

Identification, Reconstruction and Evaluation of Arguments

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Outline

- Identification
 - fillers vs. claims
 - relations between claims
- Reconstruction
 - basic types of premises
 - Toulmin scheme
- Evaluation
 - ten rules for proper argumentation

Paraphrasing

#1 Expressing the same content in other words

- *“Educate yourself, educate yourself, educate yourself.”*
- *“I did not have moments of intimacy with that lady.”*
- <http://paraphrasing-tool.com/>

#2 Grasping the important content

- get rid of redundancies
- express the important content
- not necessary stated in other words

What is not important?

Our movement is about replacing a failed and corrupt political establishment with a new government controlled by you, the American people. The establishment has trillions of dollars at stake in this election. **For those who control the levers of power in Washington and for the global special interests, they partner with these people that don't have your good in mind.** The political establishment that is trying to stop us is the same group responsible for our disastrous trade deals, massive illegal immigration and economic and foreign policies that have bled our country dry. The political establishment has brought about the destruction of our factories and our jobs as they flee to Mexico, China and other countries all around the world. **It's a global power structure that is responsible for the economic decisions that have robbed our working class,** stripped our country of its wealth and put that money into the pockets of a handful of large corporations and political entities. **The only thing that can stop this corrupt machine is you.** The only force strong enough to save our country is us. The only people brave enough to vote out this corrupt establishment is you, the American people. **I'm doing this for the people and the movement and we will take back this country for you and we will make America great again. I'm Donald Trump and I approve this message.**

Simple taxonomy of fillers

1. Framing
 - *Who? Where? When?*
2. Background
 - *Why? Why now? What else should we know?*
3. Repetitions
 - *repetitions, repetitions*
4. Illustrations, examples
5. Language nuances
 - *definitions, etymology, sarcasm, rhetorical ornaments*
6. Details
 - *everything else*

Fillers?

Our movement is about replacing a failed and corrupt political establishment with a new government controlled by you, the American people. *[background]* The establishment has trillions of dollars at stake in this election. *[detail]* ~~For those who control the levers of power in Washington and for the global special interests, they partner with these people that don't have your good in mind.~~ The political establishment that is trying to stop us is the same group responsible for our disastrous trade deals, massive illegal immigration and economic and foreign policies that have bled our country dry. *[repetition]* The political establishment has brought about the destruction of our factories and our jobs as they flee to Mexico, China and other countries all around the world. *[illustration]* ~~It's a global power structure that is responsible for the economic decisions that have robbed our working class, stripped our country of its wealth and put that money into the pockets of a handful of large corporations and political entities.~~ *[repetition]* ~~The only thing that can stop this corrupt machine is you.~~ The only force strong enough to save our country is us. The only people brave enough to vote out this corrupt establishment is you, the American people. *[repetition]* ~~I'm doing this for the people and the movement and we will take back this country for you and we will make America great again.~~ I'm Donald Trump and I approve this message. *[framing]*

Relations between claims

1. **Motive**
 - *They detonated dynamite because **it was expired**.*
2. **Cause**
 - *Dynamite detonated because **there was a fire**.*
3. **Effect**
 - *Dynamite detonated and **killed a goat**.*
4. **Clarification**
 - *Dynamite detonated and **the explosion was huge**.*
5. **Backing**
 - *Dynamite detonated spontaneously because **there was nobody around**.*
6. **Implication**
 - *Dynamite detonated spontaneously so **it must have been unstable**.*

Barebone paraphrase

It's a global power structure that is responsible for the economic decisions that have robbed our working class.

[motive] For those who control the levers of power in Washington and for the global special interests, they partner with these people that don't have your good in mind.

[clarification] The only thing that can stop this corrupt machine is you.

[implication] I'm doing this for the people and the movement and we will take back this country for you and we will make America great again.

Current politicians do not care about working class because they care more about their own good and global interests. You can change it, therefore vote for Donald Trump.

Argumentative reconstruction

- argumentative support: a claim (conclusion) is made more acceptable due to its relation to other claims (premises)
- focus on backing and implication, they implement a basic structure of an argument:

Backing

1. *There was nobody around.*
2. *Therefore dynamite detonated spontaneously.*

Implication

1. *Dynamite detonated spontaneously.*
2. *Therefore it must have been unstable.*

Types of premises

(P1) There was nobody around.

(C) Therefore dynamite detonated spontaneously.

(P1) There was nobody around.

(P2) It is impossible to blow it off remotely.

(C) Therefore dynamite detonated spontaneously.

(P1) There was nobody around.

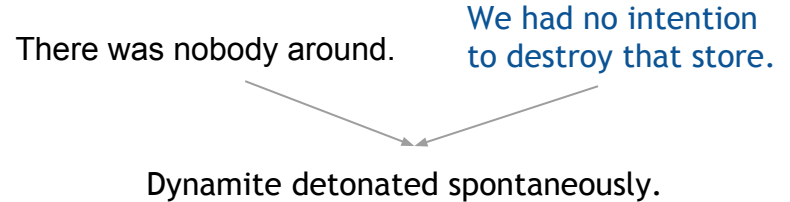
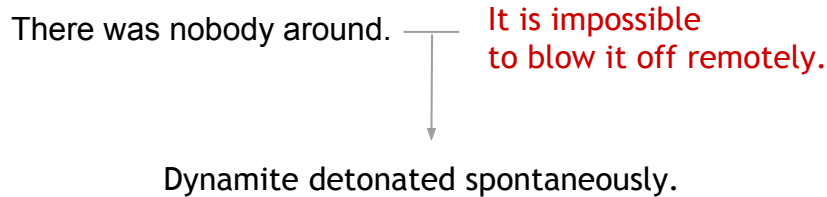
(P2) We had no intention to destroy that ammunition store.

(C) Therefore dynamite detonated spontaneously.

Stability of argument

- (P1) There was nobody around.
- (P2) It is impossible to blow it off remotely.
- (C) Therefore dynamite detonated spontaneously.

- (P1) There was nobody around.
- (P2) We had no intention to destroy that store.
- (C) Therefore dynamite detonated spontaneously.



Be careful!

Positive argument

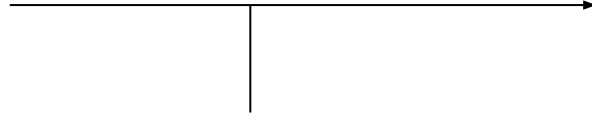
“Czech Postal Service is perfect. They deliver on time, it is cheap and employees are always nice.”

Negative argument

“Czech Postal Service is not perfect. They do not deliver on time, it is not cheap and employees are not always nice.”

Textbook example

Harry was born
in Bermuda



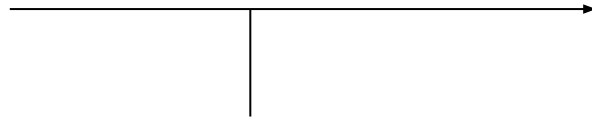
since

a man born in Bermuda will generally
be a British subject

presumably Harry is a
British subject

Dynamite example

there was
nobody around



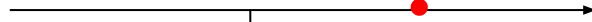
dynamite detonated
spontaneously

since
it is impossible
to detonate dynamite remotely

Dynamite example

not true

there was
nobody around



not sufficient

not relevant

since

it is impossible
to detonate dynamite remotely

not true

parallel argument

dynamite detonated
spontaneously

Evaluation of arguments

- We are surprisingly good at it, especially when it comes to arguments of others.
- Proper evaluation presupposes adequate
 - identification of intention of the partner
 - *Is he really arguing? Or is it some other kind of verbal activity?*
 - interpretation of argumentative structure
 - *Is this relevant? Is there a support relation?*
 - recognition of target of attack
 - *What just happened? Is the objection working?*

#1 Freedom rule

You cannot prevent the other from putting forward standpoints or casting doubts on standpoints.

- 1. In her campaign for president, Hillary Clinton has received \$100 million in contributions from Wall Street and hedge funds, says Trump.*
- 2. Chris Stevens was left helpless to die as Hillary Clinton soundly slept in her bed ... who knows if she was sleeping ... she might have been sleeping.*

#2 Burden-of-proof rule

When you put forward a standpoint, you are obliged to defend that standpoint. (Burden of proof is a set of duties describing how to participate in a discussion.)

- 1. America is Judeo-Christian nation because that's the way it is. Clinton would flood the country with terrorists.*
- 2. When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best... They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.*

#3 Standpoint rule

Attack on standpoint must relate to the standpoint that has indeed been advanced.

1. *Clinton wants to have open borders.*
2. *She wants to take your guns away.*

#4 Relevance rule

You can defend your standpoint only by arguments related to that standpoint.

1. *"The speech was a poignant speech that was well received by the American people," he said. "The words that she used were words that were personal to her." Therefore she did not plagiarise them.*
2. *Trump also has claimed repeatedly that Putin had called him a "genius." Russian language experts told us in May that Putin used a word meaning "colorful" or "bright," depending on the translation. Putin clarified in June that he called Trump "flamboyant."*

#5 Unexpressed premise rule

You may not present something as premise that has been left unexpressed by the other party or deny a premise that the other party left implicit.

- 1. I have nothing against homosexuals. Only, I think the age limit for homosexual relations should be higher, so we can avoid the danger that all young people become homosexuals.*
- 2. Hillary Clinton's energy agenda will cost the U.S. economy over \$5 trillion.*

#6 Starting point rule

You can not falsely present a premise as an accepted starting point, or deny a premise representing accepted starting point.

1. *Who have you been arguing with today?*
2. *Racial discrimination is illegal because it is a violation of law.*

#7 Argument scheme rule

A standpoint may not be regarded as conclusively defended if the defense does not take place by means of an appropriate argument scheme that is correctly applied.

(Argument scheme is a pattern or a stereotype of argumentation, e.g. argument by authority, causal reasoning, argument by example, ...)

1. *Immanuel Kant would approve a great wall between U.S. and Mexico, says Donald Trump.*
2. *You (Hillary Clinton) get a subpoena, and after getting the subpoena you delete 33,000 emails.*

#8 Validity rule

The argument must be logically valid or must be capable of being made valid.

- 1. If you eat spoiled food, you became orange. You are orange. Therefore you must have eaten spoiled food.*
- 2. If you eat spoiled food, you became orange. You have not eaten spoiled food. Therefore you are not orange.*

#9 Closure rule

Losing defender must retract the standpoint, successful defender makes the antagonist retract her doubts.

- 1. I have never seen a women being elected as an american president. Therefore you should vote for me.*
- 2. Your argument is fine but I am still not convinced. Let us agree to disagree.*

#10 Usage rule

Parties must not use any formulations that are insufficiently clear.

*Well, first of all, I want you to understand that the Democrats, and I've watched them very intensely, even though it's a very, very boring thing to watch, that **the Democrats are doing nothing with Social Security. They're leaving it the way it is. In fact, they want to increase it. They want to actually give more. And that's what we're up against. And whether we like it or not, that is what we're up against. I will do everything within my power not to touch Social Security, to leave it the way it is; to make this country rich again; to bring back our jobs; to get rid of deficits; to get rid of waste, fraud and abuse, which is rampant in this country, rampant, totally rampant.***