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THE PROBLEM OF VALUES IN THE ARGUMENTATION THEORY: FROM ARISTOTLE’S “RHETORICS” TO PERELMAN’S “NEW RHETORIC”

Abstract
The Author presents the problem of values in the argumentation theory. Paper focuses on the topic form a wide perspective, starting from the ancient Greece and finishing with the Chaim Perelman’s concept.
Key words: rhetorics, values in the argumentation theory

For the first time the thesis about the axiological dimension of argumentative activity was expressed by Aristotle. However, this fact is not widely known, because it’s usual to reduce the logic of Aristotle to his apodictic—the deductive theory of the syllogism. Such reduction, for example, is strongly pronounced in the historical studies of famous Polish logician J. Lukasiewicz [Lukasiewicz 1951], and also in the writings of many of the modern logicians, analyzing the actual issues of syllogistic [Corcoran 1994]. In this interpretation the fact that Aristotle's logical system includes two parts: apodictic and dialectics is completely ignored. The latter one is appropriately regarded as the version of the argumentation theory in its own way, built over the doctrine of the syllogism. Three of Aristotle’s treatises are mainly devoted to its description.

The main issue of the argumentation theory is the explication of the structure of argumentative discourse, represented as a process in which two differently oriented strategies are found. One of them aims to defend a controversial thesis, the other one—to attack it. In Aristotelian the realization of both the strategy of defending, and the strategy of attacking

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involves the use of "topos". In literature on the history of logic, this term is adopted to translate as "common place" and gives it a sense of commonly held opinions. This interpretation identifies the topos with arguments, the content of which is more general in nature. The example of such understanding of the topos is the situation in which the thesis "a slice of a lemon is smaller than the lemon" is argued by the commonly held opinion (topos) "a part is less than the whole."

In "Topics" two types of the topos are analyzed: meaningful and formal. The topos of the first type pose as axiological meaningful statements, which act as general rules and can be used to defend a number of theses. Such theses are certainly referred to a value. For example, such meaningful topos in "Rhetoric" are the most common interpretations of "good" (common bonum). The topos of the second type determine the certain rules of inference: for example, topos "when we prove that it is inherent to one, we’ll refute that it is not inherent to any" is based on the direct syllogistic inference (inference according to the logical square). It should be noted that it would be wrong to identify the topos of the second type with the rules of the inference; it would be more correct to state that these topos implicitly contain the certain rules of inference. Hence, the interpretation of them as an argumentation scheme is possible.

As an example, consider the Aristotelian formal topos, containing inference by analogy as an inference rule. The first step of this inference is to establish the thesis, which acts as a statement. The second step is reduced to the adducing of an argument or a set of arguments. In the next stage the necessary logical connection between the arguments and thesis, the connection in the form of implication, is set due to the topos. The fourth step is to establish the truth of the argument. And finally, the truth of the thesis is approved.

Based on this example, it should be noted that the formal topos as the argumentation scheme implies the consideration of the argumentation not as a two-way process in which both speakers actively interact, but as the process, coming mainly from one side of the communicative act, when only one speaking activity is meant – one who defends thesis or attacks it.

The formal topos should be characterized according to the criterion of its compliance with the following features of the argumentation scheme [Van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Henkemans 1996]:

The argumentation scheme must have a beginning and an end. The beginning is the same for both the strategy of the proof and the strategy of refutation and involve the presentation of the thesis as well as the determination of different viewpoints. For the strategy of proof the end of the scheme is reduced to the statement of the thesis. For the strategy of refutation the end of the scheme is reduced to either the statement of the falsity of the thesis or the statement of its uncertainty, when the thesis is neither proved nor disproved. In the latter case, the strategy of the refutation is not aimed at the thesis itself, but at the arguments, substantiating it, or to the connection of the arguments and theses.
The argumentation scheme is characterized by a sequence of steps which must be certainly defined. Thus, the strategy of proof must realize the following sequence: the presentation of the thesis, the adducing of the arguments or their combinations, the approval of implication "if arguments are true, a thesis is true," the statement of the truth of the arguments, and the inference of the truth of the thesis. For the strategy of refutation the sequence is as follows: the expression of doubt in the truth of the thesis (the starting point for this strategy is already presented in the thesis), the adducing of a counterargument or its combination, the approval of the implication "if counterarguments are true, the thesis is false," the statement of the truth of counterarguments, and the inference of the falsity of the thesis. It should be noted that the possible "side" steps, conventionally established in each concrete case on the basis of mutually shared expectations, are excluded in the situation of the realization of the argumentation scheme. Because such mutually shared expectations are not significant in the process of the argumentation. The notion of "argumentation scheme" only emphasizes the logical aspects of argumentation in their specific unity with its content aspect.

The realization of the argumentation scheme should take into account the rules of inference by which the truth of the arguments (counterarguments) approves the truth of the thesis / antithesis for the strategy of proof / refutation. These inference rules implicitly exist in each scheme and are implied by the participants of discussion throughout the debate.

According to formal characteristics of the considered topos as the argumentation scheme it follows that the presence of mutually shared expectations and mutual obligations are not fixed, as well as the requirements for recognition of the argumentation scheme by the participants of discussion are also excluded, that is the communicative aspects of the argumentation remain beyond the analysis, and the logical procedures of proof and refutation are only in the forefront. A completely different situation is with the meaningful topos. For which, on the contrary, the communicative aspect of the argumentation is the acceptance of the viewpoint of an argumentator by a recipient on the base of the shared persuasion, which, as one shall know, is largely based on values.

As an example of meaningful topos, we give the following understanding of the “good”: "We call a good what is desirable in itself, but not for the sake of anything else, and to what everything eager to and to what everything would eager, if it was endowed with intelligence and practical sense, and is what creates and saves similar things and what these things are connected to’ [Aristotle]. And really, the main exists on its own and its parts depend on its existence, so the main from the position mentioned above states that “good” is more desirable at the same time.

Aristotle’s doctrine about topos is widely used in the scientific argumentation of scholastic scientists and served as the main logical-methodological base of traditional science. However, this doctrine was subject to severe criticism because of "seldom appliance."
Instead of the doctrine about topos, deductive logic is increasingly used in logic and science. As a result of these intellectual processes, specific ideal of scientific knowledge formed since the XVII century, according to which proper scientific knowledge should be value-neutral, and for this it should spotlessly substantiate from the positions of deductive logic and mathematics. Subsequently, this ideal was named “leibnizeanski”. Throughout classical science, it served as the indisputable value of scientific knowledge. In the middle of the XIX century mathematical logic as the unique organon of exact sciences was created on the base of this ideal. This kind of logic became the expression of the deductive power of scientific knowledge in itself. It would seem that Aristotle's doctrine of the topos will be forever forgotten, and will have only archival interest.

But from the middle of the XX century the cultural situation around the science and scientific knowledge changed markedly. The public began intervening directly in setting up scientific aims, and the obvious priorities of those scientific research which have significant importance were outlined in the scientific knowledge itself. The time of fundamental science was gradually ending, giving way to technical and applied knowledge. This was all being accompanied by a rapid increase in the social significance of communication technologies in all fields of human activity. This cultural situation could not lead to a new logical tradition, relevant to the ideas of mathematical logic. This tradition was named informal logic or argumentation theory.

The writings of the following authors were at the origins of the formation of the new tradition: Toulmin, S.E. The uses of argument (1958); Kahane, H. Logic I contemporary rhetoric. The use of reasoning in everyday life (1971); Thomas, S.N. Practical reasoning in natural language (1973); Resher, N. Dialectics (1977). Thanks to these writings the status of such traditional disciplines as dialectic and rhetoric was gradually relived, and the interest in the heritage of Aristotle's logic was also renewed.

To the greatest extent, still existing interest in the problems of argumentation was initiated with the concept, which was built up by Belgian logician Chaim Perelman [Perelman, Olbrechts-Tyteca].

At the dawn of his creative blossom Perelman adhered to the concept of neopositivism and was interested in logical and philosophical problems, related to the field of law to varying extents. During his further own theoretical research Perelman concluded that the appliance of the logical means, developed within neopositivism, is impossible towards the analysis of reasoning about law. Lastly, based mostly on value judgments, which, in turn, should be regarded as devoid of empirical basis, and therefore the argument containing them should seemingly salute as irrational. According to logical ideas of neopositivism, rational one is a statement that is verified either by means of empirical observations, or is deductively derivable by means of the rules of formal logic. Nevertheless, Perelman marks that every user of language, including a lawyer, very rarely cites formal evidence for his conclusion. In most
cases, he tries to justify it by the use of judgments. This affects every day conversation and is especially typical for the practice of law.

According to Perelman, the activity for justifying his statement should be rational regardless. Hence, he notices there is an urgent need to create the argumentation theory, which would complete the already developed mathematical (formal) logic. This theory must first of all deal with discourses, using value judgments, i.e. with these discourses, which cannot be resolved either through empirical verification, or formal proof, or both combined. Perelman and Olbreht-Tyteka’s *new rhetoric* became one of the first versions of such theory.

According to the authors’ opinion of the new rhetoric, the subject of informal logic includes specific examples of the argumentation that took place in the science and law discourse. Based on this definition of the research subject, they perceive the description of these argumentation schemes as their aim that can be successfully applied in practice. As a result, the neorhetorical theory of argumentation is a pragmatic model and doesn’t bear normative character – does not establish the rules and regulations to which the argumentation must be made.

The name chosen to describe their conception by the authors is aimed to emphasize the following aspect: this theory inherits the basic content of classical rhetoric, rooting back to Aristotle’s treatise "Rhetoric". On one hand this is expressed in the understanding of rhetoric as a branch of knowledge that describes in what ways argumentative (by Aristotle – dialectical) techniques that can be used to convince a concrete audience, i.e. certain recipients. On the other hand, it is expressed in postulating that the argumentation always has its main aim to influence those to whom it was addressed initially (this effect consists the formation of the persuasion of a concrete audience or in a motivation to action). Hence, the correctness and rationality of the argumentation is simply the functions of the fact of its success within the audience to which it was addressed. Thus, in both rhetorics, (Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Perelman’s *New Rhetoric*) the meaning of the audience is fundamental, and has particular importance for all conceptual constructs.

In the neorhetorical conception of the argumentation the existence of two different types of persuasion are postulated. The first type of argumentation is argumentation itself, which is acceptable to everyone. The second type of argumentation refers to the cases of the argumentation in which the process of argumentation is successful and effective only with respect to a particular person or group of people. According to the authors’ opinion in "New Rhetoric" the difference between two types of argumentations is conditioned by the difference of audiences to which the argumentation is addressed and to which it should influence. Therefore, taking the division of argumentation types into consideration, two types of audiences are introduced. The first type is any locally organized group of people (the situation where only one person is not excluded in the group). The second type of audience is defined by means of ideal construct, a "universal audience", implying the inclusion of every rational
person in this generalized group of recipients. The construct, "universal audience" is
a guarantee of rationality of the argumentation.

Returning to the types of persuasion, it should be emphasized that it is the first type of
persuasion that describes those cases when the argumentator builds his argumentation in such
a way that it can have an influence on any recipient, (i.e. in general, on the universal
audience). In every concrete situation the argumentator is able to decide himself whether he
considers his audience as a "universal audience" or not; in this case his decision will depend
on the final aim of the argumentation. However, it shouldn’t be forgotten that the visions of
the "universal audience", i.e., of the content of this ideal construct, may be different for both
the different argumentators and in various auditoriums.

On the basis of the marked differences between the two types of persuasion, Perelman
identifies two types of dialogue: on one hand, heuristic dialogues, and on the other, eristic or
polerical dialogues. For marking the first ones he uses the term, discussion; for the second
ones, debate. The first kind of dialogue has axiologically positive value, and the second one,
on the contrary, has negative connotations. The difference between these two types is reduced
to the following: during the heuristic dialogue the argumentator, using rational methods of
persuasion, tries to persuade his recipients in the correctness of a thesis, while the recipients
are considered as part of the universal audience by the argumentator, i.e. as rational judges. In
the-eristic dialogue, the argumentator tries to influence the viewpoints of the audience, to
convince in the correctness of its view point or to give it a motive to some action, using any
arguments and argumentation schemes, i.e without taking into account the positive
assessment of his actions on the part of the rational judge.

Perelman preacts the classification of argumentation schemes with the description of the types
of the arguments which are used in the argumentative process. There are two main types of
arguments: the first argument is related to reality (facts, truths and presumptions), the second
one is referred to the arguments, related to the fact that is “more preferable” (values, the
hierarchy of values and topos). The arguments of the first type pretend to be approved by the
universal audience, ones of the second type – for the approval of the local audience, as they
always have to deal with the specific preferences of the concrete audience.

*Facts* are arguments, which can’t be the subject of discussion. Facts – are statements about
reality, they are recognized as true by every rational person and do not require further
explanation. *Truths* are a system of complex relationships between facts. In consequence
everything that is related to the facts is applied to them. This system of complex relationships
between facts is a scientific theory. *Presumptions* – are the arguments in which it is not stated,
but assumed to a certain degree of probability that a certain state of affairs is present, and it’s
initially suggested that these hypotheses will be confirmed in the future.

*Values* expresses the preferences of the local audience. They serve as the guidance in the
selection of viewpoints and the basis for their formation. In the neorhetorical theory of
argumentation the concept “value” is very important. According to this approach, the values supported by this or that audience, are the criteria for determining the accept ability or unacceptability of various points of view for the recipients. However, more important for the argumentator is a hierarchy of values, which in a greater degree characterizes the local audience as unique and original. Topos, expressing the preferences of the definite local audience, are very general in nature and may serve as arguments for many different statements made in the argumentation. For example, to justify the statement “you should be agreeable to the job which is offered to you”, it may be topos as “a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” It just tops to constitute the logical and communicative base for both the use of values, and for the use of their hierarchy.

Reference list

ARISTOTLE, *Topics.*