Philosophical Argumentation: Logic and Rhetoric

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The subject of the present paper is a specific type of argumentation, namely philosophical argumentation. Nevertheless, I believe that its aims and conclusions are pertinent to argumentation in general. Since we are dealing with philosophy, let me begin my discussion with a very general question: when and why does one use the term 'argumentation'?

One reasonable answer to this question is that the term argumentation distinguishes the discourse it refers to from formal demonstration on the one hand and irrational dispute on the other. In other words, the term 'argumentation' refers to a middle ground between impersonal methods and irrational approaches. This was Chaim Perelman's challenge and project. Perelman presents his study of argumentation as a response to the strict dichotomy between rationality and irrationality asserted by the positivists: either one provides empirical or logical proof, or one fails to provide a rational justification. Perelman's main concern was with practical reasoning related to values, but there is more than a suggestion in his work that he also contemplated philosophy in general and even metaphysics.[1] His basic claim is that there is a portion of rational thinking and argumentation that cannot be reduced to logic or empirical methods. Perelman defined this argumentation by turning to Aristotle's works on rhetoric and dialectic. He entitled his synthesis between rhetoric and dialectic 'the new rhetoric'.[2] 'The new rhetoric' not only draws attention to the fact that there are rational arguments that are neither logical nor empirical, but also paves the way to his claim that we incorrectly perceive philosophical arguments as logical ones. Perelman never completed his project concerning philosophical argumentation and the present paper can be perceived as another step in that direction.

The logical orientation of philosophy derives from the philosopher's desire to find ways to distinguish between accidental and subjective thoughts and necessary and objective ones. Logic is perceived as a means of achieving this since it offers clearly defined rules of thinking that are not contingent upon the accidental judgment of any individual (philosopher).[3] The term 'logic' hence became, in philosophical discourse, a general name for any attempt to present a consistent and accurate thought.[4] My claim is that free use of the term 'logic', together with disregard for the

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individualistic nature of philosophical thinking has created – and continues to create – tremendous distortion in philosophical discussion.

LOGICAL USE AND MISUSE

In his book *Philosophical Reasoning*, John Passmore draws attention to the free and inaccurate use that philosophers make of logical terminology. He cites the way philosophers use the term ‘self-contradiction’ as a good example. Passmore argues that close scrutiny of philosophers’ use of this term often reveals a failure to meet the logical requirements for ‘self-contradiction’, namely the conjunction of a proposition and its negation. Instead, philosophers often relate self-contradiction to a simple proposition, which bears no relation to the logical construction of self-contradiction. Passmore claims that unlike the logical concept of self-contradiction, which is formally defined, the philosophical notion of self-contradiction is often misplaced and used instead of the notion of impossibility.[5]

Passmore posits the difference between philosophy and logic as part of his effort, throughout the book, to distinguish philosophical reasoning from both mathematical and empirical reasoning. He adduces Hume’s famous criticism of induction as an example of his claim. According to Passmore, despite his noted recommendation to ignore arguments that are neither empirical nor mathematical, Hume’s own argument does not employ scientific or mathematical procedure:

> It tries to show that something cannot be done, but not because (in the scientific manner) it would be inconsistent with some physical law . . . nor because the supposition that it can be done leads to formal contradiction . . . but rather because any attempt to do it presume that it has already been done. This one of the most characteristic procedures in philosophy. (Passmore, 1970, p. 7)

Passmore is indeed referring to a very common philosophical argumentative procedure, although he does not do so by name. This is the well-known strategy known as ‘begging the question’ (*petitio principii*). Such critical strategies are common in philosophical discussion since one of the principle goals of philosophical thinking is to expose basic assumptions and test them critically. The philosopher exposes the controversial implicit or unjustified assumptions of a given position and argues for ‘begging the question’. This is exactly what Hume did when he pointed out that the principle of the uniformity of nature is a problematic assumption. Hume was doubtless not alone in this recognition, but unlike others he sought philosophical justification, i.e., was not willing to accept it at face value. Philosophical discussion, which does not restrict the targets of philosophical criticism *a priori*, encourages this kind of investigation – critical strategy which claims that the basic assumptions of a certain position have not been justified and sometimes that they cannot be justified at all.

Chaim Perelman explains that this is exactly the meaning of *petitio principii*:

> This [*petitio principii*] is not a mistake in formal logic, since formally any proposition implies itself, but it is a mistake in argumentation, because the orator begs the question by presupposing the existence of an adherence that does not exist and to the obtaining of which his efforts should be directed. (Perelman, 1979, p. 15)

'Begging the question' is a rhetorical fallacy and not a logical one, because it originates in the addressee's attitude to the argument and not in the internal structure of the argument itself. If the conclusion were not – implicitly or explicitly – present in the assumptions, it could not be logically derived from them. The idea of logical inference is that logical steps do not add any content of their own. Therefore, if 'begging the question' is perceived as a problem of philosophical argument, it would be inaccurate and misleading to equate philosophical and logical argument. Whereas 'begging the question' is evidence of logical validity, it is indicative of philosophical failure. The demand that philosophical argument be logical and at the same time avoid 'begging the question' is hence an eminently contradictory demand. In other words it is always possible to claim that a philosophical argument is not logical or that it begs the question. This does not mean that logic does not have a significant role in philosophy, but merely that philosophy always uses logic in a manner that subordinates it to philosophical purpose, which might be called 'begging an answer'.

The fact that 'begging the question' is a rhetorical fallacy and not a logical one can also explain why philosophers easily recognize the fallacy in the arguments of other philosophers but rarely in their own. Although logical fallacies are often exposed by someone who disagrees with a certain position, rhetorical fallacies can be identified *exclusively* by someone who disagrees with a certain position. Since philosophical thinking is interested in basic assumptions it is only natural that the rhetorical fallacy, which indicates disagreement with basic assumptions, is so dominant a part of this discussion. In other words, an activity is always critiqued with respect to its purpose. In the case of philosophical inquiry this purpose is critical examination of the basic assumptions. A philosopher accuses another of 'begging the question' by introducing a new question, which was not asked previously and that he feels should be asked. The accusation of 'begging the question' faults the philosopher for dogmatism, i.e., granting certainty to controversial assumptions while under commitment to avoid dogmatism. In other domains where dogmatism is not the main target, this kind of criticism is severely limited.

One might summarize the issue thus: the fallacy of 'begging the question' is not a logical fallacy although it refers to the relationship between assumptions and conclusion. It is not a logical fallacy because logic requires the conclusions to somehow be inherent in the assumptions. Even Whately, who considers this fallacy in a logical context, argues that

it is a subjective and interpretive form of criticism rather than an objective, formal one:

> It is not possible, however, to draw a precise line, generally, between this fallacy [*petitio principii*] and fair argument; since, to one person, that might be fair reasoning, which would be, to another, 'begging the question;' inasmuch as, to the one, the premises might be more evident than the conclusion; while, by the other, it would not be admitted, except as a consequence of the admission of the conclusion. (Whately, 1864, p. 107)

Perelman, as was mentioned above, offers a more determined claim, explaining why this is a rhetorical rather than logical fallacy.[6] In my opinion this kind of criticism is unavoidable in philosophical discussions. The philosopher who tries to claim that he has critically examined the most basic assumptions of his position is naturally subject to an unconvinced philosopher's accusation of 'begging the question'.

To return to the beginning of the discussion, we can see how logical tools are imbued with rhetorical significance in the philosophical discussion. Passmore, who does not employ rhetorical terms, cites the philosophical use of the term 'self-contradiction' as inaccurate. According to Passmore philosophers often argue for self-contradiction when a certain claim is merely irreconcilable with the implicit assumptions of their inquiry.[7] I agree with Passmore that the free use of logical terms by philosophers is often misleading especially when the terms are used to claim the irrefutable status of a certain claim. Yet my present aim is not only to warn of the potentially misleading confusion of logic and philosophy but also to draw attention to the fact that although logic plays an important role in philosophical thinking, philosophical arguments should be seen as rhetorical rather than logical ones.

The philosophical tendency to prefer logical thinking is not incidental and can be explained. The philosopher who desires to clear his thoughts, ensure they are not grounded in personal and arbitrary preferences, regards logical elaboration as a means of testing them that is independent of common opinions. Aristotle for example, saw dialectic as logical thinking that begins with common opinions but does not rely on common agreement. The conclusions of dialectical thinking will be perceived as true even if they contradict common opinions. The Platonic forms are a good example of this (mainly because Aristotle himself rejected their possibility).[8] According to Plato the forms necessarily exist because a logical examination of the question of knowledge taught him (convinced him) that it could not be otherwise, even if their existence appears preposterous. Philosophy always grants special weight to logical thinking, this being one of the most remarkable characteristics of philosophical thinking and argumentation. Philosophical arguments are hence often perceived as absurd and rejected by non-philosophers. Arguments that are perceived as convincing by philosophers, or at least an individual philosopher, might be regarded by non-philosophers or even other philosophers as peculiar and resound-

ingly unconvincing. This was Aristotle's response to the Platonic notion of forms.

The logical elaboration of a thought however, does not occur in a vacuum and is only one of the means philosophers use to convince themselves and others that their positions are not grounded on personal and arbitrary preferences. Logical thinking can hence lead, as it has done in the past and will continue to do in the future, different philosophers to different conclusions. My claim is that this is because it is not logic that determines the conclusions of philosophical thinking, but the personal judgment of each individual philosopher. Logical development of philosophical thought is not dependent on the rules of logic, but culminates in a point that from the philosopher's point of view cannot be passed without exchanging the clarity achieved for a new obscurity. From this point of view logic is used by philosophers as a magnifying glass, the proximity or distance of which is dependent on the philosopher's degree of clarity at the outset.

LOCKE AND BERKELEY: AN EXAMPLE

A good example of my claim is the manner in which George Berkeley criticizes John Locke's position. This is an instructive and interesting example because these two philosophers not only shared a basic assumption (empiricism) but also a similar argumentative framework. Berkeley's criticism was merely that Locke did not halt the logical elaboration of his thought in the appropriate place. He does not dispute Locke's starting point nor his way of thinking, but only the point at which he decided to determine his conclusions.

Berkeley writes in his notebooks:

> Wonderful in Lock that he could w^{n} advanc'd in years sees at all thro a mist y^{t} had been so long a gathering & was consequently thick. This more to be admired than y^{t} didn't see farther. (Berkeley, 1967, p. 71)

Berkeley appreciates Locke's philosophical abilities, the capacity to see through the thick fog distorting human understanding. Yet he criticizes him of not following through,[9] i.e. of not realizing the philosophical conclusions that Berkeley feels necessarily emerge from his position. The question I want to pose at the center of this discussion is: what is the significance of this kind of criticism? Who or what can determine the proper logical elaboration of a thought?

Berkeley believes that his gauge is the correct one, mainly because he derived it from Locke himself. In his book *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke recommends the proper analogy for clarifying the process of understanding:

> *The perception of the mind being most aptly explained by words relating to the sight*, [emphasis mine] we should best understand what is meant by clear and obscure in our

> ideas by reflecting on what we call clear and obscure in the objects of sight. (Locke, 1975, p. 363)

The contribution of this very old analogy to the present discussion is surely not a function of its originality. It is important because it is a central axis of the thinking and argumentation of both Locke and Berkeley, i.e. plays a significant role in the elaboration and justification processes in the respective positions of these two philosophers. Berkeley not only adopts Locke's assumptions, but also the analogy that guides Locke's thinking. Comparing the two philosophers can illuminate how and why two philosophers who share the same assumptions and method of thinking can arrive at different conclusions.

I will briefly consider three central points of disagreement between Locke and Berkeley: the issue of abstract ideas, the issue of material substance and the issue of primary and secondary qualities. With respect to each I will show how the logical disagreement is actually the result of disagreement concerning the argumentative status of the analogy that both employ: *thinking is like seeing*.

Locke makes reference to the visual in order to assert that particular ideas precede abstract ideas. He writes:

> [F]or, when we nicely *reflect* upon them, we shall find that general ideas are fictions and contrivances of the mind, that carry difficulty with them, and do not *so easily* offer themselves as we are apt to imagine. (Ibid.: 596)

In his book *The Concept of Mind*, Gilbert Ryle speaks of the importance of the term 'reflection' that Locke borrows from the field of optics to lend the process of introspection a visual dimension.[10] When the analogy 'thinking is like seeing' is both the implicit and explicit axis of thought, the difficulty of understanding abstract ideas is apparent. Locke does not present the difficulty in order to reject the possibility of abstract ideas, but only to assert the priority of particular ideas ('the empiricist's basic assumption').

> At least this is enough to show that the most abstract and general ideas are not those that the mind is first and most easily acquainted with, nor such as it earliest knowledge is conversant about. (Ibid.)

Locke uses the analogy in order to illustrate the difficulty of understanding abstract ideas and hence assert the priority of particular ideas. Nevertheless, he does not aver that because abstract ideas cannot be subjected to the visual test they are impossible ideas. In other words, he permits himself to reach philosophical conclusions on the grounds of the analogy but avoids using it as a principle of rejection.

Berkeley differs. He analyzes the abstract idea of a triangle – also employed as an example by Locke – in order to assert that it not simply difficult to conceive, but an impossible idea. Berkeley seeks to 'push' the analogy further:

> What more easy than for any one to *look* a little into his own thought, and there try whether he has, or can attain to have, an idea that shall correspond with the description that is here given of this general idea of triangle – which is neither oblique not rectangle, equilateral, equicrural nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once? (Berkeley, 1959, p. 113)

Sight will never make an idea accessible to us that contains all the possible properties of a triangle, including those that exclude one another, and at the same time contains none of them. The question is does this 'gaze' – although its argumentative value has been ascertained – reveal anything about the impossibility of abstract ideas or the difficulty in understanding them? Did Locke arbitrarily curtail the logical elaboration of his thought or did Berkeley take it a step too far?[11]

Disagreement between the two philosophers concerning the idea of material substance raises the same issue. As in the case of abstract ideas, Locke does not reject the existence of material substance, but supplies the line of thought that enables Berkeley to do so. In the fourth book of his Essay, in the chapter entitled 'On our knowledge about the existence of other things', Locke writes:

> For the having the idea of anything in our mind no more proves the existence of that thing, than the *picture* of a man evidences his being in the world, or the *visions* of a dream make thereby a true history. (Ibid.: 630)

When understanding is explained by means of an analogy to sight, it is difficult to explain what aspect of the 'picture of understanding' indicates the existence of anything qualitatively different to that picture itself. The analogy Locke elects to use leads him to consider a state of consciousness as nothing more than a picture. Therefore, he finds himself bound to explain claims that are not easily explained in this framework. Yet Locke, who himself points out the difficulty that inheres in the analogy does not think it sufficient philosophical justification for rejecting the idea of material substance.

Once again, Berkeley thinks otherwise. He makes a stab at the very point that Locke indicates with the 'Ockham razor':[12]

> But [I don't see] what reason can induce us to believe the existence of bodies without our mind, from what we perceive, since the very patrons of matter themselves do not pretend there is any necessary connection betwixt them and our idea? (Ibid.: 133)

One of the patrons to whom Berkeley is referring is Locke himself. Locke argues that the general idea of a material substance is not a clear one at all, since we can have neither a sensational nor a reflective perception of it. It is, confesses Locke, nothing more than an uncertain assumption.[13] If we recall the analogy that guides his thought it is easy to understand why Locke believes the idea of material substance cannot be clearly understood: because we cannot 'see' it. But should Locke have reached the same conclusion as Berkeley? Not Necessarily. Locke himself explains why:

> But to say or think there are no such, because we conceive nothing of them, is no better an argument then if a blind man should be positive in it, that there was no such thing sight and colors, because he had no manner of idea of any such thing nor could by any means frame to himself any notions about seeing. (Ibid.: 554)

These words illustrate the difference between Berkeley's use of the analogy and Locke's. Locke sees it as a potential aid to learning about understanding but definitely not as a criterion for rejection. Berkeley, unlike him, sees the analogy as marking not only the boundaries of human understanding, but also the boundaries of the world; he uses it as grounds for ontological conclusions.

Locke illustrates his approach by the following example: I cannot convincingly argue that something does not exist only because I have difficulty ('visually') perceiving its existence. The example of the blind man, contained in the same analogy, is intended to illustrate the argumentative limitations of the analogy. Locke, without being acquainted with Berkeley's criticism, renders absurd the validity that Berkley ascribes to the analogy. The question therefore, is what brings a philosopher to stop at a certain point, rather than which of the two went the whole distance and which one stopped mid-course. Hume, it should be noted, went a step further and rejected the existence of spiritual substance as well.[14]

The distinction between primary and secondary qualities has an interesting argumentative connection to the assumption of material substance. On the one hand the distinction between these two levels of qualities reinforces the assumption of material substance. On the other, only the assumption itself can give meaning to the distinction. Here however, I will focus only on the different use of the analogy made by the two philosophers.

In keeping with the complexity of Locke's position throughout, here also he points out the difficulty of interlacing this distinction with the visually argumentative framework. Once again Berkeley, using visual introspection, renders the idea absurd.

Locke bases the distinction between primary and secondary qualities mainly on arguments that reject the possibility of the existence of secondary qualities in the substance itself. Yet close to the end of his discussion of the distinction he adds the following remark:

> But our senses not being able to discover any unlikeness between the idea produced in us and the quality of the object producing it, we are apt to imagine that our ideas are resemblance of something in the object, and not the effects of certain powers places in the modification of their primary qualities, with which primary qualities the ideas produced in us have no resemblance. (Ibid.: 142)

Locke it seems, despite his great efforts to ground the distinction, which is a central motif of his philosophical positions, is aware of the fact that it is problematic from the point of view of visual introspection. If one limits thought to the range of imagination, hence to the visual criterion, one has difficulty accepting the distinction. In a visual context, argues Locke, one

would be inclined to think there is no essential difference between the two kinds of qualities. Berkeley agrees. He adopts Locke's claim that secondary qualities exist only in the mind, in order to argue – with the help of visual language – that all qualities exist in the same place, namely the mind:

> But I desire any one to *reflect*, and try whether he can, by any abstraction of thought, conceive the extension and motion of a body without all other sensible qualities. For my own part, I *see* evidently that it is not in my power to *frame* an idea of a body extended and moving, but I must withal give it some color or other sensible qualities, which is acknowledge to exist only in the mind. [emphasis mine] (Ibid.: 129)

Berkeley takes the issue of visual introspection as far as he can. It was Locke who recommended visual introspection, but his conclusions do not satisfy Berkeley who feels that Locke always fails to take the extra step.

It seems that both Locke and Berkeley take consistent positions i.e. each one's position on one issue is reconcilable with their position on other issues. Therefore, an important element in philosophical evaluation of their positions is their different use of the central analogy they share. My claim is that whereas Locke makes what might be called 'analogous use', Berkeley makes 'metaphorical use' of it. The question of the logical elaboration is hence subordinated, *inter alia*, to the question of the argumentative status of the analogy.[15]

Locke maintains the separation between the analogues, between seeing and thinking. He is therefore careful not to draw conclusions that depend entirely upon this analogy. In other words he regards the analogy as having excellent argumentative and explanatory power but not as a criterion of validity. Berkeley, unlike Locke, fuses the analogues. He therefore does not hesitate to draw conclusions that are entirely dependent on visual introspection, even pure ontological conclusions. In other words Berkeley transforms the analogy into a metaphor.[16] He totally eliminates the difference between the analogues, hence giving the analogy status as a criterion of validity. Therefore, whereas Locke reaches certain conclusions on the grounds of the analogy (the priority of particular ideas) but rejects the possibility of more radical conclusions (the impossibility of abstract ideas), *Berkeley interprets this limitation as inconsistency*.

In his 'analogous use' Locke seems to constantly emphasize the comparative term 'like' which indicates that the relationship between the analogues is one of similarity rather than identity. When we explain A by means of B we are not committed to arguing that what is wrong for B is also necessarily wrong for A. Although Locke recognizes the argumentative value of visual introspection he does not seriously presume to argue for the impossibility of abstract ideas, even if their possibility is negated by visual introspection. According to this view visual introspection can be useful in illustrating the difficulties in understanding abstract ideas, and hence prove the priority of particular ideas. Since, however, it is only an analogy, it cannot be used to reject the possibility of abstract ideas.

In his ‘metaphorical use’ Berkeley seems to relinquish comparative terms such as ‘like’ and hence transforms, in the service of his argument, the relationship from one of similarity into one of identity. When we refute A by means of B, they must be mixed together in order to argue that what is wrong for B is also wrong for A. Berkeley, according to his metaphorical use must therefore reject any idea that is refuted by the visual introspection test. The question that Berkeley repeatedly asks is: why do I have to assume the existence of entities whose possibility I cannot (visually) perceive?

Plato offers an interesting perspective on the conflict. Plato, who often uses the analogy in his own argumentation, emphasizes the difference between ‘sensual sight’ and ‘intellectual sight’. He hence warns of the dangers of ‘metaphorical use’ such as Berkeley’s (although he also rejects Locke’s position). From the Platonic point of view Berkeley’s use is simply misuse:

> [The soul] bidding her trust in herself and her pure apprehension of pure existence, and to mistrust whatever comes to her through other channels and it subject to variation; for such things are visible and tangible, but what she sees in her own nature is intelligible and invisible. (Plato, 1937, p. 468)

I do not intend to pursue the Platonic position further since it is only invoked here as an example of a philosopher who maintains that there is a qualitative gap between the analogues of seeing and thinking. One should therefore be careful not to confuse them when using the analogy. Not only because, like all analogies, it has limited validity, but especially because it is an analogy between two excluded qualities. For Plato, one might circumspectly argue, thinking begins exactly at the point where seeing ends. Locke does not concur. He opines that one can learn about thinking by comparing it to seeing, bearing in mind that since it is only an analogy there are things that should be accepted or assumed even if they do not pass the test of the analogy. Berkeley, who regards Locke’s analogy as a criterion of validity, wonders why one should assume the existence of things whose possibility cannot be understood.

LOCKE AND BERKELEY – THE LESSON

Paying attention to the argumentative role of figurative language illustrates how the logical elaboration of a philosophical thought is subordinated to selections made by the individual philosopher. These selections are what determine the argumentative space within which the logical elaboration obtains its power and the philosopher’s conclusions their meaning. Returning to the metaphor invoked before, we might characterize the logical elaboration as the philosopher’s ‘magnifying glass’ and the argumentative selections as his ‘point of observation’. Meaningful philosophical criticism

must therefore consider both the 'magnifying glass' and the 'observation point'. Any attempt to distinguish between 'the proof itself' (the logical elaboration), and whatever is not 'the proof itself' (the argumentative selections), will necessarily distort the picture and sometimes even prove impossible. How, for example, can the arguments of Locke and Berkeley be 'purged' of their selections regarding figurative language?

My claim is not that comparisons of Locke and Berkeley's positions are valueless, but that they cannot be tested on the logical level alone. From this perspective Russell's claim that Hume's position is more consistent than those of Locke and Berkeley is meaningless so long as it does not consider the argumentative selections each one makes. To Berkeley Locke's arguments are invalid because visual introspection makes their conclusions preposterous. Likewise, Berkeley's arguments cannot be perceived as valid from a Lockean point of view because he considers analogy a criterion of validity (Locke's example of the blind man illustrates this well). Before one examines their arguments from a logical perspective therefore, one should have a clear conception of the argumentative status of visual introspection. This will determine, to a large degree, whether one regards Locke as having mistakenly avoided conclusions that presented themselves (as Berkeley opined) or Berkeley as having mistakenly drawn conclusions that were not tenable (as Locke suggests).

The argumentative status of analogy is a question that cannot easily be answered, nor for which an *a priori* answer exists. Maintaining the distinction between the analogues ('the analogous use') would seem to be a more favorable philosophical method because it reduces the possibility of being misled by attributing all the properties of the *phoros* (the known – by means of which one tries to explain) to the *theme* (the unknown – the thing one is trying to explain).[17] In other words, awareness of the difference between analogues is maintained. On the other hand it must be noted that that the ability to refute by means of 'metaphorical use' is in certain contexts an important way of escaping dogmatic slumber, creating new ideas and introducing them into discussion.[18] It is advisable therefore, to examine the use of analogy – as any other argumentative device – as part of each particular argumentative complex and not in isolation. Every philosopher constructs this complex differently.

Analogy is a central tool in thinking and argumentation, especially in philosophy. The choice both of an analogy and the manner in which it is used, have significant influence on the philosophical conclusions reached and the philosophical criticism. This brings Chaim Perelman to argue that, 'the whole history of philosophy could be rewritten, emphasizing not the structure of systems, but the analogies that guide philosophers' thoughts' (Perelman, 1979, p. 99). I am not convinced that analogies alone can explain a philosopher's line of thought (Plato, Locke and Berkeley used the same analogy), but I do concur that they should be taken into consideration when examining a philosophical argument. I disagree therefore with

Jeff Mason's claim that metaphorical language is merely a technique of expression.[19] I aver that metaphorical language plays an important role in thinking and argumentation and should not be dismissed as mere decoration. The example of Locke and Berkeley shows that the same analogy can lead to different philosophical conclusions, making Perelman's claim seem exaggerated. However, Mason's approach whereby the metaphorical level is only an artificial addition to the 'straightforward argument' is also incorrect. It does not acknowledge the central argumentative role of the metaphorical level, which makes it possible to understand the philosopher's way of thinking and the argumentative space within which his claims obtain their meaning and justification.

PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENTATION: LOGIC AND RHETORIC

Plato's dialectic, Descartes' method, Spinoza's geometry, Kant's system and Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* are usually mentioned in assertions of the logical nature of philosophical argument. But a rigorous reading of these texts shows that although the arguments they contain express logical thinking, they also make use of non-logical tools in order to advance their conclusions. Hence, one cannot understand them by appealing to logic alone.

A good example is Spinoza's *Ethic*,[20] which is considered to be an authentically logical work. This philosophical piece was composed according to the model of geometrical demonstration – definitions, axioms and propositions. Spinoza proves every proposition by referring to preceding definitions, axioms and propositions. He also however, adds many notes to his proof, which indicate that he perceives the philosophical argument as wider and different to a conclusion deduced from a series of assumptions. Two interesting, but certainly not exceptional examples, can be found in the second part of the book, which is entitled 'De natura et origine mentis' ('On the nature and origin of the soul').

In corollary eleven Spinoza argues:

> Hence it follows that the human mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God (Spinoza, 1937, p. 58)

This proposition, which is presented, like any other in the book, as a deduced conclusion, contains a problematic claim. The claim that the human mind is part of God's mind is controversial and even provocative. Spinoza is aware of this and hence adds the following note:

> At this point many of my reader will no doubt stick fast, and will think of many things which will cause delay; and I therefore beg of them to advance slowly, step by step, with me, and not to pronounce judgment until they shall have read everything which I have to say. (Ibid.)

This kind of remark is foreign to logical proof. This is because logical rules rather than the addressee's response are what is important in logical proof, and also because logical proof is indifferent to the meaning of its propositions. Furthermore, Spinoza's request that the reader not judge his claim yet is absurd from a geometrical point of view. One can stop at any point of geometrical or logical demonstration and test its validity according to former steps; the subsequent steps are totally irrelevant for this purpose. My claim is that Spinoza himself was aware of the fact that his argumentation was constructed like a geometrical demonstration, but was not actually a demonstration. The content and style of his notes show this clearly. It is in fact a philosophical essay that tries to convince the reader of the veracity of Spinoza's ideas concerning God, the human soul and their relations. So, Spinoza should ensure not only that his thesis is consistent but also that his reader is convinced.

The second example from Spinoza's *Ethics* brings us back to figurative language, also used by Spinoza. In proposition forty-three Spinoza argues:

> He who has a true idea knows at the same time that he has a true idea, nor can he doubt the truth of the thing. (Ibid.: 88)

This proposition is Spinoza's answer to skepticism. It is supposed to nip in the bud any attempt to argue that the question of philosophical justification necessarily leads to an infinite regress. This proposition, which is based on proposition eleven, is true, according to Spinoza's system, since an adequate idea in human mind is an adequate idea in God's mind. It is the end of a Cartesian move in which Spinoza substitutes the criteria of correspondence by the criteria of clarity and distinctness, in Spinoza's terms an 'adequate idea'. In the note to this proposition he tries to convince the reader of the validity of this criterion by using a common metaphor:

> Clearly, just as light shows itself and darkness also, so truth is a standard of itself and falsity. (Ibid.: 70)

This analogy is important for understanding Spinoza's concept of truth, since it reflects his thought concerning the nature of truth and its relation to falsity. Surely Spinoza uses it by way of an analogy – in order to explain one thing, the relation between truth and falsity, by another thing, the relations between light and darkness – but the known part of the analogy determines the border of the unknown one. That is to say, the known analogue does not only help to clarify the idea of the unknown analogue, but also delimits its possible logical elaboration. This is the reason why it is important to ask and understand why Spinoza chooses relations between light and darkness (with all their possible connotations) in order to explain the relations between truth and falsity. For Spinoza, one might say metaphorically, truth is the light.

Like Spinoza, all philosophers, including the very logically oriented ones, needs to break out of the framework of logical proof in order to

provide a philosophical argument. Hence, philosophical arguments could not and should not be identified with logical proofs, even when one speaks about logic-oriented philosophy. Philosophy is a domain of argumentation and not of demonstration.

In his book *The Realm of Rhetoric*, Chaim Perelman calls attention to an essential characteristic of any argumentation that is not a formal demonstration:

> Every argument implies a preliminary selection of facts and values, their specific description in a given language, and an emphasis which varies with the importance given them. (Perelman, 1982, p. 34)

Perelman stresses that any argumentation, even if it appears objective, expresses a subjective tendency. This tendency is reflected in the selections that necessarily constitute any argumentation. The subjective tendency of argumentation does not necessarily mean that all argumentation is manipulative, but it necessitates an awareness of the argumentative selections. In order to understand the manner in which an argument supports a position is it necessary to ask why it was constructed in a particular way. This is not related to the speaker's intention, because unconscious selections are a likely phenomenon. Instead the question aims to reveal the context within which the argument obtains its force. This examination reveals those elements with no logical function to be part of the conditions for justification. These elements are responsible for the presence of certain selections and not others in the consciousness and hence determine the direction and shape of the logical elaboration of a philosophical thought.

We learn from this that it is impossible to disregard the rhetorical selections of a philosophical text when judging it philosophically. It is not surprising therefore, that any examination of a philosophical argument that does not take its rhetorical selections – its non-logical elements – into account will ultimately refute that argument, or in philosophical-rhetorical terms present it as unconvincing. A philosopher presents his arguments in the way he deems most likely to convince. Presenting the arguments in a new context in which the original qualities have been censored damages its potential to convince. Critical activities such as 'revealing the logical structure of an argument' or 'logical examination of an argument' and so forth are actually interpretive activities, their analytical guise notwithstanding. Their aim is to declare that 'this time' the argument has been examined objectively and the examination is therefore more reliable with regard to its original format. My question is: why?

Not only why is this a more reliable way, but also why do philosophers not present logical structures alone? Why is this judgment considered objective? Why is it important to argue for its objectivity? Who is one trying to convince?

Not only does the history of philosophy teach us that any commitment

to objective judgment is criticized as sophism by other thinkers, but more importantly, failure to take into account the subjective aspect that is necessarily a part of all philosophical thinking is itself sophism. 'Revealing the logical structure of an argument' is an interpretive, intrusive and evaluative activity which actually implies that the philosopher did not do a good job. 'Logical examination' is an alternative name for the censoring elements the critic regards as insignificant, though it would appear a purely objective activity. Displacement of an argument from its original place and appearance are perceived as a necessary condition for criticism and often the only task the critic must fulfill. By means of this displacement, especially when it appears logically founded, the critic declares to have improved the conditions for judging the original argument by removing unnecessary elements that make a reliable philosophical evaluation difficult. In fact however, the critic has changed the conditions for judging the argument. His activity has isolated certain ideas, censored some elements, added new concepts and reorganized the argument. The argument is now a different one. The problem lies not in the change itself, which might have positive results (revelation of new perspectives, clarification of certain concepts etc.) but in the lack of consistent awareness of the change. Judgment of a new argument will often be perceived not only as a judgment of the original, different, argument, but mainly as an objective judgment of the original argument, especially if the criticism is presented as logical. The change is perceived as a translation into objective language and hence contributes to a process that involves subjective interpretation of an objective outlook. The original argument is judged via a different argument that is perceived as more representative. Herein lies the philosophical problem: the criticism is perceived as an objective examination due to the illusion conjured by the critical process, especially when using logical tools, namely that a subjective judgment is in fact an objective one. The activities of selection and reorganization are forgotten and analysis of the relations between the propositions is all that remains in the consciousness, thus leaving an opening for illusion. We are convinced, or more precisely convince ourselves, that the reorganization of the original argument facilitates performing an objective examination of the original argument and of the philosophical thesis it supports.

The demand to reduce philosophical thinking to a set of logical requirements is therefore not only hardly to be succeed but easily leads to the misconception that philosophical thinking, which is necessarily subjective, is nothing but the employment of a set of objective rules. What must be stressed and remembered is that philosophical thinking necessarily involves the autonomous and free judgment of an individual subject – the philosopher – and hence it is determined also by the philosopher's subjective selections that cannot be fully explained in logical terms. Keeping this clearly in mind is important both for the philosopher who presents a position and for the critics of that position, for the former in order correctly to evaluate

the epistemological status of its conclusions and for the latter in order to present a fruitful philosophical criticism.

NOTES

[1] Thus Perelman in the paper 'The new rhetoric: a Theory of Practical Reasoning':

> To reconcile philosophic claims to rationality with the plurality of philosophic systems, we must recognize that the appeal to reason must be identified not as an appeal to a single truth but instead as an appeal for the adherence of an audience, which can be thought of, after the manner of Kant's categorical imperative, as encompassing all reasonable and competent men. (Perelman, 1979, pp. 13–14)

And again in his paper 'Rhetoric and Philosophy':

> If philosophy makes it possible to clarify and render precise the basic notion of rhetoric and dialectic, the rhetorical perspective makes it possible to understand the philosophical enterprise itself better, by defining it in terms of a rationality that transcends the idea of truth and understanding the appeal to reason as a discourse addressed to a universal audience. (Perelman, 1979, p. 50)

[2] It should be noted that Perelman's major work *The new rhetoric* (Perelman, 1969) was written in collaboration with Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca.
[3] This line of thought is the origin for Leibniz's criticism of Descartes' criteria of a clear and distinct idea (see: Leibniz, 1951).
[4] I articulate it thus in order to avoid entering into the meta-logical controversy about formal logical systems. The meta-logical controversy itself is of course a philosophical one and therefore facilitates positions like Goodman's as well:

> No satisfactory criterion for distinguishing just what is logic from what is not had been discovered. Rather, logic is specified by listing the signs and principles that are to be called logical; and the list given by different logicians are not all the same. (Goodman, 1961, p. 8)

This claim concerning the list of logical signs and criteria belongs to a meta-logical philosophical controversy. The use of the term 'logic' in philosophy however, does not express a commitment to a certain formal system, but only a general and undefined commitment to the criteria of contradiction and consistency.
[5] See the chapter 'Self-Refutation' in Passmore, 1970, pp. 58–80.
[6] It is important to remark that Perelman and Whateley hold different concepts of logic. Whateley holds an Aristotelian view, which requires true assumptions for a valid syllogism, and therefore sees *petitio principii* as a logical fallacy. Perelman holds a more modern and formal view, which considers only the formal aspect of an inference, and hence defines *petitio principii* a rhetorical fallacy. Nevertheless, both argue *petitio principii* is a subjective and interpretative criticism and not an objective or formal description of an argument.
[7] He thus interprets Descartes' consideration of the claim 'I am not a thinking creator' as self-contradictory (Ibid.: 59–61).
[8] Aristotle considered the forms nothing more than an empty metaphor (Aristotle, 1948, p. 991).
[9] This is a common criticism of Locke's position, which can be also found in our contemporary discussion. Richard Rorty, for example, argues that Locke's position is situated between the Aristotelian view of knowledge as the identity of the mind with the object and the new concept of knowledge as a representation (Rorty, 1980, pp. 139–148).
[10] Ibid.: 159.

[11] It is interesting to mention in this context that Descartes points out the impossibility of imagining a chiliagon exactly in order to argue for the existence of a conception of pure intelligence (Descartes, 1948, p. 50). Hume, in contrast, uses similar example in order to make an almost contradictory claim. He argues that such examples demonstrate how the human spirit has the ability to consider ideas it cannot evidently perceive (Hume, 1978, pp. 22–23). Descartes and Hume do not build their arguments on the same grounds, like Locke and Berkeley do, but they also use a similar example in order to justify contrary (if not contradictory) claims.

[12] The known version of this principle is: *entia non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate*. It is interesting to note that according to the editor's preface of the collected works Ockham never used this version. Nevertheless, the idea of this principle is that one can argue for explanatory fallacy by pointing out unnecessary assumptions (Ockham, 1990, p. XXI).

[13] Locke writes in the first book of his *Essay*:

> I confess . . . We have no such clear idea at all, and therefore signify nothing by the word substance, but only an uncertain supposition of we know not what. (Locke, 1975, p. 95)

[14] Russell indeed argues that Hume presents the most consistent version of empiricism:

> David Hume is one of the most important among philosophers, because he developed to its *logical conclusion* the empirical philosophy of Locke and Berkeley, and by making it self-consistent made it incredible. (Russell, 1961, p. 634)

[15] I wrote '*inter alia*', since the analogy is only one element of the argumentation of Locke and Berkeley. For the purposes of this discussion only I isolated it from the rest of the argumentation.

[16] I used Perelman's definition of metaphor for this purpose:

> A metaphor is only a condensed analogy, due to a fusion of theme and phoros. (Perelman, 1982, p. 120)

[17] Descartes begins his book *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* with a warning of this possibility:

> As soon as men recognise some similarity between two things, it is their custom to ascribe to each of them, even in those respects in which they are different, what they know to be true of the other. (Descartes, 1978, p. 147)

It is interesting to remark that Foucault chooses to quote this paragraph as representative of the fundamental change in Western thought at the beginning of the seventeenth century; the end of 'the age of imagination' and the beginning of 'the age of reason' (Foucault, 2000, p. 51).

[18] Paul Ricoeur presents this approach in his book *The Rule of Metaphor*. He argues that the most interesting use of metaphor in philosophical discourse is to present new meanings and to bring to light new aspects of reality (Ibid.: 292–295).

[19] See the chapter 'Tropical Philosophy' in Mason, 1989, pp. 98–140.

[20] It should be noted that the full title of the book is *Ethic demonstrated in geometrical order* (Spinoza, 1937).

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