Informal Logic

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A "Neo-Logicist" Defense of the Primacy of the "Logical" Mode of Argument in Gilbert's Multi-modal Theory of Argumentation

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Une défense « néo-logiciste » de la primauté du mode d'argumentation « logique » dans la théorie multimodale de l'argumentation de Gilbert

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Article abstract

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Logics for "Non-Logical" Argumentation: A "Neo-Logicist" Defense of the Primacy of the "Logical" Mode of Argument in Gilbert's Multi-modal Theory of Argumentation

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Abstract: On Gilbert's multi-modal theory of argumentation, the "logical" is but one among many modes of argument, including the emotional, the visceral (physical), and the kisceral (intuitive). Yet, I argue that, properly understood, the logical is not one mode among many. Rather, it is better understood as the *uber-mode* of argument. What Gilbert calls the "logical mode" of argument—a linear, orderly, highly verbalizable, way of arguing—is made possible only to the extent that the logic of some space of reasons has been articulated. The "anti-logical" penchant of multi-modal argumentation is not found at the object-level—in its countenancing "non-logical" modes of argument, but at the meta-level—in its resistance, as a mistaken embracing of the "logical" mode, to using the logics governing the different modes to self-regulate the course of our arguings.

Résumé: Selon la théorie multimodale de l'argumentation de Gilbert, le mode "logique" n'est qu'un parmi de nombreux modes d'argumentation, y compris l'émotionnel, le viscéral (physique) et le kiscéral (intuitif). Pourtant, je soutiens que, bien comprise, la logique n'est pas un mode parmi d'autres. Au contraire, la logique est mieux comprise comme le super-mode d'argumentation. Ce que Gilbert appelle le « mode logique » de l'argumentation – une manière linéaire, ordonnée et hautement verbalisable d'argumenter – n'est rendu possible que dans la mesure où la logique d'un certain espace de raisons a été articulée. Le penchant « anti-logique » de l'argumentation multimodale ne se trouve pas au niveau de l'objet - dans son approbation des modes d'argumentation « non logiques », mais au niveau méta - dans sa résistance, en tant qu'acceptation erronée du mode « logique », à utiliser les logiques régissant les différents modes pour autoréguler le cours de nos argumentations.

Keywords: Michael Gilbert, meta-argumentation, multi-modal argumentation

1. Introduction

1.1. Multi-modalism in Gilbert's Coalescent argumentation

Coalescent argumentation (hereafter CA), Michael Gilbert tells us in his monograph of that title (1997; cf. 1995b), is a "normative ideal" (p. 102; cf. 2007) whose aim is "to bring about an agreement between two arguers based on the conjoining of their positions in as many ways as possible" (p. 70; cf. pp. xv, 74, 106). By comparison with other idealized normative models for disagreement management and resolution, CA offers a novel, rhetorically-based approach to understanding and addressing our disagreements, by focusing our attentions (i) on the fullness of the *circumstances* in which we come to disagree and address our disagreements, and (ii) on *ourselves as people* who disagree and argue (1995a)—particularly including: our goals (discursive and extra-discursive), our (extra-argumentative) relations with one another, our motivations for engaging in argumentation as a means of disagreement management, and the stakes, preferences, and values we attach to various states, including end-states, of disagreements and argumentative interactions (1996). A persistent and principal thought informing the CA approach is that a failure to sufficiently and properly attend to arguers and their circumstances results in descriptive and subsequent normative failures in existing, predominant dialectical and informal-logical models of argumentation.

One of the things that, Gilbert claims, properly attending to arguers and the circumstances of our arguings—particularly the ways we actually argue with one another—reveals is that arguing is *multi-modal*. Multi-modalism, then, is a central conceptual and analytical resource posited by CA for charting and navigating the problem spaces of describing, regulating, and evaluating our argumentative activities. "Multi-modal argumentation," Gilbert tells us, is "… the metaphysics of Coalescent Argumentation … [It] accepts as a reality that people do not argue from an exclusively logical or linear point of view. Rather, people's arguments may stem from their emotions, physicality, or intuitions" (1997, p. 143). These give rise to, respectively, the emotional (1994a, 1995d, 1997, 2004, 2005, 2018), visceral (1994a, 1997, 2018), and kisceral

modes of argumentation (1994a, 1997, 2002, 2011, 2018), in addition to the "logical" mode (1994a, 1994b, 1997, 2002, 2018). (Importantly, Gilbert explicitly leaves open the possibility of other, or different, modes, and even of revising or eliminating the modes he proposed (2018, p. 314).) Crucially, as will be discussed in detail later, Gilbert maintains that normative pluralism is a consequence of multi-modalism in argumentation, claiming "the strength of a reason is dependent on its mode" (1997, p. 83; cf. Godden 2003, p. 225f.). A multi-modal approach to argumentation thus requires the articulation of standards and norms of good argument for each of the different modes, each of which constitutes its own, distinctive, space of reasons.

1.2. Problems resulting from neglecting "non-logical" modes of argument

According to Gilbert, existing models of argumentation not only insufficiently attend to arguers and the circumstances in which we argue, and (as a corollary) the ways we actually argue with one another, but they tend to focus too heavily—indeed, typically, exclusively—on something he calls the "logical" mode of argument. That is, existing models of argumentation neglect (whether by overlooking, ignoring, or excluding) "non-logical" modes of argument. According to Gilbert, this neglect marks a principal respect in which existing accounts fail to properly theorize the phenomena (namely, our practices of arguing and our undertakings in that practice) they are meant to model, regulate, and adjudicate.

At best, theories focusing on the "logical" mode offer an incomplete picture of argumentative reality. While our focus on the logical might provide adequate tools for theorizing that aspect of argumentation, our neglect of the non-logical means that existing theories fail to address themselves to normatively significant features of our arguings associated with those other modes. When responding to the "traditionalist's" answer that "it is a fallacy to take those things [here, Gilbert is specifically referencing examples of situational features which, on his multi-modalism, comprise the physical mode] into account when evaluating an argument," Gilbert replies: "But it is impossible not to take them into account when having an

argument" (2018, p. 322; cf. 2002). As such, existing theories provide only partially adequate analytical, regulative, and evaluative frameworks for our argumentative activities.

Worse is that, on Gilbert's view, "logically-oriented" theories offer a distorted picture of argumentative reality—so distorted, in fact, that they entirely fail to represent, and sometimes even to reference, the subject matter they seek to theorize. By focusing overly on the "logical," at the expense of the "non-logical" aspects of argumentation, Gilbert contends that the resulting theoretical models bear little descriptive resemblance—and thereby little prescriptive relevance—to the phenomena they seek to theorize. Not only do our idealized models abstract away the particulars of our arguings, they misrepresent the normativity at work in our argumentative activities by ignoring entire normatively-rich dimensions—specifically, the "non-logical" modes—of our arguings. The resultant theories of argumentation, being based on inadequate models of the phenomena itself, are thus wholly inadequate as descriptive, regulative, and evaluative accounts of our activity of arguing.

As a remedy to these deficits, Gilbert calls on argumentation theorists to "open the concept of rationality to include the non-logical modes as legitimate and respectable means of argumentation" (1997, p. 142), and to then begin to articulate the normative contours of these different argumentative modalities. Gilbert hopes that this latter project will not only improve our understanding of these aspects of our arguings, but will further legitimate them as reasonable, or rational, ways of going about the activity of arguing—of conducting ourselves, both during the course of, and pursuant to, our arguings.

1.3. The position to be argued

In this article, I seek to specify, prescriptively, the place of the logical in the overall framework of Gilbert's multi-modal argumentation. My central claim is that, properly understood, the logical "mode" of argument is not one mode among many. Rather, viewed as a mode of argument, the logical is better understood as the *uber-mode* of argument. Let me explain what I mean by that. If Gilbert's thesis of normative pluralism is correct, it follows that

each mode of argument is a distinct normative terrain—a unique space of reasons—with its own distinctive logic. As will be explained later, the logic of a space of reasons articulates the inferential connections obtaining between its informational contents. I argue that, what Gilbert calls the "logical mode" of argument—a linear, orderly, highly verbalizable, way of arguing—is made possible only to the extent that the logic of some space of reasons has been articulated. Articulating the logic of a space of reasons makes available a vocabulary and accompanying move set that contributes significantly to the analysis and evaluation of arguings undertaken in that space of reasons. Using that logical vocabulary in our arguings, in turn, allows for the self-regulation of arguings taking place (whether wholly or partially) within that rational space. Thus, properly understood, arguing in the logical "mode" consists in meta-argumenation which can be *about* arguments made in any of the argumentative modes identified by Gilbert. Moreover, to the extent that the logic for some argumentative mode has been articulated, and that logical vocabulary is available to, and properly used by, arguers, arguing within that mode will become more "logical" in the way Gilbert characterizes arguing in the "logical mode."

As I read Gilbert, his resistance to the "logical mode" of argument includes a reluctance to grant that we can and should *normalize*—in the sense of make conformable to a norm, i.e., regulate—our argumentative activities in the "non-logical" modes by articulating the logic of those modes, and then using that logical vocabulary to regulate argumentative moves made in "non-logical" modes. Thus, I agree with those who detect an anti-logical slant within Gilbert's multi-modalism and coalescent argumentation. It's just that, by my reckoning, the problematic elements of Gilbert's rejection of the logical, of his embracing the "non-logical," are not to be found at the object level, but rather at the meta-level.

Gilbert doesn't just (correctly) *find* our argumentative practices to be *unregulated* in certain notable respects; as I read him, he insists on *leaving them* that way. He resists, as a mistaken embracing of the "logical mode" of argument, efforts to regulate our argumentative activities by articulating the logic of the different argumentative modes of arguing and then using that logical

vocabulary during the course of our arguings. And, he does this on the grounds that we, as unreflective arguers, *do not* tend to argue in ways that would allow us to better self-regulate our own arguings. On my reading of Gilbert's view, such *reforms* of our ways of arguing with one another, and of our practice of arguing generally, does not fit with argumentation *as we find it* "in the wild." Yet, of course, the point of a reform is to change the way things are, the way we do things, hopefully for the better. To make our arguings more logical in the way I set out in the paper would, by my reckoning anyway, improve them. It would refine our practice of arguing in ways that would better enable us to regulate our undertakings in that practice as we are engaged in it. To my thinking, it is Gilbert's reluctance to endorse this reform of our argumentative practices (at least as I understand him) that is the real, and worrisome, manifestation of the anti-logical penchant in his multi-modal, coalescent approach to argumentation.

1.4. The argument in brief

The paper's main line of argument goes something like this: Gilbert presents a mode of argument as, roughly, "a means or way of communicating, a form of expression [i.e., a manner of expressing oneself], or a style of imparting information" (2018, p. 313). A mode of argument, on this view, is like a way of conducting ourselves when we argue. And, to conduct oneself "logically" is only one among many ways we might conduct ourselves in the course of arguing with one another. Yet, since, according to Gilbert's thesis of normative pluralism, each mode comes with its own set of norms, each mode is also properly understood as being (or, perhaps, as having) its own distinctive *space of reasons*—it is a distinctive normative terrain. Gilbert's argument modes are thus properly understood as distinctive spaces of reason, and not merely as ways of arguing or manners of reason-giving. Now, a *logic*, I will argue, is nothing other than a description of a space of reasons. As Wittgenstein says in *On Certainty*: "Everything descriptive of a language game is part of logic" (*OC* § 56). So, when we articulate, as Gilbert implores us to do, those various norms, rules, and rational connections structuring "non-logical" modes of argument, what we get is the *logic* of that mode. (Should we fail at this task, we must

then ask ourselves seriously whether we do indeed have a mode of *reasoning* or *argument* in the first place.)

Thus, conceiving of the "logical" as yet another mode alongside other "non-logical" modes of argument is mistaken. The logical does not stand alongside the emotional, visceral, kisceral, and what might better be called the "discursive" (rather than the "logical"), as a distinctive space of reasons. Taking this view of the logical misapprehends its relationship to those very domains and their informational, conceptual, message contents. Rather, the logical is better understood as the *uber-mode* of argument, and to engage in argument in the logical mode is to engage in *meta-argumentation* whereby one argues about the cogency of acts of reasons-giving occurring at the object level. Logic makes explicit the normative, rational, inferential contours of a space of reasons. Given some information set, system of concepts, or collection of message contents, logic articulates the rational ordering of, and relationships between, the pieces of information in that set. Basically, it specifies what is a consequence of what, and what is inconsistent with what. More robustly, it sets out the classes of permissible and prohibited inferences, obligatory and prohibited commitments, by articulating those relationships of incompatibility, relevance, following from, and probative weight that prescriptively govern our rational undertakings in that space of reasons. In the logical "mode" of argument, we (we arguers) *use* that logical meta-vocabulary in the course of transacting reasons with one another, enabling us to better regulate those transactions.

So understood, logic is not one mode of argument among others, because logic is not a space of reasons unto itself. It does not have its own space of reasons. Rather, given some space of reasons, logic articulates the contours of that space. As such, the language game of logic is not a language game on a par with other language games we use to talk about the world. Rather, logic is the language game that allows us to talk about other language games. Logic provides a meta-linguistic vocabulary for talking about patterns of reasoning and argument. It provides an analytical lexicon, and a normative vocabulary, the use of which allows us to talk about moves made in some object-level language game. Using the logical vocabulary allows us to engage in meta-argumentation (Krabbe 2003; Godden 2019).

Thus, to the extent that the logic for some argumentative mode has been articulated, and that logical vocabulary is available to arguers, arguing within that mode will become more logical in the way Gilbert characterizes arguing in the "logical" mode—i.e., arguing will become more linear, orderly, and verbalizable. Why? Because as arguers we are able to use that logical vocabulary during the course of our arguings. By using the logical vocabulary, we have at our disposal a meta-argumentative move set—one that allows us to do things like analyze and evaluate, criticize and praise, justify and explain, our and each other's moves within that argumentative space, together with our judgements about the cogency—the acceptability, relevance, and sufficiency–of those moves. Using this logical vocabulary to engage in meta-argumentation permits the self-regulation of our transactions of reasons with one another, thereby enabling us to conduct ourselves in the course of our arguings in a more regulated, orderly, and responsible, way.

And, this is a desirable result not merely from the point of theorizing argumentation, but from the point of view of arguers themselves. Argumentation, particularly in the public sphere, is a self-regulating activity. As Sally Jackson has argued, in the open marketplace of reason, the norms of argument are subject to *participant administration* (2019, p. 638). Among other things, using a logical vocabulary allows us to reign in arguings that have become unruly, and arguers who are behaving unreasonably. And, it allows us to do this even when our interlocutors are arguing "on their own terms"—i.e., from within their own preferred space of reasons, or "mode" of argument. Ironically, then, should Gilbert's hypothesis of inter-modal normative pluralism—i.e., that different argumentative modes each have their own logic—bear out, then the resulting argumentation occurring within each of those modes will be *more logical* than was possible prior to articulating the logic of each "non-logical" mode.

Well, now that I've sketched the position I advance in the paper, told you what I hope to convince you of, and how I hope to do it, I'd best get to the actual doing of it, so you will be in a position to judge whether you find my position compelling. Let's get started by considering a picture of argumentative reality—one which

emphasizes aspects that Gilbert finds significant, as well as those that I take to be just as significant.

2. Argumentative reality

2.1. Mapping the territory

"People," Wayne Brockriede sagely observed nearly a half century ago, "will find arguments in the vicinity of people" (1975, p. 179). One of the things that becomes clear as one familiarizes themselves with the corpus of Gilbert's work in argumentation theory is his unflinching orientation to the human aspects of those situations—including those characterized by disagreement or argumentation—that we make for ourselves, or find ourselves in, and the ways we go about strategically navigating them (see, e.g., 1995a). Argumentation is, for Gilbert, first and foremost, a distinctively human endeavor. "If," Gilbert argues, "… we are obliged to treat argument as a *human* endeavor rather than a logical exercise, we must make room therein for those practices used by actual arguers" (1997, p. 77).

Yet, on this view of argument, it is complicated—messy, in fact. It *resists* description. This is not just to say that any description we offer will be incomplete. Nor that any incomplete description will, without exception, offer a distorting picture of its subject matter. Moreover, there are internal tensions—explanatory gaps, apparent paradoxes, incoherencies, inconsistencies, even outright absurdities—in the subject matter argumentation theorists seek to theorize: in the positions from which we argue, in the goals or motivations we have for arguing, in the ways we conduct ourselves when arguing, in our responses to argument, even in ourselves as arguers. We don't always have reasons, let alone good or defensible ones, for what we think, say, or do. Nor do we always have special insight into, or authority about, those reasons, even when we do (seem to) have them. And, even when we do, we aren't always sincere or clear in stating them.

This can be particularly so when considering the norms we follow, and the standards we uphold and apply, when reasoning. When we seek out the rules of our game, all too often we come back

empty-handed. When we are called upon to articulate the rules by which we are playing, all too often we can't (at least, not coherently)—often we're even reluctant to sincerely do so. In this way, our practice of argumentation also *resists* regulation. Moreover, it is not as though having those rules to hand would solve all our problems in normalizing our practices of reasoning together. Setting out the norms for this activity is a perennial project, which is to say it will always be incomplete. Relatedly, articulating a rule can backfire in its regulatory intent. By making a rule, by articulating a norm, by setting a standard we create new ways of misapplying or breaking it, whether by misunderstanding or deliberate violation. This phenomena is identified by Scott Aikin (2020) as the *Owl of Minerva problem* (see also Godden 2022).

It's not just our practice that resists regulation, *we*—we arguers—also resist regulation. For example, in my experience anyway, we are often more committed to the views we have than the strength of our reasons for them entitles us to be (Godden 2014). When our proffered reasons fail us, particularly when we are attached to, or identify with, the views at issue, we like to seek out different reasons to shore up our views, rather than revisit the strength of our commitment to those views. That is to say, the failure of our reasons does not always occasion doubt in us. (Nor should it, always!) Certainly this not atypical in contexts of disagreement, where the (perhaps only) apparent failure of our reasons is that they fail to be convincing to someone *else*—when they fail to assuage *another's* doubts. We might, even justifiably, feel that our reasons *ought* to have been persuasive—ought to have answered the doubts of the other.

Yet, *generally speaking*, the further we proceed down that road, the more closed-minded and intransigent we become. When we insulate our views from the strength of the reasons we have for them, we effectively remove those views from the space of reasons. But this isolation tends only to be one-way: while we are disinclined to revisit or revise those views, we have no symmetrical disinclination to reason from them or to otherwise act on them, whether in thought, word, or deed. That is: in general, our unresponsiveness to the doubts of others, to the strength of our reasons as measured by their persuasive success, is a tendency

towards unreasonableness and intransigence—and that is a tendancy towards intellectual and argumentative vice. To the extent that we allow ourselves to proceed down the road of reasons-unresponsiveness, not only do our views become less reasonable—*we do* (Godden 2022). (In testing your acceptance of this claim, consider it in contexts where you judge there to be reasons-unresponsiveness in those with whom you disagree (see Godden 2014)). As we resist according the strength of our commitments with the strength of reasons we have for them, we become less reasonable people. Elsewhere, I have argued (Godden 2021a, 2021b, 2022) that, to the extent that we do not (whether by inability or refusal) submit to the authority of reason—i.e., permit ourselves to be self-regulated in this way—we sacrifice our rational authority, autonomy, and agency.

Seemingly, as Gilbert contends, "there are no rules, and even if there were, no one would follow them" (1997, p. 143). Well, each of us wouldn't to some degree or other—and evidently enough to collectively change the whole culture of argumentation in the public sphere. It is not just that we allow *ourselves* to be rationally insubordinate (e.g., biased) when it suits us. As well, we have allowed *our practice* of argumentation to become adversarial; we have grown tolerant of incivility in ourselves and others when we disagree and argue with one another (Aikin and Talisse 2019, 2020). It is not just ourselves, but the communities and societies we build for ourselves, that we have allowed to become rationally unregulated.

To my thinking, this is the picture of argumentative reality we ought to contend with. And, it is an urgently problematic picture, because so much of our own wellbeing depends on the success of reason as a mechanism of self- and social-regulation. The unaccountable authority of *un*reason—of force and power, of compulsion and caprice—slips in to fill the voids left by the authority of reason. And, allowing ourselves to be governed by unreason comes at the cost of our rational authority, autonomy, and, ultimately, agency. Reason is not a monolith that we find "out there" somewhere, imposed on us by nature, some alien authority, or foreign power; it is a cultural institution we have built for ourselves—a distinctively human institution. And like any other

institution it requires our continual attention, care, and cultivation to thrive.

2.2. Arguing

We humans have a vast repertoire of moves and responses—i.e., of things we do and say—when we don't get along with one another, when others don't share our view, when we don't get our way, when we don't get what we want, when things aren't going the way we think they should, in short: when we disagree. Sometimes we raise our voice, yell, stamp our feet, pound our fists. Sometimes we throw a tantrum, or the dishes; sometimes we throw shade. Sometimes we try to negotiate our differences. Sometimes we roll our eyes, troll one another, pander to the onlooking crowd, trade insults, or even blows. Sometimes we storm off in a huff. Sometimes we sulk or cry. Sometimes we embrace one another. Sometimes we give each other the "silent treatment," or even break off our relationship all together. Sometimes we ignore our differences and try to get along as best we can despite them. Sometimes we just walk away. And sometimes we go to war (Rorty 2021, p. 66). Finally, sometimes we try reasoning with one another.

And, sometimes, at least some of those things are done in the service of settling our differences (or getting past them, at least), and even of repairing the rift in our relationships brought about by the disagreements we have with one another. That is, some of those things are done to the end of repairing our intersubjectivity as best we can, including getting back on the same page with one another about the differences that occasioned our communicative exchange or are impeding us from going on together or, at least, getting along with one another.

On one reading of Gilbert's coalescent theory of argumentation, and its accompanying account of multi-modalism in argumentative communication, all of these moves and responses—indeed everything we do and say when we disagree—together with all of the circumstances and conditions of our disagreements, should be included among the phenomena theorized by argumentation

theory.[1] In his effort to get theorists and arguers alike to pay more attention to the people and the circumstances involved in arguing, Gilbert endorses a view of argument as "any exchange of information centered on an avowed disagreement" (1997, p. 104). So understood, any information, whether part of the argumentative situation or expressed by the disputants, is *part* of the argument.

Gilbert might be willing to rein in this definition, or further qualify it. His offering of such an expansive definition seems intended to provoke our reorientation towards the people and the circumstances involved in the disagreements we have with one another. Gilbert embraces a view he attributed to Charles A. Willard, that "arguers use all tools at their disposal to persuade a dispute partner, and … that all communications taking place in an argument are part of it" (2018, p. 315). Gilbert then insists that, in our efforts to navigate and theorize the vast repertoire of moves arguers have at their disposal, and use, in managing their disagreements, "it is necessary to examine them using more than the tools logic and even informal logic makes available" (2018, p. 316). By purely focusing on what Gilbert calls the "logical mode" of communication, we blind ourselves to much of what goes on between us when we disagree. And, without attending to those things, we ignore much that could help us to understand both our disagreements and each other, and much that could help us to manage and resolve (in the non-technical sense) our disagreements.

Just as there are many ways that our differences can be expressed and addressed, there are many ways that our differences can be redressed and our intersubjectivity repaired, or further damaged, as a result of those actions. Understanding that—i.e., how what we do

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[1] Gilbert explicitly denies that fights of the pugilistic variety are arguments, writing: "A football game, for example, is not an argument *because information is not being exchanged*; similarly for fights—they are contests not arguments" (1997, p. 105, emphasis added). Yet, one might question Gilbert's stated reason since, if a touch can communicate information in the physical mode (see Gilbert's example 6.8, Mr. & Ms. Burns, 1997, p. 85), one wonders why a blow cannot. If one strikes another during the course of an argument, are they still arguing, but if the other then strikes back and things progress thusly have they stopped arguing and started fighting on Gilbert's view? Seemingly, that conflict, and whatever underlies and gives rise to it, remains part of the phenomena—the argumentative reality—that Gilbert would have us fathom as argumentation theorists, if only to understand how to prevent our disagreements from ever escalating to that point.

contributes to bringing about the resultant states of mind, of our relationships, of the world—is integral to understanding human cognition, communication, action, and interaction. It is in this context that Gilbert introduces the different argumentative modes, to which we now turn.

3. Multi-modalism in argument

3.1. The dialectical tasks of arguers

In arguing with one another, our proximate tasks are to make reasons manifest and to recognize the probative force of reasons made manifest. In offering reasons, a proponent's (Pro) dialectical task is to present them in such a way that her audience, Resp, will recognize the probative value she takes them to have—presumably in a way that Resp previously had not properly appreciated. A respondent's (Resp) task, meanwhile, is to appraise the probative value of the reasons he is presented with as accurately as he is able.[2] From Pro's perspective, typically, this task involves drawing upon pieces of an understanding of the world she shares with Resp, selecting those pieces that she takes Resp to not have properly taken account of in forming his view, and then arranging and presenting those bits of information in such a way as she expects will garner Resp's recognition of their probative value to the issue at hand.[3]

Now, as Gilbert rightly points out, garnering that recognition needn't, and indeed doesn't, always happen verbally. Indeed,

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[2] While deviating from their more standard usage in dialogical theories of argument, I here use the term 'Pro' (Proponent) to name the agent offering a reason, and 'Resp' (Respondent) as the recipient of a reason offered. On this usage, Resp needn't be a discussant; they need only be an audience member— one who has received a reason, whether addressed to them or not. Also, I am happy to talk in terms or our offering reasons to, and receiving reasons from, ourselves, as a way of describing solitary activities whereby we transact reasons with ourselves—e.g., reasoning, deliberation, inquiry. Those engaged in the general project of what might be called "weighing reasons," whether together or individually, needn't proffer them, but need only consider them with the aim of appraising their probative value. They too may occupy the roles of Pro and Con as I understand them here.

[3] For a more fleshed-out version of the picture with which I am working, see (Godden 2019, p. 729ff. and passim).

sometimes, it is far more effective to garner that recognition when the reason is *not* presented verbally. For example, I have argued that it can be more rhetorically effective to present one's reasons visually, simply because of the extent of cognitive resources dedicated to processing visual information in the human brain (Godden 2017). The thought that the efficaciousness of a reason, its uptake or recognition by an audience, is partly a function of the way in which it is presented to that audience is, in my estimation, a kernel insight of the multi-modal thesis. *That insight alone merits a multi-modal approach to the study of argumentation.*

Let me emphasize that point, lest it be overlooked in the critical argument to follow. I agree with Gilbert that a multi-modal approach to the study of argumentation is called for, if we hope to understand the mechanisms, both dialectical and psychological, by which reason recognition occurs, whether reliably or unreliably. That was the point I sought to leverage in my article "Arguing at cross purposes" (*Argumentation* 2003), which offered a defense of Gilbert's multi-modalism and coalescent approach to argumentation from the critiques it had received to that point in the informal logic literature.

In arguing for a multitude of argumentative modes, Gilbert calls our attention to the different communicational means by which we can engage in the give-and-take of reasons. He rightly points out that, in practice, we do not just communicate verbally, and this includes when we communicate reasons to one another. Rather, we express ourselves, and communicate information to one another, along a variety of different communicational modes.

3.2. What is a "mode" of argument?

In my view, this insight informs how we ought to conceive of a mode of argument. And, Gilbert is, at times, equivocal on this point. For example, sometimes Gilbert characterizes modes as "communicative practices" (1997, p. 50; cf. 1994b, p. 97) while at other times he speaks of "modes of evidence, warrant, backing, and presentation" (1997, p. 78; cf. 1994a, p. 164), and at still other times he describes the decision as to whether to include consideration of "non-logical" modes in our theorizing "as involving a total choice of paradigms, or … conceptual frameworks" (1997, p. 49; 1994b,

p. 97). Most recently, Gilbert writes: "By a 'mode' I mean, fuzzily, a means or way of communicating, a form of expression, or a style of imparting information" (2018, p. 313). Yet, this recent clarification doesn't speak to the ambiguities Gilbert leverages in setting out his theory of multi-modal, coalescent argumentation—particularly in his criticisms of the "logical" mode.

In the secondary literature, one finds at least two distinct conceptions of a mode of argument (Godden 2017, p. 427ff.). According to one, the modality of an argument specifies the manner in which informational contents are presented. I endorse such a view (2017, p. 428), and I read J. Anthony Blair (2015, p. 218) as doing so also. On such a view, the same informational contents can be expressed in different presentational modes. Indeed, this is also how I read Gilbert (Godden 2003, p. 224). A second view, suggested by Leo Groarke (2015, p. 140, emphasis added), "define[s] modes in terms of the *ingredients* (the '*material*', the '*stuff*') an arguer uses and arranges when they engage in an act of arguing." On this view, "[t]o see if an act of arguing is an instance of a particular mode it is enough to check whether it is built from ingredients that define the mode" (p. 143).

Previously, I distinguished these conceptions grammatically: on the first, a mode is an adverbial quality of an argumentative act (*presentational manners*), while on the second, a mode is a noun-category of argument components (*material ingredients)* (Godden 2017, p. 428). I there recommended an account of argument that permitted distinguishing between the function, content, and mode of a component of argument. Functionally, I claimed, arguments are composed of the same stuff: claims and reasons. (Here I took myself to be following Blair (2004, p. 45; 2015, p. 332).) "Thus," I claimed, "the modality of a reason cannot interfere with its functionality as a reason; similarly with claims. Further, in order to retain the possibility that the *same* argumentative content (whether claim or reason) might occur in a variety of different modes, I suggest that there is an advantage in identifying reasons and claims by their content" (2017, p. 428). A final advantage of this approach, I suggest, is that it leaves open the question of inter-modal normative pluralism—the question of whether the probative value of a reason,

rather than our recognition of that probative value, is dependent on its mode.

Typically our messages and communicative or expressive moves are multi-modal in the sense that we express ourselves across a variety of different modes, each of which contribute to the overall message. Thus, on Gilbert's view, "while there are paradigms of each mode, separability, and its analogue categorizability, are never definite" (2018, p. 316). Instead, messages are comprised of a fusion of information communicated in various modes. "It might have been better," Gilbert writes at this juncture, "to have referred to the modes as 'aspects'" as this might have emphasized that our communications are typically multi-modal" (2018, p. 317). Rather than being independent features of the phenomena being analyzed, Gilbert here seems to conceive of the modes as theoretical constructions used for the purpose of analysis. "The modes do not indicate real different things," he writes, "but rather ways of analyzing or dissecting things according to certain interesting conceptions. … We need to look at the reality as if it were made up of bits and pieces, but we must not forget that it is a heuristic and that the reality is itself dense and complete" (2018, p. 317). The message itself is, in reality, a unified whole, and it is this that we express and respond to in communication. (It is at this point that Gilbert introduces his analogy of blending colors: while we can understand, and even create, a color by blending several other, different colors, once blended-in they are inseparable from the resultant color (2018, p. 317).) Since communication is inherently multi-modal by nature, analyzing a message according to some particular mode is to model it only partially and incompletely. "It is imperative, however," Gilbert adds, "that we not mistake the analysis, the model, for the reality" (2018, p. 317). For Gilbert, it seems, our penchant for what he calls the "logical" mode is, at least partly, a result of our tendency to focus on the abstract and idealized model(s) we have created for the analysis of argumentation, rather than on the phenomena—the argumentative reality—we hope to understand by modeling it.

3.3. Inter-modal normative pluralism

Whether modes are constructions and creatures of analysis, or distinct features of the phenomena under analysis, one thing is clear. Gilbert takes the modality of a message to have normative significance.

Specifically, according to Gilbert each mode has its own domain of evidence, backing, and warrant (1997, p. 78). "An argument," Gilbert tells us, "… may be said to be wholly or partially in a particular mode *when its claim, data, warrant, and/or backing is drawn from that particular mode*, or if these items are communicated using a form of presentation from a particular mode" (1997, p. 80; emphasis added). Similarly he writes: "Arguments can be formed within a mode by using evidence in that mode, staking claim to information in that mode, *using warrants specific to a given mode*, or simply by being about something in a particular mode" (1997, p. 143; emphasis added). One reason to think that there might be modally-specific warrants is the thought that there are modally-specific backings underwriting them, a view which Gilbert also seems to endorse. ''Backing," he writes, "contains within it rules of conduct, procedure and argument. When a different mode of backing is the appropriate one, different rules and different forms of argument are relevant'' (1997, p. 92).

Gilbert's view that there are modally-specific warrants and corresponding modally-specific backings is of singular importance, normatively speaking. For this is the thought that could justify an inter-modal normative pluralism—the view that "the strength of a reason is dependent on its mode" (Gilbert 1997, p. 83).[4] It is one

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[4] Astute scholars and careful historians might notice that this sentence in Gilbert's (1997) monograph, *Coalescent Argumentation*, does not match the corresponding sentence appearing in his original 1994 paper "Multi-modal argumentation" (1994a). There, one finds the sentence: "Needless to say, the strength of the reason is independent of its mode" (1994a: 169). While I won't present myself as speaking on Gilbert's behalf, I can attest that this discrepancy came up in conversation during my presentation of the work informing this paper at the 2020 OSSA summer school on Gilbert's multi-modal theory of argumentation. It is my recollection that, on that occasion, Gilbert attributed the discrepancy to a typo in the original, 1994, paper, rather than to his having changed his mind on the matter following its publication. Certainly, the thought expressed in Gilbert's monograph seems to be his settled view on the matter.

thing to say that there is modally specific information, and even that such information can have the status of data (reason) or claim in argument. It is another thing altogether to say that there are modally-specific warrants and backing. For, while reasons and claims comprise the nodes in a space of reasons, warrants are the latticework configuring that space, and backings are the principles underwriting, or supporting, that rational structure. While warranting relations give shape to a space of reasons, backing provides the structural integrity. Together they constitute the logic of that space of reasons. They are the principles by which we connect reasons and claims, and which license our inferential passage from reason to claim.

Thus, if the warranting connection between two nodes (otherwise held constant by their informational contents) in a space of reasons varies from one argumentative mode to the next, different inferences will be permissible in one mode than in another. Such variations in a space of reasons can be of several sorts. Perhaps innocuously, there might be mode-specific connections between mode-specific nodes, or to nodes in adjacent modes. But, if that space of reasons is not to be completely isolated from the rest of our thought and talk, those mode-specific nodes will, at some point or other, need to connect to nodes that are not mode-specific. It is there we find the more controversial sort of inter-modal variations in a space of reasons. For example, two modes might prescribe different strengths, or "weights," to an edge connecting two nodes. Or, that connection might be present in one mode, but entirely absent in another.

Any such variations are usefully understood as giving rise to distinct spaces of reason. Such spaces can differ not only according to the informational nodes comprising them, but also according to the warranting edges connecting the nodes inferentially, perhaps together with other Toulminean features of argument structure like backing, qualifiers, and rebuttals. In explicating his position Gilbert (1997, p. 90ff.) reminds us of Toulmin's (1958/2003) account of the field-dependency of features of argument like data, warrant, backing, and claim. By contrast to Toulminean argument fields, Gilbert tells us, argumentative modes

do not delineate areas of endeavour or fields of study, but rather ways of relating and conceptualizing within fields so understood. In other words, it is not the *difference* between a psychologist and a physicist that is important to multi-modal argumentation, but the *similarity* between a new-age psychologist and a creationist science professor. It is the way of thinking, and the correlate way of arguing, that is of interest. (1997, p. 90)

It is the thought that there are modally-specific *ways of thinking*, and corresponding *ways of arguing*, that that give rise to the inter-modal normative pluralism at the core of Gilbert's multi-modal account.

3.3.1. Normative revisionism versus Trans-modal evaluative non-equivalence

One version of inter-modal normative pluralism claims that the same (content-specified) argument, presented in different modes, could rightly receive different evaluations. This is a position I have called *trans-modal evaluative non-equivalence*, defining it as follows (Godden 2017, p. 407):

> *Trans-modal evaluative non-equivalence*:
> An argument, presented in one mode can properly receive a different rational or probative evaluation than the same content-defined argument presented in some other mode, ceteris paribus.

There I argued in favor of this thesis, on the grounds that *our recognition* of the probative value of a reason can depend on the mode in which it is presented to us. Treating the visual as a mode of argument, I claimed that, because of the extensive cognitive resources dedicated to processing visual information in the human brain, it can be easier, indeed possible, for us to detect and appraise logical and evidential connections between different pieces of information presented visually than when those same bits of information are presented verbally.

Yet, I deny that the probative value of a reason *per se* is a function of its mode. This stronger claim I identified with a position I called *normative revisionism*. It is the view that there are modally-specific ways of thinking and corresponding ways of arguing.

Adapted for a multi-modal context, normative revisionism asserts (Godden 2017, p. 401):

> *Multi-modal normative revisionism*:
> Arguments presented in different argumentative modes require their own evaluative ways.

By an evaluative *way*, I mean a theory, method, criteria, or standard of argument evaluation.

Minimally, then, a multi-modal normative revisionism holds that there are some mode-specific theories, methods, criteria, or standards of argument evaluation. As a corollary, some modally-specific ways would not properly apply to other modes. In its strongest version, multi-modal normative revisionism holds that there are no trans-modal theories, methods, criteria, or standards of argument evaluation; instead, each mode has its own unique evaluative ways.

3.4. Normative implications of Gilbert's multi-modalism

The answer to the question of whether Gilbert's multi-modal vision of argumentation results in a fully-fledged normative revisionism can seem unclear. At first glance, Gilbert seems argue for a compatibility between the evaluative ways of existing, yet predominantly "logical," theories and his own, multi-modal approach. In an apparent effort to get informal logicians and pragma-dialecticians to incorporate his multi-modalism into their own theories, Gilbert argues that a multi-modal view of argument is compatible with the evaluative ways of each approach (2004, 2005). Addressing the informal logicians, Gilbert (2004, p. 249) asks: "What normative frame ought [to] be developed in order to govern emotional argumentation?" In answer, Gilbert claims that "the most popular Informal Logic model can be, with a minimal amount of tailoring, applied to emotional argumentation as well" (2004, p. 249). Gilbert proceeds to argue that the evaluative framework of informal logicians, namely the cogency criteria of relevance, sufficiency, and acceptability, can be applied to the "non-logical," emotional mode of argumentation (2004, pp. 249-250).

Yet, while this would seem to suggest that Gilbert would deny multi-modal normative revisionism, this is not the end of the story. For, elsewhere, Gilbert maintains that standards of argument ''are delineated not by their internal characteristics, but by the mode in which they operate. In other words, *each of the modes can define, for itself, relevance, sufficiency and acceptability*'' (1997, p. 97; emphasis added). And this is exactly what one would expect from a view which holds that there are modally-specific warrants and backings. Moreover, in discussing the significance of a multi-modal approach to argumentation, Gilbert claims that "In order to investigate the role that all these aspects and factors play in a complex communication it is necessary to examine them using more than the tools logic and even informal logic makes available" (2018, p. 316). Seemingly, we do require new evaluative ways in order to properly fathom the multi-modal aspects of argumentation. Thus, I conclude that Gilbert's multi-modalism entails normative revisionism (cf. Godden 2017, p. 405f.).

Understanding that Gilbert takes argument modes to be normative helps one to appreciate why he finds a focus on the "logical" mode so problematic. Exclusively studying argument according to its "logical" mode is, on Gilbert's view, to prize certain norms of argument above others. As one example of the kinds of problems such a focus on the "logical" can result in, Gilbert proposes the *logocentric fallacy*, which he defines as follows: "The *Logocentric Fallacy* is just the assumption that verbal pronouncements take precedence over other forms and modes of communication, and it is a fallacy because relying on it can often lead us to accept falsehoods rather than truth" (2002, p. 26). Since Gilbert characterizes the "logical" mode of argument partly by its prioritizing of discursive forms of expression and communication over non-discursive forms, our susceptibility to the logocentric fallacy results from our neglect of non-discursive, "non-logical" modes of argument.

In what follows, I want to set aside the question of whether Gilbert's inter-modal normative pluralism is correct. I have already said that there is a sense—that of trans-modal evaluative non-equivalence—with which I agree, and another—that of multi-modal normative revisionism—with which I disagree. Rather than try to

settle this matter, which I recognize to be contentious, here I instead want to grant what I take to be Gilbert's position on the matter for the sake of the argument to follow. What I wish to argue here is that a person who is committed to inter-modal normative pluralism in the strong sense of multi-modal normative revisionism, as I take Gilbert to be, ought also to grant that each distinct argumentative mode has its own logic. That is the concession which, in my view, opens the door to the criticism of Gilbert's view of the "logical" mode of argument offered in the paper.

4. Gilbert's "logical mode" of argument

Gilbert's position on the place of logical analysis and evaluation of our argumentative practices is, to put it charitably, nuanced. He repeatedly insists that he does not object to the "logical" mode of our argumentative practices *per se*, and that he has no objection to the analytical and normative apparatuses we bring to its theorizing, evaluation, and regulation. Instead, he presents the "non-logical" modes of his multi-modal metaphysics of argument as adding to the "logical" mode, to the end of offering us a more complete understanding of our arguings. This might be called the "logically sympathetic" reading of Gilbert's position. The "logically unsympathetic"—I would go so far as to call it "antagonistic"—side of Gilbert's position emphasizes the inability of a "logocentric" approach to fathom the "non-logical" modalities of argumentation, whilst simultaneously exerting a hegemonic and dominating force over our argumentative practices. And, this antagonistic, anti-logical side of Gilbert's position is just as pronounced.

It is worth our taking the time to understand in detail just what Gilbert takes to be unfit about the "logical" in taking the measure of his "non-logical" modes of argument. The reason is that when we come to articulate what Gilbert thinks ought to happen in order that we properly take account of "non-logical" modes of argument, we will encounter a problem that, in my estimation, strikes at the very core of his antagonistic portrayal of the "logical" mode of argument.

4.1. *"Logocentric" approaches to argumentation*

Minimally, Gilbert presents the "logical" mode of argument as characterizing a distinctive "communicative practice" (1997, p. 50; cf. 1994b, p. 97)—a way of arguing. This way of arguing, Gilbert claims, has its own rules and norms: "An argument that takes its information, for example, warrant, backing, evidence, from traditional rationalist sources, and which, in addition, is or can be put into traditional rationalist form, namely, linguistic, is said to be in the logical mode, realm, or form." (1997, p. 79; cf. 1994a, p. 166). Seen in this aspect, the "logical" mode of argument "isolate[s] a sense of 'rational' correlating to the C-L [critical-logical, see sect. 4.2] norm of reasoned linearity that ideally occurs in dialectical argumentation … it is intended to indicate not merely a respect for orderliness of presentation, but also a subscription to a certain set of beliefs about evidence and sources of information" (1997, p. 78; cf. 1994a, p. 164).

In addition to having a distinctive set of argumentative norms, the "logical" way of arguing has its own prescriptions for, and expectations of, "proper" argumentative conduct. When viewed in this aspect, a mode of argument is like a way of conducting ourselves when we argue. Sometimes we argue dispassionately, and verbally, and in an orderly, linear way. We calmly cite facts and evidence, and articulate our warrants—those thoughts which connect our reasons to our claims. We care not for "winning" the argument (i.e., having our opening position prevail at the end), only for coming away from the argumentative exchange with the most reasonable, defensible view, and are open to changing our minds should our reasons be defeated or bettered in the course of argumentation. This is roughly what it is to argue in the Gilbert's "logical" mode.

Gilbert dubs this the "neo-logicist's" view of proper argumentative conduct, and describes it in these terms:

> We must always have *reasons*, and the reasons we have must be articulated, defended, laid out in such a way as to persuade any other human who is capable of entertaining and understanding the hypotheses and defenses put forward. We are not persuaded by sentiment, raw feeling, pre-dispositions, or other non-rational

aspects of the human messaging system. We … are never persuaded, but only convinced. We sift through data, examine warrants, and determine carefully how these are applied to the presented claims. We are disinterested, we are objective, we hear the arguments presented and weigh them carefully to see how they tell against the positions we hold. (2001, p. 245)

Despite the many apparent intellectual and argumentative virtues exemplified this manner of argumentative conduct, Gilbert finds it deeply problematic. Immediately after painting the picture just presented, Gilbert claims: "This is, of course, nonsense" (2001, p. 245). Indeed, from the very beginnings of Gilbert's work developing his multi-modal, coalescent theory of argumentation, he sought to identify faults and shortcomings that attend to this "neo-logicist" view of proper argumentative conduct.

4.2. The Critical-Logical Model

Beginning in his 1994 paper "Feminism, argumentation, and coalescence" (1994b), Gilbert began to characterize something he called the Critical-Logical Model [C-L] of argumentation by way of a "nexus of values, techniques, and attitudes" he found problematic (96; cf. 1997, p. 48).

According to the C-L [model], the best examples of reasoning are linear and careful. Extraneous material such as emotional content, power relationships, and the social consequences of the argument are separated from its text or transcript in order that the *argument* itself can be examined. Discovery and justification are two very separate processes on the C-L view, facts are things we can get our hands on, and the politics, social outlook, or personal history, i.e., the *situation*, of the arguers is almost always irrelevant to the evaluation of the argument. Information is carefully separated into that which is relevant and may be adduced as evidence or reasons, and that which is not and must be ignored or put aside while the argument is being evaluated. (1994b, p. 96; cf. 1997, pp. 48-49)

This characterization of the C-L model corresponds with two "pervasive assumptions" Gilbert identified in his paper of that same

year, "Multi-modal argumentation" (1994a), as shaping argumentation theory:

> *The "Linearity" Assumption*: "Argument is essentially rational, where the sense of 'rational' is taken as "reasoned" in the Critical-Logical (C-L) sense." (1997, p. 76; cf. 1994a, p. 160)

> *The "Marginalization of the non-discursive as [non-]rational" Assumption*: "Social context, psychological motivation and other matters that impinge on the argument process, are inherently peripheral to the notion of 'argument.'" (1997, p. 76; 1994a, p. 161)

Crucially for our purposes, Gilbert seems to have concluded that the picture of reasoning and argument found in these two assumptions, together with the values, techniques, and attitudes characteristic of the C-L model generally, are satisfied only by what he calls the "logical" mode of argument.

Gilbert then dubs as "neo-logicists" those who valorize the logical mode of argument, and its attendant picture of good argument and arguing well.

> The desire among those I refer to as neo-logicists is to have a system of analysis that is linear, logical in the sense of being precise, verbal, and conforming (at least loosely) to the patterns of argumentation that are recognizably logical and mappable. (2001, p. 244)

Yet, according to Gilbert, it is by focusing exclusively on the "logical" mode that arguers and argumentation theorists alike misunderstand what arguers are really up to and on about when we argue. "More than anything else," Gilbert argues, "Argumentation Theory, if it is to come to truly serve the needs of real situated arguers, must open the concept of rationality to include the non-logical modes as legitimate and respectable means of argumentation" (1997, p. 142).

4.3. Logic as an instrument of oppression

In this "neo-logicist" picture of argument, Gilbert not only located problems for theorizing and regulating our arguings; he also found this picture to be a hegemonic force in shaping our practice of

arguing. In his view, the C-L model stands as a "dominant and, for all intents and purposes, official way to reason" (1997, pp. 50-51; cf. 1994b, p. 98)—one that excludes, denigrates, and prohibits ways of communicating, reasoning, and arguing common to, or stereotypical of, non-dominant groups. Gilbert specifically identified the C-L model with masculine ways of thinking, communicating, and arguing, to the exclusion of feminine ways of doing these things (1997, p. 48ff.; 1994b).

> The C-L approach simply does not take the values and practices of women into account. It upholds the logicality and linearity that underlies male reasoning and values while not incorporating the notions of context and inclusiveness that are arguably significant components of female reasoning. (1997, p. 59; cf. 1994b, p. 104)

As a result of the hegemonization of the C-L model, and the "logical" mode of argument embodied in it, Gilbert finds "neo-logicists" to wield their dominant vision of the "logical" as an instrument of oppression—giving rise to a "logic of domination" (Warren 1988, p. 32; cited by Gilbert 1997, p. 58; cf. 1994b, p. 103). Embracing Warren's (1988) view (1997, p. 59; cf.1994b, p. 104), Gilbert writes that "the C-L tradition has with it certain assumptions and prerequisites that are inimically intolerant of the reasoning and communicative modes of a large portion of the population" (1997, p. 58; cf. 1994b, p. 104). At what is perhaps the most extreme point of his critique of the "logical," Gilbert endorses an account of logic and its history as having been developed for the purpose of oppressing the marginalized (1994b; cf. 1997, p. 59).

In these moments, Gilbert espouses a view of logic as a structure of social and political power, designed to exclude and oppress, and wielded as an instrument of domination over populations for whom it is almost entirely alien. Logic, on this unfortunate vision, is not a cultural institution of *our* own—one which forms the normative, conceptual fabric out of which our very rational authority, autonomy, and agency is woven—and which is to be cultivated for that very reason. Instead, it is portrayed as a hegemonic monolith—an alien and alienating architecture, lacking in accountability or legitimate authority, intended to uphold and reinforce existing differences in social and political power. So understood, of course, it is not the sort

of thing anyone would willingly submit to—not even those who are said to be privileged by it!—for the legitimacy of its authority over us is unrecognizable in this picture. The misunderstandings found in this picture are particularly lamentable, in my opinion, because of the harms that they bring to those who take up this vision as their own. Because of its failure to recognize the legitimacy of the authority of logic, this misguided attempt to "liberate us from the oppression of our own thoughts" backfires disastrously. Rather than freeing us from alien, oppressive constraints, it encourages a certain kind of rational unaccountability—specifically, one which rejects the authority of logic over our thought, talk, and conduct. Yet, to "opt out of" rational accountability in this way is to, perhaps unwittingly, opt out of a normative, recognitive space of entitlements and responsibilities—a normative space in which our rational authority, autonomy, and agency are all conferred upon us (Godden 2021a, 2021b, 2022).

What might be helpful at this juncture, I suggest, is an alternative vision of logic—one on which the legitimacy of its authority is at least recognizable. In the next section I sketch out the basic ideas that give shape to such a view. Before that, though, it is worth seeing what Gilbert prescribes as an antidote to the failures of a "neo-logicist" view of proper argumentative conduct—according to which, our arguings are to occur exclusively in the "logical" mode—and to our accompanying neglect of the "non-logical" modes of argument.

5. The role of the logical in multi-modal argumentation

5.1. Gilbert's antidote to "neo-logicism" in argumentation

In prescribing his antidote to the deficiencies of a hegemonized and exclusively "logical" approach to argument, and its accompanying neglect and denigration of "non-logical" modes of argument, Gilbert returns to the "logically sympathetic" version of his position.

At the conclusion of *Coalescent Argumentation*, Gilbert reiterates his view that our continuing to argue in the "logical" mode should be allowed, despite all its faults, as long as we also permit, and countenance as rational, argumentation occurring in the "non-logical" modes. He then advises that what is needed is the

development of the same kinds of analyses one finds in "neo-logical" approaches to argument, but for the "non-logical" modes.

> It is not that the logical mode ought to be dropped, but rather that the non-logical modes ought to be examined and analysed more closely. What is required … is the sort of careful, even rule-based, method of analysis used in pragma-dialectics or detailed RSA [relevancy, sufficiency, and acceptability] analyses. If these sorts of approaches can be turned to the understanding of the emotional, visceral, and kisceral aspects of argumentation, then further advances in understanding can be expected. (1997, p. 142)

Here, Gilbert calls for the articulation of what I take to be the logic(s) of the "non-logical" modes of argument. Let me explain. I'll start by offering an alternative picture of logic to the one we have just seen Gilbert to offer.

5.2. An expressivist view of logic

At its kernel, a logic spells out the consequence relation for a language. That is, given any set of truth-bearers (which, for present purposes, we can understand as a body of thought, or a system of concepts, or a data set), the logic of that system specifies what follows from what. Logic answers the question: Given the truth of some things in the system, what else *must* be true? This roughly captures Aristotle's definition of a deduction in the *Prior Analytics*: "A deduction is speech (logos) in which, certain things having been supposed, something different from those supposed results of necessity because of their being so" (I.2, 24b18–20). Correspondingly, the logic of that system will also specify what *cannot* be true, given the truth of other things in the system. That can be understood as the inconsistency relation for the language.

Importantly, these logical constraints of consequence and inconsistency are not *imposed* on the system from without. Rather they emerge from within, via examining the truth function of the language. We assume the truth of some things, and consider all possible cases in which those truths hold. We then look to see which other things are also true in all those cases (giving us the consequence relation for the language), and which things are never

true in all such cases (giving us the inconsistency relation for the language).

It can be useful to understand matters of logic as matters of *conceptual* necessity. For example, that a book is red, it follows as a matter of logic that the book is colored (consequence), and likewise that the book is not green (inconsistency). Sometimes, the relevant concepts are part of a vocabulary specially designated as logical—e.g., the Boolean truth-functional operators. While this designation is arbitrary, making it allows us to construct formal logics, by separating those bits of our thought and talk that have semantic content (i.e., reference) from those that play an organizational role, fixing the structure of our thought and talk as it pertains to the relations of consequence and inconsistency.

So far, we have considered the relations of consequence and inconsistency as they apply monotonically—that is, as they apply in situations where learning new information consistent with the truths supposed would not affect the extension of those relations. Importantly, these same basic notions can also be applied non-monotonically—as in the case of default but defeasible implications, where commitment to the consequence can be withdrawn should new information be discovered that defeats the default relation of consequence. By adding some additional principles preventing inconsistencies in cases where our commitments are less than certain, we can also specify an inductive logic for the system. And, likewise with decision- and game-theoretic logics, to give but a few examples. There are even logics articulating the connecting principles at work in systems with vague concepts (fuzzy logics), and systems that contain contradictions which are to be managed rather than eliminated (paraconsistent logics). The point is that by specifying what we mean throughout a given system, the logical properties of that system can, with a considerable amount of care and effort, be worked out.

What I have offered so far is, admittedly, a very rudimentary account of what a logic is, at its core. It is meant, in part, to show that, so understood, logic should be innocuous. Indeed, almost banal. Yet, it is also intended to show that logic is not some alien edifice, imposed on one from without. In response to the question provoked by Gilbert's "unsympathetic" vision of logic and its

history—namely: "Whose logic is it anyway?"—the answer is always, "*Yours*." That is, so long as you use truth-apt expressions—e.g., so long as you assert things, have beliefs, or judge things to be one way rather than another—, there is a logic for the language game you are playing when you do so.

And, those matters of logic can form the principled basis on which we evaluate our thought and talk. Having committed oneself to some things by, say, having gone on record about them, there are other things to which one is thereby committed to as a matter of logical necessity, on pain of inconsistency. To flout that norm, by say "opting out," is to not hold oneself accountable in certain kinds of ways—ways that go to the very core of what it is to think, say, and mean anything at all.

On the picture I am presenting, what is important about logic is what it allows us to *say* and *do*. Namely, by articulating the logical relationships among our concepts we are able to think and talk about our thought and talk. Robert Brandom calls such a view of logic *logical expressivism*. "This is the view that the expressive role that distinguishes logical vocabulary is to make explicit the inferential relations that articulate the semantic contents of the concepts expressed by the use of ordinary, nonlogical vocabulary" (Brandom 2018, p. 70). In more detail, Brandom describes an expressivist view of logic in this way:

> On this view, the philosophical significance of logic is not that it enables those who master the use of logical locutions to *prove* a special class of claims—that is, to entitle themselves to a class of commitments in a formally privileged fashion. The significance of logical vocabulary lies rather in what it lets those who master it *say*—the special class of claims it enables them to *express*. Logical vocabulary endows practitioners with the expressive power to make explicit as the contents of claims just those implicit features of linguistic practice that confer semantic contents on their utterances in the first place. Logic is the organ of semantic self-consciousness. It brings out into the light of day the practical attitudes that determine the conceptual contents members of a linguistic community are able to express—putting them in the form of explicit claims, which can be debated, for which reasons can be given and alternatives proposed and assessed. The formation of concepts—by means of which practitioners can come to be aware of anything at

all—comes itself to be something of which those who can deploy logical vocabulary can be aware. Since plans can be addressed to, and intentional practical influence exercised over, just those features of things of which agents can become explicitly aware by the application of concepts, the formation of concepts itself becomes in this way for the first time an object of conscious deliberation and control. (1997, pp. 152-53)

If this account of the pragmatics of our logic talk is on the right track, then it puts paid to any questions or doubts one might have harbored about the justifiability or acceptability of claims I made previously in the paper about what the articulation and use of a logical vocabulary permits us to think, say, and do in argumentative contexts. By using the meta-vocabulary of logic we can express, and justify, our judgements about the cogency—the acceptability, relevance, and sufficiency—of reasoning conducted in a space of reasons. As that meta-vocabulary is fleshed out, we are supplied with a lexicon of argument structures, standards, principles, rules, fallacies and the like, the use of which allows us to label and categorize, analyze and synthesize, commend and endorse, justify and explain, criticize and deny, moves made by ourselves and others in our games of giving and asking for reasons. Not only does the logical meta-vocabulary permit us to express, or assert, such judgements—additionally, it provides us with the conceptual and expressive means to *debate* those judgements: to express reasoned doubts about them, and to justify them.

From this vantage point, the key feature of the logical "mode" is this: "It is the mode that assists us in moving from a message to a conclusion in a reasoned and patterned way" (Gilbert 2018, p. 314). How does the logical mode so assist us? By articulating not the expressive, message content of an argumentative move (whether in the "logical" mode or otherwise), but by articulating the *inferential* content of such moves or messages. And, this expressive potential of the logical does not locate it as one mode among others. Rather is situates the logical as a meta-mode for each of the other "modes" of argument.

Put differently, *meta-argumentation* about *arguings having occurred in some "non-logical" (say, emotional) mode occurs in the logical mode*. For any of the various argument modes we might

catalogue or countenance, our efforts to self-regulate our argumentative undertakings in them take place in the logical mode as I have explained it here. Thus, I claim that the logical, properly understood, is not one argumentative mode alongside other "non-logical" modes. Rather, each "mode" of argument, insofar as it consists in a distinctive space of reasons, has its own logic. So understood, arguing in the logical mode is to engage in meta-argumentation, where we use the logical meta-vocabulary to argue about the normative features of inferences made or invited at the object level.

5.3. Logics for "non-logical" modes of argument

While this point is, I think, an important corrective to Gilbert's view of the modes, and the place of the logical mode in relation to them, his central point still remains.

As Gilbert has maintained from the very start, the problem that calls for a multi-modal approach to argumentation, is that we, perhaps suffering under the influence of a biased, "neo-logicist" view of the rational, remain reluctant to investigate what I have here called the logics of the "non-logical" modes of argument, because we refuse to countenance undertakings in these modalities as argumentative activities *at all*. By denying that our "non-logical" expressive, message acts belong among our rational activities at all, we have ignored the possibility that, say, our affective attitudes could have a logic to them, which, with a bit of work, might be made explicit. That is, we have ignored the possibility that "non-logical" attitudes like emotions could, perhaps, constitute a space of reasons. I agree with Gilbert that this is a drastic oversight, and one that might well result from a pernicious prejudice.

Importantly, Gilbert was not alone in calling attention to this possibility. At the same time Gilbert was developing his multi-modal vision of argumentation, other theorists were also calling for a more expansive understanding of argumentation. Robert Pinto, for example, in his paper "Generalizing the notion of argument," presented at the second conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation in 1990, suggested that "argumentation would be better conceived more generally as *the attempt to modify conscious attitudes through rational means*" (2001, p. 10). Pinto

argued for this more expansive conception of argument on the grounds that it is not merely our cognitive attitudes (our alethically-oriented attitudes like belief) that are "on the table" or play an inferential role in reasoning and argumentation. Centrally, Pinto argued that our conative (attitudes of planning or intending to do something) and evaluative attitudes also operate in inferences (2003, 2009). Additionally, Pinto recognized a role for other intentional states, be they propositional attitudes or attitudes that take some part of the world directly as their object, within our argumentative activities. "It is evident," Pinto argued, "that we do try to affect intentions, fears, hopes, desires through rational persuasion and therefore through argument" (2001, p. 15).

Importantly for our present purposes, Pinto explicitly included emotional attitudes among those that could play an inferential role, giving the following example in which the emotional attitude of fear occurs in both premise and conclusion.

> [Feared] The Soviet Union enters a period of political instability.
> If Gorbachev falls from power, then the Soviet Union enters a period of political instability.
> [Real Possibility] Gorbachev falls from power.
> ∴ [Feared] Gorbachev falls from power. (Pinto 2001, pp. 15-16)

In subsequent work, Pinto (2011), together with his daughter and co-author Laura Pinto (Pinto and Pinto, 2016), proceeded to explore in more detail the various roles our emotional attitudes can play in our reasoning and arguings. The point here is this: Whether or not the inference Pinto offers is one we would countenance, if we count it as an *inference* at all, then there is a logic at work somewhere in the background. There are warrants that, rightly or wrongly, serve to license the passage from premises to conclusion, and there are principles that, again rightly or wrongly, back those warrants as legitimate. Articulating those warrants and backings would go towards articulating the logic of argumentation in the emotional mode. And, having spelled out a logic for that space of reasons, we could then use that meta-vocabulary in debating the cogency of arguments occurring in what Gilbert calls the emotional mode. Moreover, we could use our logical meta-vocabulary generally in

debating the normative features (e.g., coherence, truth-conduciveness, etc.) of the logic of the mode itself.

All this is to say that I second Gilbert in his call for examining what he calls the non-logical modes of argument in an effort to discover what I call their logic(s). Considering the emotional mode, I agree with Gilbert that:

> the emotional message act carries a significant weight in argumentation, especially if we desire to understand the positions of the players, their goals, desires and needs. By dismissing expressive speech acts and not exploring them we miss a great part of actual argumentation, which, in turn, means it escapes our observation and *regulation*. (2001, p. 248; emphasis added)

I further agree with Gilbert that: "Once we understand a mode, how it works, what its dynamics are, how it can be used both properly and improperly, then we might be able to create some valuable normative correlates that will be useful" (2018, pp. 323-324). Of particular importance, in my view, will be the *regulative* use to which those normative correlates we articulate can be put. To my thinking, recognizing and taking advantage of the regulative use to which our logical meta-vocabularies can be put will allow us to better conduct ourselves when arguing in any "mode," logical or otherwise, by reforming those very practices to include the "logical" mode of arguing in the form of meta-argumentation.

5.4. A lingering perplexity with Gilbert's position on the logical in multi-modal argumentation

Yet, all of this leads me to a final, lingering perplexity I have with Gilbert's overall position on the role of the logical in his multi-modal account of argumentation.

Gilbert's remedy for our neglect of the "non-logical" modes of argument is that we should articulate what I have called their logics. Gilbert calls on us to specify what he calls the "rules of non-logical argumentation."

> There are, in Argumentation Theory and Informal Logic, any number of systems of rules that are laid down for the edification and enlightenment of those who would argue well and correctly.

> Arguing "well" in this context, invariably means arguing logically, generally dispassionately, and not infrequently with a fairly high degree of analytical content. In other words, arguing well seems to fall within the purview of logical argument. Nor is there anything wrong with a properly conducted logical argument. There is only something wrong when that is considered to be the only way there is to argue at all. It is not that we do not need rules, it is that we do not have enough of them. We need rules for non-logical argumentation: Rules of evidence, interaction, fallaciousness, and connectivity. … If the only response to non-logical argumentation, to argumentation as it occurs in the other modes, is that it is fallacious, or ought to be eliminated, or is really beside the point, then it will never be properly studied. Argument from the alternative modes will never have rules and procedures designed to foster good, constructive, coalescent argumentation until they are allowed as argumentation at all. (1997, p. 143)

I agree. And, as I have argued, having such rules for non-logical argument, and using them in our meta-argumentative undertakings in the practice of transacting reasons with one another will allow us to argue more "logically" in precisely Gilbert's sense—i.e., in an analytical, linear, orderly, highly verbalizable, way.

Yet, at the same time as he calls on us to set out the rules for non-logical argument, Gilbert repeatedly insists on decrying the "logical" as being of very limited applicability in the marketplace of reasons.

> Our own lived experience of arguing with colleagues, friends and family, demonstrates that arguing is not a linear process with clearly defined edges and readily identifiable components. Our lived experience entails, if anything, the exact opposite conclusion: real, everyday, marketplace argumentation is frequently chaotic, rambling, emotional, and rife with explicit and implicit references to, and reliance on, the context, social milieu, personalities, and personal history of the argument and the arguers. (2018, p. 315)

According to Gilbert, the "neo-logicist" vision of good argument and arguing well simply doesn't apply here. And, he responds to efforts to apply it in order to reform and better regulate our arguings in the marketplace of reasons by claiming that this is to impose an

alien, oppressive hegemony of the logical on our ordinary argumentative practices.

That is, in looking at our arguings through a multi-modal lens, Gilbert's doesn't just *find* that our argumentative practices are all-too often *un*regulated—he seems insistent on *leaving them* that way. It would seem that Gilbert's view is that, to do otherwise would be to embrace a mistaken, "neo-logicist" vision of proper, exemplary, virtuous argumentative conduct. Recall that Gilbert characterized this "neo-logicist vision" of good argument and arguing well as "nonsense" (2001, p. 245).

This is the tension in Gilbert's position on argumentation as multi-modal that I find utterly perplexing. As I see things, as I have tried to present them here, Gilbert should not denigrate the logical mode of argument, he should venerate it. After all, if I understand him correctly concerning what he would have us do once we come to recognize the "non-logical" modes of argument as rational, our doing so would result in our arguings being more "logical" in precisely the sense that Gilbert disparages. Gilbert would have us specify the "rules for non-logical argumentation" so that we might have "procedures designed to foster good, constructive, coalescent argumentation," in order that we might better "regulate" our argumentative undertakings in those modes. Yet, using those rules and procedures in regulative ways involves engaging in a meta-argumentative discourse which uses a logical meta-vocabulary and, as such, occurs in the "logical" mode. Using that logical meta-vocabulary in the meta-argumentative self-regulation our argumentative transactions of reasons would result in those transactions being better regulated, more linear, orderly, and verbalized. In short, it would have us conduct our arguings in a more "logical" manner. Thus, Gilbert's own remedy for our neglect of the "non-logical" modes of argument would have us argue *more* in the logical mode, not *less*.

That Gilbert seems, ultimately, to deny—or at least to refuse to grant—the logical mode any role in regulating our arguings in the "non-logical" modes I take to be the most conspicuous and most pernicious moment of Gilbert's antipathy for the logical. Importantly, I do not follow others in locating the "anti-logical" penchant of Gilbert's multi-modal argumentation in his imploring

that we countenance "non-logical" modes of argument as rational. Indeed, I'm quite sympathetic to Gilbert's plea here. It's certainly worth a good look. And, I am willing to look past his disparaging, misleading, and harmful vision of logic itself. We're all friends here, after all. The real problem, as far as I'm concerned, is that Gilbert's aversion to the logical seems to have prevented him from following his *own* prescriptive advice. Gilbert's own prescriptions for properly attending to the multi-modal aspects of argumentation would accord the logical, as I have explained it in this paper, a central role in argumentation occurring in *any* "mode." Yet, we never find Gilbert to say that. Not anywhere. Instead, putting it bluntly, we find Gilbert to say that the logical ought to make room for the non-logical in the space of the rational, and then "mind its own business." In my judgement, that's just plain illogical.

6. Concluding remarks

The main argument of this paper has sought to show that a proponent with Gilbert's commitments ought to take a different attitude towards the logical.

Firstly, such a proponent ought to recognize that the logical is not an alien and alienating authority imposed on us externally for the purposes of oppression and suppression. The logic to which we must hold ourselves accountable, which has authority over us, is a logic of our own thought and talk, sense and feel—in general, of our own conscious life, whether outwardly expressed or not. Elsewhere I have argued that a refusal to submit to that authority comes at the cost of our rational authority, autonomy, and agency. Importantly, it is in the name of those things that we stake our claim to be treated as arguers—to be engaged with rationally—at all. So understood, we are right to say "Well, if you won't be logical then there's just no reasoning with you at all," because whatever else a person might be doing, if they will not hold themselves to account for their own conscious attitudes by their own logic, they are not making moves in the game of giving and asking for reasons.

Secondly, such a proponent ought to recognize that, so understood, the logical is not a mode of either thought or argument in the sense that it is one way of thinking among others. The logical does

not stand alongside the scientific, sentimental, sensual, sensitive, or superstitious as a way of conducting ourselves and our conscious mental lives when reasoning or arguing. Rather, logic articulates the conceptual relationships obtaining between the various elements of our thought and talk, sense and feel. As such, it provides us with a meta-vocabulary for talking about our conscious attitudes as they inferentially relate to other conscious attitudes. Logic is not the *language* of argument—it is the *meta*-language of argument.

Finally, such a proponent ought to recognize that the logical mode of argument has a much greater domain of applicability than Gilbert seems willing to admit. Gilbert might well be correct that our communicative messaging is inherently multi-modal. But, if those messages are being communicated in an argumentative context, where reasons are being transacted—indeed, if those informational message contents relate to other informational contents in inferential ways—then the logical will *always*, whether implicitly or explicitly, be one of the modes in play. In making the core argument of this paper, I have attempted to show the benefits of making that logic explicit. Principal among these is that using this logical meta-vocabulary allows us to self-regulate not only our arguings with one another, but our conscious lives generally.

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