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## Types of Dialogue, Dialectical Shifts and Fallacies\*

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The critical discussion is clearly a major context of dialogue to use as a normative model in evaluating arguments as fallacious or not.<sup>1</sup> However, this paper will study other types of dialogue that cluster around the edges of the critical discussion. It is a thesis of this paper that these peripheral models of dialogue are needed to support evaluations of arguments as fallacious or non-fallacious. A second thesis is that dialectical shifts, changes from one context of dialogue to another, are vitally important in the job of evaluating whether a given argument is fallacious or not.

Previously the present author has, both jointly with John Woods in a series of papers on the fallacies,<sup>2</sup> and more recently in his own works,<sup>3</sup> advocated this pluralistic view that argumentation needs to be judged as correct or incorrect in relation to a multiplicity of different models of reasoned dialogue.<sup>4</sup> It will be shown in Walton and Krabbe (1992) how some important types of dialogue that are major contexts for argumentation can be reduced to a typology of six basic types of dialogue.

### 1. TYPES OF DIALOGUE

A *dialogue* is an exchange of speech acts between two speech partners in turn-taking sequence aimed at a collective goal. The dialogue is *coherent* to the extent that the individual speech acts fit together to contribute to this goal. As well, each participant has an individual goal in the dialogue, and both participants have an obligation in the dialogue, defined by the nature of their collective and individual goals.

In some dialogues, the goal is to prove something, and in this type of dialogue, a primary obligation is the burden of proof. A burden of proof is a weight of presumption allocated, ideally at the opening stage of the dialogue, set for practical purposes to facilitate the successful carrying out of the obligations of the participants during the course of the dialogue.<sup>5</sup> The device of burden of proof is useful because it enables discussion to come to an end in a reasonable time.

One important type of dialogue is the critical discussion, well described by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984), which is a type of *persuasion dialogue*, meaning that the goal of each party is to persuade the other party

to accept some designated proposition, using as premises only propositions that the other party has accepted as commitments.

The following classification of types and subtypes of dialogue may help to orient the reader.

1. persuasion dialogue
  - 1.1 critical discussion
2. information-seeking dialogue
  - 2.1 interview
  - 2.2 advice-solicitation dialogue
    - 2.21 expert consultation dialogue
3. negotiation dialogue
4. inquiry dialogue
  - 4.1 scientific inquiry
  - 4.2 public inquiries (e.g., into air disasters)
5. eristic dialogue
  - 5.1 quarrel

A more extensive account of the different types of dialogue is given in Walton (1989, p. 10) and Walton (1989a, p. 355).

The concept of commitment is the basic idea behind all dialogue as a form of reasoned argumentation - see Hamblin (1970), Hamblin (1971), Walton (1984), and Walton and Krabbe (1992). In a dialogue, each participant has a set of propositions called that participant's *commitment set*. As the various speech acts of asserting, questioning, etc. are brought forward in turn by the participants, propositions are added to or deleted from the participants' commitment sets. One simple rule, for example, is that when a participant asserts a proposition, it goes into her commitment set.

In *information-seeking dialogue*, the goal is for information to be transmitted from one party to the other. The *interview* is one type of information-seeking dialogue, for example. In Hamblin's formal game of dialogue (H) - see Hamblin (1970, pp. 256-271) - transfer of information is ostensibly the goal, but there do seem to be implicit aspects of the persuasion dialogue involved as well (even though Hamblin did not formulate explicit win-loss rules).

Another type of information-seeking dialogue is the *advice-solicitation dialogue*, where the goal of the one party is to seek advice, in order to carry out an action or solve a problem, by consulting another party who is in a special position to offer such advice. This type of dialogue is not adversarial in the way that the persuasion dialogue is.

An important type of advice solicitation dialogue is the *expert consultation dialogue*, where a non-expert in a domain of skill or specialized knowledge consults an expert in order to get the expert's opinion or advice in a form he can use for his purposes, to solve a problem or go ahead with a course of action in an informed and intelligent way.<sup>6</sup> In this type of dialogue, the expert respondent has an obligation to offer his best advice in clear and accessible

language, at the same time admitting her limitations and doubts. The obligation of the advice-seeker is to ask clear and specific questions of a sort that the expert can answer, in relation to the problem in hand. A commonplace type of case is physician-patient dialogue in medical treatments and consultations.

In *negotiation dialogue*, the aim for both parties is to "make a deal" while bargaining over some goods or interests by conceding some things while insisting on other things. Each side tries to figure out what the other side wants most, or feels is most important, of the goods at stake.

Negotiations, like union-management bargaining for example, are now often guided by professional mediators. Fisher and Ury (1983) describe methods of negotiation and mediation studied in the Harvard Project.

In *inquiry dialogue*, the goal is for the participants to collectively prove some particular proposition, according to a given standard of proof, or to show that the proposition cannot be proved, at the present state of knowledge. The intent of the inquiry is to be cumulative, to work only from established premises that will not require further discussion or retraction once set in place at the appropriate stage of the inquiry. The sequence of the inquiry is meant (ideally) to be linear or branching in one direction, so that circular argumentation can always be excluded.

The *scientific inquiry*, called the demonstration by Aristotle, requires that proof proceed only from premises that are either axiomatic or that can be established by methods of inference accepted by standards in a particular branch of scientific knowledge.<sup>7</sup> Other inquiries, like public inquiries into air disasters and the like, rely on expert testimony of scientific consultants. But the goal is the same. The purpose is to prove a conclusion by a high standard of proof that eliminates unverified presumptions from the line of advance.

Inquiries have three main stages. First, the data or findings are collected. Second, these findings are analyzed, discussed, and interpreted, in order to draw conclusions on what can be proved from them. Third, the results of the inquiry are presented to a wider audience or readership. It may be the third phase of presentation, where the order of proving is quite different from the order of finding, that corresponds most closely to what Aristotle called demonstration.

The *quarrel* is a type of dialogue where the goal of each participant is to verbally "hit out" at the other, and if possible, defeat and humiliate the other party. The quarrel is typically precipitated by a trivial incident which "sparks" an escalation of emotions, and both parties adopt a stubborn or "childish" attitude during the argumentation stage. The real purpose of the quarrel is a cathartic release of deeply-held emotions so that previously unarticulated feelings can be brought to the surface - feelings that would not be appropriate to bring out for discussion in the course of a normal, polite, public conversation. The quarrel characteristically shows dialectical irrelevance, because the participants "jump" from one issue to another.

In contrast to the critical discussion, neither participant in the quarrel is really open to changing his position, even when confronted by convincing evidence and reasonable arguments. The quarrel is not a good friend of logical reasoning - it is characterized by cavilling, by a brushing aside of logic, and by giving priority to the need to defeat the other party crushingly, by any means, foul or fair, that comes to hand. The quarrel is typified by excesses and violent emotional outbursts.

The quarrel is a species of *eristic dialogue*, a type of dialogue which is almost purely adversarial, where finding the truth of a matter and paying attention to logical reasoning procedures are always subservient to winning out over the other party.<sup>8</sup> Aristotle (*De Sophisticis Elenchis* 171 b 22-25) compared contentious (eristic) argument to unfair fighting in an athletic contest where the participants are bent on winning at any cost, and stop at nothing. Aristotle related the quarrel to sophistry in an interesting way, as well (*De Sophisticis Elenchis* 171 b 25-35) - those who are contentious merely to win a victory are "quarrelsome", but those who do so for the sake of reputation for wisdom, and the consequent payment, are "sophistical". For the art of the sophist, writes Aristotle, is "a money-making art that trades on apparent wisdom..." Thus, according to Aristotle quarrelsome people and sophists use the same kind of arguments, but for different reasons.

Argumentation in a quarrel often does involve a kind of duplicity or pretence. A participant will often try to occupy higher ground of presumption by accusing the other party of being emotional and illogical. The suggestion is that I (the one party) am being cool, rational and reasonable, while you (the other party) are being emotional and irrational. The implication is that the other party is violating the rules of a critical discussion. But this is a pretence, a kind of tactic, if the argument really is a quarrel, and was not supposed to be a critical discussion in the first place. The false allegation or presumption, in such a case, is that there has been an illicit, unilateral shift to the quarrel by the one party, when both parties were supposed to be engaged in a critical discussion.

This type of pretence, or "holier than thou" tactic is not essential to the quarrel as a type of dialogue. But it is very common, and typical of the quarrel. It is not necessary, in order to have a quarrel, for both parties to pretend that they are not quarrelling, but having a critical discussion. But it is just this sort of pretence or deception that often seems to sustain or motivate a quarrel. Each party exhibits a righteous indignation that the other party is being so unreasonable, so selfish, so emotional, when her own arguments are so eminently rational and logical. Not all quarrels contain this subtle type of duplicity, however.

It is often presumed that the quarrel is a wholly bad type of dialogue, best avoided altogether. But this point of view overlooks some valuable benefits of the quarrel. By allowing powerful feelings to be expressed through the articulation of deeply held grievances, the quarrel can have a valuable

function of improving mutual understanding and cementing the bonds of a personal relationship. A quarrel can split two people apart, but if it has a good cathartic effect, it can function as a substitute for physical fighting, and draw people closer together in the course of a meaningful relationship.

As a normative model of how argumentation should be conducted, the quarrel is not too interesting or instructive, in itself. However, in order to understand fallacies, it is necessary and vitally important that one sees how there has been a dialectical shift from some other type of dialogue (like a critical discussion) to a quarrel.

An important benefit of the critical discussion is its maieutic function of enabling a participant to articulate and clarify his deeply held commitments on an issue by testing his arguments in adversarial dialogue with an able critic. The maieutic function brings these dark commitments to light by exposing them to critical questioning. The cathartic function of the quarrel generates more heat than light, but the resulting expression of repressed feelings can still be a valuable side-benefit of this type of argumentation.

An important problem is that when there is a shift from the critical discussion to the quarrel, the emotional responses, that are appropriate in the quarrel, become obstructive to the goals of the critical discussion. The maieutic function is impeded. In general, having a quarrel is not an efficient way of conducting a critical discussion.

## 2. DIALECTICAL SHIFTS

During the course of a conversation between two or more parties there can be a change in the context of argumentation or dialectical shift from one type of dialogue to another. Empirical studies of Gumperz (1972) showed, for example, that students knew from a change of "register" when a classroom conversation changed from an academic discussion to personal chat. You could detect the shift by a change of pace and attitude in the speech exchanges.

Another example of a dialectical shift would be where a union-management negotiation group finish their bargaining session and adjourn to the bar where they start arguing about who will have the best soccer team that year. All the same participants may be taking part in both sessions, but the context of the argument has changed, as well as the topic. One dialogue was a negotiation, and the second could perhaps have been a kind of critical discussion on which team arguably has the best prospects.

In the union-management case, the first dialogue was properly closed off, presumably by the chairman or mediator who ran the meeting. Then there was a clear break, and even a change of venue, that marked the transition to the opening of the second dialogue. However, in some cases, the transition is not so clearly marked. The one dialogue can be "sandwiched in" between the prior and subsequent parts of an enveloping sequence of dialogue of another

type. Practical reasons can cause an interruption, but then the dialogue can quickly shift back to the original type.

In the following case there was a sudden dialectical shift from a critical discussion to an action-directed deliberation dialogue.

Case 1.0:

Karen and Doug were cycling along together down the bicycle path while having a conversation together. As they cycled along, they were discussing the pros and cons of living in a house versus living in a condominium. Doug said, "Sometimes the walls in those condominiums are pretty thin, and you can hear the neighbours." Karen replied, "Yes, but with a condominium it is easier to travel. You don't have to worry about cutting the grass or having the walk shovelled while you are away." Doug agreed, saying, "Yes that can be expensive." Just then they came to a junction in the road, passing a sign giving the directions to the next villages. Karen immediately said, "I think if we turn to the right, the path goes to Sassenheim. Do you want to go to Sassenheim?"

Just at Karen's last speech, there was a quick shift in the conversation, necessitated by a practical need to pay attention to directions. After they had returned to the junction, and started along the path to Sassenheim, the critical discussion of house versus condominium resumed. But at Karen's last speech above, there had been a shift from the critical discussion to another type of deliberation dialogue which concerned a practical decision.

In this case, the shift from the critical discussion to the action-directed dialogue was interruptive. Karen shifted to a different type of dialogue by bringing up the issue of directions. But in this case, the shift was a legitimate (licit) one, because there was an immediate practical need to talk about directions. Once this question was settled, the conversation shifted back to the continuation of the critical discussion. Even though there was no formal closing off of the first dialogue, by a chairman or mediator, there was a good reason to close off the first dialogue, and since it could subsequently be resumed with no real loss except for a small inconvenience, there was nothing illegitimate or suspicious about the shift.

Some dialectical shifts are definite and sharp, where there is a *deplacement* of the one type of dialogue by the other. In other cases, there is a gradual shifting or *glissement* from the one type of dialogue to the other. In some cases, the two types of dialogue overlap, and we have a *mixed dialogue*. In some cases, having a mixed dialogue can influence the quality of the original dialogue, because the second dialogue is functionally related to the argumentation in the first dialogue. In such a case, the one dialogue may be said to be *embedded in* the other dialogue. An example is an appeal to expert opinion during the course of a critical discussion. Suppose a panel is having a discussion on whether or not to build a new nuclear reactor. Expert opinions may be consulted on whether nuclear reactors are safe. Here, an intelligent solicitation and use of the expert opinions could greatly improve the quality of the critical discussion.

Some dialectical shifts, however, are illicit, and these illicit shifts are often associated with informal fallacies. To judge whether a shift was licit or illicit in a particular case of argumentation, you first have to ask what the original context of dialogue was supposed to be. Then you have to identify the new context, and ask whether the shift was licit or illicit by looking backwards, and judging by the goals and standards of the original context. Is the new dialogue supporting those old goals, or at least allowing their fulfilment to be carried forward, or is it blocking them? Was the shift agreed to by the original speech partners, or was the shift unilateral, or even forced by one party? These are the kinds of questions that need to be asked.

Shifts from negotiation dialogue to critical discussion are common in divorce dispute mediation, and mediators often try to encourage this kind of shift in many cases, because it can be a positive embedding that fosters constructive agreement. For example, suppose a divorcing couple are arguing about child custody. It may be very positive if the dialogue shifts to a critical discussion on how well each party is equipped to look after the child. If both parties are working, who is free to look after the child? Who is best at providing a structured life for the child? Who has shown the most interest and support in looking after and spending time with the child in the past? Instead of trying to "score points" in hard-nosed bargaining, the participants are now posing questions that can be answered more objectively by looking at evidence. By engaging in a critical discussion, they come around to a more dispassionate, less personal type of exchange that is less close to quarrelling. Of course, in this type of case, the quarrel is always lurking under the surface of the discussion, and it is all too easy for the dialogue to degenerate into a sequence of "counterblaming" and personal attack.

Shifts that go from another type of dialogue to a quarrel are always dangerous and often illicit. This type of shift is closely associated with the *argumentum ad hominem*. For example, the negotiation between the union and management of Eastern Airlines during the strike period of 1989 shifted gradually in a *glissement* from a negotiation dialogue to a quarrelling type of dialogue. The unions began to portray Frank Lorenzo, the chief executive officer of Eastern, as a symbol of greed and ruthlessness. After Lorenzo had tried to cut costs by cutting back on wages, the union adopted a tactic of making him the issue of the dispute, by portraying him as a "brutal, unscrupulous autocrat". This approach was taken up with enthusiasm by the employees of Eastern who booed and shouted "There's the slimeball!" when shown a picture of Lorenzo.<sup>9</sup> According to a report in *Newsweek*, however, Lorenzo did not really deserve this kind of treatment - although he was said to be a quiet and shy sort of person, he was by no means the bad person portrayed in these attacks. However, as this *ad hominem* attack escalated, the workers became "obsessed" with it, and the "fight" became so personal that any possibility for compromise was lost", according to *Newsweek*.<sup>10</sup> In this case, the gradual shift to the quarrel, forced into place by one side, eventually

destroyed the possibilities for constructive negotiation in time to address the problem. The outcome was a prolonged deadlock, and the company went into bankruptcy.

### 3. FALLACIES

*Argumentum ad hominem* is a technique of argument used to attack someone's argument by raising questions about that person's character or personal situation. The personal or abusive *ad hominem* alleges bad character for veracity, or bad moral character generally. The circumstantial *ad hominem* alleges a practical inconsistency between the person and his circumstances. A third type of *ad hominem*, the bias or "poisoning the well" variant, alleges that the person has a hidden agenda, or something to gain, and is therefore not an honest or objective arguer.

Whether an *ad hominem* argument is reasonable or fallacious, in a particular case, depends on the context of dialogue. For an attorney to raise allegations about the bad moral character, or character for veracity of a witness he is cross-examining in court can be a reasonable kind of *ad hominem* argumentation. Yet in a scientific inquiry, for example, criticizing a scientific argument by attacking the scientist personally for his alleged bad moral character could be inappropriate and fallacious.

The *ad hominem* argument is characteristic of the quarrel, where it is well suited to the goal of the quarrel, which is to air personal grievances by fixing blame on the moral character of one's opponent. The *ad hominem* can be a reasonable argument as used in a critical discussion, but often it has a tendency to go wrong by causing the argumentation to shift by a *glissement* into a quarrel, as the exchange becomes more heated and personal. In such a case, the *ad hominem* fallacy can occur because the argument was originally supposed to be a critical discussion, and quarrelling is a very poor and inefficient way of carrying out the goals of a critical discussion, perhaps even blocking it altogether.

The relationship between the *argumentum ad hominem* and the quarrel is one of typical association rather than a necessary or inherent connection. One of the best clues or signs of the shift from the critical discussion to the quarrel is the *ad hominem* argument. In the reverse direction, the *ad hominem* argument can often be best explained, analyzed or evaluated as an argumentation tactic that is effective in getting the best of an opponent in argument by revealing the underlying shift to the quarrel.

If you define a fallacy as a violation of a rule of critical discussion (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1984), then the personal attack in the Lorenzo case is not classified as an *ad hominem* fallacy, or any sort of fallacy. Can an argument which shifts from a negotiation dialogue to a quarrel be a case of the fallacy of *ad hominem*? This is an interesting question.

When the bias type of *ad hominem* attack is used in a critical discussion,



the allegation is that the respondent has illicitly and covertly shifted to a negotiation dialogue. The accusation is that she is only making a pretence of looking at both sides of the issue with an open attitude of looking at the evidence, and that she began by being set to push for her own side for personal gain. For example, suppose that in a critical discussion on the issue of acid rain, one party accuses another of being a major stockholder in a coal company. The *ad hominem* attack alleges that her mind was made up, so she never really (honestly) entered into the critical discussion at all. Generally with this type of *ad hominem* argument, an alleged shift from one context of dialogue to another is involved.

The bias type of *ad hominem* argument is not necessarily fallacious. It depends on how it is used in relation to the type of dialogue the participants are supposed to be engaged in. For example, if the participant in the acid rain discussion had concealed her relationship with the coal company, and tried to pose as a scientific observer who was objectively looking at the evidence on both sides of the issue, the other party's revelation of the relationship could be a reasonable allegation of partisan bias.

Another fallacy where dialectical shifts are very important is the *ad baculum*. During a negotiation type of dialogue, threats and appeals to force or sanctions are quite typical and characteristic. However, if the context is supposed to be that of a critical discussion, the same kind of argumentation which was appropriate enough in the negotiation context, can become highly fallacious. Being open to fairly considering the arguments on both sides of an issue is very important in a critical discussion. In this context, the use of the *ad baculum* argument is always highly suspicious and tends to be at odds with the discussion, because it is a way of trying to force closing off the free expression of one's point of view in a way that is necessary for critical discussion.

Generally, threats and appeals to force or fear tend to go contrary to the rules of a critical discussion, because the critical discussion is an open type of dialogue where participants are obliged to give each other a fair chance to raise questions or bring forth arguments. Too often, such appeals are ways of bringing pressure to bear in a way that is meant to choke off arguments or inhibit free discussion of an issue. Much here depends, however, on how you define the *argumentum ad baculum*. Must it be a threat, or are appeals to fear (scaremongering) that are not threats also included?

The most subtle and effective type of *ad baculum* argument is the indirect type, which is overtly a warning and covertly a threat, e.g., "My advice is for you not to do that, or it could be very dangerous for you and your family. - the men in my union are hard to restrain, and they are vicious brutes when you do something they don't like. " In a given case, this speech act could be a threat, and it would be very important for the respondent's survival for him to recognize it as such, interpreting it correctly. The key thing in evaluating such cases as fallacious or nonfallacious is to analyze the underlying

dialectical shift correctly. A warning might be legitimate in negotiation dialogue, for example, but if there is an underlying, covert threat, the *ad baculum* argument could be a contravention of the rules of dialogue, and rightly judged fallacious.

The *argumentum ad verecundiam* is usually treated as a fallacy, but many appeals to expert opinion in argumentation are quite reasonable as arguments, provided the context of dialogue is appropriate. See the range of different kinds of cases evaluated in Walton (1989, chapter 7). Generally, with *ad verecundiam* argumentation there are four participants and three contexts of dialogue involved - it is a mixed dialogue situation. Two primary participants are engaged in a critical discussion, and one accuses the other of not paying sufficient attention to an expert opinion that he (the first party) has brought forward to support his line of argument. Presupposed is a secondary dialogue exchange between the first party and some third party, an expert source who has been consulted or interpreted by this first party to the critical discussion. This latter party is alleging that his opponent in the critical discussion has not been properly respectful to the authority that has been consulted, and is therefore immodestly saying, in effect, that he "knows better" than the expert. The first party is therefore appealing to a fourth-party audience, arguing that they should not take the arguments of this opponent seriously for, after all, he is a person who is so immodest and unwise that he thinks he knows better than the experts. Thus the third context of dialogue is the dialogue between some fourth-party wider audience and the two original participants who are in a contest to persuade this audience.

Generally, the expert consultation dialogue can be embedded into the critical discussion in a way that is a highly positive factor in supporting the goals of the critical discussion. In the case mentioned in section 2 above, for example, the critical discussion on the issue of whether nuclear reactors are good or bad, might not have been so intelligent and revealing if it did not have input from expert opinions mixed in.

The fallacy of many questions is also very sensitive to contexts of dialogue. The question, 'Have you stopped cheating on your income taxes?' could be non-fallacious if asked by a cross-examining attorney in a trial to a person who, just previously, admitted that she had cheated on her income tax in the past. Of course, in another context, asking this kind of question could be rightly judged fallacious.<sup>11</sup> It depends on the context of dialogue in a particular case whether asking such a question is fallacious or not. In particular, it depends on the prior commitments of the respondent in the prior sequence of the dialogue in the given case.

The distinction between the fallacy of begging the question and the non-fallacious use of circular argumentation also depends very much on the context of dialogue. In an inquiry there is always a requirement of *evidential priority*, meaning that the premises must be better established than the conclusion that is to be proved from them. In this context, the use of circular

argumentation goes strongly against the goals of the dialogue. The inquiry is supposed to always move forward from firmly established premises, never circling back to stages already covered. By contrast, however, in a different context, like that of a negotiation or a critical discussion, a circular argument could be quite tolerable. It could be evidence of confusion, or of a blunder in some cases, but it might not be such a bad failing that a critic would be justified in calling it a fallacy.

We can find in Aristotle the proposal that whether a circular argument is fallacious depends on its context of dialogue, and not just on its syllogistic form. According to Aristotle, the fault of begging the question is the attempt to prove what is not self-evident by means of itself.

To beg and assume the original question is a species of failure to demonstrate the problem proposed; but this happens in many ways. A man may not reason syllogistically at all, or he may argue from premises which are less known or equally unknown, or he may establish the antecedent by means of its consequents; for demonstration proceeds from what is more certain and is prior. Now begging the question is none of these: but since we get to know some things naturally through themselves, and other things by means of something else (the first principles through themselves, what is subordinate to them through something else), whenever a man tries to prove what is not self-evident by means of itself, then he begs the original question (*Prior Analytics* 64 b 28-37).

Aristotle's ideas that some propositions are self-evident, or that such a class of propositions can be distinguished from propositions which require proof, have often been severely criticized as incoherent or indefensible. This has perhaps led critics to ignore the passage above, or to take it less seriously than it deserves.

For in this passage, Aristotle has made several important and fundamental points in relation to the fallacy of begging the question. He has claimed, first, that there is a special context of reasoning which he calls *demonstration*, and that it is a distinctive type of reasoning or argument, different from the kind of contestive disputation studied in the *Topics* and the *De Sophisticis Elenchis*. Second, this type of reasoning has a special requirement of priority which applies to premises used in it to establish a conclusion. Third, begging the question is not identical with the violation of this requirement, and fourth, circular arguments that violate the requirement do not always commit the fallacy of begging the question. His fifth and final point is that when begging the question is a fallacy it is because, in certain cases, the violation of the priority requirement is a kind of improper attempt to prove something in demonstration in a wrong manner.

This passage appears to express something deeply important about begging the question as a fallacy. But it also poses so many puzzling questions that it is hard to get a clear grasp of what it is saying. What kind of argument is a "demonstration"? Why does it have a requirement of priority, and what does this requirement really amount to anyway, as a rule that could be applied to contexts of argumentation where begging the question is a problem?

From this point in the *Prior Analytics*, there begins a longer passage (65 a 10-38) which Hamblin (1970, p. 74) has justifiably described as "quite puzzling". In Woods and Walton (1982, section 5), an extensive commentary to supplement Hamblin's remarks on this murky passage are given. Some of the interesting points Aristotle makes in this passage include the following. To be a principle of a demonstration, something does not have to be absolutely certain, but it does have to be more certain than the question to be answered. This remark suggests that the purpose of a demonstration is to answer a question, where the answer is not known at the outset of the demonstration. Then the demonstration answers the question by utilizing principles that are "better known" (65 a 13). A second point (65 a 35) is that question-begging is a similar fault, but at the same time a distinctively different type of fault in at least one respect, in "scientific demonstrations" as opposed to "dialectical arguments".

Another early insight into the subtle point that the same inference could be a *petitio principii* in one context of reasoning, and yet not be a *petitio principii* in another context, can be found in DeMorgan (1847, p. 255). DeMorgan here drew attention to a type of case where an allegation of begging the question may be unjustly brought forward as a criticism. The basis of DeMorgan's point is that a formal inference, like a syllogism or an instance of *modus ponens*, can have different uses in different contexts of reasoning. DeMorgan (p. 255) claimed that, as well as the *demonstrative* use of inference, there can also be *elucidatory* inferences and *recapitulatory* inferences. Thus the same syllogism, as a demonstration, could be a legitimate instance of *petitio principii*, while as an explanation, it might not be a begging of the question.

Say 'it never could have been doubted that men would apply science to the production of food'. If there should be any hesitation about this, the explanation of 'man' under the phrase which is exclusively characteristic of him, rational animal, would remove it: the animal must have food, the rational being will have science. But it would be begging the question to assert that the syllogism of elucidation "A rational animal is, etc.; man is etc.; therefore man is, etc. - is a demonstration. And out of this arises the fallacy of presuming that an author meant demonstration, when he can only be fairly construed to have attempted elucidation of what he supposed would, upon that elucidation, be granted. The forms of language are much the same in the two cases.

In this case, a valid chain of syllogisms could be perfectly reasonable as an elucidation of what is meant by a key term. Yet the same chain of syllogisms could rightly be accused of committing a *petitio principii* if it is taken as a demonstration of its conclusion, which must meet the requirement of establishing that conclusion on the basis of prior and better known premises.

One type of shift is from an argumentative context of dialogue to a non-argumentative context, or vice versa. For example, a circular sequence of questions and replies in dialogue could be harmless and reasonable as an explanation, say, of a feedback cycle in nature. But construed as an argument

for a specific conclusion, the same sequence of questions and replies could be interpreted as an argument that begs the question.

A second type of shift is from one context of argument to another. A circular argument in a persuasion dialogue might be suspicious, for example, but it might not be justified to presume that it is a case of the fallacy of begging the question. Whereas the same pattern of circular argumentation, interpreted as part of an inquiry to establish a particular conclusion on the basis of firmly fixed premises, could be quite clearly determined to be an instance of fallacious question-begging.

In either of these types of dialectical shift, DeMorgan's point that the "forms of language are much the same" remains valid. It is a pragmatic matter of the context of dialogue to determine when such a shift has taken place.

All the basic argument criticisms depend on requirements that are highly sensitive to a context of dialogue. The criticism that an argument begs the question, in particular, depends on the requirement of evidential priority. While that requirement may or may not be present in a persuasion dialogue, it is virtually mandatory in an inquiry. To see whether the requirement is present in any particular argument, the critic must not only look at the evidence from the text, he must also have some grasp of the type of dialogue that is involved.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

A fallacy is traditionally said to be an argument that seems valid but is not.<sup>12</sup> But this slogan needs to be revised, or at least interpreted in a different way than it is often taken. By valid, not just deductive (semantic) validity should be meant. What should be referred to is the use of a technique of argumentation in a context of dialogue. The argument techniques we have referred to can be used reasonably to support goals of dialogue in some cases, and used fallaciously as sophisticated tactics to block or subvert legitimate goals of dialogue in other cases. The job is to study the uses of these techniques to develop criteria to aid in sorting between the fallacious and non-fallacious uses of them in particular cases.

By seeming-validity, not just what seems to be correct to the individual respondent, to whom the particular argument was addressed, should be meant. This psychologistic account of seeming-validity should be rejected. What the proponent or the respondent's motives were, whether he intended to deceive or had a guilty mind, are not requirements of judging the use of an argument as fallacious.

What often makes fallacious arguments "seem valid" - that is, what makes the use of such argument techniques effective in a dialogue, even when they are used incorrectly are two factors. One is that in many cases, perhaps similar cases in many respects, these argumentation techniques are used

correctly to support legitimate goals of dialogue. The other factor is that there is often a dialectical shift involved. The use of this particular technique might be quite inappropriate and incorrect in one type of dialogue, running quite contrary to the goals of the dialogue, but if the context has shifted to another type of dialogue, the use of this same technique may now be quite appropriate. But if the shift has not been perceived, if it was a covert or unilateral shift, not made out in the open, or agreed to by both parties, the incorrect argument may have a surface appearance of correctness to the uncritical respondent or observer.

The view of fallacies arising out of this analysis may not be popular with everyone, because it places a serious burden of proof on the would-be critic who is to go around declaring arguments fallacious. He can no longer simply declare: "Aha, that's an *ad hominem* argument; therefore it's fallacious." or "That's an appeal to authority; therefore it's a fallacy." Since the uses of these argumentation techniques are sometimes quite reasonable in a type of dialogue, it is incumbent upon the critic to show why they are fallacious in a particular case. This puts a serious burden of proof on the critic to support a charge of fallaciousness by citing evidence of two types: (1) textual evidence from the given text of discourse in a particular case, and (2) contextual evidence showing the type of dialogue involved, including the existence of dialectical shifts.

What is important is the identification of the type of dialogue that the participants were supposed to be engaged in, and the commitments of the participants, as revealed through their speech acts as verbal exchanges in the dialogue. But commitments are not beliefs or motives (psychological entities) of the participants - see Hamblin (1970, p. 257). Commitments are inserted into the commitment-stores of the participants in a dialogue in virtue of the rules of the dialogue. Whether an argument is to be judged fallacious or non-fallacious in a given case then is a matter of judging the commitments of both the proponent and respondent as revealed by their performances in a context of dialogue.

## NOTES

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1. See van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984).
2. Woods and Walton (1989).

3. Walton (1989) and (1989a).
4. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1989).
5. See Douglas N. Walton, 'Burden of Proof' *Argumentation*, 2, 1988, 233-254.
6. See Douglas N. Walton, 'Reasoned Use of Expertise in Argumentation', *Argumentation*, 3, 1987, 59-73.
7. See the *Prior Analytics*, and note Hamblin's comments (1970), pp. 66-69). See also John Woods and Douglas Walton, '77te *Petitio*: Aristotle's Five Ways', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 12, 1982, 77-100.
8. See Robinson (1953) for Plato's changing views on eristic dialogue.
9. John Schwartz, Erik Calonius, David L. Gonzalez and Frank Gibney, Jr. 'A Boss They Love to Hate', *Newsweek*, March 20, 1989, 20-24.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
11. Walton (1989a).
12. Hamblin (1970).

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