Current issues being addressed by argumentation theorists can be identified by examining their writings in The Journal of the American Forensic Association (JAFA). Traditionally, argument has been seen as an utterance or act, from a philosophy based logical "product" perspective. Many current theorists, however, see argument as a process or communication transaction, and it is this perspective that is most useful for the speech communication teacher. The modern theorists' acceptance that argument is not logic leads to disputes concerning the nature of the standards to be applied in evaluating arguments. For the teacher, procedural standards provide the best assurance of validity. The role of nonverbal communication is also a growing concern of current theorists. A survey of seven recent undergraduate texts—by H. Kahane, K. Lambert and E. Ulrich, J. V. Jensen, A. M. Eisenberg and J. A. Ilardo, A. Freeley, J. E. Sayer, and J. M. Sproule—reveals that only the last three depart from traditional views and define argument as a process or procedure. Of these three, only Sproule's "Argument: Language and Its Influence" retains that perspective in discussing argumentative validity. His is the first choice, and Sayer's the second, for a teacher desiring to put argumentation more fully into a transactional perspective. (JL)
Contemporary Writings in Argument

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It is likely that most post-secondary speech departments include in their curricula a course or courses in argumentation. Frequently the study of argumentation is merged with--and occasionally subsumed by--study in debate. Certainly the frequency with which these fields are linked in textbook titles is a response to the pervasiveness of such linkage in course titles and/or descriptions. Unfortunately, such linkage invites a perspective toward argumentation which no longer represents the direction of thought by scholars in that area. This paper attempts to identify current issues being pursued by argumentation theorists through an examination of their writings in the scholarly journal claiming an argumentative focus: JAFA. The paper then examines seven recent (1980 or 1981 copyright) undergraduate texts in terms of their treatment of those issues.

RELATION TO LOGIC

Before argumentation can be analyzed it must be defined. The bases for dispute on other issues are found in the different perspectives on argument assumed by contemporary theorists. Daniel O'Keefe perceives two views of argument. He feels the traditional approach is to view argument as a kind of utterance or act, but a second perspective sees argument as a kind of interaction. Wayne Brockriede agrees, labeling
the former perspective as a product orientation and the latter a process orientation. He expresses a strong preference for the process orientation, claiming "the act of producing an argument is not a very significant object of study for persons interested in understanding human communication." These two theorists combine to demonstrate a sense of dissatisfaction with the traditional view of argument as pseudo-logic, or the rhetorical equivalent of logic. Instead, they suggest argument is an interaction, a subset of human communication. Brant Burleson recognizes the dual perspectives of product and process but prefers the former as a starting point for discussion. Burleson posits that argument in the process sense is identified by the presence and exchange of argument in the product sense. For him no discussion of argument is possible until a claim (argument as product) is introduced. Burleson suggests the product precedes the process. The ramifications of this ordering are significant. While Brockriede would focus primarily on the communicative encounter to analyze argument, Burleson would be expected to focus on the issues, evidence, etc. which comprise the product. For him the argument is not necessarily the interaction; it is instead the claim and the defense organized around that claim.

Joseph Wenzel injects a third perspective into this dispute. He suggests arguing is a process (akin to rhetoric), argumentation is a procedure (akin to dialectic), and argument is a product (akin to logic). It is the notion of procedure which sets his theory apart. For Wenzel this procedure involves a systematic management of discourse for the purpose of achieving critical decisions. Wenzel suggests the strength of a procedural perspective lies in extending the previous perspectives into a form which may more readily be tested. For him the logical perspective "enables us to express our understandings; dialectical
procedures enable us to test them." He finds a middle ground between the formal standard of logic and the more open-ended characteristics of interaction. Wenzel might be expected to support several argumentative decision making systems which would be characterized by procedural guidelines. Following the procedures would produce the best results. Charles Willard supports the notion of procedural rules. He classifies argument as "a specific kind of social relationship or encounter." As a species of social relationship, argument demands the arguers assume a co-orientation or intersubjectivity (not consensus) which leads to establishment of procedural rules. It is the relationship which leads to the employment of the rules. Discussion of the rules may, of course, lead to further argument. If argument is construed as a type of social relationship—a communication transaction—then argument is linked to the whole panorama of concepts surrounding those transactions.

For Willard a direct link is drawn to the notion of person perception and mutual creation of the other. Dale Hample extends Willard's transactional perspective. He suggests since the locus of communication is in the mind of the receiver, "the cognitive view insists that the argument exists only within the receiver." The argument simply does not exist until it is received and translated. Because the receiver gives the argument life and determines what shape it ultimately takes, Hample suggests "an argument's author is not the speaker; it is the receiver." Hample's thought refutes no other perspective; rather it enhances and extends both Wenzel's dialectic perspective and Willard's constructivist/interactionist view.

As a speech communication teacher I am much more comfortable with a view of argument as a type of transaction. It is that perspective which I encourage students in the introductory course to employ in
thinking about their everyday encounters. From a purely pragmatic perspective, viewing argument as a special type of transaction enables me to tie the speech communication curriculum together. It helps the students view the discipline from a more consistent perspective. I also prefer the transactional perspective because it places the study of argument squarely within the discipline. The logical "product" perspective borrows heavily from philosophy. Many students and faculty outside the discipline feel argument is simply a weaker form of logic. They find comfort in the belief that logic will lead them to undisputed ultimate truths. They become uneasy with Plato's view of the Sophists and not infrequently level a charge of sophistry themselves. The transactional perspective clarifies the unique aspects of argumentation—particularly those which separate it from logic—in a manner which emphasizes the rhetorical nature of argument in a positive manner.

VALIDITY

If argument is not logic then arguments should not be judged by logical (i.e. formal) standards. On that issue theorists agree. What they dispute, however, is the nature of the standards to be applied in evaluating arguments. Thomas Farrell suggests validity judgments lie with the audience. He rejects formal logic as a standard of judgment, indicating no analysis of the soundness of rhetorical argument is possible until the audience has been reached. He does, however, set an a priori standard for his audience, indicating an "appropriate audience" is conscious both of itself and of facts relevant to its decision. He cautions, however, that the relationship between the argument and the audience's judgment is probable rather than absolute; argument is not characterized by forced choices. If there is no choice there is no need for argument. Ultimately, Farrell's concept of validity depends on a "normative force"—
the relation of the argument's premises to the social knowledge attributed to the audience. Both Farrell and Knower offer recaps of Toulmin's concept of field dependence: rhetorical arguments are judged valid/invalid by the specific audiences to whom they are addressed. Ray McKerrow draws a critical distinction when he reiterates the claim of many contemporary theorists that arguments justify rather than verify their claims. For him arguments do not convince so much as they reinforce. They follow rather than precede the decision. The measure of validity is direct:

"... an argument is valid if, and only if, it serves as a pragmatic justification for the adoption of a belief."

Each of these views most readily applies to the product (logical) perspective of argument. Each standard may evaluate a "thing" which is offered to an audience. These standards may be characterized as both less stringent and more realistic than standards of formal logic, but none of them really applies procedural norms of judgment. To an extent they recognize the notion of process, but only insofar as the validity judgment rests with the receiver of the argument. That judgment is not based on universal standards; rather the audience sets its own standards. While this view is no doubt much more realistic than the standard of formal logic, the inability to establish more concrete standards opens claims of rhetorical validity to the charge of sophistry.

The procedure perspective offers a real opportunity to establish norms which may guarantee that an audience bases its judgment on a full hearing of relevant argumentation. James Aune and Burleson suggest such standards may be found in the writings of Jurgen Habermas. Aune proffers Habermas' four structural requirements for validity, based on each speaker having equal opportunity to: (1) initiate and perpetuate communication; (2) employ regulative acts without imposition of one-sided norms; (3) employ conative...
acts so no propositional statements are immune from examination; and (4) employ representative acts. Habermas' structure is designed to assure a full hearing insofar as the arguers and audience demand it. There are neither external nor unilateral constraints on free inquiry. Aune feels 'Habermas' criteria suggest that barriers to validity lie in the structure of the arguer's society, and that neither adherence to logical form nor to rhetorical validity, but rather political action, will provide the possibility of true speech.' Burleson isolates the procedural nature of this perspective, as he indicates free communication both questions and reestablishes the validity of the claims. He suggests the real test of validity comes through a combination of Habermas' procedural standards with the product standard offered by Toulmin's field-dependent measures. This merging of perspectives appears consistent with a transactional perspective, as it emphasizes the active role of the audience in assessing (not merely receiving) argumentation. Burleson reiterates "... the truth of a claim, in the final analysis, is inseperable from the social means through which the claim is assessed, tested, and justified."

As a teacher, and especially as a forensics director, I am strongly attracted to procedural standards. As a teacher of general speech communication courses such standards appear in a variety of settings from the dyad to the small group. They are readily translatable to the student's experience, and as readily translatable into classroom experiences. In the argumentation class such standards certainly suggest debate as a decision making paradigm. When open communication is demanded and field dependent standards are employed argumentative validity should be assured--for that transaction, that audience. Of course, procedural standards are subject to acceptance by the audience...
and the arguers. As in debate, the standards may themselves become the subject of argument. Willard indicates another parallel to intercollegiate debate: "...these rules may not conform to abstract logical standards; and it is probable that many actors employ those rules which they predict will aid them in their argumentation while ignoring or even attacking those rules which might impede them." Validity, then, may best be assured by a combination of standards derived from each of the three perspectives on argument.

NONVERBAL

A final issue developed at some length is the role of nonverbal communication. This issue impacts on the utility of diagrams (such as the Toulmin model) in argument analysis. If nonverbal communication plays a significant role in argument, the claim goes, diagrams which cannot capture nonverbal cues cannot analyze the argument. Willard has been the major proponent of that view. To support the notion that nonverbal cues play an important role in argumentation he simply groups argument with other forms of communication: "I think it intuitively obvious that all kinds of communication may be construed along discursive and/or non-discursive lines and that arguments, because they are a kind of communication, reflect the same duality." Why does this impede the utility of diagrams? "...a central weakness of argument diagrams is their illusion of facticity, the false security they provide, the distortive sense of precision they engender." Burleson and Kneupper disagree. Burleson posits nonverbal cues are communicated through primitive cognitive structures which are less meaningful for adults than later developing structures; but concedes nonverbal communication is important in argument. Like Kneupper, he asserts critics may
reasonably approximate the argument and diagram appropriate nonverbal cues. He insists, however, symbolic phenomena must be linguistically explicable, if not explicit, to be considered as arguments. As a teacher I find this last distinction meaningless. Both Willard and Burleson offer thoughts which are not completely refuted by the other. If argument is viewed as a type of communication, and Burleson offers no reason it should not be so construed, there is no reason nonverbal cues should not play a major—if not the major—role in conveying the message. Likewise, if we can observe and record nonverbal cues there appears to be no reason they cannot be diagrammed. What neither author addresses is the fundamental difference between the types of things expressed verbally and nonverbally. The role of nonverbal seems uncertain; of course it is there, but no one seems to know just how it acts. Further research into nonverbal communication, both in terms of assigning meaning to specific cues and in studying the effects of specific variables, should help clarify how nonverbal cues contribute to the meaning of an argument, how those cues influence the transaction. Because that field is barely out of its infancy not enough is known to theorize with any certainty.

Contemporary issues developed through JAFA lead to the conclusions that argument may best be viewed as a type of communication transaction— as a process or procedure. That perspective affords an audience- and procedure-centered measure of validity which may more accurately reflect what happens in argument than traditional logical measures of formal validity. The role of nonverbal communication in argument is only now being explored. While it appears nonverbal cues must influence the meaning, the extent of that influence is not yet known. Until more is known about assigning meaning to specific nonverbal cues it is not
likely they can be diagrammed with any degree of accuracy. For that reason, and because they freeze argument into a product, models of argument are subject to the same limitations which plague communication models. That indictment may limit their utility, but it certainly does not mean they are useless.

No fewer than seven texts claiming to be appropriate to the argumentation course have emerged during the past two years. Four tend to reiterate the classic (product) position no longer preferred by argumentation theorists. As a group, they are prone to represent argument as a thing and to discuss validity in formal terms. Several find it necessary to distinguish between argumentation and persuasion; their distinctions largely recapitulate the persuasion/argumentation duality notions popular about the time of the first World War. Three texts do offer a more contemporary perspective on argument. They may reflect the beginning of a trend toward a broader perspective on argument, but none fully embraces the process/procedure perspective.

LOGIC-ORIENTED TEXTS

Two of the texts are written from the perspective of philosophy. Howard Kahane focuses on formal logic in the recent revision of a text, which has become a standard. While he mentions argument, and defines it as "one or more sentences or propositions . . . offered in support of another sentence or proposition . . ." the concept is not central to his work. The definition clearly treats argument as a thing, a product. Kahane's formal validity standards, especially when combined with his focus on the quest for truth (or drive for correctness), reinforce that perspective.

As an introductory text in the study of logic, Kahane may be useful, but the relationship between this text and contemporary thought in argumentation
is too remote to claim the text reflects the field. Lambert and Ulrich also write from the philosophical perspective. Their perspective is reflected not so much in a search for truth as in an examination of the formal relationships between constituent parts of an argument. Argument is clearly viewed as a product, "something that can represent reasoning processes." While they do recognize the expression of argument may or may not be verbal, they posit such expression is only meaningful as a description of an internal process. Validity and soundness may readily be determined through an examination of an argument's formal properties, because the "thing" is not subject to the vagaries of processual reinterpretation. Their goal in the study of argument is a closer approximation to correctness. They recognize "rationality itself is a matter of degree—no one is perfectly rational. Nevertheless, if one develops a sensitivity for what makes arguments good or bad, he can learn to reason correctly much more of the time." Like Kahane, Lambert and Ulrich offer worthwhile views in discussing logic. Also like Kahane, their views are of limited utility in the study of argument. These philosophy texts should be expected to differ significantly from texts written from the discipline of speech communication, as the fields do not address the same phenomenon.

Unfortunately, two texts written from the perspective of speech communication also view argument as an outward expression of the internal reasoning process. This product view is not necessarily evidenced in their definitions of argument, but in their measures of validity a bias for the logical perspective emerges. As with the texts discussed earlier, each of these works is an effort to improve the reader's decisions by making them more "correct." Vernon Jensen defines argumentation as "a human communication process which emphasizes the rational (logos) while at the same
time recognizing the importance of the appeal to the credibility of the arguer (ethos), and the appeal to the emotions of the audience (pathos).\textsuperscript{50}

For Jensen the argument is a thing to be adapted to certain audiences.\textsuperscript{51}

It may be tested through formal validity standards, as it is an expression of the arguer's internal reasoning process. Abne Eisenberg and Joseph Ilardo also pursue the logical tradition. They suggest argument may be viewed in two ways—as a sort of unpleasant interpersonal disagreement, or in the "rhetorical sense" as "a line of reasoning, with evidence, in support of a conclusion."\textsuperscript{52} Their definition of argument reflects the first option, removing the unpleasant connotation, but their treatment of argument is more object- than process-oriented.\textsuperscript{53} Thus "it would be possible for a speaker to present a 'perfect' argumental case and still fail to persuade a popular audience."\textsuperscript{54} Effectiveness is not the measure of validity, nor are field-dependent or procedural standards. Rather, validity is judged by formal standards. (Eisenberg and Ilardo develop some twenty-six fallacies in chapter four.\textsuperscript{55}) While they admit "Many of our most significant personal and interpersonal problems occur on an emotional level," such problems are excluded from the realm of argument precisely because they involve emotions.\textsuperscript{56} Thus it is possible to misuse this thing known as argument. This text represents a reluctant recognition that the field is turning away from logic as an argumentative paradigm. But that reluctance heavily influences the text. It becomes readily apparent the authors are not comfortable with the direction of contemporary theory. Their perspective is:

since argumentation is engaged in by human beings, nonlogical and nonverbal factors always operate. The requirements of the real world force us to consider the nonverbal and nonlogical aspects of interpersonal disagreement
Only then can the supremacy of logic be assured.  

Like Jensen, then, Elsenberg and Iiardo offer the logical, product perspective no longer reflected by writings of contemporary theorists.  

TOWARD PROCESS

In the fifth edition of his popular work, Austin Freeley begins to bridge the gap between contemporary texts and current theory.  

Freely recognizes that argument involves "reason giving in communication situations by people whose purpose is the justification of acts, beliefs, attitudes, and values." His definition appears to recognize the audience centered perspective central to the process view of argument. His discussion of validity also hints at that perspective, as he defines rhetorical proof as "the degree of cogency arising in the minds of the audience from the combination of premises with reasoning." In his discussion of tests of argument Freeley returns to a logical, product perspective, however. His tests include the truth of the evidence on which the argument is based, the relevance of the conclusion (to the evidence, not to the audience), and the traditional formal fallacies. It may be unfair to criticize Freeley's text too much for its shortcomings in argumentation, however. It is primarily a debate text, and much of the effort in each of its four revisions appears to have been directed toward updating and refining the text's treatment of debate. Nevertheless, while Freeley begins to recognize the process perspective, his treatment of argumentation falls largely in the traditional mold of argument as pseudo-logic.  

Two other texts embrace current theory more fully. James Sayer puts argumentation squarely into the process perspective. He consistently reminds the reader argumentation is a subset of communication. He
defines argument as "the process of presenting persuasive information and conclusions to secure agreement with one's position." After discussing a modified SMCR model of the communication process, he reminds the reader "since argumentative communication is but a subset of the overall communication process, the communication model itself indicates that there is more to the study of functional argumentation and debate than the study of formal logic." His audience centered perspective comes even more clearly into focus as he defines proof as what appears tenable and sound to the audience. The goal of argument is with the audience. The audience is of equal importance to the source in the communication model, and the audience determines what it will accept as proof. Many contemporary theorists follow that trend of thought with the claim that validity standards must also lie with the audience. Sayer, however, returns to the traditional thought. After indicating that probability rather than certainty is the basis for argument, he discusses formal fallacies as guarantors of accuracy. He defines fallacious argument as argument whose structure is so irrational it should not persuade a reasonable person. He thus returns to the a priori of reason characteristic of the previously discussed texts. His book is worthwhile as an attempt to place argument within the purview of human communication. Regrettably, Sayer does not follow through with the process perspective in the area of argumentative validity.

Michael Sproule chooses a consistent procedural perspective. His effort departs significantly from the logical, product view of argument and stands more securely with contemporary thought. He uses "argument" to represent a unit of thought, "the relationship of two terms via a name-relation-name pattern," but indicates few single units exist.
Rather, "extended arguments" consisting of "two or more basic arguments connected in such a way that one of them is a claim to be proved and the other(s) is (are) data offered in support of the claim." For Sproule, argumentation is so pervasive that all users of language may be called arguers. Rather than continuing to treat argument as a thing—separate units—Sproule offers five constituent parts to any dispute: (1) the agent(s); (2) the subject of the dispute; (3) the position (or claim) of the agent(s); (4) the supporting arguments; and (5) the resolution of the dispute. The use of language and connecting of terms as the agent(s) moves through a dispute represents the process of argumentation. Though he recognizes argument is criticized primarily through its effects, Sproule suggests a validity standard not directly consistent with any of the three perspectives offered earlier in this paper. For Sproule "an argument is valid when, in an adversarial situation, the degree of certainty attributed to a conclusion by an agent is less than or equal to that of the relevant proof." (Thus, if the evidence suggests X will occur in 75% of the cases where Y is present, the agent may not validly claim Y will undoubtedly be accompanied by X. Validity would follow a claim that such a relationship is likely rather than necessary.) What is important here is the notion that an adversary system helps establish validity, that validity is a result of the presence of adversaries. This standard is clearly consistent with the procedural measures suggested by Habermas. Sproule limits the utility of structural tests to validation of fact; ethical and truth tests of argument are conducted through the dialectic. For him argument serves the same basic functions as language: it reports, persuades, reveals attitudes, reveals the self, and establishes relationships. Thus Sproule suggests a procedural perspective for dispute.
resolution through argument. While his effort is clearly more consistent with current theory than others, it could be more direct. Approaching argument from the perspective of language frees him from the biases inherent in the traditional perspective of argument as a product, but it may also obfuscate the relationship between contemporary argumentation theory. While much of Sproule must be interpreted through implication, the book remains closest to a process/procedural view of argument among this group of seven.

CONCLUSION

This paper has reviewed three basic issues in contemporary argumentation theory. Review of current perspective on argument indicates a pronounced shift away from the traditional logical perspective toward a process/procedure view of argument. As the field turns from the logical model, so is it rejecting measures of validity based on formal logic. Validity seems to be based in the procedure followed during the argumentative transaction and in the audience's field dependent standards for evaluating the content of the arguer's messages. Finally the role of nonverbal communication is being discussed in the literature of the field. While there is a growing recognition of its importance, current research cannot yet interpret specific cues or establish an overall proportion of the meaning derived from nonverbal variables. While this problem certainly limits the value of models of argument, it does not appear to destroy their utility altogether.

The paper also examined seven texts published during the last two years. Only three of the texts depart at all from the logical, productive view of argument. The others retain a heavy traditional bias. Of the three which define argument as a process or procedure only Sproule's *Argument: Language and Its Influence* retains that perspective.
in discussing argumentative validity. As a teacher of speech communication desiring to put argumentation more fully into the transactional perspective, my choices are slim. From this group of texts, Sproule is the first choice, with Sayer a clear second.
Notes


4 Brockriede, p. 130


6 Burleson, p. 140.

7 Burleson, p. 141.

8 Burleson, p. 141.


10 Wenzel, p. 83.

11 Wenzel, p. 84.
12. Wezel, p. 94
17. Willard, p. 137.
25. Farrell, p. 147.
28 McKerrow, p. 135.


30 Aune, p. 106.

31 Aune, p. 108.


41 Burleson, "The Place . . . .", p. 226.

42 Albert Mehrabian suggests nonverbal cues communicate (1) the degree of like/dislike (2) the gross level of responsiveness, and (3) status or power.


45 Kahane, p. 3.

46 See Rudolf Carnap’s preface, especially p. xv.

47 Lambert and Ulrich, p. 4.

48 Lambert and Ulrich, pp. 4-5.

49 Lambert and Ulrich, p. 8.

50 Jensen, p. 6.

51 Jensen, chapter 11 discusses audience adaptation.

52 Eisenberg and Ilardo, p. 2.

53 The definition is on p. 10.

54 Eisenberg and Ilardo, p. 4.

55 Eisenberg and Ilardo, pp. 82-98.

56 Eisenberg and Ilardo, p. 5.

57 Eisenberg and Ilardo, p. vi.

58 See note 1.

59 Freeley, p. 1.
Freelty, p. 110.

Sayer, p. 5.

Sayer, p. 37.

Sayer, p. 59.

See Willard, "A Reformulation..." Wenzel; McKerrow; Hample; Farrell; Burleson, "On the Foundations..." and Aune.

Sayer, p. 190.

Sproule, pp. 4-8.

Sproule, p. 8.

Sproule, p. 24. Sproule adds the language used need not be verbal. Nonverbal messages may also constitute arguments.

Sproule, p. 16.

Sproule, p. 86.

See Aune; and Burleson, "On the Foundations..."

Sproule, pp. 38-44.
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