Exchanging Reasons: responses to critics

Lilian BERMEJO-LUQUE

ABSTRACT: I provide responses to what I take to be the most salient aspects of John Biro, James Freeman, David Hitchcock, Robert Pinto, Harvey Siegel and Luis Vega's criticisms to the normative model for argumentation that I have developed in *Giving Reasons*. Each response is articulated on a main question, i.e., the distinction between regulative and constitutive normativity within Argumentation Theory's models, the semantic appraisal of argumentation, the concept of justification, the differences between Toulmin's model and my model of argument and the analysis of the pragmatic dimension of argumentation.

Keywords: the concept of justification; constitutive and regulative normativity; inference-claims; semantic appraisal; toulmin's model; warrants; pragmatic dimension of argumentation.

RESUMEN: *Ofrezco respuestas a lo que considero son los aspectos más destacados de las críticas de John Biro, James Freeman, David Hitchcock, Robert Pinto, Harvey Siegel y Luis Vega al modelo normativo para la argumentación que he desarrollado en Giving Reasons. Cada respuesta se articula en torno a una cuestión principal, i.e., la distinción entre normatividad constitutiva y regulativa dentro de los modelos de la Teoría de la Argumentación, la evaluación semántica de la argumentación, el concepto de justificación, las diferencias entre el modelo de Toulmin y mi modelo de argumento y el análisis de la dimension pragmática de la argumentación.*

Palabras clave: *el concepto de justificación; normatividad constitutiva y regulativa; afirmaciones inferenciales; evaluación semántica; modelo de toulmin; garantes; dimensión pragmática de la argumentación.*

First of all, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all the contributors to this volume for their insightful observations. I hope that these responses, which have had to be less detailed and complete than what I would have liked, are worth of them.

Due to strict space constraints, I have focused on what I take to be the most salient aspects of their criticisms. Thus, my response to each author's contribution is articulated on a main question; but I have had to leave unanswered other interesting points that they also raise. Hopefully, we will have occasion to discuss further in the future…!

1. Constitutive and regulative normativity

The normative model proposed in *Giving Reasons* is mainly grounded on a speech-act analysis of argumentation. One of the main problems that Biro and Siegel find in this proposal is that such approach "can tell us only whether someone is arguing, not whether she is arguing well, by whatever criterion" (p. 281).

In section 2.5.5 of *Giving Reasons*, I argue that normative models for argumentation must deploy two types of normative proposals. On the one hand, they must be able to distinguish argumentation from other type of phenomena, so as to ground the differ-

ence between *real* and *false* argumentation.[1] This type of normative proposal would be *constitutive* of the concept *argumentation*. On the other hand, normative models must be able to tell the difference between good argumentation and bad argumentation. This type of normative proposal would be *regulative*. Biro and Siegel take that a speech-act analysis of argumentation can be, at it best, just constitutively normative, but not regulatively normative.

Actually, they also have doubts on my proposal regarding the former type of normativity. In their view, "there is no single thing, argumentation, that can have the different sorts of property the various approaches Bermejo-Luque distinguishes focus on. In fact, as she herself allows, these different approaches take their objects of study to be different" (p. 280).

Certainly, it is commonly acknowledged that logical (and some epistemic) models focus on arguments, dialectical models focus on argumentative procedures and rhetorical models focus on argumentative processes. But this view somehow contradicts the actual practice within the field: in fact, current proposals take themselves to be rivals. How can it be? Because, despite they adopt different *theoretical objects* – i.e., their corresponding characterizations of argumentation as a product, a procedure or a process – they aim to deal with the same *phenomenon* – i.e. *argumentation*, whatever it is. Each theory takes its theoretical object to be the best way to deal with the real phenomenon of *argumentation*; and this is why, for example, despite they certainly adopt different theoretical objects, Biro and Siegel criticize Pragma-dialectics (or I myself criticize Biro and Siegel's proposal).[2]

The main goal of *Giving Reasons* is to defend a conception of argumentation as a certain type of speech-act. As I try to show throughout the book, this theoretical object has many advantages over other models' theoretical objects: not only at a purely theoretical level (for, as I argue in section 2.5, it is a suitable starting point in order to avoid instrumentalism and, with it, the *justification problem*), but also respecting our common goal of dealing with argumentation as a phenomenon (for it enables, among other things, an integrated account of argumentation's justificatory and persuasive powers and is fruitful enough to deal with related phenomena such as the relationship between reasoning and arguing, with non-verbal, indirect and non-literal argumentation, etc.). The extent to which I succeed in showing this will be a measure of the suitability of my approach compared to others. (It would be great if, because of its suitability to ground a normative model, people start thinking of argumentation in terms of the second-order speech-act complex of arguing!)

Biro and Siegel's second line of criticism has to do with the regulatively normative part of my proposal. They contend that my object of study, i.e. acts of arguing, cannot

---

[1] In *Giving Reasons*, I argue that certain types of fallacies, like the *ad baculum*, pivot on the trick of pretending to be arguing when in fact one is doing something instead (like, for example, menacing the addressee).

[2] In section 2.4.2 of *Giving Reasons*, I analyze in more detail the distinction between the theoretical object of a normative model for argumentation and the target phenomenon this model is meant to deal with.

be good or bad in the non-instrumentalist sense that, we agree, must ground a proper account of argumentative value. In their view, "if 'argumentation' really means 'arguing', the objects with which the theory deals (acts) do not have logical properties, and if it means 'arguments' (structured sets of propositions purporting to provide support for beliefs), a theory of how to tell when those do what they purport to do has no room for dialectical or rhetorical considerations." (p. 281)

Certainly, most acts do not have such properties, but speech-acts do have semantic and syntactic properties: for example, assertions, claims and other types of constatives can be true or false and can be syntactically right or flawed. On my account, the semantic and syntactic properties of acts of arguing determine their logical value, i.e., whether their target-claims are correct or not. (I will come back to this account of the logical value of acts of arguing when discussing Freeman's and Pinto's criticisms). But just as assertions are not good *qua assertions* just by being semantically and syntactically good (they have to be pragmatically good as well), acts of arguing are not good *qua argumentation* just by being logically good.

On my account the logical value of an act of arguing is crucial. But it is not enough to determine its argumentative value, i.e. whether the act of arguing succeeds in *showing* its target-claim to be correct, which is, in turn, my proposed definition of "justification".[3] Actually, provided that Biro and Siegel agree that *justification* is the sort of value our normative models should aim at characterize, I would say that logic is not enough for them either. For, in their view, "to ask whether that object is a good one of its kind is, in the case of arguments, to ask whether *it can be used* to lead to justified belief" (p. 282, my italics).

In order to preserve a certain metaphysical parsimony, I prefer to think of arguments as representations of the semantic and syntactic properties of particular acts of arguing. That is, contrary to Biro and Siegel, who claim that "an act of arguing is the deployment of an abstract object with semantic and syntactic properties" (p. nn), I think that arguments are posits, mere reconstructions. But I am willing to accept that a good argument is an argument *that can be used* to justify. The question is then: can a good argument be *used* badly? And, in this case, would it lead to justified belief?

Biro and Siegel do not take pragmatic conditions to determine argument goodness. Fair enough. But they are bound to admit pragmatic conditions for justification if they do not want to refuse the idea that good arguments can be used "badly" (for example, by using them in order to support a claim which is not the target-claim – which is what we do when we commit, for example, a *straw man* fallacy).

It might seem that Biro, Siegel and I are not so far away from each other: the sort of activity I name "argumentation" might be regarded by them as the sort of activity one is engaged in when "using" an argument for justifying a claim. However, unlike them, I contend that it is crucial not to forget that this is a communicative activity, that is, an activity pragmatically constrained by its very nature as a certain type of communication. On my account, the pragmatic constraints of argumentation corres-

---

[3] On my account, good argumentation is argumentation providing justification to its target-claim, in the sense of showing it to be correct.

pond to the dialectical and rhetorical conditions of arguing. This is why Biro and Sie-gel question "the viability and, indeed, desirability" of integrating argumentation's log-ical, dialectical and rhetorical dimensions: in their view, pragmatic constraints do not determine justification. But this position, I have tried to show, is untenable for anyone acknowledging that arguments are *used* for justifying.

Biro and Siegel try to avoid the need of appealing to the idea of "using arguments with the purpose of justifying" by providing the following definition of *argumenthood* and *argument goodness*: "what makes a set of propositions an argument for *p* is its suita-bility to be deployed – whether or not it actually is – to justify someone in believing that *p*, and what makes such an argument a good one is that it does in fact provide good reasons for believing that *p* – whether its target (or, indeed, anyone) actually comes to believe that *p* on its basis" (p. 283). But I find this account even more prob-lematic. First: what does it mean to say that a set of propositions "can be deployed to justify someone in believing that *p*"? If, in normal circumstances, someone tells you "my name is Jean", she is certainly deploying a proposition in a way that will certainly justify you in believing that her name is Jean. Yet, "my name is Jean" is not an argu-ment. Second: what does it mean to say that an argument "provides *good reason* for be-lieving something"? If, in certain circumstances, someone offers you a very bad argu-ment, he will be giving you good reason for believing that he is not too smart. Yet, his bad argument is not a good argument for this belief.

In order to avoid these counterexamples, Biro and Siegel need to say, rather, that the content of the belief to be believed because of the goodness of the argument cor-responds to the content of the conclusion of this argument. That is, they have to say that the argument *is* not a good reason for this belief, but rather *contains* a good reason for it. And how can an argument "contain" a good reason? That is, what is a good rea-son in this sense? On my account, it is just a claim showing that the target-claim for which that claim constitutes a reason indeed is correct. But Biro and Siegel do not think of reasons as speech-acts. This is why, in my view, their constitutively and regu-latively normative proposals cannot really work as a model for argumentation.

2. The semantic value of argumentation

As pointed out above, James Freeman's detailed analysis focuses on my proposal for determining the logical value of acts of arguing. He has serious misgivings regarding my accounts of qualifiers, inference-claims and validity, and my contention that logical normativity is not a matter of form, but a matter of the pragmatic conditions in which inferences supervene.

In *Giving Reasons*, I follow Toulmin's intuition that qualifiers are the key to deter-mine logical value. But my adoption of a speech-act model makes my strategy a little different from Toulmin's. I characterize argumentation as a second-order speech-act complex, that is, a speech-act composed of the second-order speech-acts of adducing (i.e., the reason) and concluding (i.e., the target-claim). These speech-acts are related to each other because of their relationship to another speech-act, namely, the implicit in-ference-claim that is also constitutive of any act of arguing. By means of this infe-rence-claim, a couple of first-order constatives *R* and *C* (whether directly or indirectly,

literally or non-literally performed) become the second-order speech-acts of adducing and concluding. Normally, the fact that the speaker has used a qualifier like "probably," "necessarily," "evidently," etc., or a expression like "so," "therefore," "since," "consequently," etc., authorizes us to make this linguistic presumption, which amounts to interpret the speaker's performance as an act of arguing indeed.

This distinction between the constatives that any act of arguing would consist of and the act of arguing proper grounds my distinction between *ontological* and *epistemic qualifiers*. Without aiming to get into deep philosophical issues, I contended that, in saying that a certain representation of the world is true, necessary, possible, impossible, plausible, acceptable, probable, presumable, etc. we are saying something about its representativeness respecting the world. All these expressions would then be *ontological qualifiers*, making explicit the type and degree of pragmatic force with which we put forward the corresponding contents in our constatives. On the other hand, in saying that a claim holds truly, necessarily, possibly, plausibly, probably, presumably, etc. (or alternatively, that it is likely that *p*, that it might be the case that *p*, that certainly *p*, etc.), we are saying something about the status of this claim as knowledge, about the confidence we should bank on this claim or our entitlement to it. That would be the role of *epistemic qualifiers*, which express the type and degree of pragmatic force of our acts of arguing.[4]

On this account, Freeman's observation that "on many occasions, we put forward a conclusion as simply being true" (p. 291) would be misguided: acts of concluding involve two kinds of pragmatic force, namely, that of the ontological qualifier of the corresponding claim as such claim and that of the epistemic qualifier of this claim as the target-claim of the act of arguing. Besides, he would be wrong in saying that I do not conveniently distinguish between "the necessity of the consequence and the necessity of the consequent" (p. 293): on my account, when we use deductive acts of arguing for supporting contingent truths, such as the far-famed ones reporting the mortality of Socrates, what we do is to put forward that *necessarily* (epistemic qualifier) it is *true* (ontological qualifier) that Socrates is mortal. Actually, as I explain in section 7.2.3, we can also have other combinations of epistemic and ontological qualifiers in the target-claim. For example, because of the reasons that we can adduce for them, certain ontologically necessary truths may have to be epistemically qualified just by a "likely." This is the case, for example, when mathematicians *check* (instead of *demonstrate*) recalcitrant hypotheses such as Fermat's last theorem or Goldbach's conjecture by considering a large amount of numbers. As acts of arguing for the corresponding hypotheses, these strategies are inductive because their inference-claims are not necessary mathematical truths, but (more or less) plausible claims in the lines of "if a mathematical

---

[4] As I point out in section 7.3.2 of *Giving Reasons*, there are epistemic qualifiers without a straightforward ontological counterpart, such as "likely", "no doubt", "in all probability", as well as certain uses of "could," "must," "should," "may," "might," etc. I take the correspondence between epistemic and ontological qualifiers to be idiomatic, something to be empirically determined for each language.

hypothesis holds for an enormous amount of numbers, then it is correct".[5] Yet, if Fermat's last theorem or Goldbach's conjecture is true, it is a mathematical necessity.

Now, this is how I assume Toulmin's distinction between deduction and induction: on my account, this distinction is a matter of the ontological qualifier that we should use to qualify the inference-claim of the corresponding act of arguing. That is, acts of arguing whose inference-claims are necessary truths (ontological qualifier) entitle us to draw our conclusions with a "necessarily" (epistemic qualifier): they are deductive. In turn, acts of arguing whose inference-claims are just probable, plausible, acceptable, etc. (ontological qualifiers), entitle us to draw our conclusions only with a "probably", a "plausibly", a "likely", etc. (epistemic qualifiers): they are non-deductive.[6]

Thus, I characterize the validity of an act of arguing as a matter of this act having an inference-claim whose ontological qualifier, as presented by the speaker in her actual act of arguing, is correct indeed. In being correct, such inference-claim sanctions the epistemic qualifier implicitly or explicitly used for *concluding* the target-claim. Consequently, non-deductive arguments may also be *valid* in this sense. In turn, an act of arguing will be *formally* valid if its inference-claim is true because of its form. Thus, for example, acts of arguing like "it's raining; streets will be wet" are not formally valid, but the traditional reinterpretation of such argumentations as enthymematic, i.e., as having implicit premises that turn them into instances of *modus ponens*, is formally valid indeed: "it's raining and if it rains streets will be wet; therefore, streets will be wet" has as its inference-claim a conditional which is true because of its form.

So, I do not "characterize validity as having a valid logical form" (p.290) and I do not "confuse syntax and semantics" (p. 290). Rather, my thesis in Chapter IV that logical normativity is pragmatic, not a matter of form, relies on the observation that "being true because of its form" is something that depends on the formalization and the formal system on which we judge that the inference-claim is true.

As I see it, all this account of logical value and of the nature of logical normativity is Toulminian, at least in spirit. There is one thing, however, about which Freeman rightly observes that I do not quite follow Toulmin. This is my conception of warrants. I will come back to this question in dealing with Robert Pinto's criticisms, but I would like to make a couple of remarks here.

As pointed out above, on my account, arguments are just representations of acts of arguing. This is something both Freeman and Pinto seem to forget at times. My theoretical object is acts of arguing, and the elements I deal with come from my characterization of acts of arguing as second-order speech-act complexes. Most of these ele-

---

[5] For a long time mathematicians could not provide a deductive proof for Fermat's last theorem, but they thought that it was *likely* true because it held for the very many numbers that had been examined up to that time. And, so far, we only have this kind of non-deductive arguments for Goldbach's conjecture.

[6] Actually, I do not make a sharp contrast between deductive and inductive inferences, in the sense of inferences whose conclusions follow of necessity and those whose conclusions are less than certain. For example, acts of arguing having pragmatic presumptions as inference-claims will qualify their conclusions with a "presumably", which is a kind of qualification that does not seem to fit well in any of these two groups.

ments have their counterpart in Toulmin's model of argument, but not all: for example, Toulmin does not distinguish between epistemic and ontological qualifiers.

In principle, in representing the logical properties of acts of arguing, I take warrants to stand for inference-claims. There is a lot of controversy on Toulmin's conception of warrants, but most argumentation theorists understand that they are meant to be general, rule-like statements sanctioning the step from reason to conclusion. Contrastingly, I take that the propositional content of the inference-claim is, simply, that of the material, truth-functional conditional. To this, Freeman, in the same vein as Pinto, objects: "truth-conditions would not seem sufficient to express the expected connection between the propositional contents of the reason and the inference-target, or the corresponding premise and conclusion. To adduce a reason for a target-claim one asserts not just that if the reason is true, so is the target claim, but that the target-claim follows in some sense from the reason." (p. 290)

Yet, following Grice's account of conditionals, I take inference-claims of the form "if 79974 is divisible by 3, then 79974 is divisible by 9" to be conversationally inappropriate, but not false. In other words, I think that an act of arguing such as "79974 is divisible by 3, therefore 79974 is divisible by 9" is semantically correct, but pragmatically flawed because the reason is irrelevant. To my mind, this kind of irrelevance is pragmatic: we put forward a reason in order to show a target claim to be correct, but the reason does not work for this end. On Grice's account, the only circumstances in which it is appropriate to assert a conditional is where the speaker is ignorant of the truth-values of R and C, but believes that if R happens to be true, C will as well.

Thus, in section 3.3.3 of *Giving Reasons*, I explain that I take the truth-value of inference-claims to be that of the corresponding material conditional, whereas I admit that their assertibility conditions involve, no doubt, certain relationships of relevance between R and C. These relationships can be causal, conceptual, logical, etc., and if they do not hold, we will criticize the act of arguing for being pragmatically flawed.

However, let me insist that, in my account, inference-claims can have other values than truth-values: they can be probable (to a degree x), plausible (to a degree y), necessary, possible, presumable, etc. Freeman correctly points out that, in dealing with inference-claims whose ontological qualifier is a probability value, we should not deal with them as truth-conditional claims. And, of course, I agree. Actually, as I say in section 7.2.3 of *Giving Reasons*, in these cases, conditional probability will work better as an estimate of the ontological qualifier of such inference-claims. In turn, in order to determine whether a certain inference-claim is presumable, we will have to consider whether accepting the conditional makes sense in the circumstances; and in order to determine whether it is necessary or not, we will have to consider, for example, whether it holds in every possible world, if possible worlds semantics is your preferred account of necessity.[7]

---

[7] I do not mean that I have a theory of the semantics of any type of conditional. Certainly, my contention is that determining the value of an act of arguing involves determining the ontological qualifiers of its reason and inference-claim. But I do not think that a normative model for argumentation is a theory of such a thing. Actually, one might be a skeptic about necessity, for example, and yet admit that valid deductive arguments are those having necessary inference-claims, that is, none.

3. A conception of justification

David Hitchcok's main discrepancy with my account is related to my conception of justification. He agrees that justification is the sort of value our normative models for argumentation should characterize, but is unhappy with my particular proposal. He has three, closely related, qualms. First, he takes that acts of arguing are attempts at justifying that the action or emotion expressed in its conclusion is correct – and not attempts at justifying target-claims, which is what I defend. Second, he doubts that we can always reconstruct reasons and conclusions as (qualified) constatives. And third, he finds my reconstruction of justification as "showing correctness" wanting.

There is a first, straightforward answer to the overall criticism of my conception of justification: as I explain in Chapter II of *Giving Reasons*, my use of the term "justification" is technical; it is meant to be just a name for the sort of value a normative model of argumentation should characterize. That is, I contended that good argumentation for a claim that *p* is the same as justification for a claim that *p*. As argued in that chapter, this was the way I tried to overcome the justification problem that normative models for argumentation are bounded to face. My strategy was to think of them as descriptions of the pre-theoretical concept of argumentation goodness which is, in turn, a value that constitutes argumentation as an activity: arguing would be, constitutively, aiming at justifying. It is because individuals are able to recognize this value that they are able to say of each other that they argue. Thus, a characterization of argumentation as behavior aimed at a certain goal would in turn result in a definition of what counts as arguing well, namely, behaving so as to achieve this goal.

In the particular linguistic-pragmatic model developed in *Giving Reasons*, argumentation is defined as a communicative activity whose constitutive goal is to show a target-claim to be correct. Particularly, I characterized argumentation as a second-order speech-act complex that, illocutionarily, counts as an attempt to show its target-claim to be correct. Consequently, I assumed that any piece of argumentation actually showing its target-claim to be correct has the sort of value that a normative model for argumentation must characterize, i.e., it is argumentation achieving justification for its target-claim.

Now, this kind of speech-act is the *theoretical object* of my linguistic-pragmatic normative model. As argued above in responding to Biro and Siegel, this means that the adequacy of this model will be a measure of this object's ability to represent the real phenomenon argumentation theorists are interested in. My contention is that any practice that can be said to be argumentation can be characterized as such second-order speech-act complex. But this is, at least to a great extent, an empirical thesis, something to be tested: it might be the case that certain phenomena that, pre-theoretically, we are willing to recognize as argumentation cannot be adequately dealt with using my model.[8]

---

[8] In turn, the value of my model, as of any other, will depend on how well it manages to interpret, analyze and evaluate real argumentation. To a great extent, then, such a value is a matter of the practical adequacy of this model.

But this "straightforward" response to Hitchcock's concern with my conception of justification is only part of a full answer: after all, I might have chosen any other term to designate *argumentative value*…! Indeed, I have the overall intuition that the centrality of Argumentation Theory within Philosophy derives from the fact that concepts such as *justification*, *reasons* and even *rationality* are, primarily, argumentative concepts. Of course, this is such a general and ambitious thesis that I will not even dare to argue for it here. *Giving Reasons* is just a first step in this direction. But part of its achievements regarding this general project depends on the plausibility of the idea that reasons, and the type of things something may be a reason for, are second-order constatives. This means that we argue for claims, not for the action or the emotion expressed in the conclusion of our arguments, which is Hitchcock's view.

As pointed out above, in *Giving Reasons* I provide an analysis of argumentation as a second-order speech-act complex, that is, a speech-act composed of a speech-act of adducing and a speech-act of concluding. On this account, acts of adducing and acts of concluding are constatives; but they are second-order constatives, because they can only be performed by means of first-order speech-acts. Paradigmatically, such first-order speech-acts are also constatives, but there are other possibilities. I provided an extension of Bach & Harnish's Speech Act Schema (SAS) in order to interpret and analyze particular acts of arguing, including what I take to be cases of indirect or non-literal argumentation.

For example, in "I promise I'll take care, don't worry", two first-order speech-acts (a promise and a request) would turn into the constative speech-act of adducing that the arguer commits herself to take care and the constative speech-act of concluding that the addressee should not worry. In general, the idea behind this model is that when we argue, two constatives (whether directly or indirectly performed, literal or non-literal) become an act of adducing, R, and an act of concluding, C. This happens because of their relationship with an implicit inference-claim whose propositional content is "if R, then C." In a few words, it is because we can attribute to the speaker the implicit inference-claim "if I commit myself to take care, then you should not worry" that we can interpret her utterances of "I promise I'll take care" and "don't worry" as a single argumentative speech-act. This inference-claim is, precisely, the reason why acts of adducing and acts of concluding have to be constatives: the inference-claim establishes an inferential relationship between their contents by stating that if something *is the case* then something other *is also the case*.

Now, imagine that, as Hitchcock says, someone argues for a directive such as "take them all". On which ground could we say that a given reason for it is a good reason? Something like "I don't need any of them" would be a good reason for "you may take them all" whereas "I need the shelf for myself" would rather be good for "you must take them all". As conclusions, directives are too unspecific.

As I argue in several passages of *Giving Reasons*, the sort of persuasion that argumentative communication enables is legitimate, by contrast to other type of symbolic inducements, in the sense that it is meant to be the result of making others *see* (whatever that means) that something is correct. But the correctness of an action or an emotion, which are the sort of things Hitchcock takes to be the only suitable objects

to argue for (p. 303) is, in itself, something too ambiguous: is this correctness a matter of *moral correctness*, of *practical adequacy*, of *desirability* (as opposed to mere desire), of *permissibility*, of *practical possibility* or *necessity*, of *accountability*, etc…? In order to evaluate a piece of argumentation, it is crucial to get ride of such ambiguity. For this reason, even though I agree with Hitchcock that argumentation enables beliefs, actions, and even emotions, to be coordinated with others by rational means, I take that this coordination is always brought about *via* beliefs. In other words, argumentation provides theoretical justification for what we argue for. This may explain one of the main features of argumentative persuasion: namely, that this sort of persuasion cannot be forced by making salient motives that would make it pragmatically right accepting a given directive, comissive, expressive, etc. – like when we are threatened or bribed, for example. As I see it, argumentation can promote agreement on practical matters because it promotes agreement about what is the case and this includes what we "should," "need," "shouldn't," "must," "cannot," "may," "might," etc. "do", "desire", "believe", "decide", "fear", "expect", etc.

Accordingly, in my view, those pieces of argumentation containing speech-acts other than constatives should be interpreted as indirect argumentation. In turn, in "A unitary schema for arguments by analogy" (Bermejo-Luque, forthcoming) I have argued that, even though analogies, like metaphors, do not count as proper assertions – which is the reason why they happen to be such powerful rhetorical devices– addressees of analogical and metaphorical argumentation are bounded to make sense of analogical and metaphorical reasons as full-fledged constatives, on pain of being defenseless in the face of their literal falsity (metaphors) or of their trivial truth (analogies). Analogical and metaphorical argumentation would be, on a SAS basis account, non-literal argumentation.

4. More on inference-claims and warrants

I have provided part of my responses to Robert Pinto's qualms in responding to Freeman's. I hope the following remarks will complete my answer to what I take to be a common misunderstanding. As I see it, this misunderstanding is based on a failure to notice that my conception of warrants is the result of (1) my conception of argumentation as a speech-act – not the other way round – and (2) the corresponding view of arguments – and of the elements an argument consists of – just as mere representations of acts of arguing – and of the elements acts of arguing consists of. I think this failure is based on an inherent ambiguity in Toulmin's approach.[9]

Pinto finds my account of inference-claims wanting, as compared with Toulmin's account of warrants. Following Toulmin, he considers, with Freeman, that, contrary to inference-claims, "warrants must be *general* statements" and, in addition, he underlines that "when stated explicitly [warrants] are *practical* statements about what we may "safely" do or what we are *entitled* to do" (p. 314).

---

[9] Unfortunately, I cannot get into this question here. I have dealt with it in sections 4.3.4 and 4.4.6 of *Giving Reasons*.

Let me explain, first, why Pinto misrepresents my position when he says that, in my view, "nothing further is required to link reason and conclusion *or to "justify" the step from reason to conclusion*" (p. 314, my italics).

Certainly, in my account, inference-claims stand for nothing but the inferential link of the act of arguing. Yet, I have no problem with admitting that this link itself may be in need of justification: inference-claims are claims after all. What I do actually reject is the idea that the way inference-claims bridge the gap between reason and target-claim is by *justifying* the step from reason to target-claim. Inference-claims just *make explicit* this step: they *express* the inferential relationship the speaker establishes between reason and target-claim, just by arguing. In turn, I take warrants to be mere representations of inference-claims in arguments. Consequently, contrary to what Pinto suggests in footnote 8, I have no doubt that warrants can be made explicit: indeed, this is what we do when we represent an act of arguing by using this model of argument![10] My contention is, instead, that *inference-claims* are necessarily implicit in *acts of arguing* because they are the linguistic presumptions we make in order to interpret the speaker's utterance of "she is red haired" as a reason for the claim that "she is hot-tempered". It is because we interpret the speaker as establishing an inferential relationship between these two claims that we interpret her words as a unitary communicative contribution, that is, a full-fledged act of arguing.

But Pinto considers that warrants must be something else. Particularly, he takes them to be (general) rules that *entitle* us to make the corresponding inferences. He says:

> to see why there is a question about the *nature* of that step, we need only reflect on the example from Scriven (...). Where the "step" in the argument is *from* a reason expressed by 'she has red hair' *to* a conclusion expressed by 'she is hot-tempered', it is not immediately clear which *features* of the reason are supposed to link it to the conclusion – that is to say, the *bearing* which the reason is supposed by the arguer to have on that conclusion is not immediately clear. Is the premise supposed to support the conclusion because it says of a *person* that that person has red hair? Or is it supposed to support the conclusion because it says of a *woman* that she has red hair? The nature of the step, and the bearing of the reason on the conclusion, is not clarified by pointing to an "inference-claim" which merely embeds reason and conclusion in a material conditional. (p.316)

I absolutely agree that the inference-claim is not enough to fully determine the interpretation of the reason and, also, that a full interpretation of the reason is crucial in order to appraise the argument. But I do not think that this view is incompatible with my proposal. Let me explain this by considering a similar criticism by Freeman. Freeman says:

> [T]o answer Toulmin's warrant-generating question – How do you get there? – one must indicate some general connection between data and claim. Although Toulmin allows "If D, then C" to frame the warrant, he indicates that a more candid way of formulating it is to say "Data *such as* D entitle one to draw conclusions, or make claims *such as* C" (1958, 98; italics added). Although

---

[10] All through the book, I have insisted on the idea that arguments are representations of acts of arguing, and I have tried to make clear the distinction between the elements of the act of arguing and the elements of the argument. Thus, for example, I have used the terms "premise", "conclusion" and "warrant" in order to avoid misunderstanding with the corresponding elements of the act of arguing "reason", "target-claim" and "inference-claim" (see section 4.4.7, where I provide a diagram of my proposed model of argument).

> egregiously vague, the "such as" indicates generality here. Should someone ask why D is a reason
> for C, to answer "If D, then C" would provide no explanation. (p. 295)

I think that the conditional (i.e., the implicit inference-claim) just makes explicit what we *do* when we adduce D as a reason for C. Therefore, of course, saying "if D, then C" does not answer why D is a reason for C. When we ask such a question, we are rather asking why the speaker's implicit inference-claim is correct: after all, it is because we attribute such a claim to the speaker that we take her act of putting forward a claim D as a *reason* for her claim C. That is, in asking why D is a reason for C, we are demanding from the speaker a reason for her implicit inference-claim. This reason for the inference-claim is what I name the *backing* of the act of arguing.

And, as pointed out above in explaining my truth-functional account of inference-claims, a backing showing an inference-claim to be true "by showing that its consequent is true, without appealing to any aspect of the content of the antecedent" (p. 317) will render the argument semantically valid, but pragmatically flawed.

5. *The pragmatic conditions of argumentation*

In a way, Luis Vega's misgivings about my overall proposal are opposite to Biro and Siegel's: while the latter complain that I am unnecessarily, and even undesirably, committed with the pragmatic intricacies of argumentation, Vega demands a stronger role for the dialectical and rhetorical dimensions of arguing. As he sees it:

> [T]he theoretical apparatus that G.R. [*Giving Reasons*] seems to need in order to bring about its
> proposal is not only precise but also restricted: in principle, it seems enough to have a linguisti-
> cally competent speaker, a world of beliefs and of argumentative or discursive intentions and a
> rather monological framework, where the arguer's interlocutors do not decisively count for the
> purposes, the success or failures of his activity. (p. 322)

In Vega's view, a good account of argumentation should take interlocutors and contexts into account.

Actually, his concern with the role of interlocutors and contexts within a normative model for argumentation is displayed at two levels: on the one hand, interlocutors and contexts would be crucial for determining the interpretation of certain pieces of communication as argumentation. He offers two nice examples to make this point. On the other, interlocutors and contexts would partly determine the pragmatic evaluation of argumentation.

Regarding the former concern, pragmatic-linguistic analyses have traditionally been very concerned indeed with the role of interlocutors and contexts in interpreting communication. And the model that Bach and Harnish proposed in their *Linguistic Communication and Speech-Acts* (1979), which is the one I take as a basis for characterizing the speech-act complex of arguing, is no exception. This model deals with interpretation as an inferential process in which "the speaker provides, by what he says, a basis for the hearer to infer what the speaker intends to be thereby doing" (1979, 5). Thus, it involves the following elements: 1) the general framework of a *Linguistic Community* (CL), which would sanction certain expressions as meaningful or meaningless, in general; 2) a set of *Mutual Contextual Beliefs* (MCBs), which ground, together with the speaker's words, the inference the hearer makes and takes himself to be intended to

make; 3) a *Communicative Presumption* (CP), which is the mutual belief in CL that whenever a member S says something in L to another member H, he is doing so with some recognizable illocutionary intent; and , finally, 4) a *Linguistic Presumption* (LP), which is the mutual belief in the linguistic community CL that (i) the members of CL share L, and that (ii) whenever any member S utters any *e* in L to any to any other member H, H can identify what S is saying, given that H knows the meaning(s) of e in L and is aware of the appropriate background information (Bach & Harnish 1979, 7).

Obviously, all these elements involve hearers and contexts in a crucial way. And my addition of a fifth element – meant to characterize, in particular, the second-order speech-act complex of arguing – abounds in this purpose of making full-sense of that which is interactive and contextual in any kind of communication. This element is an *Argumentative Presumption* (AP), i.e., the mutual belief for H and S that S has implicitly made an *inference-claim*.

Unfortunately, I cannot provide here a full analysis of the examples Luis Vega proposes, but my contention is that any such analysis will involve hearers and contexts in the way he takes to be necessary for adequately analyzing what was going on in these argumentative interactions.

On the other hand, Vega also points at the need of taking into account interlocutors and contexts in order to determine the dialectical and rhetorical value of argumentation. Regarding my characterization of the dialectical dimension of argumentation in terms of the recursive nature of the activity of giving and asking for reasons, Vega says that this proposal does not seem to take into account the particulars of real interlocutors, their real demands and the way interlocutors influence the commitments assumed by arguers (p. 323).

In my view, this criticism misrepresents my proposal. As I explain in section 5.2 of *Giving Reasons*, in arguing we manage to communicate not just our beliefs, but also the reasons that are supposed to show that the corresponding claims are correct. Moreover, we can prompt reasonings that may cause such beliefs in our addressees. Thus, in argumentation, when the speaker offers a claim *r* as a reason for a claim that *p*, the addressee is put in a position either to believe that *p* because of *r* or to consider the value of *r* as a reason that shows the claim that *p* to be correct. Given the interactive nature of argumentation as a communicative activity, arguers are certainly committed to take into account their interlocutors' demands in order to be credited as actually arguing: any contribution by a speaker must be relevant for the communicative exchange, and in the particular case of argumentation it must be able to be regarded by the addressee as an attempt to show a target-claim to be correct. This is so because acts of arguing are, illocutionarily, attempts at showing a target claim to be correct.

Regarding my account of the rhetorical constraints of arguing, Vega rightly observes that, if an act of arguing is an attempt at showing a target-claim to be correct, then this "showing" should be inextricably linked to that interlocutor to whom this act of arguing is addressed. After all, showing something is showing it to someone, and in order to do this, we have to take this person into account (p. nn). But, again, I think Vega misrepresents my position: my use of Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) is precisely meant to respond to this demand.

In *Giving Reasons*, I argued in fact that the rhetorical dimension of argumentation plays a crucial role in determining its value. If good argumentation is argumentation showing its target-claim correct, then argument goodness depends both on the actual correctness of the target-claim and on the goodness of the argumentative act as a means for *showing* this. That is, for an act of arguing to be a good one, it will have to be a suitable instrument for producing that cognitive state in its addressee. After dealing with the question of the conflation between an interpretative use of CP, (which is involved in the Speech Act Schema for acts of arguing, as developed in Chapter III) and the possibility of using CP as a regulative standard, I proposed to adopt Grice's CP as a means to determine how well an act of arguing plays as an act of showing.

As it is well known, CP establishes general conditions for a talk exchange to be pragmatically adequate, in the sense of being "efficiently informative," which is, according to Grice, the primary purpose of any talk exchange. Consequently, the pragmatic conditions that determine how well an act of arguing plays at making it salient to an addressee that a target-claim is correct would state that acts of arguing have to be *relevant* respecting that goal, they have to be adequately informative *quantitatively* and *qualitatively*, and *clear* enough to be understood. Argumentation that, respecting the goal of showing a target-claim to be correct, is irrelevant, quantitatively or qualitatively inadequate, or unclear will fail to show what it was aimed at showing, namely, that its target-claim is correct: it will then be pragmatically flawed, it will not succeed in justifying, or, in other words, it will be bad argumentation.[11] Of course, relevance, quality, quantity and clarity are context-dependent properties. This means that, on this account, there is no way of bypassing the particular conditions that the contexts of each piece of argumentation impose, including the fact that it is addressed to a particular individual or audience. But this context-sensibility does not react to factors such as the eventual stubbornness of the addressee or his inability to understand certain expressions.[12]

In section 6.4.2 of *Giving Reasons*, I also pointed out, following Grice, that there might be different sorts of other maxims operative in different argumentative contexts. Because of this, I recommended to take into account the possibility of finding additional requirements for "correctly showing" within particular argumentative frameworks. I myself mentioned the examples of forensic debate and jurisprudence as contexts procedurally regulated by additional sorts of circumstantial constraints, like the distribution of time, the maximization of resources, the avoidance of having false positives (innocent people declared guilty), etc. These additional constraints would al-

---

[11] In *Giving Reasons* I offered an account of several traditional fallacies as violations of one or another of the maxims of CP, but in no way I mean that there is a univocal relationship between the set of traditional fallacies and the set of possible violations of the maxims. I agree with Vega that traditional fallacies involve a component of trickiness that is not necessarily at stake in many cases of violations of maxims.

[12] For more on the tension between context-dependency and the need of avoiding particularisms, see sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4, where I work out the distinction between something being funny, scary, sad, etc. and its producing fun, fear, sadness, etc. on particular individuals.

so play a role in determining how well a piece of argumentation accomplishes its pragmatic constraints as a good act of showing.

However, I have also been concerned with distinguishing argumentation from argumentative processes such as public debate or deliberation. My model is just a model for something that is only one part or aspect of these different kinds of processes: namely, acts of arguing. The procedural aspects that sanction particular argumentative exchanges (like the allocation of time for each party, turns of reply, etc., the norms of etiquette and good manners, the settlement of the agenda, the recognition of individuals as legitimate or illegitimate parties in the discussion, etc.) are, no doubt, of the utmost importance. However, as I see it, they are out of the scope of a normative model for argumentation, because they do not determine whether our reasons justify our target-claims; rather, they are key questions to determine the extent to which a given argumentative exchange may be said to be legitimate or adequate from a practical point of view.

REFERENCES

Bach, K., and R.M. Harnish. 1979. *Linguistic Communication and Speech-Acts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Bermejo-Luque, Lilian. 2011. *Giving Reasons: A Linguistic-Pragmatic Approach to Argumentation Theory*. Argumentation Library, vol. 20. Dordrecht: Springer.
Bermejo-Luque, L. Forthcoming. A unitary schema for analogical argumentation.
Toulmin, S. E. 1958. *The Uses of Argument*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

LILIAN BERMEJO-LUQUE is a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC). She is the author of the book *Giving Reasons. A linguistic-pragmatic approach to Argumentation Theory* and editor of the journal *Revista Iberoamericana de Argumentación*.

ADDRESS: Instituto de Filosofía, CCHS–CSIC. c/ Albasanz, 26-28. 28037 Madrid (Spain). E-mail: lilian.bermejoluque@gmail.com