L'esclavage Pendant la Révolution ». Cooper researched the archives in Paris and revealed the hypocrisy and silencing that prevailed. Her dissertation was the only source I found about the law of 4, April 1792 that mentioned the double language of Brissot and Claviere (founders of the association Les Amis des Noirs). What I did find was an ambiguous statement in French that Claviere convinced Louis XVI to sanction the Act of 24th of Mars and to restore the equality only to whites and free men of colour.[14] Cooper suggested that history must attend to its marginal spaces and silenced stories.

Unfortunately she herself was silenced and her French dissertation (not Latin as quoted in the website source above) was dead and buried until published, edited and only in translated English in 2006.

As there were many disorders in France during 1790–1792 the storyline in books and journals might have been flawed. For instance, in one place it was written that Antoine Barnave was in the Jacobean camp, in another, that he was secretly trying to plot the restoration of the monarchy and exchanged secret notes with Marie Antoinette. The most credible claim is that he played a part in both camps. In March 1790 Barnave was elected to the Committee on Colonies and drafted several proposals supporting the interests of French trading monopolies in the West Indies, maintaining that their retention was vital to the needs of the French nation. His opponents, led by Jacques-Pierre Brissot, bitterly attacked his policies, and, as the antislavery campaign won favour in the increasingly radical Jacobin society, Barnave's influence waned considerably. However and against all odds the society "Les Amis des Noirs" ended. Last known activity is recorded by Dorigny in September of 1791,[15] only 1 month after the start of the slave revolt in Haiti, which destroyed within a month the plantations of the French and killed many of the set-

[13] This is a Euphemism. The dissertation was written in French and treated a subject of the History of Saint –Domingue (now Haiti).the passage is quoted from http://www.csus.edu/cooper/Cooper-Woodson%20College%20Enhancement%20Program/Biographies%20of%20Dr.%20Cooper%20and%20Dr.%20Woodson.html a new essay about the philosophical writings of Anna Julia Cooper is published recently 2015 in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/anna-julia-cooper/

[14] « En mars 1792 ce ministère girondin en la personne notamment de Clavière parvint à convaincre Louis XVI de sanctionner le 4 avril 1792 le décret législatif du 24 mars consacrant l'égalité des Blancs et des hommes de couleur libres ».

[15] Bruno Benoit, « Bernard GAINOT et Marcel DORIGNY, *La Société des amis des noirs, 1788–1799. Contribution à l'histoire de l'abolition de l'esclavage*, Collection Mémoire des peuples, Paris, Éditions UNESCO/EDICEF, 1998, 429 p. », *Cahiers d'histoire* [En ligne], 44-2 | 1999, mis en ligne le 22 janvier 2008, consulté le 31 mai 2015. URL : http://ch.revues.org/203

tlers that were there. “Les Amis de Noirs” were accused of being responsible for this massacre.[16]

In fact what happened was a perfect case of a Double-Bind situation. The African slave revolt in Haiti (Saint-Domingue) was probably more organized than was stated openly. Furthermore, it was quite unlikely that not one of the eloquent members of « Les Amis des Noirs » was able to deny the accusations regarding their responsibility for the slave rebellion, inflicted upon them by Le club Massiac.[17]

Following is a detailed description of the slave revolt: Also in August 1791 The Bois Caïman ceremony and subsequent insurrections are the result of months of planning and strategizing. There are 200 slave leaders involved from around the North. All hold privileged positions on their plantations, most of them commanders with influence and authority over other slaves. Through strategic manoeuvring these leaders successfully unite a vast network of Africans, mulattoes, maroons, commandeurs, house slaves, field slaves, and free blacks. However, over the centu-

[16] Les colons des Antilles, voyant dans les idées révolutionnaires une menace, veulent interdire l’application aux colonies des principes de la Déclaration des droits de l’homme. Ils fondent le club Massiac, la Société des correspondants des colons, qui, avec beaucoup d’argent, lutte contre le programme de la Société des amis des Noirs. L’insurrection de Saint-Domingue met celle-ci en accusation; l’abbé Grégoire devient le principal ennemi des Grands Blancs et l’on accuse les Amis des Noirs d’être en collusion avec l’Angleterre.

[17] (Also in August 1791 The Bois Caïman ceremony and subsequent insurrections are the result of months of planning and strategizing. There are two hundred slave leaders involved from around the North. All hold privileged positions on their plantations, most of them commandeurs with influence and authority over other slaves. Through strategic skilful moves these leaders successfully unite a vast network of Africans, mulattoes, maroons, commandeurs, house slaves, field slaves, and free blacks. However, over the centuries the ceremony has become legendary, and it is important to note it can be difficult to distil fact from myth. Some historians, for example, believe the ceremony took place on the 22nd of August, not the 14th. On August the 16th slaves in the Limbé district stray from the leaders’ plan, apparently due to a misunderstanding, and are caught setting fire to an estate. During their interrogation they reveal the conspiracy and the names of the leaders. Interestingly, though, many of the planters who are warned of the rebellion stand by their slaves and refuse to believe the rumours. One plantation manager, for example, “offered his own head in exchange if the denunciations….proved true.” Other planters, warned of the coming violence, escaped with their lives but still couldn’t protect their property, often losing everything. From 14th to 30th August the forces of rebels grew from 1000 to 15,000. By September all the plantations within fifty miles of Le Cap are destroyed. The white troops are completely unprepared for the rebel’s guerrilla tactics, which include surprise attacks, thefts of supplies and livestock, ambushes, and poisoned arrows. The slaves, more resilient than the whites, are merciless, taking no prisoners of war. After some weeks of horrible fighting, in 28th September 1791 The National Assembly in France issues a decree granting amnesty to all free persons in Saint Domingue charged with “acts of revolution.” The slaves though continue the warfare. After a massacre of rebels (mostly women and children left behind by a camp of rebels that was attacked by surprise by whites) on the 9th of January 1792. During Mars 1792, a very secret manoeuvre in France (with the personal assistance of Claviere) brought about the famous 4th of April 1792 Act. Louis XVI affirms the Jacobin decree, granting equal political rights to free blacks and mulattoes in Saint-Domingue. A second commission is assembled, led by Léger Félicité Sonthonax, to enforce the ruling. He is killed later on. http://library.brown.edu/haitihistory/5.html

ries the ceremony has become legendary, and it is important to note it can be difficult to distil fact from myth. Some historians, for example, believe the ceremony took place on the 22nd of August, not the 14th. On August the 16th slaves in the Limbé district stray from the leaders' plan, apparently due to a misunderstanding, and are caught setting fire to an estate. During their interrogation they reveal the conspiracy and the names of the leaders. Interestingly, though, many of the planters who are warned of the rebellion stand by their slaves and refuse to believe the rumours. One plantation manager, for example, "offered his own head if the denunciations….proved true." Other planters, warned of the coming violence, escaped with their lives but still couldn't protect their property, often losing everything. From 14th to 30th August the forces of rebels grew from 1000 to 15,000. By September all the plantations within fifty miles of Le Cap are destroyed. The white troops are completely unprepared for the rebel's guerrilla tactics, which include surprise attacks, thefts of supplies and livestock, ambushes, and poisoned arrows. The slaves, more resilient than the whites, are merciless, taking no prisoners of war. After some weeks of horrible fighting, in 28th September 1791 The National Assembly in France issues a decree granting amnesty to all free persons in Saint Domingue charged with "acts of revolution." The slaves though continue the warfare. After a massacre of rebels (mostly women and children left behind by a camp of rebels that was attacked by surprise by whites) on the 9th of January 1792, during Mars 1792, a very secret manoeuvre in France (with the personal assistance of Claviere) brought about the famous 4th of April 1792 Act. Louis XVI affirms the Jacobin decree, granting equal political rights to free blacks and mulattoes in Saint-Domingue. A second commission is assembled, led by Léger Félicité Sonthonax, to enforce the ruling.[18]

The purpose of the Friends of Blacks is to prepare the suppression of human trafficking and consequently in due time the abolition of slavery. The idea to abolish slavery with the help of the settlers in itself seems a paradox. However they face the interests of settlers and hatred of the Montagnards, who send them to the gallows (Brissot in 1793) or lead them to suicide (Claviere, Condorcet). Only Abbe Gregoire escapes repression. He is even elected to the Convention, where he demands, "the outlawing of the infamous trade." Under his leadership and that of Danton, the Convention abolished slavery in February 4, 1794.

Perhaps the most important point that one can make regarding the force of anti-slavery ideas, however, is to note that the moral case against slavery and institutionalized racism was often given up by their leading defenders. Both were unjust and irrational, they admitted, but unfortunately necessary for French prosperity and the preservation of order in the colonies.

[18] http://library.brown.edu/haitihistory/5.html

### *12.4.2 The Glaring Paradox of Modern Commerce – Bernard Mandeville*

Allen Jones Chair 1969

The focused frame of this controversy might be enclosed within the luxury debate as well as within the birth of capitalism and governance when a defense of the human passions against the constraints of traditional morality was viewed both optimistically, as is seen in Shaftesbury's texts or pessimistically as is clearly seen in many satires of the period, like in Swift's Gulliver Travels and Holberg's Niels Klim travels underground. It was Mandeville's central thesis, expressed by the motto, "Private Vices, Publick Benefits," of *The Fable of the Bees*, that the attainment of temporal prosperity has both as prerequisite and as inevitable consequence types of human behaviour which fail to meet the requirements of Christian morality and therefore are "vices". Few books have provoked such an outcry as the 1723 edition of *The Fable of the Bees*. Shortly after its publication, it was presented to the Grand Jury and was denounced in a sermon preached before the Lord Mayor of London. Among the known critics, to whom Mandeville replied was also George Berkeley (1732). Berkeley came to the closest grips with *The Fable of the Bees* when he rejected Mandeville's grim picture of human nature.[19] He met Mandeville's eulogy of luxury by saying that the argument that expenditures on luxuries were no better support of employment than the equivalent spending on charity, or than the more lasting life which would result from avoidance of luxury. It will be of outmost interest to get a closer look at this fascinating aspect of the controversy but unfortunately

[19] See in the Introduction of Jacob Viner to Bernard Mandeville's Letter to Dion sent as a response to George Berkeley's critique in 1732. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29478/29478-h/29478-h.htm

this aspect, which is part of the larger deistic debate, is beyond the scope and context of this essay.

I will focus on a small fraction of Mandeville's system of thought concerning the role and function of women in society. Mandeville is playing a trick when he places women who want equality in a paralysing double bind. If his premise is that women are responsible for the prosperity of the society it means that if they demand equality they will eventually demand to be freed from their responsibility and will harm the collective. He actually, in his text, creates a potential zone for double bind which is very similar to the situation of "be spontaneous".

Mandeville imposes liability on women in both texts, *Fable of the Bees* and *A Modest Defense of Publick Stews*, as an acceptable argument which is reflected in the different education of men and women.

Mandeville develops the arguments to demonstrate that Private Vices lead to Public Benefits and concludes that vice, at variance with the Christian values of his time, is a necessary condition for economic prosperity. He places the responsibility to this economic prosperity on women in several places of the Fable.

"[Woman] to live great had made her husband rob the state t'enjoy the worlds' convenience"

"…the variety of work that is performed and the number of hands employed to gratify the fickleness and luxury of women is prodigious and this is good for the economy"

In *A Modest Defense of Publick Stews*[20] Mandeville blames women in many ways, including mentioning that women do not learn as men although they have the same head for studies and that they use their chastity to determine their market price.

In the preface to her translation of *The Fable of the Bees*[21] to French (1735) Madame du Châtelet writes that society does not allow women to advance by studies as men and also attacks Mandeville on his uninterested text about the inexistent laws regarding the prevalence of rape of women. She resents his remarks but her preface and translation has found its place in the depths of boxes transferred from the home of Voltaire to Katarina the Great after his death and discovered only recently (2005) in St. Petersburg.

One needs to study the context of the era to realize that Mandeville actually used "topsy turvy" tactics in his text, which is actually a satire of the religious reformers.

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[20] 'PHIL-PORNEY'. *A Modest Defence of Publick Stews: or, an Essay upon Whoring, as it is now practis'd in these Kingdoms … written by a layman*. London: A. Moore, 1724. With the final blank. (Worming at bottom margin.) Contemporary panelled calf (rebacked).

One of two editions of this notorious pamphlet published in the same year, the dedication signed 'Phil-porney.' The imprint of A. Moore is fictitious. Since it advocates a scheme of public houses of prostitution, the work is sometimes attributed to Bernard de Mandeville whose *Fable of the Bees* (remark H) praised the wisdom of the Amsterdam authorities in tolerating Temples of Venus. Goldsmiths' 6337.

[21] Du Châtelet, E. Preface and Translation of Mandeville The Fable of the Bees (copy with orthographic corrections) St.Petersbourg: National Library of Russia. Voltaire Collection. Vol IX: 153, 217.

Sadly it turned out that not only the readers did not oppose the proposal but also political economists and theorists from the Utilitarians to Friedrich Hayek,[22] a leader of the Viennese school teaching against government control of people's lives, presented the philosophy of Mandeville as their inspiration. On the other hand, also John Maynard Keynes, the father of Keynesian economics, which sees the government control of markets in crisis a successful economic model, finds his inspiration in Mandeville's system as well. This paradox undoubtedly indicates a clear ambiguity in the writings of Mandeville. Where, then, does the mute or silent element appear in the philosophy of Mandeville? Is there a problem inherent in this type of writing, which needs to be understood as a satire but actually is understood only at its literal level? I argue that Mandeville's writings self apply the Double-Bind Theory. In the context of his era as well as in the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth century, such applied tactics did not allow many of the readers to perform a critical reading that would at the same time de-frame and re-frame the existing beliefs. To clarify what de-framing and re-framing mean in my vocabulary I will open parentheses for a small detour to explain. (In my thesis "René Magritte: towards a methodology of non-interpretation" I developed a theoretical category to grasp the process that the viewer is subjected to when she sees a painting placed beyond understanding. I named the category: De-framing and Re-framing of the conceived event. The category that I call de-framing consists of radical scepticism, withdrawal from the conventional presumption on which one is used to base one's belief, to be opposed dialectically with Re-framing, which consists of injecting understandable meaning where it does not exist). Mandeville's writings, especially *A Modest Defence of Publick Stews*, are a biting satire which does not clearly enrage because of the mix-up. On the one hand Mandeville presented the matter of fact accepted philosophy of the ancient Greeks regarding the role and function of women in society (Plato, Socrates and Zeno) which was accepted and considered a proper societal convention while, on the other hand, he (born and educated in the Netherlands) ridiculed the unbridled activity of the British Reformers regarding women in certain streets of London, mainly Southwark, and their hypocrisy regarding other women. This religious zeal which demands the policing of the sexual passions of men was considered absurd since male sexual activity was always regarded as the male's right to practice whenever and wherever possible.

In *Letter to Dion*, written in 1732, Mandeville stressed his authentic view about the prostitution system in Amsterdam, seeing it for what it was in his era: an exploitation of both the women/girls that are caught in it as well as the men who pay for the services. *Letter to Dion* is Mandeville's response to George Berkeley's attack on

[22] In his lecture given in The Master Mind series in London 1966, Hayek claims that Mandeville's system of thought "had become the basis of the approach to social philosophy of David Hume and his successors" https://books.google.co.il/books?id=Pf1_AAAAQBAJ&pg=PA79&lpg=PA79&dq=lecture+on+a+master+mind+1966&source=bl&ots=MKmvna_JiA&sig=XfKofGpmigcr5SiIQIagdne2dcE&hl=en&sa=X&ei=R3ptVbqXFIe7UZqkgIAE&ved=0CCQQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=lecture%20on%20a%20master%20mind%201966&f=false

him as a free thinker which was published as the satire *Alciphron: or, The Minute Philosopher.*[23]

In contrast to Mandeville the satire of Swift was accepted as a sarcastic satire that demands change. Nobody regarded Swift's text of using Irish babies as gourmet food for the English as a serious proposal. Everyone knew it was sarcasm and rejection of capitalist and colonial corruption of the British emerging Empire in the seventeenth century.

To show the self silencing effect in the texts of Mandeville, and more particularly in his satires (*The Fable of the Bees* and *Modest Defence of Publick Stews*) I will need to digress and demonstrate how Magdalenism was forced into the pattern of female education in the time of Mandeville (Europe in the beginning of the eighteenth century).

### *12.4.3 Magdalenism and the Luxury Debates*

Magdalenism is the concept that describes the cruel form of penance that was forced on young girls in convents and refers to the moral/religious concept of chastity that needs to be adopted by all women. I could not have missed the similarity of Mandeville's description of his publick stews system and the way women were educated to take up their role in society, mainly those that were destined to be either married to keep the property of their families or those girls who were a liability to the noble families or to the citadins/emerging middle class families with little or no fortune. In various places *in A Modest Defence of Publick Stews* the reader has a sense that Mandeville describes what is happening in convents of women. Particularly when he details how the community of women will be regulated. (Each stew will be managed by an older woman who will be responsible for 20 young women : Police-officers will be in charge of the Madams (called Abbesses[24]) who will be policing and attend to regulations in the houses, the government will support the Stews financially, the women policed by the Madams will not be allowed to leave the premises without permission, they were to be punished for any disciplinary offense by similar means as were applied in the convents, music will be banned, drunken and violent persons will not be allowed, women will be cast out if they do not follow the regulations to the letter, the clinics to cure women attained by venereal diseases are conditional because the women will be banished if they do not disclose their condition before anyone else has discovered that they are infected.) This is actually a satire on the policing of sex by the religious institutions that were actually regulating the sex life of society through women. Mandeville actually

[23] Alciphron: or, The Minute Philosopher in seven dialogues containing An Apology for the Christian Religion against these who are called free thinkers. London: The Strand. 1732. https://archive.org/stream/alciphronorminut00berkiala#page/n7/mode/2up

[24] The title of the superior of an abbey or a monastery of nuns.

stresses in the text that women wear an impurity sign on their forehead regardless of whether they remain chaste or not.

The education system which was regulated then by religious Institutions banned the entry of women to higher education institutions and demanded not to teach women beyond what they needed to know to effectively serve men.[25] In the text Mandeville explained that it would be easy to populate the "communities/convents for the service of men" because of the brainwashing of the SRMs (Societies for the Reformation of Manners) on girls and young women who realize they have no choice but to engage in prostitution in order to survive. He also suggests that if the number of women that inhabit the "Monasteries of sexual services", or as he calls them "communities of acts of debauchery", will not meet the demand the government will pass a law to enable importation of women from other countries such as France and Italy and then the young men of England will not have to leave London to enrich their knowledge of continental culture. In the second stage, after repeatedly indicating how his proposed system is a much better method than the present one (non-regimented and open to the violence of men), Mandeville proposes to check if his system does also successfully prevent the bad influence of lust (p. 50) and announces that there is a good chance that his system will not satisfy men and they will prefer to marry than to pay for sad smiles. And if despite the established clean and sweet community men will seek their satisfaction with other women "we will punish them". Then contradicts himself and claims that a ban on passions only reinforces them rather than cures them (p. 93).[26]

Diderot, who was intimately familiar with what happened to his sister (she died at a young age as a result of abuse in a convent), wrote his text *La Religieuse*[27] for the drawer. Unfortunately, although he was a very influential member of the Republic of Letters he did not attempt to issue this virulent text about the education of girls in convents in France during his lifetime. Such education was more like a prison for life for many of them. If anything, he wrote a letter to his daughter, whom

[25] This religious education of girls was developed in France from the sixteenth century until abolished in 1790s by the revolution. In Paris the convents of women are many : in 1790, just before their closure, there were about 100, double amount than the convents of men. « Les couvents de femmes sont particulièrement nombreux : en 1790, à la veille de leur suppression, ils sont une centaine, deux fois plus que les couvents d'hommes, en très grande majorité (4/5) fondés au XVIIe : Carmélites (1602), Ursulines (1603), Capucines (1604), Augustines des Madelonnettes (1618), Filles du Calvaire (1620), Bénédictines du Val-de-Grâce (1621), Annonciades célestes (1622), Visitandines (1623), Feuillantines (1623), Recolette (1627), Filles de la Charité (1633), Filles de la Croix (1641)… » http://paris-atlas-historique.fr/24.html

[26] In the last part of the text Mandeville sets arguments against the objections of the religious system. The arguments are quoted speculations of a moral system such as "out of two evils one should choose the lesser evil" or "When is it permissible to kill - when it is saving lives and saving the community" and gives the example of a ship which was quarantined off the coast of the country fearing that the sick passengers will infect the population. Nevertheless some of the passengers manage to reach the shore. They are killed by the government to prevent them from contaminating the population (p. 105).

[27] http://www.gutenberg.org/files/28827/28827-h/28827-h.htm

*La Religieuse* was written by Denis Diderot in 1760 and was published posthumously in 1796

he really liked. His letter to her on the day of her marriage conveys his bitter acceptance of the double standard system. He demands that she realize that she has no chance in the world if she does not marry a man with a status that could support her. Therefore she needs to shut up and be obedient to her husband from now on. It is up to her how her life would look under the yoke of her husband.[28]

In the Luxury debates Mandeville's system of communication plays a game with the reader. If commerce corresponds to discourse (exchange between hands) human beings themselves – the agents of the conversation – correspond to commodities. Mandeville uses the art of dissimulation, the art of presenting something which it is not, to imply that the social bond is of discursive nature. Since in commerce the language is persuasive, dissimulative and deceitful one cannot overlook the significance of such a debate. The debate encompasses a contradiction which is perhaps impossible to resolve: the contradiction between interested commerce and disinterested dialogue.

Humankind is paradoxical, according to Mandeville, because it is both naturally disagreeable and yet sociable, or at least "can be made" sociable by artificial means.

If watched carefully one can trace in Mandeville's texts how the Double-Bind Theory is applied within the text. By stating the bitter truths Mandeville is betraying his obedience to his own identity as a man of elite class that is meant and educated to govern and control the other, uninitiated part of society: women and the poor people of the era. Mandeville cannot enlighten us about commerce without betraying the system of civil society that supports it. In fact in the end of part 2 of the Fable Mandeville justifies the lack of access to his style: "If I had wrote with the desire to be understood by the meanest capacities, I would not have chosen the subject there treated of; or if I had, I would have amplified and explained every period, taken and distinguished magisterially and never appeared without the fescue in my hand" (1:402).

After all, Mandeville's proposal of "publick stews" is exactly the opposite of freedom! Women robots regimented community to service men, who will be punished if they try not to use this community but prefer to try their luck with women belonging to other male citizens.

[28] http://www.deslettres.fr/lettre-de-diderot-a-sa-fille-madame-de-vandeul-vous-allez-quitter-la-maison-de-votre-pere-pour-entrer-dans-celle-de-votre-epoux-et-la-votre/

Denis Diderot, figure capitale des Lumières, maître d'oeuvre de l'*Encyclopédie*, romancier, philosophe, était un aussi un bon vivant, attaché, certes, aux idées, mais surtout à ses amis, ses proches, sa famille. Vivace et déconcertant, drôle et affectueux, l'homme Diderot apparaît dans sa correspondance sous mille facettes qui tranchent avec l'image de l'austère philosophe, ferraillant contre la religion et la noblesse pour ses idées progressistes. Dans cette lettre à sa fille Marie-Angélique, écrite juste après son mariage le 9 septembre 1772 avec Abel-François Caroillon de Vandeul, il lui donne de précieux conseils sur la *vita nova* qui l'attend : une lettre tendre d'un père meurtri par le départ de sa fille.

## 12.5 Double-Bind in René Magritte's "The Secret Player"?

One of the speculations in this essay is a question I toyed with for a while: Could silence be one of the detectors/cues for a Double-Bind situation in intractable controversies.

René Magritte – The Secret Player 1927

In order to respond to this question with some sort of a coherent answer I searched in the oeuvre of René Magritte for a painting that corresponds to my question. I did find one painting that for many years was for me an enigma. It is a very early painting by Magritte, painted in 1927, when he started to paint his "metaphysical" paintings.

The viewer is coping with the loss of context, that there is nothing to lean on (reference points), which increases the uneasiness and the need for the viewer to find meaning despite the ominous elements that threaten the search itself, due to a growing feeling of disturbance and unease in front of the painting. The title of the painting is "The secret player". My question was: where is the secret player? This question gained a new dimension during my research on the Double-Bind Theory and my approach to silence as a possible cue for a Double-Bind situation in context. A large sense of betrayal creeps upon the watcher if one connects the "secret" of the title with the muzzle on the mouth of the woman standing in the box, as if she is the judge of the game. Observed minutely one is obliged to sense that some items in the painting are governed by different physical rules than those in the real world. Some rules are the opposite of what actually is considered real: Lifeless white columns

(according to a letter of Magritte they are upside down legs of a table) are flowering while the two human players dressed in white are painted in distorted proportions, gaze into a void and seem inhuman. The black flying object can be either a turtle or something else, very mysterious and menacing. Everything in the painting is responding to a visible-hidden dialectic which embraces the viewer as well, in a game of decoding. I believe that a viewer of this painting might perceive how the silence depicted in the painting evokes a multitude of interpretations invalidating the reality painted. I have elaborated in this essay some developments that theoretically create the process we are involved with when confronted with an event out of the scope of our understanding: the dialectical de-framing and re-framing mechanism. I would like to add to this another tool. I refer to a tool called "The visual Oxymoron" which signals that meaning, if there is any, is not transparent and needs a complex interpretation. The oxymoron uncovers the complexity of the phenomenon which is, supposedly, contradicting rationality: two elements, contradicting each other sound right in the same sentence (at the same time). The use of oxymoron in a sentence, achieves an effect of stopping to think about the meaning of the sentence. The same, even in a more complex way, happens when a visual oxymoron is used. I argue that the surprise effect of the visual oxymoron allows the viewer to free her thoughts from their fixedness, or at least become aware of it; to be aware of our efforts to interpret even if we do not see. This is the essence of my grasp of the visual pragmatics of non-interpretation. In my thesis I follow the path that Magritte has constructed for finding the mechanism that would eventually break the accepted conventions through the domain of pictorial art. Probably he was not always successful in conveying his intention in his work but to the aware viewer he did succeed in conveying that any absolute answer is fiction.

## 12.6 Conclusion

In this essay I used examples to show how to detect the point in a controversy in which a Double-Bind situation occurs. By connecting a type of "silence" which occurs in a controversy to the mechanism of Double-Bind patterns one can see how the silence is used. The process offers an opportunity to untangle a stubborn knot, while applying a de-fixating antidote methodology in context.

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# Chapter 13
# Representation, Objectivity and the Ethics of Images

**Giovanni Scarafile**

> *For the observer never sees the pure phenomenon with his own eyes; rather, much depends on his mood, the state of his senses, the light, air, weather, the physical object, how it is handled, and a thousand other circumstances.*
>
> (Goethe, 1985: 24)

**Abstract** Considering Jaspers'studies on the paradoxical nature of conflicts, I reflect on the capacity of communicative forms to provide an objective representation. In particular, my attention is devoted to the predicative intentionality of images (PII), namely the set of modalities by which an image represents. The level of accuracy of images is relevant also for a specific meaning of the ethics of communication, regarding the truthfulness of what is represented in a photograph. After an historical reconstruction of the several ways in which representation has been themed, I consider as a case study some pictures of allegedly hysterical patients, taken from the archive of the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris. My thesis is that, for an adequate analysis of images, a pragmatic interpretation is necessary, able to integrate the hermeneutical approach.

**Keywords** Conflict • Ethics of communication • Hermeneutics • Hysteria • Indexical conception • Interpretation • Mimetic conception • Objectivity • Photographs • Pragmatics • Predicative intentionality of images • Representation • Scopic drive

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## 13.1 Representations in Conflict, Conflict in Representations

> We cannot avoid conflict, conflict with society, other individuals and with oneself. Conflicts may be sources of defeat, lost life and a limitation of our potentiality but they may also lead to greater depth of living and the birth of more far-reaching unities, which flourish in the tensions that engender them (Jaspers 1997: 326–7).

In the pages of *General Psychopatology*, whence the preceding quotation is taken, Jaspers reflects on the dynamics of the relationship which connects every individual to the world where he lives.

According to the German thinker, reality is not a given and preordained element, established once for all. It is rather a dialectical dimension by which every man opens himself to society.

In paragraph 2, entitled "Concrete reality," he clarifies that the very reality is not objectively fixed once for all, but "it depends to a certain degree on *beliefs which the community generally accept*".[1]

Finally, in paragraph 3, "Self-sufficiency and dependency", he observes that each of us has the tendency to imagine her/himself as an ideal being, self-sufficient, unrelated, without any need to come into contact with the outside.

The effective encounter with reality happens when such a alleged self-sufficiency is abandoned. In this way, man becomes a symbiotic being; he lives with other human beings in reciprocity, in exchanges, participating in community.

The interaction itself occurs by means of conflict. A conflict primarily consists in affirming one's own worldview compared to that of other individuals. As such, it can lead to two different outcomes: on the one hand, it can be a solicitation to seek forms of interaction respecting more and more the essential individuality of those who are implied in the interaction itself; on the other hand, and above all in situations where the management of the respective instances of affirmation is impracticable, it can lead to adverse outcomes.[2] Conflict, therefore, can be considered the hinge that connects or divides the I and the others.

### *13.1.1 Representation and Forms of Communication*

I'd like to focus on a passage from §2, where Jaspers recalls the generally accepted "belief" by a community as a preliminary and essential condition so that the I can make his entrance into society.

On closer reflection, the confrontation with such a *belief* is not an immediate data or something intuitively achievable.

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[1] Jaspers' italics.

[2] I'm referring, in particular, to the so-called forms of "malignant conflicts" (Musallam and Coleman 2010) or "intractable conflicts" (Gray et al. 2007).

To know what is this *belief*, in fact, the I should put in place a representation. The representation is an internal introjection of the external reality. The possibility of an adequate insertion of the I in the reality goes through such a dramatization.

The opinion of the others, also, cannot be taken for granted once for all. By its own nature, it changes constantly. Consequently, representation whose aim is to register such opinion is continuously in adaptation.

The I, just when one overcomes his self-sufficiency to enter society, cannot but uninterruptedly consider the representation. It is one of the main conditions of the freedom of the individual.

The need to access the worldviews of other individuals is possible to the extent every single individual practices the representation itself.

It is possible to formulate the foregoing in a thesis. This option can help us to find, in a more schematic way, further aspects of this topic.

(A) The more effective representation is, the more possibilities an individual has to avoid conflicts with other individuals.

The representation of the worldviews occurs starting from and within the types of communication from time to time adopted to express—more or less consciously—the point of view in which the worldview is condensed.

Communicative forms, therefore, articulate meanings, choices, options of the values of other individuals and of ourselves. One should then take into account a communicative competence to go back from communicative forms to worldviews. The possibility to avoid conflicts as a result of the friction between several incompatible worldviews is not a generic and abstract eventuality. It functionally depends on the communicative competence.

Thesis (A) has hence a first corollary (a.1):

(a.1) Representation depends on the types of communication.

Expressive forms are multiple. Within the analytical approaches to communication, a primary role is often attributed to language. On the one hand, it is true that we mainly communicate with verbal language; on the other hand, one should not underestimate that the use of verbal language is accompanied by other types of communication (the gestural, the sound, but above all the visual language—including graphic styles, spatial display, diagrams, pictures from line drawings and still and moving pictures).

The above permits us to formulate another corollary (a.2):

(a.2) Visual communication is one of the types of communicating.

Given its articulation on more levels, the multimodal character (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001) of communicating would need a possibly comprehensive framework.

In this sense, important indications come from two scholars, Fei and Schrøder:

1) Fei writes: “Academic disciplines that focus on mono-modality, such as that of linguistics, must come into dialogue with other fields of research, for instance, visual communication studies and media studies, to facilitate the interdisciplinary nature of multimodal research” (Fei 2004: 229);

2) For his part, Schrøder observes that "a holistic theoretical perspective is necessary to understand the way the media communicate with citizens and consumers living in a mediatized world" (Schrøder 2006: 590).

An effective comprehension of the specificity of the communicative dynamics involves a dialogue between disciplines[3] (linguistics, visual semiotics, film theory, art criticism). This is an important indication whose evidence will be concretely shown later in this paper, referring to the interpretative categories of several disciplines.

Furthermore, the different level of effectiveness of a representation (thesis A) means a corresponding different level of accuracy.

In other words, the accuracy itself cannot be considered an independent variable. Several factors are able to influence it.

Based on (a.1), the request of accuracy converts itself into a request of exactness in communication;

Based on (a.2), the request of exactness in communication converts itself into a request of faithfulness in visual communication.

What does it mean to have a faithful visual communication?

### *13.1.2 Exactness of Representation and the Ethics of Communication*

To answer this question, based on the interrelation between corollaries and thesis, depends on the substance of the conflict–representation connection, I'd like to consider a specific case of visual communication.

I'm referring to the communication with photographic images. It appears as a type of "objective" communication. To explain the terms of such objectivity, consider one of the most famous pictures circulating on the Internet after the recent bombing in Paris in 2015 (Fig. 13.1).

It *unequivocally* shows the city after the attacks. What we see significantly corresponds to our expectations. It is in fact plausible that the Paris boulevards are deserted. Immediately, therefore, we are led to believe that those images are truthful. The caption accompanying the image contributes to our belief. It assumes a further probative feature. Looking at that image, we acquire specific information (Paris just after the attacks) and we are confirmed in the pre-existent belief of the immediacy and naturalness with which a photograph can represent reality.

Contrarily to what Black (2002: 132–3) maintains, when he affirms that "the idea that a painting or a photograph 'contains' its content or subject as straightforwardly as a bucket contains water is too crude to deserve refutation", I believe that discussing such a conviction is useful.

[3] Elsewhere (Scarafile 2014), I indicated that starting from 1972 a complex taxonomy was found, able not only to distinguish between interdisciplinarity (ID), multidisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, but also to recognize several levels in the same notion of ID.

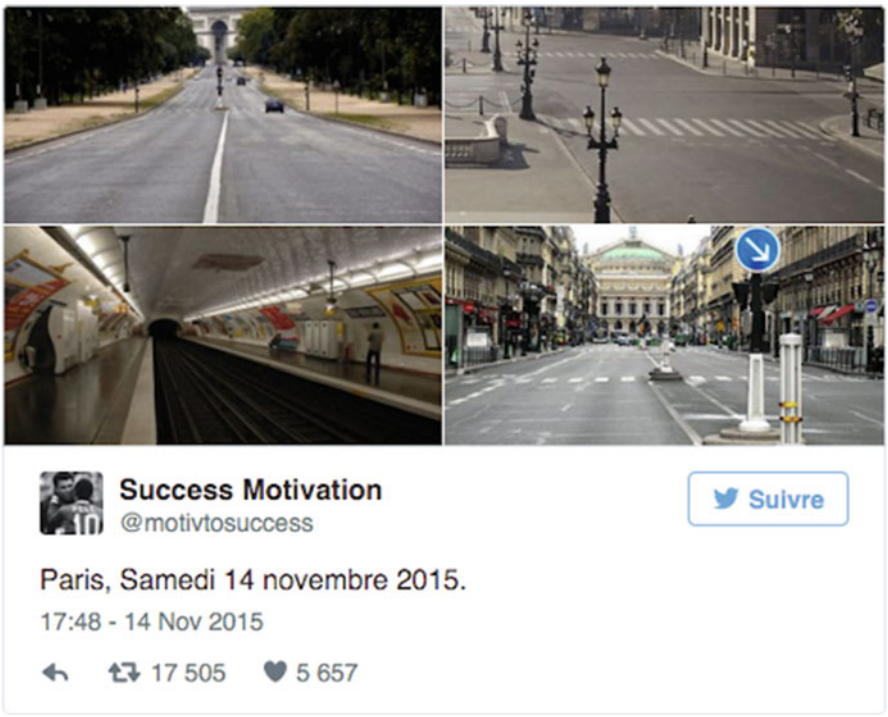


**Fig. 13.1** Paris after the terrorist attack, November 2015. From Twitter http://www.ilpost.it/2015/11/15/attentati-parigi-isis-foto-false-bufale/

What is at stake, in fact, is not only attributable to the validity of photographic representation, intended as one of the constitutive dimensions of visual communication. The stakes are much higher and they are introduced by thesis (B):

(B) The more a visual communication is correct, the more it can be considered ethical.

In this case, "correct" means truthful. It is ethical, therefore, when specific visual communication complies with the true. It is ethical that visual communication is conveyed which is able to reproduce as exactly as possible the message by itself.

Based on (B), the very possibility of an ethics of images is at stake. Such an ethics, in fact, can exist starting from the question of whether the seemingly indexical relationship a photograph has with the represented can be considered in the same way as between authenticity and verisimilitude.

However, even this last question risks being too elaborate if we do not examine whence it derives. I'm referring to the largely unreflective attitude by which we *naturally* are led to believe that what we see in a photograph or, more generally, in a picture, is true. I'll try to illustrate this aspect in Sect. 13.4.

### *13.1.3 Aspects of Ethics of Images*

In this paper, I examine a precise definition of the ethics of images, as a part of the ethics of communication, peculiarly in reference to the exactness of representation, as mentioned in thesis (B).

However, many other meanings of the ethics of images exist. For example, one can contend that images increase our sensibility towards what is shown in them. The spectacle of images returns us to the real from potentially unusual point of view and in this way permits us to immerse ourselves in situations or to simulate our behaviour in uncommon contexts.

Another aspect of the ethics of images concentrates itself on the relationship between the artistic feature and the content, starting from the question of whether the beauty attributable to the form is able to influence the perception of the content. We could refer to the movie *Triumph of the Will* (1936) by the director Leni Riefensthal. The movie, in which Hitler is represented as a visionary hero, is considered a masterpiece from a filmic point of view, for the presence of fascinating images. What kind of relationship exists between that peculiar filmic element and the representation of Hitler?[4]

A further aspect of the ethics of images is offered by what Didi-Huberman (2010: 6) defines as the "political issue". It consists in the modality of restitution of images or, according to another declination of the same topic, in knowing to whom images belong.

Does the viewer get the image that the author wants to convey? According to which conditions is such a process accomplished? In these cases, is it possible to talk of appropriation of the image by the spectator?

There is, finally, a last question which is, in a way, preparatory to the ethics of images. It concerns the different level of spectatorial implication, and it has known many moments in the history of images and cinema. This notion underlies spectatorship, in which two traits seem particularly meaningful. They are the"relationship between spectators, texts, and contest and how to think about differences between spectators in relation to interpretation and response" (Plantinga 2009: 247).

## 13.2 Articulation of the Task

Preliminarily, it should be clarified that a uniformity of views doesn't exist regarding the most correct way of understanding the ethics of images. Every method, starting from those introduced in this paragraph, containsundoubted strengths and inevitable weaknesses.

[4] A more complete discussion of this aspect can be found in Tersman (2009).

From time to time and depending on the image under examination, many methods can be used. Every methodology has specific resources and it is just in recalling these properties that the spectator can find his/her necessary orientation.

Even from these first indications, in particular the emphasis on the role of the viewer, as well as the importance of contingency in interpretation, the general thesis emerges that I intend to advance on the inevitability of a pragmatic interpretation. On this theme, as well as on the role of context, I will focus in particular in Sect. 13.7.

Below, in Sect. 13.4, I propose to go back to the general characteristics that constitute the natural faith in seeing.

In Sect. 13.5, I will trace the most significant moments in which the notion of objectivity of photographic representation took shape in the history of Western culture.

In Sect. 13.6, I will examine some photos of presumptively hysterical patients. These photos—taken from the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, where in the nineteenth century more than 4000 women were interned—constitute a case study, useful to demonstrate the inadequacy of an approach exclusively oriented towards the objectivity of photographic representation.

In Sect. 13.7, I'll try to clarify the meaning of the pragmatic interpretation as the most effective framework to understand an image. Each paragraph examines a partial aspect of the general topic to which this essay is dedicated, namely the connection between conflicts, representation and the ethics of images.

## 13.3 Initial Conceptual Tools

Before entering the topic, it is necessary to introduce at least some concepts that will be used later in this paper.

### *13.3.1 Predicative Intentionality of Images*

With "predicative intentionality of images" (hereafter, PII), I refer to all the ways in which a picture refers to what it represents. PII includes the major categories of interpretation and the conceptual tools by which an image can be considered. Among these aspects, an important role is attributed to the spectator in the reactivation of the reference of an image.

### *13.3.2 Dynamics of Reception of Images*

With dynamics of reception of images one indicates the set of conditions that should be considered in order for the indexical referral (the referral to referent) to be made explicit.

With *spectator/spectrum/operator* one refers to the tripartite division of terms, identified by Barthes, respectively indicating (a) the viewer-interpreter of a picture; (b) what a viewer sees in picture; and (c) who has taken the photographic image.

### *13.3.3 Evénementielle Climax*

I refer to the poetic aspect of the decisive moment of Henri Cartier-Bresson (1952).

The underlying idea is that a photograph can represent the immediate recognition of the significance of an event and of the contextual organization of forms which attributes to that event its specific configuration.

### *13.3.4 Mimetic Conception*

One of the first categories that must be considered to orientate within the PII is the so-called mimetic conception. It has an ancient lineage dating back to Aristotle, and is based on the concept of resemblance. According to the mimetic conception, what we see in a painting or in a photograph is similar to the scene or subject originally present in front of the painter or photographer. The concept of resemblance is a collective label in the sense that it carries in itself a broad spectrum of possibilities: the tree I see in the picture in front of me may more or less resemble the original. The similarity, then, is a general category, which can be applied in different degrees. They should be considered before interpreting images according to the mimetic conception.

### *13.3.5 Denotation and Connotation*

In a photographic image, Barthes (1985) indicated two possible meanings: the denotative level, available for any observer regardless of his cultural background, and the connotative level, which conveys the meaning assigned by a specific culture to the denotative message. The former constitutes the explicit meaning, the latter the implicit one. In Barthes' example one can see some food products (pasta, onion, tomato) which, according to French culture, should be connotatively combined with the Italian spirit (*Italianicity*). In the same image, another culture might instead pick another meaning (happiness, the reference to family, etc.).

### *13.3.6 Typologies of Signs*

Finally, a category to be remembered is the typology of signs (iconic, indexical and symbolic), developed by Peirce. In Peircean terminology, an index is a sign in physical connection with its object, what is represented; a symbol is a sign whose connection with the object is the result of a convention; an icon is a sign connected to the referent because of its similarity. Such different ways to refer to what is represented don't define three types of signs, but rather three dimensions which are inherent properties of all signs.

## 13.4 The Natural Belief in Seeing

The inquiry of the capacity of a photographic image to be a faithful interpreter of what is photographed, as I mentioned earlier in relation to the image of Paris after the attacks, seems to be facilitated by an attitude to naturally believe in what we see. In this section, I try to indicate three factors that affect this belief.

### *13.4.1 Scopic Drive*

The first factor, the scopic drive,[5] refers to fundamental human needs.

A drive is the place where a bodily solicitation meets its expression. It is also defined by source—that is, the anchor point in the body. The scopic drive is a particular kind of drive in which a certain role is given by the need to see, and then by an object, which can be different from time to time.

Seeing occurs therefore in relation to the satisfaction of a need and, as such, although less primary than other drives (for example, the primary need to eat), it cannot be eliminated.

### *13.4.2 Thesis of Existence*

This refers to belief that what is reproduced in a photograph really happened. In other words, while a painting may be the fruit of the imagination of the artist, what we see in a photograph must necessarily have taken place. The thesis of existence is closely related to the indexical conception that brings back what is photographed to the etiology of the photo itself.

[5] The scopic drive is in relation with the notion of "scopic regime", introduced for the first time by Christian Metz within the analysis relating to the correlation between cinematic gaze and voyeurism. Not the distance or the cure in mantaining it, but rather "the absence of the seen object" (Metz 1980: 65) defines, according to Metz, the scopic regime.

### *13.4.3 The Personal Gaze*

Ideally each photo contains the invitation to the viewer to watch with his own eyes. This appeal can be traced to the affirmation of a specific model of vision, established with the modern age and in particular with the publication in 1543 of *De humani corporis fabrica* by Andreas Vesalius.

As is well known, this is one of the first works of visual anatomy, accompanied by tables in which the different parts of the human body were portrayed with refined accuracy.

Vesalius' work celebrates the advent of a new way of seeing, characterized by trust in individual observations. This characteristic defines the transition between two moments in the history of our culture. In the Middle Ages, in fact, the direct observations of the scientist were still subject to confirmation by the authorities and institutions that held power, both political and cultural. After all, in the reiteration of the medieval formula *Ipse dixit*, we recognize the criterion of verification of a discovery based on its compliance with what Aristotle had established in his writings.

Although early anatomical experiments were already initiated in the fourteenth century by Mondino de 'Liuzzi, the work of Vesalius can be considered revolutionary. It, in fact, enshrines the cessation of the paradigm of seeing, considered as ancient and no longer able to testify to the affirmation of the autonomy of personal experience.

The *De humani corporis fabrica*, therefore, while introducing innovations in the way we view medical information, brings in a new era based on trust in direct observation. This characteristic is announced in the frontispiece of the book (Fig. 13.2) where is reproduced the scene of an anatomical dissection. At center stage, surrounded by doctors and observers on two floors in the amphitheater, the body which is subject to the dissection is depicted.

In front of the scene, most of the participants appear turned towards the hands of the physician performing the dissection. Others, however, deflect their attention from what they see, in an attitude that suggests the unsustainability of the vision of a flayed body.

It is significant, however, that Vesalius himself, who runs the dissection, is the only character of the entire frontispiece to look in a complete different direction than the other participants in the dissection.

He, in fact, looks in our direction, in the direction of the viewer. Looking into those eyes invites the viewer to look then directly at what is shown on the dissection table.

Looking directly, therefore, it is finally possible to believe our eyes, since a new paradigm of vision, based on direct experience, has been affirmed.


**Fig. 13.2** Frontispiece of the Andreas Vesalius' volume *De humani corporis fabrica.* Andreas Vesalius [Public domain], Wikimedia Commons. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ee/Vesalius_Fabrica_fronticepiece.jpg

## 13.5 The Myth of Objective Representation

Based on the *thesis of existence* (Sect. 13.4.2), a photograph is a faithful testimony of what really occurred. In this sense, it is considered *objective.* What are the traits of this alleged objectivity? How was such an affirmation historically possible? Why is it possible to speak of myth?

To take account of these questions, I would like to relate two short testimonies, dating back to a period of 40 years.

The first refers to the words with which Louis Daguerre's discovery was announced to the Académie des Sciences in Paris in 1839. The photograph, it was said, is "an artificial retina… available to physicians" (Mifflin 2011: 325).

The second comes from the French doctor E. J. Marey and was pronounced in 1878: "There is no doubt—he said—that graphical expression will soon replace all others whenever one has at hand a movement or change of state—in a word, any phenomenon. Born before science, language is often inappropriate to express exact measures or definite relations" (Marey 1878: iii).

These two testimonies can indeed be regarded as indicative of a more general trend, consistent with the motto "Let nature speak for itself".

In essence, the trend says that if one wants to have a correct attitude towards nature, then one must make use of photography. In fact, attributing more power to human faculties permits us to penetrate reality in an uncommon way. This imperative will be established through a series of intermediate steps which occurs independently of an exact chronology, although generally all in the same period under consideration.

In the transition between the different paradigms, the very notion of objectivity undergoes transformations. Its validity is undisputed, but its features change significantly in the shift from one paradigm to another. Consequently, it is also the notion of subjectivity to be interested in these transformations. In what follows, I'd like to examine some aspects of this trend.

### *13.5.1 Mechanical Objectivity*

Within this orientation the experiments conducted by Eadweard Muybridge may be subsumed. Muybridge was an English photographer, important for his pioneering work in photographic studies of motion.

In 1872, Muybridge began experimenting with an array of 12 cameras photographing a galloping horse in a sequence of shots. The human eye could not break down the action at the quick gaits of the trot and gallop. Up until this time, most artists painted horses at a trot with one foot always on the ground; and at a full gallop with the front legs extended forward and the hind legs extended to the rear, and all feet off the ground.

Muybridge's final experiment is named *The Horse in Motion* (1878) (Fig. 13.3): it shows images of the horse with all feet off the ground. This did not take place when the horse's legs were extended to the front and back, as imagined by contemporary illustrators, such as Théodore Géricault, the painter of *The Epsom Derby* (1821) (Fig. 13.4), but when its legs were collected beneath its body as it switched from "pulling" with the front legs to "pushing" with the back legs.

Muybridge's experiments can be considered representative of all the attempts of the so-called "mechanical objectivity". Properly speaking, this consists in a total trust in the system of representation permitted by the *machineries*, like cameras.

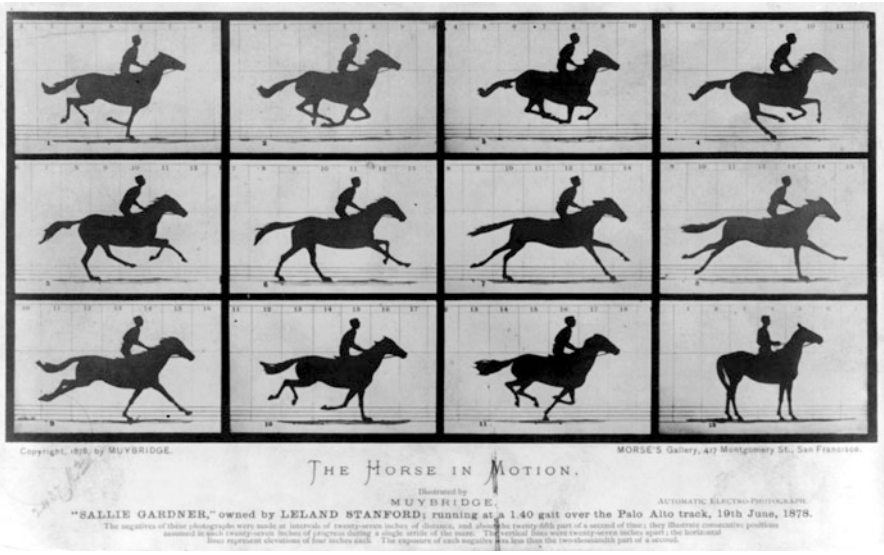


**Fig. 13.3** *The Horse in Motion* (1878), by Eadweard Muybridge. Eadweard Muybridge [Public domain], Wikimedia Commons. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/73/The_Horse_in_Motion.jpg

**Fig. 13.4** *Le derby d'Epsom* (1821), by Jean Louis Théodore Géricault. Jean Louis Théodore Géricault [Public domain], Wikimedia Commons. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f3/Jean_Louis_Th%C3%A9odore_G%C3%A9ricault_001.jpg

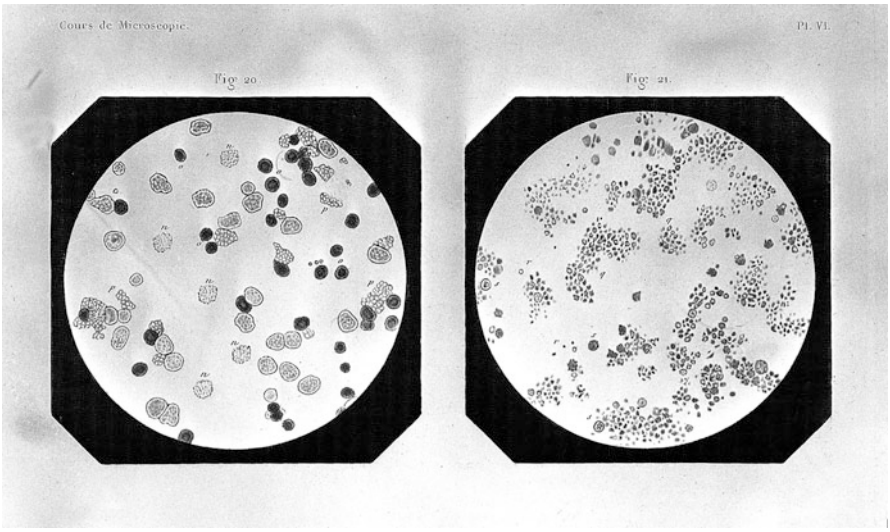


**Fig. 13.5** Blood globules, Plate VI, from Alfred Donné, *Cours de microscopie complémentaire des études médicales* (1845) [CC BY 4.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0)], Wikimedia Commons. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7b/Blood_globules%2C_%22Cours_de_microscopie%22%2C_Donne_%26_Foucault_Wellcome_L0004170.jpg

### *13.5.2 Subtraction of Subjectivity*

Based on the "camera-as-eye-analogy", it was believed that photography was able to eliminate subjective bias and to extend the visible.

> Complete passivity, the damping down or elision of subjective decisions by scientists in the illustration of an observation, became so desirable to those striving for objectivity [that it remained] an active metaphor even in the face of significant evidence to the contrary (Wilder 2009:19).

What is the meaning of Wilder's words "significant evidence to the contrary"?

To answer this question, consider the fact that the first visual archives are fully included within the categories of "subtraction of Subjectivity". I refer to the "Archive of the Planet" in Paris, the Benjamin Stone's National Photographic Record Association in England, and the U.S. Geological Survey's archives of the American landscape.

The aims of these archives were to create a "visible memory, or a visual method of problem solving" (Wilder 2009: 100).

On the same wavelength the first uses of photomicrography (Fig. 13.5) can be collocated: for example, in 1845 the Alfred Donné, *Cours de microscopie complémentaire des etudes médicales*, was published.

**Fig. 13.6** View of the Moon (1852) by John Adams Whipple and George Phillips Bond. By John Adams Whipple (Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics [1]) [Public domain], Wikimedia Commons. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/db/View_of_the_Moon_by_John_Adams_Whipple_1852.jpg

Instead, one of the early examples of astrophotography is to be found in "View of the Moon" (Fig. 13.6) recorded by John Adams Whipple and George Phillips Bond.

However, if, on the one hand, the attempt to free from subjectivity—considered able to falsify the presumed objectivity of representation—was real, on the other hand, the evaluation of the scientific photos" necessarily entailed assessments of the subjectivity of their makers and interpreters, even if the rhetoric surrounding them elided this information" (Keller 2008: 42).

**Fig. 13.7** Image taken from the volume: Rogers, M. (2010). *Delia's Tears: Race, Science, and Photography in Nineteenth-Century America.* New Haven: Yale University Press

In 1850, Louis Agassiz, the Swiss scientist who founded the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology in 1859, commissioned a photographic reproduction of some slaves (Fig. 13.7). Aggasiz, in fact, was sure to have sufficient knowledge to identify, starting from the photographs, the type of race to whom each slave belonged.

This series of images is able to show a further level of subtraction of subjectivity.

It was not so much the subjectivity of the scientist which was affected by such removal, as the identity of those who were photographed.

Considering the reification in these pictures, Rogers observed: "These people […] depicted in the photographs—Delia, Jack, Renty, Drana, Jem, Alfred, and Fassena—are at the heart of the story […] yet at the same time they are strangely absent from it" (Rogers 2010: p. xxi).

Another example falling into this category is given by Charles Darwin, who in his book *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals* in 1872 made use of photographs to try to establish the correlation between the facial expressions of men and animal behaviour.

In particular, Darwin commissioned a series of images by the London-based photographer Oscar Rejlander. The photographer, however, resorted to concocting simulations.

As Prodger (2009: 202) observes, his photographs for *Expressions* "set new standards in scientific photography [but] were produced without strictly adhering to mechanical objectivity".

As seen from the examples given, the ideal of subtraction was only partly successful.

The more one tried to eliminate subjectivity, the more its role in determining the objectivity emerged. Often images imprinted on photographic plates were small and difficult to distinguish. Also in this case, it was necessary to resort to artists to interpret *objective* images.

### *13.5.3 Authors' Interpretation*

Atlases whose main purpose is to preserve the nature of science fall into this third group. To give an example, just think that an organ reproduced in an atlas could be observed infinite times, in respect to the possibility of a direct observation. Also for this reason, atlases have been rapidly spreading. Contrary to what would be easy to assume, the atlas, however, was not just a gallery of images or drawings. It was rather a collection of images by which it sought to achieve identification of a *Typus* or archetype from which individual phenomena could be derived.

To obtain this result, one must isolate the features common to multiple images. This is the case of the image (Fig. 13.8) depicting the *Urpflanze*, Goethe's sketch of the "*typus* of a higher plant" whose aim was to represent no plant in particular, but rather the morphological prototype from which all higher plants could be derived.

Within such an orientation, which can be considered an example for a series of similar operations, the illustrators had no hesitation in aligning the drawings with respect to the archetype from time to time identified.

The role of the illustrator as interpreter is, from this point of view, fundamental. An active role in the interpretation of nature is not considered in contradiction with the pursuit of the ideal of objectivity.

Another aspect to consider is that the same items that should have been included in atlases suffered transformations. For example, one could inject wax into a body, in order to make it appear "natural".

In other circumstances, to see objects *camera obscura* was used and it was preferred to the human eye because it was considered more authoritative (Fig. 13.9).

For example, the English anatomist William Cheselden convinced Dutch artists Vanderguchtand Shinevoet to make use of *camera obscura* to draw the tables of its Osteographia (1733).

Also in this case, as in all others inserted or insertable[6] into this category, the use of a tool of *objective* vision was combined with the subjective interpretation of the images' authors.

[6] In this sense, see the following volumes: *Johnston's Students' of Bones and Ligaments* (Edimburgh, 1885); *Topographischer Atlas der medezinisch-chirurgischen Diagnostik* (Jena, 1901)*; Atlas and Text-Book of Human Anatomy* (Philadelphia, 1909).

**Fig. 13.8** The *Urpflanze*, Goethe's sketch of the "*typus* of a higher plant" (Originally published in Wolf, K.L. et al. (eds). 1947–1986. *Goethe: Die Schriften zur Naturwissenschaft*. Vol 9a, *Zur Morphologie.* Pl. 9, Reproduced from: Dastor, L., Galison, P. (1992). The Image of Objectivity. *Representations.* No. 40. University of California Press, 81–128, p. 88)

### *13.5.4 Responsibility of Authors and Readers/Spectators*

The advent of X-rays gave a breakthrough in the field of objective representation. With the twentieth century, atlases based on images obtained with the use of X-rays proliferated especially in Germany, but also in the United States, France and Britain. This is the case of the famous Rudolf Grashey tomes, *Chirurgisch-Pathologische Röntgenbilder* and *Typische Röntgenbilder vom normalen Menschen*, the last of which had six editions between 1905 and 1939 (Fig. 13.10).

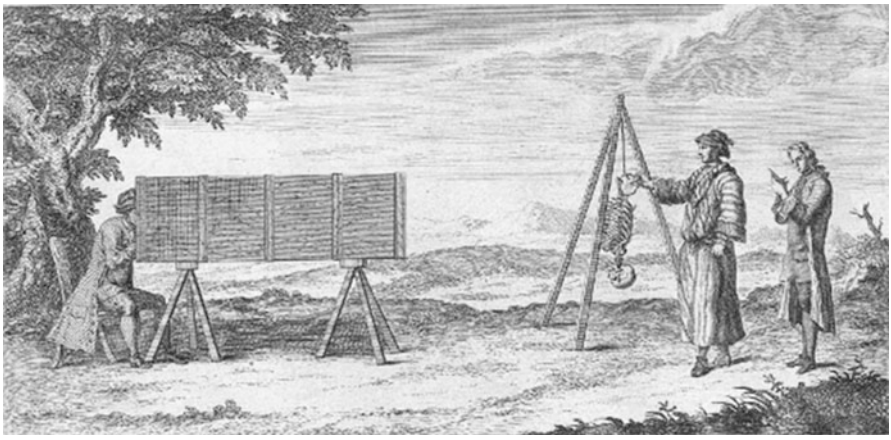

**Fig. 13.9** Title page illustration of William Cheselden, *Osteographia*; *or, The Anatomy of the Bones* (1733). http://farm7.static.flickr.com/6188/6069398212_3a0502a5fd_o.jpg

**Fig. 13.10** Skull X-ray from Rudolf Grashey, *Typische Röntgenbilder vom normalen Menschen* (1939) (Reproduced from: Dastor, L., Galison, P. (1992). The Image of Objectivity. *Representations.* No. 40. University of California Press, 81–128, p. 105)

Even within a mode of representation which, by definition, was considered objective, gradually emerged some doubts, as evidenced by the doctor Harvey Reed:

> The X-ray operator either by wilfulness or negligence in fastening the plate and making the exposure may exaggerate any existing deformity and an unprejudiced artist should be insisted upon (Harvey Reed 1898: 1018).

Grashey himself emphasized the immense difficulty of using individual photographs to distinguish normal from pathological. The model of the *Typus* was now outdated and, therefore, no longer considered valid. Furthermore, the reduction of an object from three-dimensional to two-dimensional shape could easily be misunderstood. Above all, it could contradict the absolute evidence attributed at the beginning to this type of image. Readers should be cautioned about understanding what they saw. This new requirement, originated from within the realm of objective representation, gave a new responsibility to the reader/interpreter. This is a very significant turning point:

> Earlier generations of atlas makers chose "truth of nature" as their slogan: their picture would depict the designated phenomena as they were, as they ought to be, or as they existed beneath the variation of mere appearances. By the late nineteenth century, however, the atlas makers no longer could make such unproblematic claims for the general applicability of their images, and by the early twentieth century, they had shifted responsibility to the reader (Dastor and Galison 1992: 109).

Therefore, the awareness grew, both in medicine and in paleoanthropology, that reality to be represented should not be amended. Instead, reality should be reproduced without any intervention by the scholar.

Such a provision constituted the new orientation of the so-called *moralized objectivity*: on the one hand, the confidence increased in the power of automated devices; on the other, one still preferred to get unclear photos.

Such a "morality of self-restraint" (Dastor and Galison 1992: 117) was not just about the role of the operator, to use Barthes' terminology. To be complete, the new morality attributed a new role to the interpreter. The task to distinguish normal from abnormal, or also the occurrence of a new and not yet defined disease, should be attributed to the capacity of the interpreter in interpreting images. Responsibility of the interpreter and the virtue of scientists become the new characteristics of the objectivity of representation.

### *13.5.5 Objectivity as a Myth*

A myth, generally speaking, is considered truth of faith which is given a deeper meaning. The events narrated by the myth take place at a time before written history.

Due to these connotations, I believe that the objectivity of photographic representation can be considered a myth.

The foregoing indicates the action, within the history of photographic representation and with a good level of approximation, of a trend according to which the same role of the interpreter becomes constitutive of the tension towards objectivity.

The idea of the complete exclusion either of the role of the interpreter or the interpretative role of the author is valid only in one phase of this long history and can not be extended, without risk of distorting the meaning of objective representation and making it then become a myth.

Before focusing on how precisely the role of the interpreter can be accounted for by a specific pragmatic interpretation, what remains to be considered is one of the factors that most contributed to the loss of faith in the objectivity of photographic representation. This attempt will be conducted with reference to a case study, the photograph of presumptively hysterical patients, taken at Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris in the late 1800s.

## 13.6 Case Study: Photographs of the Patients

### *13.6.1 Charcot and Hysteria Treatment*

As most people know, today hysteria no longer exists as a disease. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* traces what once was called "hysteria" to three disorders: conversion, somatization, dissociation. This change of paradigm within the etiopathogenesis of the disease—that is, the analysis of the process of emergence and development (pathogenesis) of the disease—is undoubtedly due to many factors. One of the most important can be considered the work of the French neurologist, Jean Marie Charcot, director of the Salpêtrière Hospital in the late nineteenth century.

To understand, in its full extent, the contribution of Charcot, one needs only to recall that, despite hysteria having been already described in the papyrus of Kahun, dating back to 1900 BC—a history of more than 2600 years—its real causes had never been identified.

This continued failure was presumably largely due to the persistence of a gender bias, under which it was believed that hysteria was connected to the so-called "wandering uterus," a malfunction of the female genitals. This ascription is to be found already in the name given to the disease: in fact, the Greek term *hysterikós* and the Latin term *hystericum* literally mean "suffering in the womb".

Charcot was able to find that this way of understanding the disease was fundamentally wrong, since hysteria had a psychogenic cause. What is important to emphasize is that, for the purpose of discovering the true nature of the disease, photographic images had an important role. In fact, in an effort to better understand the causes of the disease, it was decided to photograph the patients. The idea behind this choice was that photographic images would enable us to see better the reality.


**Fig. 13.11** "Onset of the attack: the Cry". Pl. XV (Reproduced from: Bourneville, M., P. Régnard. (1876–1880). *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière.* Paris: Aux Bureau du ProgresMedical, V. A. Delahaye & Cie)

In the early nineteenth century, Lady Elizabeth Eastlake (1809–1893) wrote that photography's legitimate business was "to give evidence of facts, as minutely and as impartially as, to our shame, only an unreasoning machina can give" (Eastlake 1956: 102).

It is easy to see how these very words are the best possible definition of that ideal of objective representation mentioned in the previous paragraphs.

After these experiments, the general conclusion was that photographic images, especially moving images, were able to make us better understand the nature of reality. It was this same belief at the base of the photographic research of the doctors of the Salpêtrière Hospital.

For the doctors, therefore, every photo was instrumental in identifying the real causes of hysteria. Such *intentio auctoris* should be kept in mind by the contemporary interpreter. The autonomous interpretive cooperation of the spectator, in fact, cannot evade the assessment of the degree of faithfulness of each photo to the original intention from which that photo derived.

Only in this way, already in the small sequence of photographs here reproduced (Figs. 13.11, 13.12, 13.13, 13.14, 13.15 and 13.16), will one be able to grasp the gradual emergence of a *discrepancy*, able to invalidate the ideal of objective representation.

Therefore, images of the patients, while presumed to impartially represent different stages of the disease, tell a different story. This story can be read by each of us, in the gap between the autonomy of his own gaze and the evaluation of each photo's faithfulness to *intentio auctoris*.

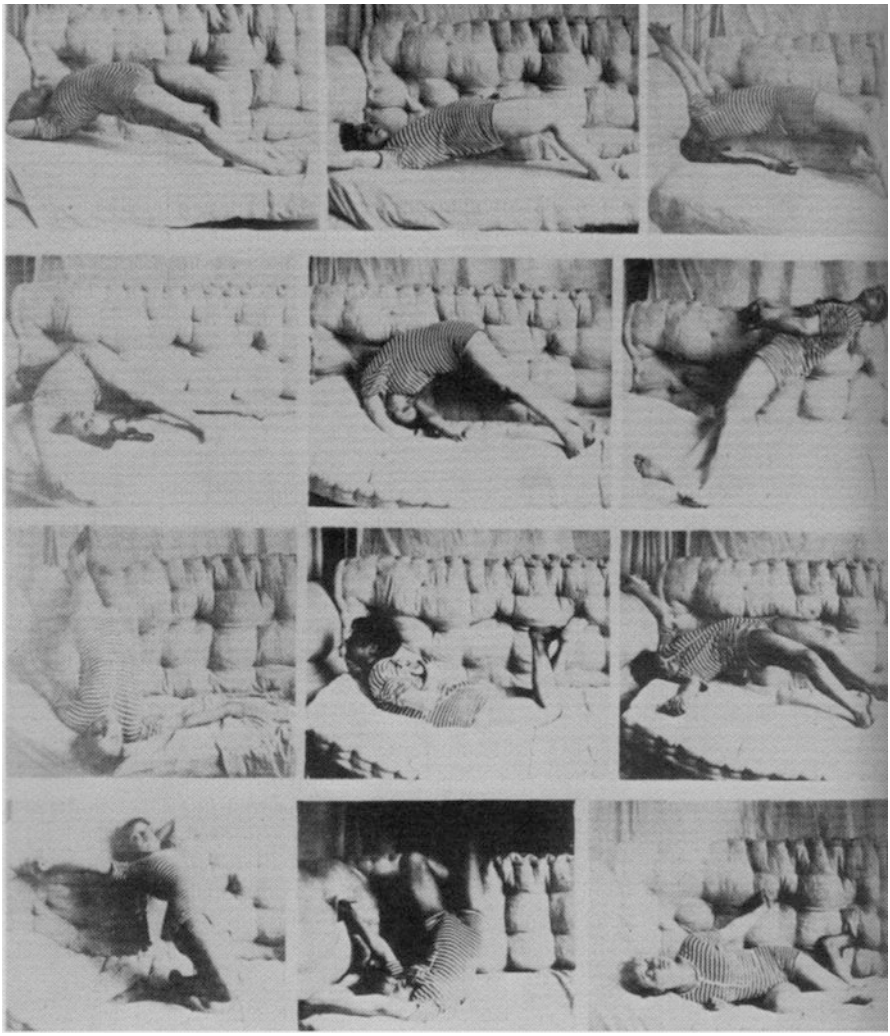

**Fig. 13.12** Contortions of a hysterical patient (Reproduced from Rummo, G. (1890). *Iconografia fotografica del grande isterismo (istero-epilessia)*. Trani: Tip. Napoli)

### *13.6.2 Photographing the Disease*

As I said at the beginning, the thesis on the fallacy of objective representation is supported by examining the transition between some of the photographic pictures of hysterical patients. Just inside the visual document that would revolutionize the way of understanding a serious disease, the most insidious proof (able to rebut the myth of objective representation) was hiding.


**Fig. 13.13** Emotions induced by olfactory stimulations (Reproduced from: Luys, J.B. (1887). *Les émotions chez les sujets en état d'hypnotisme.* Paris: J.-B. Baillière et Fils)

**Fig. 13.14** Contracture of the face (Reproduced from Bourneville, M., P. Régnard. (1876–1880). *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière.* Paris: Aux Bureau du ProgresMedical, V. A. Delahaye & Cie)

The intent of the doctors of the Salpêtrière was to portray photographically the beginning of the hysterical attack. This picture shows exactly the time when Augustine, the most famous among the patients of the hospital,[7] is hit by an attack. We can see that she is tied to the bed and we see clearly the contraction of the mouth.

Through a sequence of static images, placed side by side, one tries to describe the phenomenon of hysteria. This is what happens in this second image showing the typical contortions of a hysterical patient, photographed at different stages of the attack. Looking at this picture, you realize exactly what doctors meant by "objective representation." Moreover, it should be remembered that these same images were studied and discussed during the famous Tuesday meeting in which neurologists from all over Europe, Freud included, gathered in Paris.

The approach of the doctors to the illness changed as they made progress in the discovery of its causes. This change of approach was reflected in the type of images. At a certain point, it was thought that one way to understand the disease was to

[7] Augustine's case is displayed in the movie *Augustine* (2012), written and directed by Alice Winocour.


**Fig. 13.15** Photograph of Augustine. Plate XXIX (Reproduced from: Bourneville, M., P. Régnard. (1876–1880). *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière.* Paris: Aux Bureau du Progrès Médical, V. A. Delahaye & Cie)

focus on what was causing the symptom. A series of images shows therefore the patients subjected to a series of stresses. In this specific case, the body of the patient becomes, so to speak, the "fertile ground" for a series of electrical stimulations. The eye of the camera closely follows the doctor's hand, who remains off screen, to make room for reactions and fear of patients.

The fear was evident, then, but also the attempt by these women to prove themselves "collaborative" to the doctors who led the experiments. Probably they hoped in this way that the attention of the doctors could move to another patient. In the corridors of the hospital, the patients probably lived a real struggle for survival in the hope of avoiding the experiments. I want to focus on the fact that precisely the role of patients who take an active part in the success of the photograph is one of the factors that can undermine the ideal of objective representation. In order for this ideal to be pursued, in fact, the subject is expected to remain unchanged, but—as we sense in this photo—this does not always happen.

**Fig. 13.16** Photograph of Augustine. Plate XXX (Reproduced from: Bourneville, M., P. Régnard. (1876–1880). *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière.* Paris: Aux Bureau du Progrès Médical, V. A. Delahaye & Cie)

I would now like to draw your attention to another set of photos. In these photos, something different than what is shown so far happens. The hallmarks of objective representation, whose purpose is to make clear the different stages of the disease, are replaced by aesthetic criteria. This is the case for this photo in particular, whose subject is once again Augustine. As you can see, the key element of this image is not the paralysis of her right arm, a result of hysteria. Looking at this picture, including the position of the woman's body—the inclination of the face which seems to hint at a nod toward someone beyond the camera, can we never assume that it is a picture whose declared intention is to highlight the features of the disease?

As Didi-Huberman (Didi-Huberman 2003: 246–7) observes:

> The image thus dissimulates the infirmity it was supposed to show, while the legend tells us that it is indeed shown, in the foreground no less: an arm, a leg. But a style insciously intervenes, producing a poignant *gain in beauty*. The image is crafty, simultaneously becoming closer and more distant

The aesthetic mood has completely replaced the ideal of objective representation. Commenting the photos, Charcot (1888: 129) himself declared:

> All this part of the seizure is very fine, if I may so express myself, and every one of these details deserves to be fixed by the process of instantaneous photography. […]. You see that from the point of view of art they leave nothing to be desired, and moreover they are very instructive.

The consequences of this transformation, namely the shift from the objective canon to the aesthetic one, concern not only the effectiveness of the experiment carried out in the Salpêtrière Hospital. Such consequences have a more general meaning. These images suggest that the interaction among the subjects of the photographs (the patients) and the operator had not been sufficiently considered.

Initially this interaction had been neglected compared to the trust in the automated process through which it was thought that a photo could represent reality objectively. It was said that the photo was "sine manufacta," a Latin expression meaning that something is objective because it did not require a specific human intervention.

### *13.6.3 The Anarchist Element*

Just when the trust was highest in the ability to objectively reproduce reality, something unexpected happened, not foreseen by the doctors themselves.

The photo flees, escapes the control of the observer and shows the action of an anarchist element, totally foreign to the context. *Anarchist*, by definition, is what goes beyond categorization, that is, without principle.

In these cases, we witness the "subordination of medical to aesthetic concerns through its use of a stock female display pose" (De Marneffe 1991: 85).

This approach makes vain the intention of the authors to objectively represent the phenomenon of hysteria. The presence of such an unrelated element is not completely inexplicable. However, to explain that *presence* we should refer to a necessary interaction between patients and operators themselves. That is, we should make recourse to the context of image production.

For this reason, we can conclude that photos of patients not only have historical value.

Their relevance is in pointing out that the tools of interpretation of images have to take account of the very possibility of the recurrence of a foreign element, not required even by the intention of the authors.

## 13.7 Need for a Pragmatic Interpretation of Images

### *13.7.1 Approaches to Interpretation*

The story of the ways in which it was intended to achieve objectivity through the images showed an interesting trend, which is to involve the viewer as a decisive element of the same objectivity.

The viewer is considered, already at the time of preparation of the photographic images to be published, not as a passive content reader.

Meaning and truthfulness of images themselves can be established from the interpretive cooperation of the spectator, which is recognized as an inevitable element of the interpretive process.

Thesis (B) (Sect. 13.1.2), which placed a relationship between ethics and accuracy of the images, hashere a corollary.

(b.1) In the ethics of communication, the interpretive cooperation of the spectator is fundamental.

Typically, in language, to take account of the role of the interpretant, it is believed that the hermeneutical interpretation is the privileged way. It, in fact, seems to offer the more appropriate conceptual tools.

"Linguistic expressions […]—Gadamer confirms—always fall short of what they evoke and communicate. For in speaking there is always implied a meaning that is imposed on the vehicle of the expression, that only functions as a meaning behind the meaning" (Gadamer 1976: 88).

After all, the task of hermeneutics is to explain what is implicit in our real understanding beyond conventional meanings and so what is required is to make explicit the role of the interpretant. The idea, advocated by Marcelo Dascal, to make use of the instruments of pragmatics arises from such a warning and it suggests a mode of interpretation that can, at least, exist alongside the traditional hermeneutical contribution. The latter uses eminently the involvement of semantics.

Underlying Dascal's idea is the notorious distinction, proposed by Morris and elaborated by Carnap (1942: 9):

> If in an investigation explicit reference is made to the speaker, or, to put it in more general terms, to the user of a language, then we assign it to the field of pragmatics. […]. If we abstract from the user of the language and analyse only the expressions and their designate, we are in the field of semantics.

Now, as Dascal claims, if the goal is to go back to the "meaning behind the meaning", always more that what is expressed, such a more complete understanding cannot reside only in the examination of the fragment of a speech.

Pragmatics intervenes at this level, in the awareness that the concepts and methods of semantics "are inadequate to account for the meaning of propositions which are inherently context-dependent" (Dascal 1987: 566).[8]

Genre, style, linguistic register, beliefs, desires, expectations, communication rules of the community, and the shared knowledge of participants in the communication are relevant factors for the reconstruction of meaning; and they are part of a new and enlarged notion of context that the pragmatic deals with.

As Hanks observes:

> Context is a theoretical concept, strictly based on relations. There is no 'context' that is not 'context of', or 'context for.' […]. It is by now widely recognized that much (if not all) of the meaning production that takes place through language depends fundamentally on context and further, that there is no single definition of how much or what sorts of context are required for language description (Hanks 2006: 121).

In the case of images, as Schaeffer writes:

> Only the communicational context (or, to be more precise, all the lateral thinking) can provide criteria to determine the quasi-perceptual field actually corresponding to the given indexical relationship (Schaeffer 2006: 93).

Within a communicative process—whether it is the relationship between the speaker and the recipient, or the relationship between text/image and reader/viewer—these factors are decisive in an attempt to separate the conventional dimension of communicating with the more specifically individual dimension.

Even in the case of the interpretation of images, the viewer has to be considered not independent of prejudices and categories that are constitutive of his being.

In Gadamer's perspective the prejudice of the interpretant has a positive role, contrary to his nineteenth-century predecessors, Schleiermacher and Dilthey. In fact, their method provided that the interpreter was free from his own prejudices as a condition to relive the historical situation in which the text to be interpreted was originally written. In this way, as Dascal observes, is realized "a shift of emphasis from the "context of production" to the "context of interpretation," from the historicity or situatedness of the author, speaker or text to that of the recipient or interpreter (Dascal 1987: 570). All that is important, because it helps to define the role of the interpreter, whose responsibility does not consist in a sort of emptiness, but, on the contrary, in participation. He creates sense because he "is *constitutive* of meaning through his own activities as *an* interpreter."

In thinking about a model for such hermeneutical activities, Gadamer refers to the music or the theater, since "the being of the work of art is play and […] it must be perceived by the spectator in order to be actualized" (Gadamer 1983: 156).

[8] To justify such statement, Dascal recurs to expressions ["egocentric particulars" (Russell), *token-reflexives* (Reichenbach), "indexical expressions" (Bar Hillel)], which make fully intelligible the proposition, only with reference to the situation in which it is pronounced. On the relationship between context and common ground, see (Clark 2006).

Just when Gadamer gives a major role to the interpreter, Dascal is cautious about such a possibility.[9]

> Whatever is the eventual constitutive role of the interpreter in understanding the meaning of an utterance, a communicative act is, first and foremost, an act of generation of meaning by the speaker and success in communication cannot be made entirely independent of the interpreter's ability to go back in some way to thatmeaning. (Dascal 1987: 576)

To explain the nature of the Dascal's closure toward the potential role of the interpreter, one should probably make reference to the fact that, as he himself admits, "the pragmatic theory, while taking into account the interpreter's background knowledge, and so on, has mostly overlooked the *constitutive* role of the interpreter" (Dascal 1987: 572).

In light of that clarification, it can be observed that Dascal is, until the end, coherent with the pragmatic approach he supports. On the one hand, he takes a clear position in favour of the interpreter's role, usually not recognized by theories for which the main aim of hermeneutical operation is to trace the *intentio auctoris;* on the other hand, the warning of the Israeli scholar is that we can not confuse the author's role with the interpreter's one.

### *13.7.2 Propaedeutics for Spectatorship*

What is needed to think images? Do we need autonomous categories or should they be deduced from language?

The shift of language-based categories on the side of images is not easy, considering the different nature of the two media.

As Schaeffer observed:

> The abyss that separates analogical image from a verbal utterance is such that the very fact of accepting a general definition of the sign to understand both of them, no doubt poses more problems than it solves, if only because it pushes us to seek a common ground for acts that are essentially irreducible to each other (Schaeffer 2006: 77).

The types of images to which I am referring in this paper are eminently indexical, but the validity of the Schaeffer thought—related to analogical images—does not change.

In it, in fact, one alludes to the "protean character assumed by the individual act of reception" (Schaeffer 2006: 103) and, therefore, it goes in the direction of openness to pragmatics.

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[9] Dascal seems to distance himself from the theories, disseminated mainly in the field of literature, in which is theorized "the death of the author" (Barthes 1988) or the so-called *kenosis* in the relationship between performer and author (Bloom 1983), or the emptying of the author's influence by the reader/interpreter. From that point of view, Dascal's position seems to recover somewhat the thesis by E.D. Hirsch (1967, 1978).

In order for the indexical reference to be made explicit, the *dynamics of reception* of images is not "independent from the relation that an image has with the receiver's experience" (Schaeffer 2006: 105).

In these words of the French scholar and in highlighting the interpreter's role, we find the main elements of the difficult *transition* from the linguistic universe to the visual.

If, in the elucidation of a text, the crossing point between hermeneutical and pragmatic interpretation is the role attributed to the interpreter and to the context, the equivalent on the side of the elucidation of an image is formed by the emphasis on the role of the spectator and his relationship with images. This indication is shared by Mitchell (2009: 11), who highlights the need for "questioning our relationship with the artwork, transforming the relationship between image and the viewer in a field of investigation."

In this sense, then it is necessary, in part at least, to take distance from the position of the theorists of the so-called "iconic codification," which considers that there is a grammar of universal reading which, as such, can be described in general terms, independent from the context of the spectator.

In a photographic image, undoubtedly there are conventional elements, which have been highlighted by various scholars. For example, starting from studies on perception, Arnheim (1957) enumerates the differences between photos and reality. The photo is determined by the chosen angle of view and the distance from the object. The three-dimensionality of objects and the field of colour variations is reduced to a contrast between black and white.

In addition, as Damisch (1963: 34) observes, cameras are built according to a notion of space and objectivity "previouslyprepared to the invention of photography."

What Arnheim and Damisch say can hardly be disputed.

The question is whether the presence of these elements necessarily indicates a direction to be taken by disciplines that deal with pictures. Does the presence of these conventional elements within a photographic image require a new statute for the image itself? It is extremely difficult to find in the way, because the debate on indexicality and conventionality is far from over.

Attempts to demonstrate the codified nature of the photographic sign have a linguistic inspiration. These efforts tend to apply to visual-realm categories derived from different areas of knowledge.

My thesis is that the most correct approach to PII comes from the identification of autonomous categories, not depending on language. After all, such a claim of independence is already apparent in the writings of those who witnessed the advent of moving images. To navigate in a completely new system of reference, the witnesses of the birth of cinema speak of a new art not attributable to any of the previous arts (Scarafile 2011). Whenever possible, an image should be interrogated using appropriate categories and starting from the experience of the spectator.

The recognition of any element or form, through an image, requires a "lateral knowledge," which identifies that same form as such. The analogical image, especially when it has an indexical value, is so introjected in our perceptual world. Such

reception occurs regardless whether from the intent of the photographeror from the available iconic dictionary. As Schaeffer (2006: 85) observes, "what image tell me is, above all what I am able to see inside and this is in a close relationship with what I've already seen of the world and with the way I did that".

## 13.8 Conclusions

In this paper, I have tried to reflect on the correlation between forms of expressions and representations in which worldviews of individuals are inserted.

I have argued that the greater or lesser possibility of inclusion in society is related to the ability of the expressive forms to objectively reproduce the scenario in which individuals are called to insert themselves.

At the same time, I argue that the ability of the expressive forms to faithfully (i.e., objectively) reproduce reality is connected with the greater or lesser possibility of insertion in the society. In the many examples given in Sect. 13.5 and in the case study described in Sect. 13.6, what emerges is the impossibility of an ideal of objectivity understood as exclusion of the subject by the representative process.

Can such a conclusion be made in reference only to historical examples or does it have value for the present?

To answer this question, consider again Fig. 13.1, introduced in Sect. 13.1.2, related to the situation in Paris soon after the bombing. That picture is a fake: you see four photos of Paris practically deserted with the specification that the scene is recorded on November 14. Actually, the four photos were taken at many different moments: the first, in the upper left, was taken in August 2014 (note the green trees), the second in 2012, the third in 2006 and the fourth in 2011.

The fact that this photo was one of the most viewed photos in 2015, makes us understand how current is the question of objectivity, and how relevant the ethics of communication can be. It is true, as I affirmed in Sect. 13.5, that objectivity is a myth, if considered in its presumed power of excluding the subject from the communicative process.

Can we therefore renounce objectivity once and for all?

Obviously, the answer is no, because in this case we would face even bigger problems.

In fact, if we renounce the research of objectivity as a value-free thought, such renunciation would determine, as Fabris (2006: 115) highlights, the transformation of an "alibi for any conduct ethically and morally incorrect". The only valid instance would be the conscience of the individual operator of communication and, even worse, this would eliminate the very possibility of speaking of "truth".

We cannot renounce the ideal of objectivity; to do that, assuming what is illustrated in this paper, we have to opt for a radical transformation of the concept of objectivity itself.

In other words, remaining faithful to the trend line that emerged at the historical level and is illustrated in Sects. 13.5.1, 13.5.2, 13.5.3 and 13.5.4, we should include

the role of the subject in the concept of objectivity. To do that, one must consider an approach in which the pragmatic orientation can interact with the hermeneutical one.

Let me conclude by noting that such action is contained *in nuce* in Goethe's words, put in exergue, where—concerning the conditions in which an observer can see the phenomenon—in addition to technical data, reference was made to a "thousand other circumstances".

I hope that, from now on, between such circumstances, as the main factor of a correct approach to the ethics of communication, one should also include the role of subject.

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# Chapter 14
# *Petitio Principii.* With Reference to Doxastic/Belief Dialectics

**Rodica Amel**

**Abstract** The present contribution reexamines the thesis regarding the rationality of doxastic dialectics, an issue developed by us in several of our previous studies. This time our intention is to emphasize the paradoxical nature of the subjectivity (a premise grounding the belief), and to demonstrate that, in spite of this aspect, the above-mentioned thesis gets more subtle support, instead of being devaluated.

The demonstration – displayed in hermeneutical terms – will try to explain:

(a) To what extent the cognitive power of subjectivity (the belief) represents an 'original source', and
(b) To what extent the hermeneutical circle is a 'circle', or rather 'a way to language'.

**Keywords** Doxastic dialectics • Doxastic rationality • Doxastic subjectivity • Hermeneutical circle • Original proof

The present intervention tries to explain the conclusion formulated in the last chapter of our study – *Listening and the Well Tempered Controversy* (2014): "The premises of axiological judgment are searched within a 'language horizon' already given and simultaneously inquired". Now, our concern is to demonstrate that this case of *petitio principii* is not a fallacious way of thinking.

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## 14.1 Introductory Explanation

### *14.1.1 About Doxastic Dialectics*

(a) In our previous studies regarding doxastic/belief thinking we have advanced the thesis in conformity with which the dialectical investigation of beliefs is the exclusive way of exploring the grounds of axiology. At the beginning, our research was based on a limited choice: the cognitive autonomy of *doxa.*[1] A deeper interest in that field compelled us to introduce the philosophical concept of *subjectivity* and to explain the role it has within doxastic dialectics. Consequently, the present study should bring a rectification to the first version of the thesis presented above, by affirming that the target of doxastic dialectics is to find the *grounds of subjectivity* while establishing the grounds of axiology.
(b) A second thesis that concerned us in our former studies regarded the *rationality of doxastic dialectics.*

The demonstration of both theses (presented at the points a. and b.) were troubled by the argumentative inconvenient of the type *petitio principii.*

### *14.1.2 About* petitio principii

*Petitio principii* is a rhetorical form of argumentation, which, in accordance with the argument criticism, is considered fallacious. The proper meaning of *petitio principii* is that of begging the question of an argumentation, the conclusion being based on an assumption that is itself in need of being proved or demonstrated (see van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2010:157).

Douglas Walton, in his book *Informal Fallacies*, considers *petitio principii* an informal fallacy, because it might be logically and formally valid, but by analyzing the grounding argument one proves its inconsistency. For instance,

(1) "I believe in existence of God, because the Bible teaches us about that and the Bible is the word of God."[2]
(2) "I recently heard that God is a female being. "
"No, I don't believe it!"
"Why not?"

"Because his name is *Dumnezeu/ God*, a male! (=masculine name)"[3]

[1] In our previous studies regarding doxastic/belief thinking we have established the following things: a. The doxastic thinking represents an autonomous field of cognition that excludes any reference to the pre-epistemic stage of beliefs. b. Doxastic thinking is a subject-oriented cognition, which follows a hermeneutic procedure, interested in *understanding the meaning* not in *knowing the truth* of beliefs.

[2] The example is taken from van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2010: 157.

[3] The example is taken from a Romanian TV investigation.

Walton's criticism dealing with so-called 'informal fallacies' has proved much analytical flexibility. Within the argumentation chain – said the philosopher – the detection of 'informal fallacies' is more complicated than can be explained by the traditional deductive logical interpretation. In his criticism of argumentation, D. Walton's intention was to uncover instances in which the argument, allegedly 'fallacious', may be correct/or at least not unreasonable. "The would be 'fallacies' are not always fallacious" (see Walton 1987: 4; Amel 1990: 340).

During our demonstration referring to the functions and development of doxastic dialectics, we were confronted with a 'fluctuant premise' – that of *subjectivity* – which engenders the argumentative inconvenient of the *petitio principii* type. With the intention of finding a reasonable answer to the problem of argumentative circularity in doxastic dialectics, the opinion we had about the respective issue (namely regarding the *petitio principii* structure of doxastic dialectics) met D.Walton's conclusion about the existence of "not always fallacious fallacies". In contradistinction with D.Walton, whose pragmatic criticism follows a semantic based procedure in order to avoid the immersion of psychology in his theory, we have adopted a phenomenological procedure in 'begging the question' of subjectivity. From the perspective of the issue we are interested in – with reference to doxastic dialectics -, we shall advance the thesis that the *petitio principii* structure of doxastic dialectics is engendered by the paradoxical nature of subjectivity.

### *14.1.3 About the Paradox*

The *paradox* is understood in different ways: as a figure of speech, spiritual state, attitude, existential vision, or as multiple ways of admitting the cognitive value of equivocal things. From the point of view of the present argument, the *paradox* represents the cohabitation of contrary elements in a single functional unity.

*Nota bene:* Not all the paradoxical manifestations of subjectivity lead to *petitio principii*.

## 14.2 Doxastic Subjectivity

### *14.2.1 Belief vs.* doxa *vs. Opinion*

If I say to somebody:

(3) "*The Song of the Earth*, composed by Gustav Mahler, reaches sublimity."
"I am of another opinion, comes the reply of my interlocutor. Actually, what do you mean by 'sublimity'? Is that an aesthetic criterion?"

'Doxastic dialectics' does not refer to conflicts that regard the correct evaluation of particular things. The above quoted example or other disputable situations as, for

instance: if a certain piece of art is beautiful or if a certain person is a brave man, etc. are examples of disputes that precede doxastic dialectics. During doxastic dialectics, the arguers reach the metadialogical level of the controversy, trying to find grounding arguments for their particular propositions. Our philosophical interest was to follow the dialectical process of doxastic conceptualization, the dialectical effort being to define those doxastic concepts (*doxa*), with regard to which the arguers may justify their evaluative affirmations. Without extending the commentary about what means 'exploring the grounds of axiology', two things should be mentioned: a. the axiological universe has ontological dimension – this can be considered an axiom; b. in order to understand the grounds of axiology, a phenomenological explanation of the relationship between *belief* and the general concept of *value* (*doxa*) is useful. There is a complex dialectical labor of dissociating *belief* (an act or a content by which the idea of value is posited in consciousness), from *doxa* (the conceptual representation of the idea of value in reason) and from *opinion* (the belief's discursive and contingent form).[4] Due to this dissociation, it is easier for the philosopher to stress the cognitive specificity of beliefs and to establish the agentive function of subjectivity. Subjectivity has an important role in the procedure of meaning elucidation of value ideas, a procedure that is stimulated by interactive movements, but not limited to them. Each arguer is trying to 'understand' what, for instance, 'sublimity', 'beauty', 'human courage', 'liberty', etc. mean. *Doxastic cognition represents the meaning constitution of beliefs in the subject's consciousness. Belief is a subject-oriented concept.*

The phenomenological interpretation of beliefs allows us to admit that the supersensible 'reality' of the axiological universe is inherent to human existence. This can be considered an axiom.

Dialectical movements gradually conceptualize the subjective inherence of values. Due to the ambivalence (existential and axiological) of the human being, subjectivity manifests its paradoxical function: that of being concomitantly interactive and introspective. Values cannot be defined otherwise than by introspection, but their conceptualization engages the constitutive process of *doxa*, interactively (= pragmatically) stimulated.

By dissociating *belief* from *opinion*, the paradoxical nature of *doxastic subjectivity* (and of subjectivity in general) becomes evident: the fact that the interactive relationship triggers a self-reflecting process. While, in a dispute, the *belief* of the speaker/subject is questioned by the interlocutor, the speaker/subject develops in his mind the meaning of what he believes, he opens in his mind a 'space' of understanding, which is different from the pragmatic sense of the *opinion*. The ontological dimension of the mind engenders the need of transforming the illocutionary intentionality (= the pragmatic/dialectical intentionality) into cognitive intentionality, due to which the Ego is self-oriented and stimulated to objectify the content and the limits of his belief. Therefore, during the phenomenological turn of pragmatics, the philosopher can discover another aspect of the same paradoxical feature of subjectivity, which is concomitantly subject and object.

[4] You can find more explanations in Amel (1999).

The conceptualization of doxastic categories has a hierarchical structure, which is progressively objectified in subject's consciousness.

(4) "*No day like today*!" said somebody everyday.
"We can translate that by *Carpe diem!"*
"No! Horace's words have a *pragmatic* sense: to enjoy the present!"
"The words you quoted mean almost the same thing."
"No! There is an exclamation of *wonder*. The *wonder* of being alive, of being present."
The speaker realizes *the burst of the present!* as Heidegger said.

During the introspective mechanism, both arguers follow their own way in assuming a certain *doxa* (as in the example quoted above: a pragmatic or an ontological concept). The interpretation 'reflects' the cultural horizon of subjectivity. While establishing the grounds of axiology, doxastic dialectics finds the *grounds of subjectivity*. Due to some steps of *metaphysical transubstantiations*, using P. Grice's concept (1991), the doxastic meaning posited in consciousness is transubstantiated into a moral meaning, which finally is equated with an existential meaning, and so on (see Amel 2014). Both arguers assume in their consciousness a particular axiological axis, which objectifies for each of them the meaning of their own self. From the phenomenological point of view, *man* (the subject) *is what he believes (in).*

*Belief is* a mental activity of reflection, never saturated in its meaning. Why 'never saturated in its meaning'? This is the main question, the answer of which could neutralize the idea regarding the *petitio principii* structure of doxastic dialectics (see the following chapter).

### *14.2.2 Different Approaches of* Subjectivity

(a) Heidegger said (1957: 137): „Die Subjektivität ist nichts subjektives in dem Sinne daß damit nur das auf einen eizelnen Menschen Beschränkte, das Zufällige seiner Besonderheit und Beliebigkeit gemeint sein könnte". With Heidegger, subjectivity is not a category of being, but a possibility condition of the ontological categories (2006: 215). Subjectivity has the quality of being the original grounds of reflective acts, as Heidegger mentioned it: "Die Subiektivität ist die wesenhafte Gesetzlichkeit der Gründe, welche die Möglichkeit eines Gegenstandes zu reichen kann"(*idem*). Heidegger extends the philosophical interpretation of subjectivity, in contrast to the three already accepted aspects: psychological, transcendental and moral (subjectivity).
(b) Pragmatics refers to subjectivity in its quality of a *psychological* concept, which represents the particular aspect of human judgment, and, consequently, it cannot ensure the universal force of judgment.

(c) Doxastic subjectivity, to which our commentary makes reference,[5] is 'a possibility condition' (*condition de possibilité*) to have a belief, and consequently it is a larger concept than the *transcendental* subjectivity. The *transcendental* subjectivity is 'located' before the experience and the power of judgment. In the philosophical sense, transcendental subjectivity represents an intelligible *a priori* (innate) level of understanding that grounds the epistemic experience.

Doxastic subjectivity represents the *origin* of thinking and reflection. Given the axiological inherence, *belief* is that particular form of cognition by which the subject, making the experience of values, gets the sense of his own self and, due to that experience, the process of objectifying the inherence (the axiological dimension of reality) is engendered. In non-philosophical 'literature', the cognitive effort of the *self* to define himself is a natural process, as *Bildungsliteratur* or *Journal* literature might prove it: The Ego tries to understand himself, to 'meet himself',[6] to understand the meaning of life and the direction towards his life is moving on.

### *14.2.3 Moral Subjectivity*

In our approach, 'moral' refers to the introspective universe of the subject (see the concepts: *moral subject/ moral subjectivity* and *moral object*)[7] Subjectivity is a sense-giving agent. Due to the doxastic reflection, subjectivity justifies its grounding role in a particular type of cognition, meaning-oriented, the target of which is to get the spiritual/ moral (=introspective) representation of life mechanism. The last affirmation explains the correction mentioned at the beginning of the present study: the target of doxastic dialectics is to find the *grounds of subjectivity* while establishing the grounds of axiology.

[5] Emmanuel Lévinas (1971: 12) emphasizes the necessity to define the concept of *subjectivity* by starting with the principle of reciprocity: *subjectivity* as the *consciousness of the other.* In Levinas' definition, the theoretical frame - which is not structural (= la *totalité)*, neither pragmatic (the communication), but transcendent (= l' *infini)* – represents the dominant category. The *consciousness of the other* is a variable parameter on a scale continuously improved. "Ce livre présentera la subjectivité comme accueillant Autrui; comme hospitalité : En elle se consomme l'idée de l'infini : L'intentionnalité, où la pensée reste *adéquation* à objet, ne définit donc pas la conscience à son niveau fondamental. Tout savoir en tant qu'intentionnalité suppose déjà l'idée de l'infini, *l'inadéquation* par excellence". The philosophical definition given by Levinas could be considered a response to our interpretation of the 'original' proof used in belief dialectics.

[6] A great Romanian artist said some time before his death: "Finally, I met myself 'at the corner'"!

[7] See Amel (1999 and, especially, 2013).

## 14.3 *Petitio principii* Structure of Doxastic Dialectics

### *14.3.1 Doxastic Rationality*

In our doxastic research, we have advanced and tried to demonstrate the rationality of doxastic dialectics, by presenting its probatory process in virtue of four types of proofs: original, paradigmatic, normative and generative (see Amel 2014).

As a general rule, the dialectical rationality should offer relevant proofs capable to support a certain thesis. If a ***petitio principii*** fallacy is detected during the process of argumentation, the dialectical procedure is miscarried. Doxastic dialectics, in this respect, makes an exception. Some particularities should be mentioned. The false impression that doxastic dialectics has the structure of *the petitio principii* type is engendered by the paradoxical way the axiological cognition is reached: on the one hand, *the target of doxastic dialectics is to find the grounds of subjectivity by establishing the grounds of axiology*, and on the other hand, *subjectivity represents the grounding/original proof of axiology.*

In the philosophical sense, the Ego acknowledges himself as the grounds of its determinants, and as grounds of its self-identity. Consequently, doxastic cognition is dependent on the particular way subjectivity ensures the logical development of belief dialectics:

(a) The doxastic rationality is based on the *self-reference of THE SUBJECT*, whose target is to crystallize and to objectify the axiological universe in consciousness;
(b) Doxastic dialectics develops its rational procedure in conformity with the transcendental logic (see Amel 1999). Subjectivity is looking for a principle of transcendence – a concept of categorical order – in virtue of which the founding acts of reflection are validated and the argumentative proofs are justified *a posteriori*.

By cumulating the above-mentioned functions, subjectivity is able to generate authentic intelligible acts even though they are never meaning saturated. A conflict remains open between the concept of categorical order (= transcendental law) that governs the doxastic acts and the content of belief posited in mind, an interval permanently questioned.

The cognitive subjectivity is paradoxical and interrogative by nature.

### *14.3.2 The Goal of the Present Study*

Our theoretical effort is to demonstrate that instead of considering the ***petitio principii*** structure of doxastic dialectics a shortcoming of belief cognition, one should consider it the dialectical way the subject understands himself and gets the sense of life. By assuming the categorical order of *doxa* as self-defining, doxastic cognition

gets a reference horizon. Once 'a horizon' is open in front of the subject, he uncovers the sense, the *order* within which he exists, being able to transfer the nature into culture (to realize how the natural values are *metaphysically transubstantiated* into spiritual ones).

We should remember the following thing: The philosophical concept of subjectivity is associated to that of *consciousness. The consciousness* is the space within which the meaning of beliefs becomes the 'object' of an interpretative/argumentative procedure. By assuming the meaning of beliefs, consciousness realizes its spiritual transubstantiation.

Doxastic dialectics follows a rational procedure, with a modified justificative proof:

1. The maxim of relevance should be substituted by the auto-justificative proof of subjectivity;
2. The maxim of relevance should be confronted with the normative proof.

#### 14.3.2.1 Subjectivity as an Original Proof

It is difficult to admit that doxastic dialectics can offer an original proof of subjectivity. There is no *zero point* of subjectivity. Such pragmatic evidence invalidates the original proof and might lead to ***petitio principii*** . From the philosophical point of view, we have another explanation of the original act. Here we have a paradoxical example:

(5) I declare not having other biological genitors/ than the cleavage of this poem/ with an exclamation mark.[8]

With these last lines of the poem *Genealogy*, the poet and the philosopher C. Badilita excludes, in a metaphorical way, any *a priori* determination of 'his being'. The poem *uncovers* the 'splitter' existing between words, opening the vision of an exclamation mark – *to split with wonder.* The *wonder* is the grounding act posited in consciousness. The original act of belief is void of linguistic meaning, like silence, but once the *wonder* 'is posited in our consciousness', one's subjectivity is waiting for the possibility to name the belief, which is *in statu nascendi.*

The distance which is opened between the cognitive intentionality and its objectified form reminds us the controversial issue regarding the *non-arbitrariness of the linguistic sign*, a controversy originated in Socrates' question about the *Orthótes tōn onomáton* – "the correctness of names" (See Amel 2007). From the phenomenological point of view, cognitive intentionality is the grounding moment of belief that opens in consciousness the space of the meaning debates. From the philosophical point of view, it is less important that *subjectivity* is a problematic instance (being never sure about its own nature) than the conscious source of *understanding*.

[8] "Declar a nu avea alţi strămoşi biologici/ decât despicătura acestui poem/ cu semn de exclamare" - the last lines of the poem *Genealogy*, of the Romanian poet, philosopher and hermeneutist of the Bible, living now in Paris.

The *belief constitution* entails the constitutive process of consciousness with its entire *interrogative rhetoric*. The fundamental interrogation that troubles the subject's consciousness regards the ontological justification of subjectivity. If we consider this ontological justification *ein Satz (der Satz vom Grund)*, (see Heidegger 1977), we might be in a *petitio principii* difficulty. But to the extent to which belief is assumed by the subject as being the content posited in his consciousness (a *noetic* act*)*, then we have sufficient reason for its authenticity.

The last affirmation offers the explanation why even aberrant beliefs could be motivated as being authentically experienced.

#### 14.3.2.2 Subjectivity in the Search of Language

Knowledge is language dependent, the belief is included.

Doxastic subjectivity is a sense-giving agent. It gets progressively formative power, capable of crystallizing the meaning posited in consciousness and to adopt a certain conceptualized form of belief (the *doxa*). The ontological dimension of belief is transubstantiated into an intelligible one. The transubstantiation force of subjectivity makes from *belief a connecting link* between existential content and intelligible (linguistic or semiotic) form. Subjectivity, as a *link mechanism*, uncovers its paradoxical nature, being at the intersection between phenomenological and pragmatic dimensions.

The three functions of doxastic dialectics: dissociative, justificative and constitutive, analyzed in Amel (1999), have only theoretical relevance, because at any moment of the dialectical process, the connection between *belief* (the content posited in consciousness)*, doxa* (belief conceptualized content posited in reason) and *opinion* (the rhetorical form) is present. The philosopher puts the right emphasis on an aspect or another. Now, we are in the (theoretical) moment when *belief* – under the form of *a 'volonté cognitive'*- is in search of *expression* (=language). Like in the phrase *to have it on the tip of one's tongue*, when belief is in search of expression, the dialectical moment opens a large space for rhetoric and the ontological subjectivity 'regains' its pragmatic dimension. The self-justificative acts of the subject, that substitute the pragmatic maxim of relevance, have less argumentative power. Consequently, the doxastic rationality, in lack of original proofs, calls for normative proofs, the relevance of which should be accepted by both arguers. As the normative choice itself is subjective, the distinction between normative and deforming means is difficult to be made. The principle of transcendence, which is raised for justifying the evaluative acts, 'reflects' the interpretative power of the person who makes the evaluation, the choice depending on his cultural horizon or his spiritual consciousness. The hermeneutical process frequently leads to errors of categorization. For instance, an example: How to define the attitude of a 90-year-old woman who is deeply involved in writing an essay about a certain issue. Her attitude could be interpreted referring to several IDEAs of value: that of stubbornness, of intellectual devotion, or of noble strength, the concurrence being between psychological, moral

or spiritual dimension (see Amel 2008). When doxastic dialectics regains the pragmatic frame, the *normative proof* becomes a negotiable measure.

*A remark:* When we speak about meaning 'posited in consciousness' and not about concept 'posited in reason' (*doxa*), the transcendental categories of judgment are constitutive operations, dependent on the choice of the pertinence marks (as for instance, the known concepts taken from German philosophical literature: *Zeitgeist*, *Erlebniss, Erfahrung, Umwelt etc.).* As the relevance of the respective indexes is not obvious (it is a question of belief!) their normative function opens a debate caught within an interpretative circle, named by Heidegger, and after him, by Gadamer, *hermeneutical circle.*

With Heidegger, **the hermeneutical circle** does not represent a vicious circle, but reflects the way the relevance of understanding is obtained: respectively, by anticipation and construction. *Heidegger says that the circularity of 'understanding' cannot be avoided.* Any interpretation which is to contribute to understanding must already have understood what is to be interpreted (1967: 153). Interpretation presupposes a priori 'structures'. Heidegger calls them "potentialities-for-Being"*:*

> Aber in diesem Zirkel ein *vitiosum* sehen und nach Wegen Ausschau halten, ihn zu vermeiden, ja ihn auch nur als unvermeidliche Unvollkommenheit 'empfinden', heißt das Verstehen von Grund aus mißverstehen. … Dieses Zirkel des Verstehens ist nicht ein Kreis, in dem sich eine beliebige Erkenntnisart bewegt, sondern er ist der Ausdruck des existentialen *Vor-structur* des Daseins selbst (Heidegger 1967: 153).

If we see this circle as a vicious one – says Heidegger – and look for ways to avoid it, even if we just sense it as an inevitable imperfection, then the act of understanding has been misunderstood from the ground up.

The distance between *original* and *discursive language* is never completely covered, and the opposition between the language which is originally given and the acquired language is never clear. During sense-giving acts, consciousness reaches moments of self saturation and substitutes genuine acts by 'normative' ones (which actually are conventional meanings). Inevitably, each act of reference to the IDEA of Being (signs of second degree, axiological signs) is a reference to a preconceived idea. All understanding is prejudicial. The "hermeneutical circle" is structurally susceptible to be distorted by the vicious movement of ***petitio principii*** .

Meaning anticipation is a cognitive reference.

> Den Begriff des Sinnes restringieren wir nicht zuvor auf die Bedeutung von 'Urteilsgehalt', sondern verstehen ihn als das gekennzeichnete, existenziale Phänomen, darin das formale Gerüst des im Verstehen Erschließbaren und in der Auslegung Artikulierbaren überhaupt sichtbar wird (Heidegger 1967: 156).

The retro-movement towards an a-perceptive ground assures the intuitive ('innate') possibility to project a sense on a temporal scale and to protect the unclear content of belief from receiving an improper expression. Both interlocutors, rhetorically manipulating their *opinions* (the discursive language), try to mediate the relationship between *belief* and *doxa* in a dialogue during which the cultural tradition is consolidated as a **system of reference.**

Gadamer explains the concept of *hermeneutical circle* in relationship with the natural dynamics of **tradition** as equilibrium between *Bewährung* (confirmation) şi *Bewahrung* (preservation).

## 14.4 Conclusion

The ***petitio principii*** structure of doxastic dialectics is caused by the paradoxical nature of subjectivity: on the one hand, *the target of doxastic dialectics is to find the grounds of subjectivity by establishing the grounds of axiology*, and on the other hand, *subjectivity represents the grounding/ original proof of axiology.*

The axiological concern of subjectivity is to crystallize and to objectify the inner sense of the Ego: a. being concomitantly subject and object; b. being *a posteriori* and not *a priori* rationalized; and the most important of all, being the agent and object of a *metaphysical transubstantiation*.

If we want to translate the noumenal dynamics of consciousness in discursive elements, the authentic experience of value is only a partial explanation.

1. During self-reflective acts of consciousness, language, historically acquired, **approaches the House of Being, but the house is never reached.**[9]
2. The reference to transcendental principles (reference-systems), in spite of their justificative power, remains a subjective choice. For a critical mind, the normative power of the *Zeitgeist*, or of the tradition, or of any other reference system represent a challenge to open a dialogical inquiry in order to reach dialogical legitimacy.

The legitimacy of those concepts of value which are invoked as reference-systems is debatable for both reasons: as original proofs and as normative proofs as well.

The hermeneutical interpretation is and remains under dialogical debate.

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[9] „Die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins "(Heidegger 1971: 22, in Heidegger 1976). See also: „Sprache ist lichtend-verbergende Ankunft des Seins selbst (*idem*, p. l6)".

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