Lilian Bermejo-Luque

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A Linguistic-Pragmatic Approach to Argumentation Theory

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A Linguistic-Pragmatic Approach to Argumentation Theory

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For Julia, Pablo, Pedro and Javier

Preface

We all give and ask for reasons, and we do it all the time. We are involved in argumentation at least as often as in meals and more often indeed than in sex. So we must either enjoy or need argumentation very much...! No doubt, the activity of giving and asking for reasons can be very enjoyable at times. But the truth is that we get involved in argumentation so often mainly because it is terribly useful. By arguing well, we show our claims to be correct and, fortunately, this is a very effective way of persuading others of them.

However, if most people were bad at telling the difference between good argumentation and bad argumentation, the practice of arguing would not be so useful after all: in general, it would not be a practicable means to determine whether our claims are correct or not, and therefore it would not be such an effective way of persuading others of them. The main intuitions underlying the present work are that arguing well is easy and that determining argumentation goodness must be, in a way, easy too.

In order to shape these intuitions, I have followed two insightful ideas: on the one hand, Toulmin's defense of the view that the normativity of inference is a substantial matter rather than a formal one; and on the other, van Eemeren and Grootendorst's characterization of argumentation as a speech-act complex. Following these ideas, my main goal in this work is to show that argumentative normativity, i.e., the articulation of the distinction between good and bad argumentation, should be cast in terms of argumentation's linguistic-pragmatic nature.

Any theory dealing with the normative conditions of argumentation in terms of its features as a certain type of linguistic practice may be said to belong to a *linguistic-pragmatic* approach to Argumentation Theory. In this respect, the particular theory of argumentation that I offer in this book is just one of many possible ways of dealing with the normativity of argumentation from a linguistic-pragmatic perspective. Nevertheless, I will use the label "linguistic-pragmatic approach" in order to contrast the theory I offer with theories belonging to other general approaches such as the *logical* approach, the *dialectical* approach, the *rhetorical* approach or the *epistemic* approach to Argumentation Theory.

One of the main rewards of thinking of argumentation, first and foremost, as a particular type of linguistic practice – instead of thinking of argumentation as a logical product, as a dialectical procedure, as a rhetorical process or as

an epistemological tool – is to facilitate the integration of argumentation's logi-cal, dialectical, rhetorical and epistemic dimensions. Indeed, van Eemeren and Grootendorst's Pragma-dialectics, which also characterizes argumentation as a speech-act complex, is another significant attempt at such integration.

Actually, I think that integration along these lines is a well-established desidera-tum within the field. As I see it, the fact that most current proposals are answerable to the label "logical," "dialectical", "rhetorical" or "epistemic" may be symptomatic of a certain theoretical uneasiness. This uneasiness becomes especially evident when we consider that, so far, we have lacked unitary treatment of two key aspects of argumentation, namely, its justificatory power and its persuasive power. Current approaches tend to characterize argumentation either as a justificatory device that can eventually be used for persuading – this is the case with most theories that take logical or epistemic approaches – or as a persuasive device whose legitimacy conditions would provide a particular account of justification – as happens with the rhetorical approach and with some theories within the dialectical approach. A conception of argumentation as a speech-act complex is meant to be suitable for pro-viding a unitary treatment of justification and reasoned persuasion, since it enables us to characterize argumentation as a justificatory device at its illocutionary level, whereas its paradigmatic persuasive power, i.e. the power of persuading by reasons, results from its ability to produce certain perlocutionary effects.

The linguistic-pragmatic theory developed in this book is a proposal about argu-mentation evaluation comparable to other normative proposals within the field, such as Pragma-dialectics, Informal Logic, the New Rhetoric or some epistemic theories of argumentation. However, in Chapter 2, I address some meta-theoretical issues in order to explain why a linguistic-pragmatic theory along these lines is to be pre-ferred. In particular, I try to show that, unlike its rivals – including Biro and Siegel's epistemological approach – this theory avoids instrumentalism in its account of what good argumentation is; and it is only by avoiding instrumentalism that a norma-tive theory of argumentation can overcome the justification problem that normative theories, in general, are bound to face.

After dealing with these meta-theoretical questions in Chapter 2, I go on to develop the theory proper. Thus, in Chapter 3, I start by characterizing argumen-tation as a speech-act complex. On this account, any speech-act of arguing will *count* as an attempt to show a target-claim to be correct. This definition of argu-mentation clears the way for a definition of good argumentation as argumentation actually showing its target-claim to be correct. Such is the conception of justification adopted in this work.

However, apart from a definition of its object and a definition of the concept of argumentative value, I think that a suitable normative model for argumentation should provide guidelines for the interpretation and analysis of argumentative dis-course. This is why my proposed extension, in Chapter 3, of Bach and Harnish's *Speech-act Schema* (SAS) – as presented in their *Linguistic Communication and Speech-acts* (1979) – is meant to provide not only a characterization of the speech-act complex of arguing, but also a tool to interpret and analyze real argumentative discourse. As will become apparent, an extended SAS may be powerful enough

to deal, among other things, with the interpretation and analysis of texts in which argumentation is not explicitly stated but only implicated.

Chapter 3 also explains how the speech-act of arguing is related to other objects that have traditionally been associated with argumentation, namely, reasoning processes (or "acts of indirectly judging", as I will call them) and arguments. I define arguments as abstract objects representing the semantic properties of acts of arguing and "acts of indirectly judging". The possibility of representing both types of acts by means of arguments is the first condition for determining their semantic value. However, acts of arguing have, in addition, certain pragmatic constraints that have to do with their communicative nature: by contrast with acts of indirectly judging, which are not communicational, acts of arguing are attempts at *showing* target-claims to be correct. As a result, they involve two types of normativity: first, the semantic normativity in light of which the target-claim of an act of arguing is correct and second, the pragmatic normativity in light of which an act of arguing is a good act of "showing."

Acknowledging not only semantic but also pragmatic conditions for argumentation evaluation is the reason why, despite the fact that I reject the deductivist ideal associated with the traditional semanticist account of argumentative value, I am going to defend the view that good argumentation is argumentation justifying the claim for which we argue. In other words: I do not reject the traditional semanticist account because I reject justification as the constitutive value of argumentation, but rather because semantic properties (like validity and truth) are not enough to determine the ability of acts of arguing to provide justification.

As mentioned above, one of my goals in providing a linguistic-pragmatic normative model is to integrate the logical, the dialectical and the rhetorical aspects of the speech-act of arguing. In this respect, my task is to show that Logic, Dialectic and Rhetoric provide conditions for interpreting, analyzing and evaluating argumentation. In fact, I will try to show that, because argumentation is a complex logical, dialectical *and* rhetorical properties, good argumentation is argumentation satisfying logical, dialectical and rhetorical conditions. However, the counterpart of this thesis is that argumentative normativity may not be reduced to rhetorical, dialectical or logical conditions alone. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are devoted to a characterization of the logical, dialectical and rhetorical dimensions of argumentation as providing the semantic and pragmatic normative conditions of the speech-act of arguing. Additionally, these chapters seek to show that logical, dialectical and rhetorical normativities are not, on their own, sufficient to account for argumentative normativity.

In Chapter 4, which concerns the role of Logic within Argumentation Theory, I start by aligning myself with the criticism that many argumentation theorists have raised against the shortcomings of Formal Logic. Because of this, my account of the logical properties and conditions of argumentation centers on a certain conception of Logic that is meant to be particularly suitable for natural language argumentation. This conception of Logic was first developed in Stephen E. Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* (1958). As I see it, a main achievement of *The Uses of Argument* was to provide a portrayal of the nature of Logic as a non-formal normative theory

of inference. This theory of inference will be a key element in my proposals concerning argumentation evaluation. However, in Chapter 4, I also explain why Logic, even when understood in this way, is not sufficient to supply a complete theory of argumentation goodness.

In Chapter 5, taking Rescher's (1977) conception of Dialectic as a starting point, I argue for the view that the dialectical dimension of argumentation enables a "second order intersubjectivity," which is to be understood in terms of the recursive nature of the activity of giving and asking for reasons. The task of displaying the dialectical nature of argumentation in this way is carried out by providing an account of any dialectical process as the result of performing three types "moves." These three types of move correspond to the three types of speech-act that any act of arguing is composed of, according to our characterization of the speech-act complex of arguing. I argue that the constitutive conditions and consequences of these moves determine, in turn, a set of dialectical rules that are to be applied to any activity of giving and asking for reasons, understood either as a justificatory device, i.e., as an attempt at showing a target-claim to be correct, or as a persuasive device, i.e., as an attempt at persuading by offering reasons.

In Chapter 6, I argue that there is a rhetorical dimension to every communicative activity, including argumentative communication, whether we deal with it is as a justificatory or as a persuasive device. For this reason, I contend that Rhetoric should be seen as a discipline providing tools to interpret argumentation and also to evaluate it, and not only from an instrumentalist point of view. Certainly, it might seem that the idea of including rhetorical conditions for determining the value of a piece of argumentation is more akin to those approaches focusing on argumentation solely as a persuasive device. Yet, the point of my proposal is to show that, even if we think of argumentation as a justificatory device, we have to take its rhetorical properties into account in order to determine its pragmatic value *qua* argumentation, i.e., in order to determine how good a given piece of argumentation is as a means to *show* a target-claim to be correct.

Also in Chapter 6, I make a distinction between argumentation and other types of persuasive devices, which, as I argue, is something necessary in order to provide an adequate account of non-verbal argumentation.

The result of this account of the logical, dialectical and rhetorical properties and normative conditions of the speech-act complex of arguing is summarized in the particular proposal for its semantic and pragmatic appraisal presented in Chapter 7. This general proposal is meant to provide the guidelines for dealing with any kind of argumentative flaw, including that of *false* – rather than *bad* – argumentation, which is an issue I raise in the last part of the chapter by considering the case of the *ad baculum* fallacy.

There are many people whom I want to acknowledge for their support on this project, but some of them have been particularly important to me. Frans van Eemeren was the co-advisor for my PhD thesis, and I can hardly express my gratitude for all that he has done for me since then. Not only has he always been willing to respond to my academic and theoretical needs; more significantly, he has always encouraged me to develop my own ideas, even those that dissented from

his own. This is special indeed: it requires a kind of generosity that is truly not very usual.

I am also immensely grateful to Gustavo Fernández Díez-Picazo, my PhD co-advisor at the University of Murcia. It was not his duty to help me in as many ways and as much as he did. Yet, at times, his support proved to be decisive.

In fact, I have been very lucky since I started working on Argumentation Theory. Apart from my exceptional co-advisors, two well-known scholars, Robert Pinto and David Hitchcock, were generous enough to pay attention to the work of an almost beginner. They have guided and inspired my investigations since then, and have been crucial for my work in many respects (including their watchful eyes on my dodgy English...!).

I have also enjoyed the friendship and interest in my work from María José Alcaraz, Txetxu Ausín, Eduardo de Bustos, Cristina Corredor, Xavier de Donato, Ralph Johnson, Raymundo Morado, Lorenzo Peña, Carlos Pereda, Javier Rodríguez, Cristián Santibáñez, Harvey Siegel and Luis Vega, and from my colleges at the department of Logic, History and Philosophy of Science at the UNED and at the Philosophy Institute of the CCHS-CSIC.

Among them, Javier Rodríguez Alcázar has also been my ally, my compeer and a spur in this endeavor.

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Contents

Chapter 1
Argumentation and Its Study

1.1 Argumentation as a Widespread Human Activity

This introductory chapter aims to underline the importance of the activity of arguing and to motivate an interest in the normative study of argumentation as a key theoretical concern. A contrast will be drawn between, on the one hand, the importance of argumentation and its centrality within the philosophical enterprise and, on the other hand, the scant attention that natural language argumentation, as a subject matter, has received from Philosophy for centuries. I will explain this omission as a consequence of the fact that the normative study of argumentation for many centuries developed under the influence of Aristotle's work. This reflection on the historical situation within which the normative study of natural language argumentation emerged is meant to portray the field of Argumentation Theory as a relatively new discipline having certain characteristic goals. Thus, finally, my exposition will outline the range of tasks a complete theory of argumentation should fulfill.

Argumentation is an everyday and everywhere activity for most people: from mass media to scientific forums, from coffee breaks to political debates; it is so common to see individuals engaged in the activity of giving and asking for reasons that arguing seems to be something particularly akin to our very way of being. Why?

Certainly, argumentation is closely connected to the specifics of human language, in particular, to its reflexivity. The practice of supporting claims with reasons presupposes the ability to take a reflective stance toward them: after all, it is because we may question whether our assertions are right or wrong that it makes sense to try to afford reasons to support them. Moreover, arguing presupposes the possibility of establishing support relations between claims. Thus, even the simplest forms of argumentation turn out to be quite a sophisticated type of communication involving a language able to implement some meta-linguistic practice.

However, we can also think of the relationship between language and argumentation the other way round. For example, authors like O. Ducrot and J. Anscombre have suggested that the specifics of linguistic communication can be explained in terms of argumentative communication:

> Argumentation is written into the language-system itself, into the most linguistic aspect of the structure of our utterances. (Ducrot and Anscombre 1991: 35)

Ducrot and Anscombre developed a linguistic program that adopts the pragmatic framework provided by the activity of giving and asking for reasons as an instrument to explain certain key features of linguistic communication. According to them, being a competent speaker involves having abilities that are essentially argumentative. Thus, in their view, the more we think of human language as a tool developed to fulfill communicative purposes, the more we should focus on argumentation as its paradigm.

Similarly, Jürgen Habermas has proposed an account of illocutions, according to which

> we understand a speech-act when we know the kinds of reasons that a speaker could provide in order to convince a hearer that he is entitled in the given circumstances to claim validity for his utterance—in short, when we know *what makes it acceptable* (Habermas 1998: 232)

Habermas has also provided a characterization of argumentation as a practice composed of a logical, a dialectical and a rhetorical dimension. In his account, these dimensions correspond to three levels of analysis used to determine the cogency of any discourse and the adequacy of our validity claims.[1]

For his part, Robert Brandom has even developed an inferentialist theory of meaning based on the idea that

> the content to which one is committed by using the concept or expression may be represented by the inference one implicitly endorses by such use, the inference, namely, from the circumstances of appropriate employment to the appropriate circumstances of such employment (Brandom 2000: 62)

According to Brandom's inferentialism, not only the pragmatics of communication, but propositional content itself has to be explained in terms of the activity of giving and asking for reasons.

Certainly, argumentative practices seem to be closely related to the specifics of human language and communication. This fact would partly explain their widespread presence in human interactions. However, it is not only that we can recognize the activity of giving and asking for reasons at the core of most human interactions. It is also that there seems to be something *good* in this. Why is argumentation so important for us?

I think that the answer is related to the traditional characterization of humans as both rational and social beings. On the one hand, the activity of arguing is closely connected to the idea of rationality, understood both as a property of our claims, beliefs, decisions, etc., and also as a human faculty. It is not only that by providing reasons we exhibit the rationality of what we do, claim, believe, etc., but also that

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[1]In *The Theory of Communicative Action. Vol 1* (1984), Habermas says that "rhetoric is concerned with argumentation as a process, dialectic with the pragmatic procedures of argumentation, and logic with its products (1984: 26). In an earlier paper entitled "Perspectives on Argument" (1980), Joseph Wenzel had also defended this view and coined the distinction between argumentation products, procedures and processes.

the very faculty of rationality is a matter of individuals' responsiveness to reasons, as opposed to mere stimuli. On the other hand, this responsiveness to reasons is particularly involved in humans' way of being social. As many have pointed out, intersubjectivity is possible only where we treat each other as rational. To be treated as a subject is to be treated as a rational subject: our responsiveness to reasons is what enables other subjects to interpret us as proper agents and to attribute to us beliefs, desires and other types of intentional states and behaviors. In this sense, the fact that argumentation makes rationality manifest, as R. Johnson (2000) has pointed out, would give a measure of the centrality of this activity.

But, why is it *good* that we are so tied to the activity of giving and asking for reasons? Because we are responsive to reasons, argumentation provides an important way in which we are able to *coordinate* our beliefs and actions with others: giving reasons is an effective means to persuade each other. Moreover, because humans are rational beings, the coordination of actions and beliefs by means of argumentation constitutes a model of legitimate interplay, both theoretically and pragmatically. On the one hand, argumentation can show our beliefs, claims, decisions, etc. to be correct, so making up our minds by arguing proves to be a theoretically sound way of reaching agreements. And on the other hand, by coordinating with others what to believe and what to do by means of argumentation, particular views cannot be arbitrarily imposed and alternatives cannot be unjustifiably excluded. Thus argumentation guarantees for agreement and coordination which can claim *legitimacy*.

The increasing complexity of human societies has made argumentative practices more and more important: plural and open societies like ours, which must frequently assume common goals in order to develop and survive, can find that argumentation is an effective and valuable means for interaction among individuals.

1.2 The Study of Argumentation

1.2.1 The Origins

Argumentation is not only a means for coordinating our actions with what others do and believe, it is also an instrument for acquiring knowledge –since it can render our beliefs and claims justified. Because of this, the normative study of argumentation can be seen as a particular form of methodological inquiry. As such it would seem naturally to belong to the realm of philosophy – particularly, to those areas of philosophy concerned with the normative conditions for acquiring of knowledge or with the legitimacy of interactions among individuals. Furthermore, the very practice of philosophy is conducted mostly by argumentative means, so that the normative study of argumentation would also seem to be required if philosophy is to achieve self-understanding. At any rate, the enormous importance of argumentation should have led to significant theoretical and philosophical interest in it. However, the fact is that philosophers left the normative study of natural language argumentation almost unattended for centuries. Is there any explanation for this omission?

To a certain extent, inquiry into the possibilities of language and reasoning as a means of knowing the world, or of acting appropriately in it, would amount to a meta-theoretical inquiry. That may be why such an inquiry could only arise after philosophical thought had achieved a certain degree of maturity. Yet the actual emergence of a philosophical interest in argumentation had to meet with two further circumstances: first, a political and social context in which public argumentative discourse had acquired a great importance; and second, the evidence that such discourse was fragile and subject to perversion. In the fifth century B.C., Athens combined these conditions as no other place had before. The history of Philosophy tends to attribute to the sophists the dubious honor of being responsible for the last of those circumstances, i.e., the perversion of discourse. The debate between sophists and philosophers is commonly considered Philosophy's first concern with argumentation as a subject matter.

Moreover, this period also gave rise to the three main fields that the normative study of argumentation has consisted of since then: rhetoric, dialectics and logic. In fact, in its origins, the analysis of the relationships between logical, dialectical and rhetorical perspectives was at the core of the philosophical study of argumentation and, in some respects, this is still a lively debate today.

For example, the opposition between the sophists and Socrates or Plato was understood (by Plato and his followers, at any rate) as the opposition between Rhetoric and Dialectic, conceived respectively as a discipline with a merely instrumental interest in discourse and communication versus a theoretical reflection on methodological questions about argumentation proper. It has been common to make a sharp contrast between sophists and philosophers by saying that, instead of sharing the philosophers' commitment to truth and knowledge, the sophists were committed to their clients, who they trained in discursive techniques. This training was an extremely important aspect of citizens' education, a primary way of flourishing in a social context that had turned the art of discourse into the means *par excellence* in politics, and even into a spectacle on its own. In contrast, for Socrates and Plato, this conception of discourse as a spectacle would have been enough to make sophists responsible for the general vice of preferring mere opinion (*doxa*) to real knowledge (*episteme*). In fact, the traditional depreciatory connotations of Rhetoric as "the art of persuasion" would have been related to this instrumental view of discourse and to sophists' interests in developing skills for discursive efficacy, regardless of their legitimacy. Such is, at least, the stereotypical interpretation of Plato's suspicions against Rhetoric.

Certainly, Plato made a contrast between the reliability of Dialectic and the pliability of Rhetoric, stressing the difference between achieving real knowledge by the use of *logos* as a justificatory device, on the one hand, and promoting certain opinions and attitudes by the use of words as a means of persuasion, on the other. This is one of the main issues in dialogues such as *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*. However, as authors like J. Benjamin (1997) and C. Griswold (2004) have argued, in light of texts like *Phaedrus*, the most we would be entitled to say about Plato's opinion of Rhetoric is that he distinguished between good and bad practices of this art.

For his part, far from the guarded, if not distrustful, assessment of Rhetoric that we find in Plato, Aristotle even devoted a complete treatise to it, his *Rhetoric*. As it is well known, in Aristotle's view, Rhetoric is the counterpart of Dialectic and resembles it (Aristotle *Rhetoric* I.2, 1356a30f.). The disagreement among scholars about the exact meaning of this statement does not affect the general view that Aristotle did not put as much emphasis as Plato on the distinction between justifying and persuading: he assumed that both achievements play different but crucial roles in the development of knowledge and in the way individuals interact with one another. From Aristotle's perspective, we do aim, in making up our minds, to believe that which is true, but commonly our judgments must be satisfied with that which is plausible (Aristotle *Rhetoric* I.1, 1355a15f.). Such is our situation respecting many important questions, and yet rational decision-making seems to be still possible. How can this be? Because in the end rational decisions are decisions stemming from good reasons, from good argumentation, whether apodictic or just sound.

In Aristotle's view, we achieve persuasion by making people judge that such and such is the case. And for this task, the credibility of the speaker and the emotions of the audience certainly play a role, but so do the cogency of the arguments employed and their ability to show our claims to be correct or at least plausible. In his *Rhetoric*, *pathos, ethos* and *logos* are equally legitimate as resources for persuasion. For this reason, Aristotle would have seen no conflict between the study of the conditions for justification and proof and the study of the conditions for properly communicating that which is true. For, despite the fact that he acknowledged that the main concern of Rhetoric was persuasion, not knowledge, he contended that even to speak the truth would be useless if we lacked effective ways to persuade others of it.

Nowadays, the view that Logic, Dialectic and Rhetoric are complementary disciplines inspires the work of many argumentation theorists. But, for a long period it did not seem to outlive Aristotle himself.

1.2.2 The Late Emergence of Argumentation Theory

In point of fact, it is a matter of controversy whether Aristotle should be considered the father of Argumentation Theory or if he was instead an obstacle to its development. These opposing interpretations mainly depend on two ways of looking at his work on Logic. On the one hand, we could deem that Aristotle's main concern with argumentation was fully expressed in the theory of the syllogism as it was developed in the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*. On this view, he would have mainly focused on the normative conditions of demonstration rather than on the normative conditions of everyday argumentation, and his works on Rhetoric and on informal fallacies, for example, would be seen as completely independent of the enterprise of developing the first normative theory of inference. The formal and deductivist approach that characterizes such an enterprise would take Aristotle to be the father of Logic, in the classical sense of "Formal Deductive Logic." But to the extent that Logic in this sense remained for centuries the only systematic theory of argumentation,

Aristotle's work could be seen as being an obstacle to the development of a normative theory for natural language argumentation – i.e., of Argumentation Theory as we know it nowadays.

On the other hand, it can be argued that Aristotle's interest in the syllogism was only one aspect of his interest in argumentation in general. According to this view, Aristotle's *Organon* would constitute an articulated whole devoted not only to the study of proof and deductive inference but also to the study of everyday argumentation as it appears in ordinary life, in our deliberative processes concerning practical matters and in the general development of philosophical and scientific enterprises.

From a historical point of view, the first account of the role of Aristotle's works in the development of Argumentation Theory is more accurate. In *Prior Analytics,* Aristotle defines "*sullogismos*" as a discourse in which, certain things being stated, something other than what is stated follows of necessity from their being so (*Prior Analytics* I. 1 24b 19–20). So defined, the *sullogismos* would involve a relationship of necessary consequence between and among propositions. Thus, Aristotle developed his systematic study of *sullogismos*, i.e., his Syllogistic, as a theory of necessary consequence. Moreover, in focusing on certain types of formal relationships of logical consequence, Aristotle's Logic was born as a theory of formal inference, rather than as a theory of argument in general. As a result of his focus on formal inference, after Aristotle, the study of argumentation was sharply divided into three subjects that experienced very different fates: firstly, Rhetoric, which finally fit the traditional complaint against it, i.e., to try to satisfy a merely instrumental interest in argumentative discourse; secondly, Logic, which developed under the insights of Aristotle's Syllogistic became Formal Deductive Logic; thirdly, the study of informal fallacies, a peculiar topic that did not receive a systematic treatment for centuries.

In the Middle Ages, the Aristotelian conception of Logic still split into a methodology for everyday reasoning and a theory of formal proof; or, in other words, there was a distinction between a *logica utens* and a *logica docens*, but it finally resulted in the virtual disappearance of the former. Later on, modern epistemologists like Descartes and the authors of *Port Royal Logic* insisted on a conception of Logic as a theory of proof, often characterizing it as a method of presentation, rather than as a method of argumentative analysis. Thus, at the end of the 19th century, Logic had much more to do with the study of formal implication than with the study of everyday argumentation.

In addition, for a long time philosophers just assumed that there was no genuine philosophical inquiry related to rhetorical questions. For this reason, any concern with "the art of persuasion" was removed from Philosophy. This disdain finally resulted in a Rhetoric which focused almost exclusively on the "effectiveness" of persuasive discourse.

Finally, while Aristotle promoted a conception of fallacy as a flaw in reasonable communication by locating the study of argumentative fallacies within the framework of the *elenchus* in the *Sophistical Refutations* and of full-fledged

communication aimed at persuasion in the Rhetoric (*Rhetoric* II.24),[2] this pragmatic perspective was clearly lost in the treatment that the study of fallacy received later. Authors like Locke, Whately and Mill increased Aristotle's catalogue of argumentative fallacies, but they refrained from developing a theory of fallacy or a systematic framework for analyzing argumentative errors. They overlook the rhetorical and pragmatic dimensions by establishing a conception of fallacies as defective arguments rather than as argumentative maneuvers. Partly due to the fact that this dialogical framework was abandoned, the study of informal fallacies never resulted in a concrete systemic theory, but just in piecemeal considerations about different argumentative phenomena, as authors like Hamblin (1970) or Walton (1996) have observed.

Given these circumstances, it is no wonder that the study of natural language argumentation was seen as an inappropriate task for Philosophy. Consequently, philosophers focused on the study of certain types of arguments and argumentative forms, and, in most cases, they simply assumed that Formal Logic, eventually supplied with a theory of formalization, would provide an adequate normative theory for argumentation in natural language. In any case, they declined to embrace a direct approach to the normative study of argumentation as a subject matter.

Yet, it can be questioned whether or not this evolution was consistent with Aristotle's actual aim. For there is also the possibility that, whereas Aristotle treated the normative study of argumentation from a variety of perspectives, his legacy evolved as a variety of contributions to different fields – namely, the art of persuasion, the study of informal fallacies and the theory of inference. Thus, despite his focus on the syllogism, the theory of the syllogism would have been just one aspect of its study. Along these lines, it is interesting to recall that, according to Aristotle, enthymemes are rhetorical syllogisms and they "are the substance of rhetorical persuasion" (Aristotle *Rhetoric*, I. 1 1354a, 15). From this perspective, his *Rhetoric* should be considered as part of the same attempt to provide the first normative theory of argumentation; that is to say, as one part of his *Organon*, understood as such a general endeavor.

In any case, despite this oversight the truth is that, throughout history, philosophers could not help being concerned, at least indirectly, with one or another conception of natural language argumentation and of argumentative value: after all, such conceptions determine the standards for their own theoretical activity, which consists to a large extent in argumentative discourse. Thus, as is well known, from Descartes' epistemological turn, Philosophy began to leave aside the ancient conception of argumentation as an art in order to focus, almost exclusively, on a conception of argumentation as a method. This perspective led philosophers to stop studying the properties and conditions of argumentation as a certain type of communication and it enhanced the interest in the relationship between argumentation

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[2]Aristotle dealt with fallacies not only in the context of question-and-answer dialogues and of rhetorical speeches, but also in the context of demonstrations (*Prior Analytics* II.16–17). However, the latter context was not communicatively rich enough to make fallacies distinguishable from mere argumentative errors.