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Rhetoric and Logical Reasoning as Engagement with Being

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Aller au sommaire du numéro

Découvrir la revue

Résumé de l'article

Cet article montre que, lorsque les aspects les plus profonds ou les plus fondamentaux de la vérité sont en cause, les arguments logiques et la rhétorique visant à établir la vérité ou une conviction justifiée doivent être en relation avec l'être du raisonneur et de son auditoire ou avec la particularité irremplaçable du raisonneur et de son auditoire, ce que nous appelons dans la langue ordinaire, être avec qui la personne est. Au-delà de la discussion courante sur la rhétorique existentielle, cet article soutient que cet engagement avec l'être est nécessaire pour établir non seulement la vérité qui concerne directement l'être du raisonneur et de son auditoire, mais aussi la vérité ou la justification des aspects fondamentaux des choses et des problèmes en général. De plus, cette attention à l'être exige de nous de suspendre nos cadres conceptuels bien connus, ainsi que ceux de nos destinataires, afin de permettre à l'être d'émerger dans ses propres termes. En conséquence, contrairement à notre conception habituelle de l'argumentation, le but et la procédure du rhétoricien est de réaliser une suspension réelle de la conviction et même des concepts appropriés pour procéder, et créer ainsi une confusion fondamentale. Cet article décrit ensuite certaines conséquences pour la rhétorique et le raisonnement, ainsi que la structure du processus de travail avec cette confusion fondamentale.

Argumentative Rhetoric and Logical Reasoning as Engagement with Being

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Abstract: When foundational aspects of truth are at issue, argumentation that aims to establish truth or justified conviction must engage with the being, or the irreplaceable particularity, of both its audience and the arguer. This is what we familiarly refer to as who the person is. This engagement with being is necessary to establish not only contingent personal truth, but also settled truth about fundamental aspects of things and issues in general. In addition, the address of being requires us to suspend our familiar conceptual frameworks to allow being to emerge in its own terms. Consequently, the rhetorician's initial aim and procedure will be to achieve a genuine suspension of conviction and even of the appropriate concepts under which to proceed, and so to produce and inhabit a deep confusion. The paper outlines some consequences for argumentation and also the structure of the process of working productively with this fundamental confusion.

Résumé: Cet article montre que, lorsque les aspects les plus profonds ou les plus fondamentaux de la vérité sont en cause, les arguments logiques et la rhétorique visant à établir la vérité ou une conviction justifiée doivent être en relation avec l'être du raisonneur et de son auditoire ou avec la particularité irremplaçable du raisonneur et de son auditoire, ce que nous appelons dans la langue ordinaire, être avec qui la personne est. Au-delà de la discussion courante sur la rhétorique existentielle, cet article soutient que cet engagement avec l'être est nécessaire pour établir non seulement la vérité qui concerne directement l'être du raisonneur et de son auditoire, mais aussi la vérité ou la justification des aspects fondamentaux des choses et des problèmes en général. De plus, cette attention à l'être exige de nous de suspendre nos cadres conceptuels bien connus, ainsi que ceux de nos destinataires, afin de permettre à l'être d'émerger dans ses propres termes. En conséquence, contrairement à notre conception habituelle de l'argumentation, le but et la procédure du rhétoricien est de réaliser une suspension réelle de la conviction et même des concepts appropriés pour procéder, et créer ainsi une confusion fondamentale. Cet article décrit ensuite certaines conséquences pour la rhétorique et le raisonnement, ainsi que la structure du processus de travail avec cette confusion fondamentale.

Keywords: *argumentation; being; existential rhetoric; confusion; argumentative incapacity*

1. Introduction

I shall try to show in this paper that rhetoric that aims to establish truth, or that aims even at the more relaxed goal of justified conviction, can and sometimes must not only address its audience's insights, convictions, and emotions but also engage with the being of its members and the being of the arguer. By "being" here I mean the irreplaceable particularity of the participants, what makes each person *this* person and no other: what we refer to in ordinary language as who the person is. We have sufficiently clear uses for this ordinary language phrase: for example, "This just is not me; I cannot do it," or "I love you for who you are, not for this or that quality you have or this or that thing you offer me."

As will become clear, the same argument about truth-oriented rhetoric also applies to consequentially logical reasoning. It is, however, customary in the rhetorical tradition to include consequential logic in the field of rhetoric, since it is one of the standard resources on which truth-oriented persuasion draws, and for convenience I shall follow that tradition here.

The existential rhetoric literature already considers rhetoric as a relation to, and exercise of, being (for representative examples, see Daniel 2016; Hyde 1990; Scott 1964). But beyond the existing discussion, I want to show, first, that when the deepest or foundational aspects of truth are at issue, engagement with the participants' being is a legitimate and in fact necessary part of attempts to establish not only truth that directly concerns or turns on their personal being, but also truth or justification about fundamental aspects of things and issues in general. Second, the relevance of our personal being does not make all truth provisional but contributes to establishing settled truth. Third, I want to bring out some peculiarities of being as a subject of address and exercise, and to show that because of these peculiarities the relevance of being to rhetoric requires a drastic alteration of our understanding of rhetorical aims and of the nature of argumentative practice.

In the course of this discussion, I shall argue that all rhetoric really relies on truth or truth-oriented justification, so that this address of being and with it the modified approach it requires are in fact the most fundamental responsibility of rhetoric.

To show that an engagement with being requires a re-conception of rhetorical aims and procedures, I shall argue that in order to engage with the audience's being (I shall come to one's own being shortly), and in fact as part of engaging with it, one first has to establish what that being is, and that this means allowing it to emerge in the light of its own standards. These standards are not necessarily those of one's own framework or even those of the addressee's everyday, taken for granted conception of her/himself. As a result, one has to aim not at producing conviction, but at suspending both one's own and the addressee's taken for granted convictions and other relevant taken for granted conceptual resources so that her/his being can emerge free from the interference of preconceptions. The rhetorician's initial aim and procedure, then, will be to achieve a genuine suspension of conviction and even of the appropriate concepts under which to proceed, and so to produce a fundamental confusion for both her/himself and the addressee. I shall explore the character of this confusion or incoherence and argue that, while it is fundamental and inescapable, it is self-resolving. This confusion provides the conditions in which the rhetorician and the addressee together can then find ways of establishing and speaking from and to the addressee's being.

As this account already implicitly suggests, the emergence of the rhetorician's own being is part of this process: if we aim to engage with another's being, we can only do so through or from our own being. We cannot engage with another's depth if we do so shallowly. Importantly, for that matter, the rhetorician and the addressee can be the same person. In the contexts of engagement with being, then, rhetoric or reasoning is not only an engagement with the addressee's being, but also an engagement of the rhetorician's being. And as in the case of the addressee, the rhetorician's or reasoner's taken for granted conceptual resources may not be adequate to express her/his own being, and s/he will consequently need to aim to suspend them as part of argumentative procedure in this connection too.

In the first section, I shall try to show that rhetoric can and most fundamentally must engage with the being of its addressees and practitioners. I shall then argue that this involves a very different conception of rhetoric and reasoning from the received understanding. I then explore some specific consequences for our understanding of the aims, practice, and scope of rhetoric and reasoning. Finally, I outline the

structure of the process of deep argumentation in the light of the fundamental and self-resolving confusion that provides part of that structure.

2. Rhetoric as engagement with being

I will approach the issue of rhetoric as engagement with being via a critical reconsideration of some familiar elements of contemporary thought about rhetoric's relation to truth. Against the emphases of formal logic, the contemporary revival of scholarly interest in rhetoric has insisted on the relevance to argumentation of context, concrete circumstances, and effectiveness. This emphasis has led to proposals that concepts like truth be replaced with concepts like justification (Rorty 1998) or, for another example, acceptance by a universal audience (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969). I have argued elsewhere, however, that while this criticism of formal logic as inadequate in these respects is valid and crucial, the relevance of circumstance and effectiveness itself depends on a concept of truth and, what is more, on truth as involving something of the nature of formal consequence (Barris 1996). I shall give a very brief sketch of that argument here, and I shall argue that this necessary combination of informally rhetorical and formally consequential elements of argumentation in turn allows us to see that and how rhetoric concerned with the truth of fundamental issues addresses the being of the addressee.

First, as the rhetorical revival has shown, there is good reason to think that we cannot establish either truth or justified belief if we neglect the particular circumstances and audiences in whose context we try to establish them (Perelman 1979; Willard 1989). Practically, different audiences disagree even about what is self-evident, and this makes it very difficult if not impossible to establish which audience—including ourselves or our own reference groups—is right, and so to establish truths that are independent of particular audiences (Perelman 1979, 49). And theoretically, truths, justifications, and even consequential connections are expressed in culture-specific language (Mailloux 1989, e.g., 15). When it comes to meta-reflection on the bases for truth and justification themselves, then, there is no neutral ground on which to stand, no "given" on which we can rely to adjudicate between the legitimacy of, say, different languages. We do not

even have such a ground, for that matter, between different symbolic and other formalizations within a single language (for example, Ryle 1960, 123-24).

On the other hand, however, there is also good reason to think that we cannot do without the concept of formally or logically consequential truth: that is, truth that is in some sense independent of particular circumstances and context. If we rely on relevant circumstance and aim for effectiveness, we need to do so in ways that successfully identify those circumstances and work towards those aims. In other words, we need to establish those circumstances and aims themselves without sheer arbitrariness, that is, without taking them in ways that need have nothing to do with them. This means we need the kind of check that would ensure that what we take to be the relevant circumstances and what we take to be our aims have something to do with the actual circumstances and the aims we are actually carrying out. In order to ensure that what we are working with is not completely disconnected from those circumstances and aims, this kind of check would have to rely on something inherent in or internal to them. In other words, it has to rely on something that belongs essentially to the reality it deals with, that is part of something like its nature or meaning. This is one kind of what is meant by a formally or logically consequential connection.

It is therefore necessary to combine the relevance of circumstance and effectiveness with that of logical consequence. If we do so, I suggest that we get something like what Wittgenstein (1958) means by a concept: a meaning that is embodied in and in fact constituted *as* social interactions with the circumstantially contextualized things of our world. The concept of a chair, for example, involves a specific concept of sitting, unlike, say, always sitting cross-legged on the ground or on a low pallet. This concept of sitting, in turn, involves a culture in which we interact with others, first to learn how and when to sit on a chair, and then in appropriately performing many of the activities for whose sake we sit in chairs. These further concepts and activities, in turn, are constituted by and as their relations to other, also contextualized concepts. In short, meanings are parts of specific "language games" that are in turn parts of "forms of life." We do not understand the concept of a chair, then, if we do not understand as relevant and know how to perform many socially standard activities in

connection with its referent. That is, the activities and their potential performance are part of the meaning of the concept.

As a result, meanings are not fundamentally abstractions from or representations of their circumstantially situated referents. Instead, in an important sense, meanings, our handling of them in social interactions, and their contextualized referents are parts of each other, or each is part of the same thing of which the others are part. Working with meanings is, then, inherently in some way also working with the reality of the world to which our words refer, or, in other words, with being.[1]

Since meanings are constituted by and as their relations with other meanings, each of these meanings is also internally connected with others, which in turn inherently involve working with the world. As I have noted, these essential or internal connections between meanings and, with them, between world-engaged activities, comprise one kind of what is meant by logical connections. In other words, logical connections, like meanings, are already inherent *in* particular contexts and circumstances, or, in general, in being.

Now, our own particularity is part of the contexts and circumstances in which we pursue truth or justification. We are, for example, the audience for whom the relevant questions and issues have their specific meanings, and often we are also part of the subject matter of the enquiry. And on the basis of what I have argued so far, our particularity, like the other elements of the relevant contexts, is not just an item indifferently juxtaposed to the other items in those contexts but is part of the context of social practices and relations which constitutes their meanings as the items they are. What we as particular individuals in fact do on specific occasions constitutes the practices which partly establish the meanings of the items we interact with. As a result, our particularity, our individual and social being, is part of the meanings or concepts of the realities we explore. That is, the truth about ourselves as the particular beings we are is logically or conceptually

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[1] In a different area of concern, Michael Thompson gives a very helpful discussion of how certain aspects at least of human life have to be thought of as simultaneously both "general" and "actual" (2008, e.g., 158-161).

connected with the truth of the situations, events, and things into which we enquire.[2]

That our particularity is internal to the reality and truth of the larger situation of which it is part is not only a Wittgensteinian notion. J. L. Austin, for example, points out that "descriptions, which are said to be true or false . . . are selective and uttered for a purpose. It is essential to realize that 'true' and 'false,' like 'free' and 'unfree,' do not stand for anything simple at all; but only for a general dimension of being a right and proper thing to say as opposed to a wrong thing, in these circumstances, to this audience, for these purposes and with these intentions" (1962, 144). And F. C. S. Schiller, the British pragmatist, offers a similar line of argument that "The impetus given to inquiry by desires and wishes can hardly be pronounced entirely irrelevant to a logic that concerns itself with actual knowing. . . . [W]e find that truth and falsity are incidents in cognitive inquiry; and this is far too much of a whole to make it . . . possible, to restrict the predicates 'true' and 'false' to a single portion of it" (1930, 117).[3]

It is true that in many contexts in which we enquire after truth, the particularity of our own being is irrelevant to the questions we ask. For example, it may be that the particular internal connections we as particular persons have with the situation are irrelevant to those that come into the specific question we are asking. Or it may be that the ways we are internally connected with the situation are the same in all of the possible outcomes to the enquiry, and so make no difference

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[2] This has implications for our rhetorical address of the inanimate world; for example, what we often think of as the purely physical world.

[3] See too Bernard Williams, who makes the related point that "the point or pointlessness of making a given assertion to a given person in a given situation can help someone in picking up the content of that assertion. For some purposes, such as the theory of deductive inference, the content of assertions can be treated in abstraction from their appropriateness, but basically there is no understanding of the one without the other" (2002, 48). And C. I. Lewis notes, more generally, "This experience of *reality* exists only because the mind of man takes attitudes and makes interpretations" (1929, 30).

(they "divide through"). But there are contexts in which our particularity is relevant to the enquiry.[4]

One kind of case is that in which we need to establish the sense and/or legitimacy of a conceptual structure in contrast with a very different conceptual structure. This can be an entire conceptual system or framework, along the lines of what Kuhn (1970) called a paradigm, incommensurable with other such paradigms, or it can simply be a concept, belonging to a language game whose "rules" or criteria for meaning are not those that give the sense of the other concepts with which we contrast it.

We can have this need to establish the sense and/or legitimacy of a framework or concept either in coming to understand it (as when we acquire a new concept or gain entry into a new framework) or in pursuing its legitimacy once we have already understood it (as when we explore a concept or framework for coherence or other kinds of adequacy, or for its comparative adequacy over another concept or framework). In either case, we need to approach or reflect on the concept or framework itself, as distinct from the content it frames, and this implies a perspective on it from, as it were, outside it, and so in contrast to a different possible concept or framework. Without that contrast, the conceptual order is not identifiable as a particular conceptual order among others but is simply all that we can relevantly conceive, and any attempt to reflect on it simply presupposes it rather than being a genuine reflection on it that might grant further insight.

Since this contrast is precisely between concepts or sense structures, they do not, by definition, make comparable sense of the same things. They are incommensurable with each other.

Now, first, in this kind of context, where the sense itself of the framework or concept is not yet established and is incommensurable with our familiar sense structures, the internal relations of our own person to the issues that the concept or framework frames cannot be ruled out in advance as irrelevant to the objective sense of those issues. In this case, this is true even of relations that our pre-existing conceptual structures might demarcate as purely subjective. The struc-

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[4] As Raimond Gaita (2004) says of moral decisions, for example, "if I am deliberating about what morally to do, then I cannot pass my problem over to anyone else. It is non-accidentally and inescapably mine" (103).

ture of objective sense in this context is unfamiliar, and we simply do not know at this point what about our particular circumstances, characteristics, and commitments will turn out to be relevant to it.

Second, we cannot turn to the content framed by incomparable frameworks of this kind to help in coming to understand them or in evaluating or deciding between them, because, by definition, this content itself has an incompatibly different meaning within each framework or conceptual system. The content of one is necessarily not applicable to the other. As a result, it may be that the particular nature of the decider, as that which inhabits and so is relevant to both frameworks or concepts, is not only a legitimate resource but is the only legitimate resource that can help to establish or evaluate the new sense or to make a decision between the two forms of sense. This is a view that Henry Johnstone (1978), for example, proposes.[5] As I have argued, this decision on the basis of the particularity of the decider's self is not external to the relevant issues, arbitrarily imposed on them: the essential particularity of the decider is conceptually, logically, connected with the content of the issues in either conceptual framework.

So, for example, in deciding between a current and an emerging, incommensurable scientific paradigm, or between a scientific world view and a religious one, or between two comprehensive but mutually exclusive philosophical perspectives, it makes unforced, conventional sense to say that no one can decide for us or provide the conclusive materials of the decision for us, and that we have to wait and see where we find ourselves standing. This kind of decision is partly a matter of finding out what we cannot help but think and what we cannot help but be committed to; that is, it is partly a matter of finding out something of who we honestly are.

Because, as I have argued, we are part of the meaning and reality of the situation, if we are honest about ourselves, we bring this part of that reality and its contribution to sense to the fore. That is, in these contexts honesty is central to truth itself and not only to character.

There is a strong element of incoherence in the proposal that the decider inhabits incomparable frameworks or concepts. On the one

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[5] Johnstone, however, does not argue, as I have done, for the conceptual continuity of the deciding self with what it reflects on, but offers a different account of the legitimacy of the self's involvement.

hand, the relevant content of the decider's particularity, like every-thing else in the situation, is itself framed differently and so means something incomparably different in each framework or in each (less comprehensively relevant) conceptual structure. In this respect, the decider's relevant being is no better off than any other content to help make the decision between the frameworks. On the other hand, how-ever, it is also true, nonetheless, that the decider is able to inhabit both incompatible sets of meanings simultaneously. This is why we can say that *we* have learned a new language, or come to understand a differ-ent culture, or learned a new concept, without saying that we have simply become someone else or that someone else has achieved this learning or understanding.

These considerations together suggest that the decider's being necessarily comes to mean incompatible things while nonetheless remaining the same being. (I discuss the legitimacy of this conception of "sameness" across incompatible sense frameworks further in sec-tion 5 below.) Johnstone (1978) argues for the reality of this contra-diction. A philosopher, by the nature of philosophy, "stands outside his own view," and since, as Johnstone argues, a philosophical view is all-embracing (that is, it is the kind of view I discuss in this essay), the philosopher is consequently capable of being "both totally immersed in his point of view and not totally immersed in it." This, in turn, is possible because, as that capability itself shows, a human self is "a being which in its being is what it is not, and is not what it is" (121). Johnstone argues that the contradiction can and must be resolved, but this resolution consists in a permanent ongoing dialectic of attempted resolutions and further contradictions (122-23).

I suggest, instead, that we need to recognize that the incoherence is ineliminable, but that it is not the whole story.

There is an extensive literature that rejects this idea of simultane-ously grasping incomparable frameworks altogether, arguing, for example, that if we can, without complete incoherence, claim to move between "incommensurable" frameworks, then this entails that they are not incommensurable in the first place (most influentially, Da-vidson 1984; Rorty 1991; and, in argumentation theory itself, for example, Siegel 2013). There is also, however, an extensive literature that defends the possibility of simultaneously grasping genuinely incommensurable frameworks (for example, MacIntyre 1988, 374;

Putnam 1990, 104; Winch 1964, 318; and, in argumentation theory, supporting the possibility of such positions, seminally Fogelin 1985; Kloster 2018; Zarefsky 2014, chapter 15). MacIntyre, for instance, argues that coming to grasp the meanings of another framework or language cannot be tied to its having common meanings with our own, since we have all learned a first language when we had no language to translate its meanings into (1988, 374).

This second literature, on the other hand, also differs from my own view, in that it does not see any incoherence at all in the idea of this simultaneous grasp. As I have tried to show, however, this cannot be the whole story either, and there are reasons to think that this grasp is both possible and yet also involves a necessary element of incoherence.

In any event, I take the undecided state of the issue of grasping or inhabiting incommensurable frameworks in the literature as additional warrant at least to explore the possibility of this kind of grasp, and with it the possibility that there is some workable degree of coherence in the idea that a not unequivocally or straightforwardly divided "self" can inhabit and reflect on incompatible frameworks simultaneously.

In further support of this suggestion of inescapable but non-catastrophic incoherence, there is also a growing literature defending the legitimacy of elements of incoherence or contradiction in both formal and informal contexts of thought. This literature argues, inter alia, that contradiction need not, as traditionally thought, "explode" into undermining the sense of anything else that can then be said (on informal contexts, see, again, Johnstone 1978, 45; on formal contexts see, for example, Bremer 2005; Priest 2001).

In the following sections I shall offer an account of my own of the character and functioning of the particular type of incoherence or contradiction at issue here that, I hope, will show that it is self-limiting in a way that makes it logically manageable.

Returning to my main line of thought, then, in contexts where we are assessing or deciding between incomparable conceptual structures, the essential particularity of the decider—or addressee, whether another person or ourselves—is the crucial deciding factor. In these contexts, the irreplaceable particularity of the decider, including, for example, her/his deep personal commitments, consequently needs to be addressed in establishing the truth of or justified beliefs about the

situation. More precisely, what is truly the case about her/his essential particularity or deep personal commitments needs to be addressed. This is another way of saying that her/ his true nature, or being, must be addressed.

Because in these contexts conceptual structures or frameworks for sense themselves are under scrutiny, it is the foundations for sense—the sense, as it were, of sense itself—that is at issue. As a result, these contexts are also the most fundamental with respect to the underpinnings of truth, and so with respect to the concerns and responsibilities of any truth- or justification-oriented rhetoric. Further, even rhetoric that manipulates the truth or tries to persuade its audience of falsehoods must rely on these underpinnings in order truly and effectively to be doing what it takes itself to be doing (and in fact even to have the concept of genuinely doing, and so to be able to *aim* genuinely to do, what it takes itself to be doing). All argumentative rhetoric, then, ultimately depends, even if often very indirectly, on rhetoric that addresses the being of the decision-maker or inquirer.

It is worth noting, too, that this kind of inquiry into the sense of conceptual structures and of comprehensive sense frameworks is what is distinctive of philosophical inquiry. Philosophical thought, then, essentially and immediately consists in the kind of rhetoric that engages with the being of the arguer and the audience, and consequently shares the characteristics for which I argue below.

If we are to address a person's being, we need to do so in appropriate ways. I shall explore what this kind of address involves in the next section.

3. The nature of a rhetorical engagement with being

I have argued that the kinds of context in which one addresses the being of the participants are those in which the sense of the situation and its elements is not yet established. I have also argued that these elements include the irreplaceable particularity or being of the participants. In order to address the participants' being, then, we first have to establish its sense. In other words, the conditions that make it relevant for us to address being also make it essentially unclear what it is that we are addressing. As a result, since it is the very sense, or most basic nature, of this being that is unclear, we are not only not in a position to

have opinions about it on which we can act in addressing the person, but we are not even in a position to know how to proceed in establishing the relevant opinions.

Further, as I have argued, in becoming aware of a conceptual structure as a whole, we do so at least implicitly in contrast with a different conceptual structure. Since each conceptual structure redefines the very meaning of the issues defined by the other, what is said about the issues in the terms belonging to one conceptual structure is literally either meaningless or on a different topic from what is said about them in the terms belonging to the other. This means that in becoming aware of a conceptual structure as a whole we are necessarily in a state of conceptual confusion, holding two incompatible concepts of the "same" thing simultaneously. And since they comprise whatever sense we have of the issues at all, we are unable to reject them despite their contradictory character.

As a result, in those contexts where the being of the participants becomes relevant to our establishing of truth or justified belief, we do not have relevant certainties on whose basis to proceed, either about the issues or about the appropriate kinds of procedures themselves. We are also fundamentally confused, in addition to being at a loss with respect to the sense of the situation, and we are so not simply because of our incapacity, but because this incapacity reflects the truth of the situation. The sense of the situation is in itself indeterminate and confused. As Dewey, for example, argues, "indeterminate situations . . . are disturbed, troubled, ambiguous, confused, full of conflicting tendencies, obscure, etc. It is the *situation* that has these traits. *We* are doubtful because the situation is inherently doubtful. . . . The notion that in actual existence everything is completely determinate has been rendered questionable by the progress of physical science itself. Even if it had not been, complete determination would not hold of existences as an *environment.* For nature is an environment only as it is involved in interaction with an organism, or self" (1938, 105-106).

The procedure for the rhetorician or reasoner which is appropriate to this kind of context, then, is to be lost and confused with respect to the fundamentals of the situation. That is, she should proceed not by asserting her competence or attempting to establish truth or conviction, but by waiting for the sense of the situation to emerge, for it to

show, for example, the criteria by which she can judge what the appropriate approaches to it might be.

How can it help to wait while being at a loss? The state of fundamental uncertainty allows the participants' being to assert itself uninterfered with by preconceptions. This uncertainty is not just a psychological state, but is the result of having established that the sense of the situation itself is unclear and confused. That is, it is a carefully achieved recognition of the logical fundamentals of the situation, and so genuinely unsettles the relevant preconceptions themselves.

It is true that the participants' being will be freed from interference only with respect to those particular preconceptions. But those are the respects in which their being is relevant to the issues with which those preconceptions deal, and those are the issues at hand.

More than this, however, the kind of incoherence that this fundamental uncertainty reflects and expresses is self-limiting, in such a way that it resolves itself into coherence and clarity.[6] It does so, paradoxically, because it is so comprehensive with respect to relevant sense that it undermines its own conditions. In the contexts we are discussing, in which we are as it were between incompatible conceptual structures or, equivalently, approaching the relevant conceptual structures from the outside, we have no established relevant sense to rely on, and all relevant sense is in question. This includes the sense of incoherence and coherence themselves. After all, even simple contradiction does not have a meaning that can be presupposed without being established but is given its meaning by further context within a broader conceptual structure. This is true even in purely symbolic, uninterpreted systems, in which its meaning is established by the particular system. In this context, then, where relevant sense has not yet been established, the sense of incoherence itself is not yet given, and so need not unqualifiedly exclude what we might otherwise understand as coherence—whose sense in this context is also not yet given.

What is more, in this context where it is the totality of relevant sense which is confused or incoherent, the nonsense of incoherence

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[6] For extended accounts of the sense and legitimacy of the type of self-resolution I am about to discuss, see Barris 2003; 2012; 2015a.

must include some element of sense or coherence. Otherwise, we could not identify it as nonsense or incoherence in distinction from sense or coherence. In that case, we could not, in this context of considering *all* relevant sense, *mean* anything by calling it incoherence.

This has the same structure as a liar's paradox: if it is true, it is false, and if it is false, it is true.[7] Similarly, a successful reference to the incoherence of all relevant sense automatically attributes coherence to it precisely by distinguishing it cleanly from coherent sense. And since this is a global reference to all relevant sense, both characterizations apply to it in the same respect, that is, to the same whole of relevant sense. As in the case of the liar's paradox, then, if what is referred to here is truly incoherent, it is truly coherent, and if it is truly coherent, it is successfully characterizable as truly incoherent. As a result, in this kind of context, when we are talking about sense in general, and so about *every* relevant meaning, "incoherence," precisely as meaning what makes no sense at all, necessarily also partly means what does make sense.

Along the same lines, with respect to the state of confusion, precisely because a global confusion is nothing but confusion, it must also include some element of clarity. Otherwise, it could not be wholly confusion, which requires it to be wholly or clearly distinct from clarity. Similarly, again, in using the language of being "outside" relevant conceptual structures or frameworks, the very sense of being "outside" is, precisely, a given sense, and so is inside the relevant sense framework. Consequently, being entirely "outside" sense frameworks or conceptual structures itself also means being "inside" them. Successfully or correctly meaning "entirely outside a sense framework" *is* meaning something like "being partly outside and partly inside a framework." While we may quarrel with using this language at all, it is at least arguable that some equivalent of it is necessary. As the debates about simultaneously grasping incommensurable frameworks mentioned in the previous section illustrate (at the very least because they exist as, arguably, meaningful debates about this issue), it is arguable that we can meaningfully talk about reflecting on sense frameworks as a whole, and so in some sense about being at a distance from a sense framework as a whole.

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[7] On the validity of this kind of paradox, see, for example, Sainsbury 1995, chap. 6.

In other words, then, in this kind of context, part of what incoherence *is* is the alternative to itself. It itself necessarily or inherently makes room, by its own character, for clarity or sense. And this is also true of the confusion that grasps and reflects this incoherence.

In particular, and crucially, in the self-canceling moment of incoherently stepping outside relevant sense and so simultaneously establishing relevant sense, this incoherence, precisely because it is incoherence and so not constrained by the original sense of its framework, makes room even for sense that the original sense of its framework excludes. That is, because this kind of incoherence has a peculiar self-undoing character, it can successfully allow the uninterfered-with sense of being to emerge.

Further, with respect to the deciding self discussed in the previous section, this element of self-undoing incoherence allows us to conceive how a self can be fundamentally self-contradictory in a way that itself makes room for it also to be in some sense fundamentally consistent with itself.

In these contexts, then, waiting while being at a loss is not just remaining static, but consists in the unfolding of a self-resolving process, a process both of the objective sense of the situation and of the confusion that is the grasp of that sense. And both this sense and this confusion are partly constituted by the participants' irreplaceable particularity or being. As a result, the way the participants make sense of the issues, including of their own being, occurs partly through and as the unfolding process or emergence of their being.

This means, for example, that the rhetorician or reasoner is no longer simply addressing the being of the addressee, but engaging with it in the medium and through the exercise of her own being.[8] The emergence of the sense and consequently the truth of the issues, then, is in part an activity of the being of the participants. The contributions and relation of their being to the other elements of the situation are part of what *make* the situation's sense and therefore its reality as the situation it is. Its sense emerges with and in part *as* their being.

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[8] This is also true of the rhetorician's relation to all the other elements of the situation. I mentioned in note 2 above, for example, that this issue of addressing being has implications for our address of the non-human, including the physical, world.

As I have argued, the lost confusion that allows this emergence of being and with it sense and truth is not simply incapacity but a rigorously achieved grasp of the confused sense of the relevant situation. Consequently, *as* an incapacity, this lost confusion is in fact a making sense and a knowing. In this respect, in the context of addressing being, the problem is itself already partly the solution: the inability to make sense is both already the emergence of sense (in this case the sense characterizing a state of confusion) and, as a nontrivial grasp of the relevant issue, also the means by which further, resolved sense emerges.

Looking at this in the reverse direction, if one's goal in the first place happens to be to address or establish the addressee's being, then it follows that the appropriate procedure is to go about achieving the genuinely and fundamentally lost and confused state in which that being can emerge. For example, we may want to make a space in which someone can be herself, or we may want simply to acknowledge and explore the relevance of her being to the issues at hand, as the current existential rhetoric literature generally does. The way to do that, in turn, is to achieve a reflection on the conceptual structure of the current context as a whole. I suggest that this is the procedure that Socrates undertakes in many of Plato's dialogues.

It is a goal that is extremely important in its own right: to help, or in the interests of justice or love to find ways of not inadvertently preventing, someone's being to emerge. So, for example, someone who takes it for granted that people are motivated by conventional ambition may consistently fail to take seriously or even to hear the self-explanations of someone for whom conventional success is not meaningful or even counts as failure. The ambitious person may even consistently try to "help" the other person to succeed conventionally and sympathize with her when she does not. The problem in this case is only partly the would-be helper's misguided interference in connection with particular undertakings; it is also and more fundamentally that the "helper" is relating to the person as someone she is not. That is, the "helper" is dismissing or neglecting the person's very being and so leaving her fundamentally isolated, while bewilderingly appearing to confirm that he or she is doing the opposite. As a further result, the "helper" is also constantly requiring the person to behave as though

this deep unreality were what is real, and so putting constant pressure on her sense of reality.

The recognition of the possibility of this kind of situation, and the ability to pursue the kind of procedure that allows one to come to be deeply and appropriately baffled by the other person would allow this kind of situation to be remedied or perhaps sometimes not to arise. Since we do necessarily take our basic ways of making sense for granted, and there are often differences in basic ways of making sense, such situations do necessarily often arise.

In this paper I have been concerned more broadly with the relevance of the addressee's being to rhetoric that aims at truth or justified conviction about fundamental aspects of things and issues in general, and not only at truth that directly concerns or turns on the rhetorician's and audience's being. If, however, all truth is underpinned by sense which is established in the way I have argued, then it will sometimes happen that rhetoric in pursuit of fundamental truths in general too will need more than simply to be receptive to the occurrence of this state of incapacitated waiting for the being of the persons involved to emerge. Rhetoric in pursuit of fundamental general truths will sometimes also need to go about actively and directly achieving this state in the way I have just discussed. This can be the case at times even with rhetoric in pursuit of everyday general truths, when circumstances bring the sense of the relevant issues into question.

So, for example, someone may be unresolved about whether abortion is morally right, where, for instance, the sense of "life" is unclear and is differently decided by different frameworks both of which the person grasps and finds relevant. The person may then need to find out what she can honestly live with—who she is in relation to this issue—before she can take further steps to make a decision. The appropriate procedure will then involve reflection on the relevant conceptual structures each as a whole, not in order to yield clarity about the issue, but with the aim of actively achieving the recognition of confused and incompletely given relevant sense, so that her relevant being can emerge uninterfered with by the pre-given sense of these issues in either framework.

In fact, this kind of reflection is already a familiar procedure in the literature on argumentation, though there it is generally understood that showing that an argument involves inadequate relevant sense or

conceptual confusion is already the result or answer, and in fact a negative one. One has succeeded in showing that the position that produces this result is mistaken or otherwise inadequate (for example, van Eemeren 2018, 5, chapter 4; seminally on category mistakes, Ryle 1960). Here I am proposing that the state of rigorously achieved failure of sense and conceptual confusion is instead potentially the positive beginning of reaching the required result or answer.

Valuing and even aiming at an incapacity to opine or to proceed is of course already a very drastic revision of our understanding of the methods and goals of rhetoric and reasoning. The achievement of this kind of goal involves its own appropriate attitudes, procedures, capacities, and process. I shall explore these in the next two sections.

4. Some consequences for the significance, capacities, and practice of argumentation

In the light of these considerations, it is still the aim of truth-oriented rhetoric and argumentation in these deep contexts to achieve insight and produce conviction, but we now need to re-understand insight and belief in these cases, first, as partly activities of our being. For the same reasons, the means and procedures by which we achieve insight and conviction—that is, argumentation and the insight-enabling resources of rhetoric generally—are also partly activities of our being. Second, these insights and resources centrally involve an element and phase of confusion and incapacity to opine and proceed, an element and phase that resolve themselves by virtue of their own character and logic.

Correspondingly, we therefore need, first, to widen the scope of what we understand by both the aim and procedures of rhetoric and reasoning to recognize and do justice to their significance as engagements of our being. For example, argumentation in these contexts entails a deep, direct responsibility to the fundamental well-being of its participants. Second, we need to include in our understanding of the appropriate kinds of skills and aptitudes those that are required to negotiate the confusion that is central to this engagement of being and to give ourselves over to its self-resolving or self-canceling process. Further, just as we need to re-understand the nature of insight and

belief, we also need to re-understand skill and competence themselves to include what we otherwise think of as incapacity.

With respect to the change in our understanding of the required aptitudes and skills, argumentation about deep issues requires our being able to see certain kinds of incapacity—for example, failure of fluency, of sharpness, of quick response, and even of ability to render one's position intelligible—as states whose achievement is to be cultivated and respected. We need to be able to see the necessity and value of waiting for sense to emerge without being in control of it, and similarly to be able to respect interlocutors in the same state. Further, we need to be able to assist interlocutors in that state, not only by helping them to emerge from it but by participating in it with them, since in these contexts giving ourselves over to this self-resolving confusion is, in fact, the way that we ourselves acquire clarity.[9]

In the light of the positive role that the failure of available sense may play, we also need a larger perspective on the clarity we already possess or that we come to acquire. Since what motivates the need for this perspective is the relevance of a self-resolving failure of sense, the perspective includes paradoxical elements. On the one hand, since in these contexts of failure of sense a framework or conceptual structure is at issue which is all-encompassing with respect to relevant sense, the sense it offers (when this sense is legitimate by its own standards) is in fact conclusive: whatever might put it in question is outside the limits of relevant sense. On the other hand, however, issues can arise that put available sense itself into question, either because their current sense conflicts with itself in fundamental ways, or because interlocutors with new, enigmatic conceptual resources appear and what is incoherently outside of sense may turn out to resolve itself into a new kind of coherence. As a result, our formerly comprehensive and so conclusive sense may, in these logically anomalous circumstances, turn out to be questionable after all.

With respect to our familiar certainties, then, we need to combine a rightly taken for granted conviction with an awareness that, in the right circumstances, what is conceivable and what is simply incoherent can shift their boundaries. As Wittgenstein argues, on the one

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[9] I discuss further aspects of the shift in our understanding of the required aptitudes and skills in Barris 2009; 2011; 2015a.

hand, what is fundamental for us goes deeper than justification, and is instead fixed as the basis of justification; but on the other hand, precisely because those fixities are not based on anything further, as our larger context shifts those fixities too may shift and be replaced by contrasting fixities (1969, e.g., 15e). At that point of shift itself, it is not that our truths turn out to be falsehoods, but that an incoherence emerges which does not allow us to know what we mean by those truths, either to confirm or to re-evaluate them. As I have argued, however, this incoherence does not simply eliminate the meaning of those truths, because it is so comprehensive that it cancels its own meaning as incoherence and so restores settled sense. This is what makes it possible to have a perspective in which we legitimately both take our basic forms of sense unqualifiedly for granted and yet are aware that circumstances may arise in which they are questionable.

There are three kinds of case in which this sort of self-canceling shift occurs and that our larger perspective needs to be able to make sense of: that of reflecting on our own framework to gain a deeper understanding of it, that of coming to understand a new framework without being committed to it, and that of finding ourselves honestly committed to a new framework and no longer to our old one. The logic of the self-canceling comprehensive incoherence I have described gives us the conceptual resources to make sense of them.

In the first case, when we reflect on our framework, and so are, as it were, in part outside its constraints, our familiar sense is in question and we are not in a position to know unequivocally what we mean and so to evaluate it one way or the other as true or false. If in that reflection, however, we come to establish our honest commitment to our framework and consequently return to it, the circumstances of shift are then no longer relevant, and familiar sense is no longer in question or (within the framework that establishes it as sense) even meaningfully questionable. We then know what we mean, and our familiar basic truths are re-established. And as I noted above, they are then established conclusively, where before the reflection they were not established at all, but instead were simply taken for granted.

In the second case, that of coming to understand a new framework without being committed to it, the same structure of self-canceling incoherence that allows us to move outside the constraints of our framework so as to allow our and others' being to emerge, for the

same reasons allows the sense of frameworks different from our own to emerge. When that happens, we necessarily establish the other framework's truths as, in the same way as our own, conclusive within its own all-embracing context. And these truths, of course, exclude our own. But if our familiar order is still the one that we are honestly committed to, then even in our understanding of the new framework we also simultaneously inhabit our own. Consequently, we are then still partly in a context in which conflicting frameworks are both relevant and so in which sense is in question. In these kinds of sense-questioning contexts, our own particularity of being plays a deciding role in establishing truth, and in this case, again, we are still honest to our own being in maintaining our familiar truths. As a result, the same structure of self-resolving incoherence that allowed us to establish the sense of the new framework works here too to re-establish our own familiar truths as the ones that have meaning for us. And, again, it does so conclusively and unequivocally once the resolution is settled, since the idea of sense that conflicts with that of our all-embracing framework then no longer has meaning.

In the third case, where the new framework becomes honestly our own, its truths become the familiar truths that are now established. But the former truths have still not become falsehoods but instead have no meaning at all, since we are now in a framework of sense that comprehensively excludes the sense made in the old framework. For those inhabiting the old framework, its truths are rightly and genuinely still truths. Awareness of the role of the self-canceling shifts of meaning that occur when the foundations of sense are at issue allows us to recognize and situate both of these incompatible states of meaning.[10]

Turning now to the issue of engagement with being: this paradoxical larger perspective that I am proposing on the clarity we already have or that we come to achieve concerns those contexts where the foundations of sense are at issue and may be subject to argument. As I have argued, argumentation in these contexts involves an engagement of our and our audience's being. Living out this larger perspective, then, is one expression of a recognition and appreciation of the significance of deep argumentation as an engagement of being.

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[10] For further discussion of this larger perspective, see, again, Barris 2012; 2015a.

This significance is partly that deep argumentation involves a very deep responsibility, in that we are dealing not just with this or that issue in our lives, but with the very being of our audience and ourselves, with the very substance of who we are and of our lives (on this aspect of this kind of dialogue, see, for instance, Buber 1970). Emmanuel Levinas (1969) and Raimond Gaita (2004), for example, both also express this depth of responsibility as one of dealing with the absoluteness of the reality of others. They also both argue, however, that as a result, this responsibility supersedes what ontology or talk of being can express. I have argued that while this recognition is a matter of ontology, this is ontology conceived as canceling its own sense and so the sense of any relativizing questions about it that reflection on it might occasion. As a result, I believe this conception acknowledges the absoluteness they are trying to be true to when they propose that we supersede ontology.

The significance of deep argumentation as an engagement with being is also partly, for example, that rhetoric or reasoning in these contexts is an activity that, as an emergence of our being, is our becoming more fully who we are. Alternatively, it may be a process in which, as we acquire wholly new resources of sense, we who are entities partly composed of meanings grow, not simply in what we have but, again, in what we are. In that case our substance acquires, as it were, new organs of sense-making.

I have described our being as our irreplaceable particularity. Here I am suggesting that our essential particularity can develop and transform in the course of its own activity. As Johnstone argues, our being consists partly in not being what it is; and as I have argued further, this non-self-coincidence departs even from its own character and so cancels itself into simply integral selfhood. In this kind of being, then, to become more fully what it already is and to grow beyond itself are one and the same. That is, one of the peculiarities of our being is that it is both state and process at once.

5. The structure of the process of deep argumentation

The role of the fundamental incoherence or confusion I have described has consequences for the overall structure of the process of argumentation, and we can establish a schematic outline of the structure of that

process in the contexts where this confusion occurs. These contexts are those of establishing or reflecting on sense, and they occur when we approach one conceptual order from the perspective of another, incompatible one. This is the situation even if we are simply reflecting on our own familiar conceptual order since this reflection implies a perspective on the conceptual order partly from outside it, and so, as I argued in the second section above, it implies a contrast to at least a possible different conceptual order or framework. More directly, since the reflection on the framework is partly outside the framework, its own sense is to that extent incompatible with that of the framework, and it, therefore, amounts to its own "framework under construction."[11]

This approach to a different conceptual order is not a linear process or even a dialectical one. Because in this kind of context the contrasting conceptual orders each embrace all relevant sense, they each reconstitute, in incompatible ways, what can possibly be meant by each other and also by the process itself. That is, there can be no ultimate neutral, consistent ground, independent of the frameworks and their comprehensive incompatibility, on which the process takes place and in whose terms it can be consistently described from start to finish.

Considering this approach to a different conceptual order with respect to what the frameworks undergo, the process is one in which,

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[11] In the case of reflecting on our familiar conceptual framework, the contrasting framework may in fact be the familiar framework's own deep, presuppositional or foundational structure. But for it to be the underpinning of the framework as a whole, it must nonetheless be in some sense outside the whole of the framework or, in other words, it must be in some sense not subject to the constraints of the framework's sense, and consequently it must belong to a different order of sense. Otherwise, again, it is not an underpinning of that framework as a whole, but simply an internal part of its unquestioned, unreflective sense. One consequence of this is that the relation of what we mean by a presuppositional or transcendental structure to the content for which it is the presuppositional ground in these contexts of reflection on sense as such involves the kind of moment of incoherence for which I argue in this essay.

Where that kind of presuppositional structure is taken to be implicit in the content, this moment of incoherence may even characterize the structure's relation to its own explicit articulation, since its implicitness entails that it is integrally part of the content's sense, while its explicit articulation transforms it into an independent sense structure in its own right, distinct from the content because grounding it.

first, each framework necessarily wholly reconstitutes the other in its own terms (since it embraces all relevant sense), and then, as it establishes the other's own sense, comes in turn to be wholly reconstituted by the other in the other's terms (since those terms, in turn, embrace all relevant sense). Because there is no neutral ground of common meanings, what happens between these two moments is a moment in which incompatible meanings construe the same thing simultaneously: in other words, a moment of incoherence or conceptual confusion.

It is important to note that this is not a matter of our construals as interpreters, but of the frameworks' construals as the sources of sense, and so it is a matter of the objective sense of the situation. The sense of the situation is given by the frameworks, and because both frameworks are in fact in effect at this time, the same thing, in fact, has both incompatible senses at once.

To describe the process more accurately: because the entire process, from the first moment to the last, is an interaction between the incompatible all-embracing frameworks, that entire process is partly a varyingly explicit construal of the same things in incompatible ways. That is, the whole process is partly structured by this incoherence, which becomes, first, increasingly explicit, and then, after its extreme point, increasingly resolved in the way I outline below. The central moment is therefore only the most extremely explicit form of the incoherence which structures the whole process.

The "moments" are temporal in that the degree of explicitness of the incoherence changes through the process. But the incoherence is in some degree of explicitness also part of the logical structure of the whole interaction, and in that sense is an unchanging, logical moment of it, together with the logical moment of its self-cancellation and the logical moments of coherence that this self-cancellation ensures. Like the moment of incoherence, however, each of these moments also varies in its explicitness and immediate relevance.

There is, of course, a problem with the statement that the same thing is simultaneously construed in wholly incompatible ways. This amounts to saying that it is not the same thing, and that there is therefore no incoherence: instead, two different things are being construed legitimately in appropriately different ways. As I discussed in the second section in connection with the self that straddles incom-

mensurable frameworks, however, there is reason to think that there is a sense in which this incoherent proposal of a sameness across incompatible contexts is legitimate. As MacIntyre, for example, argues about incommensurable traditions of thought, "each community, using its own criteria of *sameness* and *difference*, recognizes that it is one and the same subject matter about which they are advancing their claim; incommensurability and incompatibility are not incompatible" (1989, 190). It may be easier to see this in cases where a framework undergoes a revolutionary change into a framework with incommensurable meanings (as, for example, Kuhn (1970) argues occurs in the history of science). There is a phase in the process of change of these meanings where it is unclear which framework constitutes the meaning, or, differently expressed, where it is undecidable which the meaning is. To describe this state of the meaning, we need to make use of both meanings simultaneously.

We can map out the process of approach to a different conceptual order schematically in four moments, as follows. First, we have the starting framework or conceptual order considered simply on its own. Second, as we engage with the new framework or the framework we are developing in reflecting upon our starting framework, we have the content or materials of that new framework necessarily construed in the inapplicable terms of the sense structure of the starting framework, which at this point is still the only sense structure available to us. Once we have established a grasp of the new framework (I shall return to the mechanism by which this happens), we then have, third, the sense structure of the new framework, but still with much of the unrevised materials or content of the starting framework. This phase occurs not because it is logically necessary, but for the empirical reason that it simply takes time to adjust from one way of thinking to another, and to learn to apply new general principles consistently. Fourth, and finally, as we learn to work consistently with the new framework (or with the framework of deeper reflection), we have the new framework (or the deeper sense structure of our familiar framework) on its own.

Once this process of coming to understand is complete and we have grasped the new framework in its own terms, we are finally in a position to try fairly to evaluate and decide between the two frameworks and their claims, a decision which, I have argued, turns on the essential particularity of our being. As I have sketched in the previous

sections, we undertake this decision by entering into the reflective perspective on and therefore partly outside both frameworks. This is the same reflective space that we inhabited, for the different purpose of coming to understand the new framework, during the process of approaching the new framework. The same self-canceling incoherence of this position which allowed us to move from one framework to another allows us here to be both outside and within both frameworks. This allows our being to emerge both in substantial relation to and to some degree free from both forms of sense. This combination, in turn, allows our being to establish, where possible, the relevant sense that is true to it.

Returning to the structure of the process of coming to understand the new framework, the way in which we shift from the old framework to the new is, as I have argued, through the element of self-resolving incoherence or confusion itself. Not only does this incoherence ultimately cancel itself and so make room for simply clarity again, but before it does so, or as the first part of its doing so, the simple fact of incoherence or confusion itself is what allows the shift to a new mode of making sense. At its extreme point the comprehensive incoherence is sufficiently explicit that it is established and recognizable as inescapable: that is, the old way of making sense is genuinely, thoroughly, and explicitly disorganized. This comprehensive disorganization of familiar sense allows the paths offered by a new sense structure to emerge, and our now well-grounded recognition of this state of affairs allows us to register and explore that conceivable emergence of new sense.

This is a blind moment of the process, in which we grope and blunder and even despair of possible sense, and in which we may not in fact succeed. But, again, the nature of the incoherence itself provides materials that help us. As I have argued, it is part of this depth of incoherence that it includes elements of sense. This incoherence is, after all, incoherence or confusion and not blank absence of any form of signification or, on the experiential side, blank incomprehension.

In addition, this confusion develops with the stages of the process, and it does so in such a way that the resources for moving beyond it develop with it. In the first moment, there is a sharp separation between the conflicting forms of sense: we are clear about what the issues mean for our framework, but we are also systematically mistak-

en about what they mean for the other framework we are engaging. As we continue to engage with the other conceptual order, we become increasingly confused as our assimilation of its terms to ours keeps failing to match it consistently. But our confusion occurs in ways dependent on the specifics of the clash with the other conceptual order and consequently supplies us with resources for being guided to identifying that order. At the extreme point of confusion, the midpoint of the process, as I have noted, incoherence becomes clearly established as inescapable and so as affecting available sense itself (and so as not just a matter of our personal limitations). At that point we have both the resulting explicit necessity and possibility of beginning in a wholly new way, and also the increasingly accumulated resources for guidance towards identifying the nature of that beginning.

This state of affairs allows us the possibility of groping our way to an initial grasp of the new conceptual order. As experience shows, this grasp need not happen, but it can and often does. If we do gain this initial grasp, we are then in the third schematic moment, that of working on the basis of the sense structure or "grammar" of the new framework although still also working with much of our unrevised familiar content or meanings. From that point on, however, we can progressively resolve the confusions, since we are now based in the new single, self-consistent framework.

As this new context develops into full self-consistency, the entire process produced by the interaction of all-embracing yet mutually exclusive orders of meaning itself ultimately loses all meaning. This is what enables the full resolution of the incoherence that otherwise continues to play a role and so undermine the sense of the resolution. To see that the process loses its meaning in this way, it is important to recognize that the frameworks (or conceptual orders) only have meaning as frameworks (or conceptual orders) at all in the context of this process. A framework can only be meaningfully identifiable as a framework in contrast with another. Prior to the consideration of a contrasting framework, a framework for all possible relevant sense is simply the sense of things. That is, it is not one particular framework for sense among other possible frameworks, as the term "framework" entails, but instead is simply another name for the only conceivable sense.

Consequently, it is only once the process of considering another contrasting framework is already under way that the starting framework in the process meaningfully exists at all as a framework or a particular conceptual order among others. The first schematic moment, then, of considering the starting framework on its own, is really already one of considering the framework implicitly in relation to the new framework. When the framework is considered absolutely on its own, rather than relatively to the rest of the process of approaching another framework, it is not meaningfully a framework at all.

Similarly, at the end of the process, once we are exploring the new all-encompassing framework entirely and exclusively in its own terms it, too, is simply the sense of things, and not a particular framework among others.

This corresponding return to the irrelevance of the process itself is what enables the full resolution of the incoherence that otherwise continues to play a role in the sense of the resolution. The incoherence is resolved not by engaging with it further and so necessarily getting caught up in its paradoxical logic again, but by losing its meaning and relevance altogether, as the process of interaction between incompatible frameworks which produces it wholly reconstitutes its own meaning, and ceases to have meaning and so relevance as an ongoing process at all. At that point the incoherence is and can be shown to be simply a logical mistake that can and should be avoided and dismissed.

The final resolution, then, occurs when we recognize (correctly, in this new context), the meaningless of the entire process itself. In this way, the incoherence fails to produce any further effects. That is, it does not "explode," as the longer logical tradition objects in rejecting any role to incoherence in reasoning and argumentation.[12]

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[12] For discussions at length of the character of this structure of deep argumentation and its logical legitimacy, see Barris 2003; 2012; 2015a. Elsewhere, I have also argued that the kind of self-resolving incoherence at issue here consists in a micro-structure of what we might call legitimate logical inadequacies (Barris 2015b). These include, for instance, non sequiturs and conceptual confusions between the conceptual orders, and legitimate circularities within these orders as each the whole of conceivable sense and so as requiring no justification beyond themselves.

As I have argued, however, the incoherence itself produces this resolution in virtue of its own character and logic, and for this reason it is nonetheless not simply eliminated as a necessary element of the process. Rather, it has become a dismissible error only because, through the working of that very incoherence itself, the context has now shifted to the relevance of only one framework for sense, and the process has come to *mean* differently at a different moment.

More generally, it is important to recognize that this is not a resolution that simply eliminates any of the previous moments and phases of partial and extreme incoherence, whether of our understanding or of the objective sense of the situation and its being, including ours. Or, rather, in an equally important sense, it *does* simply eliminate those phases, including their character as logical moments of the process, in rendering them altogether meaningless; but it eliminates them in this way only as long as there is no reason to put operative or taken for granted sense in question. As soon as we are justified in re-raising that question, we are back in the context of being "outside of all conceivable relevant sense," where the process and, at various of its moments, each of its elements and phases re-acquire their meaning again. As I have argued, this process is precisely one whose meaning is logically structured so as to become altogether reconstituted in this kind of way.

The final phase of entering into the new framework, then, is only definitive in those contexts in which the framework itself and its fundamental sense are no longer in question or at issue. These contexts may be temporary or otherwise limited. One such context is that in which our concern is simply to understand the framework, without concern for its relation to our original or other frameworks. Another, possibly permanent context is that in which we actually become committed to the new framework, which, as I have argued, requires an existential decision based on the particularity of who we find we truly are.

Even when we are strictly in the contexts of these definitive cases, however, we still have access to the sense of frameworks we have previously grasped (including, of course, our original framework) as what can be sense or have meaning under circumstances other than those that obtain in our current context of thought. That is, we can imaginatively project ourselves into their context; but it remains true that this is not the context of meanings we are currently in, and in the

context of thought that we are in, the contents of the other frameworks really do not have meaning at all. They are meaningful in *those* circumstances over there, but those circumstances do not obtain *here*. Differently expressed, in the strict context of the meanings of the new framework we are currently considering, the meanings of our home framework and other frameworks do not have lived reality, but only the reality of something like an abstract game.[13]

This difference in the reality of meaning is experientially evident when we go about communicating with people who inhabit a different sense framework from our own. For example, if we are Westerners, we may understand beef as nutritious while at the same time knowing we cannot meaningfully offer this idea as a way of endorsing cattle raising to Hindus who believe in the sacredness of cattle.

The possibility of these shifts of meaning and different forms of understanding in deep argumentation should make it clearer why, as I have argued in connection with the appropriate larger perspective on our clarities, argumentation about deep issues can be both unqualifiedly definitive and genuinely tentative at the same time and in the same respects. Where sense itself shifts, the meaning of our claims about the status of our own insights can shift with it too—not in a way that invalidates their original meanings in their original contexts, but in a way that simply means we are in a different context in which those original meanings of our claims are no longer relevant.

If, however, we do not have the larger perspective of awareness of the meaning-shifting character of deep argumentation, we have the complementary dangers of taking our own framework as the only possible framework and so simply as sense itself, and then similarly of taking the new framework, should we come to understand it, as the only possible framework and so as sense itself. The danger is that of a helpless and potentially destructive dogmatism and incomprehension. This kind of incomprehension consists most deeply in an obliviousness to the very being of the person, culture, or issue we are

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[13] Along these lines, Gaita (2004) writes of moral arguments, "we can of course extract arguments from what [anyone] says and write them on a blackboard, and we can try to improve on them, but until someone is prepared to assert them seriously in his own name, then they are arguments only in inverted commas for they yield only inverted commas conclusions—'conclusions,' that is, which no one is seriously prepared to conclude" (316, my insertion).

dealing with. In addition, because the absence of the larger perspective partly means the absence of reflection on the foundations of sense in general and so of being in general, this obliviousness includes obliviousness to our own fundamental being.

A relatively harmless and even constructive version of this problem, which is an often unavoidable and perhaps necessary part of the learning process, is that students, for example, when they first come to understand a new philosophical position, often begin by finding it patent gibberish and end by being unable to understand how anyone can not see it that way. In this kind of case, the effect is often temporary; but it illustrates the logical difficulty of argument about the foundations of sense. In many other cases, of course, the effects are neither temporary nor benign.

Finally, let me recall that this process whose structure I have tried to describe is not only a process of understanding and insight but is also a process of an engagement with and of being. Or, rather, it is a process of understanding and insight *as* an engagement with and of being. That is, as I noted in the previous section, the process of coming to understand, where the foundations of sense are at issue, is also the ontological process of the emergence of the objective sense of the situation and consequently, with it, of the situation's being or reality. As a result, the structure of the process of coming to understand that I have outlined is also the structure of the process of the emergence of the objective sense and with it of the emergence of the being or reality of the situation, including of the being or reality of the arguers.

By way of clarification, let me note that while I have just described our being as emerging during the process of coming to understand a new framework, I have also described it as emerging when we decide between frameworks. These two forms of the emergence of our being are intimately connected. First, the same participation of our particular being in sense which allows our being legitimately to decide between frameworks of sense also means that our being emerges during the emergence of the new framework's sense. In fact, one consequence of the participation of our being in sense is that the nature of the new sense (like the old) is partly constituted by our particular being in the first place so that our being emerges *as* part of the emergence of the new sense itself and vice versa. The sense we come to understand in

fact emerges with and partly as our newly emergent being in the first place.

Second, the same structure of self-canceling incoherence which allows our being to emerge independently of and yet relevantly to the simultaneous frameworks when we are deciding between them is also what allows it to emerge from one all-embracing form of sense into another, incompatible yet also all-embracing form of sense during the process of coming to understand a new framework. As I have noted, the moments of this structure are both logical and temporal and so operate both simultaneously and in succession; and our being too is both state and process at once.[14] During the decision between the already-given incompatible forms of sense, the logical role of these moments is foremost, while during the emergence of the new sense their temporal character is foremost.

6. Concluding note

One important upshot of the nature of this structure of argumentation about deep issues is that, on the one hand, in the context of those issues, neither rhetorical nor consequentially logical principles give us a clear sense of how to proceed. Instead, they require us to be partly and profoundly at a loss until the type of sense at issue emerges, uninterfered with by our presuppositions about its constraints. On the other hand, however, as I have argued, the very purity of the element of incoherence or lack of structure here necessarily entails its involving elements of straightforward coherence and structure. As a result, the usual constraints and procedures of both rhetoric and consequentially logical argumentation are in fact themselves also elements of that uninterfered-with emergence and give us crucial purchase on the guidance towards establishing and negotiating sense that it offers.

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[14] See the end of section 4.

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