

Towards ‘Weight’ as a Rhetorical Concept

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Abstract Recent work in rhetorical citizenship by Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen combines the theories of political argumentation and deliberation with rhetorical agency. A theory of rhetorical citizenship where deliberation in the context of political argumentation plays a crucial role makes use of rhetorical theory in both an epistemic and evaluative capacity. However, as much as deliberation is about weighing two sides of an issue, or two issues side by side, the metaphor of weight is not listed as a rhetorical concept in rhetorical canon. This essay explores a common sense scientific understanding of weight to explicate the senses in which we use the term “weight” metaphorically.

Keywords: argument, argumentation, cognitive environment, metaphor, rhetoric, rhetorical citizen, weight

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0. Introduction

«Rhetoric is the art...of making things matter» (FARRELL 1998: 1). Of the many definitions of rhetoric, this one stands out as the most pertinent to this paper. I say this because this definition makes the metaphorical link between rhetoric and matter explicit. Weight is a property of matter: things that do not have weight do not have matter. If rhetoric, as Farrell defines it, makes things matter, then rhetoric is in the business of giving ideas weight. I will not be concerned here with why we take some things to matter more than others, how weight is given to a thing, or when this can or should happen. In this essay, I will answer the question of what it means for concepts, arguments, to have “weight” by examining our conceptions of weight in the physical world¹ to see how the metaphor is used *in situ*. I will exploit the metaphor in the equivocation of physical weight and rhetorical weight. Doing so will be illuminated with the help of the cognitive environment, as developed by Christopher Tindale. The metaphor of rhetorical weight is prominent in deliberative situations, so this essay will draw on insights from theories in deliberative argumentation. In this essay, I will outline three concepts of weight given a very basic understanding of physics. Situating the metaphor of weight in the cognitive

¹ Some might say this is the ‘literal’ definition.

environment will illuminate the importance of outlining the different senses that are used given the concept of weight^{2,3}.

1. Deliberation and Rhetorical Citizenship

Rhetorical citizenship, as outlined by Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen, combines two strands of research, «public argumentation and deliberation on the one hand, and studies in rhetorical agency on the other» (KOCK, VILLADSEN 2012: 11). Kock and Villadsen make sure to note that the concept of rhetorical citizenship is not their own. However, they provide a robust development of the concept in their book. Rhetorical citizenship widens the lens from a focus on particular discourses or speech acts to wider narratives and uses public argumentation and rhetorical agency to both describe and evaluate the contribution of wider narratives to «constructive civic interaction» (*Ibidem*). Rhetorical citizenship takes seriously the idea that democracies are constructed rhetorically. The pejorative sense of rhetoric⁴, is not the sense of rhetoric on which this theory of rhetorical citizenship builds. Rhetoric involves the acknowledgment that any speech act whatsoever cannot be removed from its context and evaluated in isolation. So, rhetoric is not merely adornment, but plays a constitutive role in communication in general. In political discourse, this means that an utterance in context changes the nature of the discourse, and creates an exigence to which the interlocutors respond or ignore (a type of response itself).

Here we see that my writing this paper is a rhetorical act as a rhetorical citizen. I assert my values by engaging with the material, by making an effort to maintain or grow a body of research that I deem valuable. Before any engagement with an interlocutor or any attempt at providing a reasonable or logical account of my position, I simply respond in a way that reveals my values. So, given this conception of rhetoric, we see that constructive civil contribution is a rhetorical act that expresses what the rhetor takes to matter in a political context.

² I do not intend to deeply engage literature on metaphor surrounding the cognitive processing of metaphor, although I do think it is worth mentioning. This debate takes note of the ubiquity of metaphor in language and parses through examples where metaphorical language is processed categorically versus examples where metaphorical language is processed conceptually. When a metaphor is processed categorically it is somehow passive in our language; the metaphor is lost for some further point. In these cases, the metaphor helps to orient the hearer or reader in a certain relation to the concept. For example, in the previous sentence the word “helps” is metaphorical. The way we would normally use “help” would be to refer to the actions of one person to aid or assist another person to achieve some goal. Here, the word “help” was used metaphorically in the sense that a metaphor cannot have a similar kind of effect in the physical world. This use is an example of categorization because the metaphor was not used to add something new to the concepts of metaphor and orientation. Alternatively, a metaphor that is processed conceptually is the traditional way that we think of metaphor being used, as a tool to draw comparisons across two otherwise dissimilar domains to shed light on some new feature for conceptualization. This paper notes the difference, and, furthermore, insofar as this is a difference, offers a fine-tuning of the conceptualization of the metaphor of weight that is found in rhetorical theory (Cf. STEEN, 2008: 213-241).

³ Furthermore, one might expect a corpus search of the co-occurrence between “weight” and “argument”. I do not think that this approach would be a relevant method to this paper. It makes no difference to my argument whether the word “weight” is related, through a corpus, to the word “argument”. What I am showing in this paper is that one phenomenon of argumentation is analogous to different senses of our physical or literal definitions of weight.

⁴ That is, rhetoric narrowly defined as speech acts aimed solely at persuasion, or merely adornment.

Combining this notion of rhetorical agency with public deliberation, we begin to see the importance of the rhetorical device of weight to take form. The word deliberation has as its root the Latin *libra*, or a pair of scales. This image is familiar to those who have even a vague notion of the zodiac sign. The prefix de- in Latin means ‘entirely’, so, to deliberate is to “weigh entirely”⁵. So, we see the metaphor of weight has obvious implications as an extended metaphor of deliberation. As argumentation is an important aspect to deliberation, that is, reason-giving for and against in any deliberative case, the rhetorical device of weight deserves further attention. What follows is an analysis of the common conception of weight in the scientific sense, and how those senses of weight provide insight into the metaphor of weight in deliberation.

2. Everyday Physical Conceptions of Weight

What follows is an outline of common physical conceptions of weight, while exploiting the metaphor to show the implications for weight as it pertains to argument.

Three notions of weight in two categories:

Weight as mass

1) Weight in terms of *density*. The higher the density of a material, the more weight it will have.

2) Weight in terms of *quantity*. The more of a certain material, the more it will weigh.

To illustrate the difference, consider two coins that are exactly the same size and shape (and denomination): one that is light, made out of wood, another that is heavy, made out of gold. The coin made out of gold is more massive in terms of density. There are more subatomic particles per cubic centimeter than in the wood coin. This is what weight means in terms of density. When you place one of each of the coins onto either side of a balance, the gold coin will weigh more. However, there is a way to tip the scale to the size of the wooden coin, by adding more wooden coins. If there are 50 wood coins on one side of the scale, the wood side will be heavier.

To flesh out this distinction in argumentation, we must draw a difference between argument, as a set of premises and a conclusion⁶, versus argumentation, or the entire discourse of a deliberation⁷. This is the difference between argument as product versus argument as process (GODDU 2011), the difference between argument and argumentation (VAN EEMEREN 2010), or, following Daniel O’Keefe, the difference between argument-1 and argument-2 (O’KEEFE 1977: 122-123). If we analogize the first definition of argument (argument-1) to our coins, we find that the idea of adding weight to the coin is hard to conceptualize in terms of density. For

⁵ Cf. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=deliberation>.

⁶ What I have in mind here are definitions such as Ralph Johnson’s in manifest rationality (2000: 168).

⁷ As in a definition given by Frans van Eemeren (2010: 29).

instance, one could somehow melt the gold coin and try to infuse it into the wood coin, thereby creating a coin that is a hybrid of wood and gold, denser than the wood coin alone. Contrastingly, a gold coin could be substituted for the wood coin. Since the coin represents the same denomination, we might say that it is the same coin, however, the substitution seems drastic enough that we might not want to make that claim. This problem points to the identity problem of arguments, that is, if you modify the original argument, in what sense do we make the claim that we are left with the same argument? This is analogous to either conception of “increasing the density of the coin”. The coin remains the same size, shape, and denomination, but the means of altering the coin’s density are drastic enough that it is hard to say that it is the same coin. I will not address the problem of the identity of an argument here. The point that I am making is that there is a sense in which the substance of an argument, the content of the premises/conclusions can be modified, and we still consider the argument the same, despite the fact that it has gone through an alteration. This is what it means to increase the density of an argument.

How we conceive of adding weight is more clear concerning Argument-2s. Argument-2s also avoid the identity problem of argument. In this second sense of argument, weight is added to an argument-2 by adding more premises, or more premise and conclusion sets to the existing argumentation on one side of the scale or the other. For instance, more weight is added to one side of the scale by adding more argument-1s. In this scenario, a metric ton of wood coins is many more (quantity) coins than a ton of gold coins, however, both weigh a metric ton. In terms of argumentation, this means that adding to the set of argumentation for or against either side of an issue has an effect in deliberation that is proportional to the weight of the individual argument. In other words, not all arguments are equal, but the scales may be tipped to one side by many ‘light’ arguments in the face of one ‘heavy’ one.

3. Weight and Gravity

Early on in a scientific education, we are taught that we often incorrectly equate weight and mass. Mass is not dependent on gravitational force; your body has an equal mass on the surface of the Earth as it does on the International Space Station. This is because mass is measured in terms of the density per cubic centimeter. However, the gravitational force changes from object to object such that a thing with the same mass will have different weight relative to the other masses around it. So, if you weighed yourself on your bathroom scale on earth, and then again on Mars, the number on the scale would differ greatly⁸. The way we conceive weight in terms of gravity leads to our third sense of weight.

3) Weight and *gravity*. Depending on the mass relative to the size and distance from another mass (setting)(context)(situation), a thing weighs relatively more or less.

While we had a preliminary illustration above, to properly exploit the metaphor of weight in terms of gravity, think back to experiments of dropping a feather and an

⁸ To further complicate matters, other factors such as atmosphere, rotation, and relative position on the rotating object all influence weight. i.e.) your bathroom scale will also change on the north pole because of the difference in centrifugal force from the poles to the equator. Thoroughly examining the extent to which the physical analogy holds might be a fruitful endeavor, these three distinctions provide enough material for our purposes here.

apple in a vacuum. Despite the differences in mass between both objects, both fall towards the earth at the same rate in a vacuum. This is because the force of gravity is acting equally on both objects. So, despite the differences in mass, each object falls at the same rate because the force of gravity is the same on both objects (partly because, relative to the mass of the earth the difference in mass between the apple and the feather is negligible)⁹.

Another factor that highlights why the context matters here is: that the material that surrounds a mass affects its weight. On Earth, we are surrounded by an atmosphere; that has an effect on how we can move in our environment due to friction in air and atmospheric pressure. On the moon, the atmosphere is negligible compared to the atmosphere on Earth. So, on the moon our mass and the moon's mass has an effect on our weight; there is only a negligible atmosphere so, air friction is negligible and the weight of the atmosphere that is constantly exerting pressure on us is also negligible¹⁰. I bring this up to show that the setting also has a further effect on weight.

In terms of argumentation, this notion of weight plays a role as a recognition that the same argument-1 might "tip the scales" depending on the weight of a competing argument-1. That is, in the case of deliberation where two parties are making arguments for their side, a given argument might be relatively light in comparison to a competing argument. This conception of weight takes into account the relative importance of each argument in relation to other arguments. As is the case for physical weight in this sense, it is not the amount of matter that will determine the weight of a thing, but how much matter a thing has in relation to another material object. Adding weight in this sense is different than simply adding to one side or the other because it shows that the relation between the two objects (arguments) is as important as the size or density of the argument itself. It is not simply the case that an argument can tip the scales, but there can be better or worse arguments depending on the context or relation to other arguments.

3.1 Weight vs. Amplification

While "weight" is not obviously in the rhetorical cannon, it appears prominently in a paper by Thomas Farrell, *The Weight of Rhetoric: Studies in Cultural Delerium*. In this paper, Farrell provides a robust treatment of the rhetorical device *magnitude* as found in the literature. His approach is to outline the ways in which magnitude manifests as a rhetorical concept in rhetoric and philosophy, and to show how we assign importance of significance to rhetorical concepts (FARRELL 2008). My approach in this paper is different from Farrell's. He takes on the rhetorical notion of magnitude as it appears in literature and philosophy, and outlines other ways that he thinks that importance is added to arguments, or to speech in general. I, on the other hand, tease out senses of weight as a physical concept in order to develop the metaphor as a rhetorical concept. In fact, Farrell *uses* "weight" as a rhetorical concept in his paper as an equivocation with magnitude (*Ibidem*). Defining weight in terms of magnitude is unproblematic insofar as Farrell is looking to outline the ways

⁹ It is important to note that this whole discussion is a gross oversimplification of the concept of weight and mass in physics. However, the distinctions are more or less correct and are more precise than a general conceptualization of weight that we may be attracted to otherwise.

¹⁰ The physics here is beyond a passing familiarity, so, would not be expedient to outline in a paper such as this.

in which we shift importance of one concept of another in-text. However, the equivocation of weight and magnitude breaks down at the metaphorical level. Magnitude is merely a measure of size relative to some other thing. Farrell shows the importance of magnitude¹¹ as a rhetorical concept; I argue that weight is deserving of being adopted by the rhetorical cannon on its own.

In Jeanne Fahnestock's book *Rhetorical Style* she outlines the rhetorical concept of amplification. Fahnestock offers Melancthon's definition of amplification as an exemplary definition at the beginning of the chapter, «In rhetoric it is emphasized that the orator should see what is good in a case, what bad, and he should augment the good things and the bad discreetly cover, and he should overwhelm with the amplification of good things» (FAHNESTOCK 2011: 390). Fahnestock's definition follows, where amplification is, «to [endow]with stylistic prominence so that it acquires conceptual importance in the discourse and salience in the minds of the audience» (*Ibidem*). With these two considerations in mind, we find from the outset that there is a difference between amplification and weight. In the first definition, the goal of the orator is to persuade the audience, but reason or arguments alone will not suffice. Therefore, the orator must overwhelm with the good aspects of the thing in question. This does not point to a fair and balanced¹² treatment of the topic of the oration, but to take a position and to amplify the good so as to overwhelm. There is no additional weight, the argument for the good, or the good itself is assumed, and methods of amplification are employed to persuade the audience, not through reason or argument, but through word selection.

Fahnestock goes on to outline several rhetorical devices of amplification that I will deal with briefly here.

Five from Quintilian¹³:

1) *Auxeisis* – “Heightening through strategic word choice”. For example: Calling a good person a Saint. The hyperbolic language amplifies the goodness of the person.

2) Series construction – to place words or concepts in a series that lead up to the most important.

Example: “He has been arrested for breaking and entering, resisting arrest... and aggravated assault”. This contrast with a diminishing strategy: “He has been arrested for aggravated assault, breaking and entering ...and resisting arrest”. The series build up to the final element, making it most prominent.

3) Comparison for the sake of inflating or deflating – a comparison is made that positions the good in contrast to something worse. For example: “A vicious terrorist is out there. It's not Osama bin Laden, it's AIDS”.

4) Heightening through reasoning – this is not reasoning strictly speaking, but using certain words so as to imply a certain characteristic or another point. For example,

¹¹ And, because of the equivocation, ‘weight’ as well. Farrell's paper provides a good backdrop for other ways in which weight applies to deliberative dialogue in rhetorical theory and as applied to text through various examples.

¹² Some might say objective.

¹³ All of the following five are taken from Fahnestock (2011: 391-396).

Fahnestock shows this through an example where words are used to describe Mark Antony's strength and size so that the audience will infer that it took a large quantity of alcohol to get him drunk.

5) *Congeries* – “accumulation of words and sentences identical in meaning”. This is more or less self-explanatory, the rhetor strings together phrases that have the same meaning so that the audience will diminish competing ideas. Here Fahnestock outlines Erasmus' extension of this device, however, the core concept remains.

Two Non-Quintilian¹⁴

1) *Epichireme* – This device follows the dialectic syllogism and enthymeme and has two types. In the first, the syllogism or enthymeme is followed by an embellishment and restatement of the conclusion. The embellishment constitutes the amplification. In the second type each premise and/or the conclusion is followed by an embellishment. The embellishment constitutes the amplification here as well.

2) *Diminishing* – Opposite to certain nuanced forms of amplification are diminishing through brevity or silence. Brevity and silence can help to amplify other points by drawing attention away from the points that are made briefly or not at all.

The preceding concepts fall under the umbrella of forms of amplification. Fahnestock goes on to give an expert analysis of a section of Darwin's *Origin of Species* drawing on these devices of amplification. The analysis shows how Darwin was an expert rhetor and employed these strategies to gain audience adherence.

However, these concepts are different than adding weight, as they outline ways to embellish language, rather than making the arguments weightier. That is, the premises, set of premises, or argument-1 as a whole, are not *altered* in any way, rather, the existing points are embellished. By contrast, adding weight would involve adding premises, sets of premises, or whole argument-1's to add weight to the argument. Additionally, the existing premises could be more clear or precise or stated in a way that is tailored to a specific audience so that they gain importance. There also seems to be some overlap in the concept of 'diminishing' with the concept of 'weight' in terms of gravity, where an argument might have relatively more importance in relation to the surrounding arguments. However, the concept of weight can also be considered separate from diminishing when the context itself provides the relative scope of importance. For example, PETA's arguments may be taken to be more important at a vegan conference than a factory farming conference.

In the summary of the section on amplification, Fahnestock mixes metaphors:

It is always tempting to dissociate stylistic means from the substance of an argument. The place of style *after* invention in rhetorical pedagogy invites the separation, usually to the disparagement of style. But stylistic methods are better seen as the substance, the material in the language of argument, since the material of argument is language. Both amplification and diminution are then indissociable effects in an argument: the rhetor is always on a rising or falling curve; the slope is always positive or negative (*Ivi*: 414).

¹⁴ Both of the following are taken from Fahnestock (2011: 394-402).

Here we see that Fahnestock extends the metaphor of amplification as a physical property. While I agree with the general sentiment that the style cannot and should not be separated from the substance, the metaphor of weight points to something that is seen in Melanchthon's definition above. In this definition, the deliberation has already been carried out by the orator. In this case, amplification *is* a matter of style because it does not alter the materiality of the case being made. In other words, Melanchthon's definition appears to be sensitive to the difference between weight and amplification in that the definition separates the deliberation (between the good and the bad), from the style (the amplification of what the orator takes to be good). Here the orator does not add anything to the case being made for the good but highlights what has been established as good through style. Something that has weight, something that matters, certainly can be amplified, however, altering the weight of a point or an argument does not amplify that thing. It is an important distinction that shows that adding weight is not merely embellishment, such as the case with the devices outlined above but changing the argument-1's or argument-2 so that certain points have better support. Weight as a rhetorical concept is a strategy to add importance to arguments, where amplification has to do with embellishment.

Rhetoric is audience-minded, so to the audience, amplification may be thought of as a "making matter", however, the audience decides how weighty a claim is for themselves. Amplification is an element of style rather than substance because the orator wants to make it seem like certain aspects of their claims are larger, and therefore, have more weight. Re-visiting the methods outlined by Fahnestock may reveal that some concepts have to do with adding weight rather than amplifying. For instance, the device of accumulating words to heighten their importance is obviously one of amplification to make it seem like that word or corresponding concept is more important than another. The accumulation of words not change the substance of the argument but makes one concept more present than another.

Following the metaphor of amplification and weight, we see that a main difference between the two is the relationship with the material. Amplification does not change the weight of the object, but merely how that object is perceived. Think of a magnifying glass that amplifies the perception of whatever is on the other side, but that does not change the materiality of the thing. Furthermore, a device that amplifies sound does not constitute a material change, but a change of how waves travel through a medium. So, what this shows is that there is a difference, particularly in deliberative argumentation, between weight and amplification.

3.2 Situating the Concept of Weight in the Cognitive Environment

In his book *The Philosophy of Argument and Audience Reception*, Christopher Tindale outlines the concept of cognitive environment and the role argumentation theory plays within it. A cognitive environment for an individual, as defined by Sperber and Wilson, refers to «the set of facts, assumptions, and beliefs that are manifest to a person» (TINDALE 2015: 145). To be manifest is to be perceptible or inferable. The cognitive environment of an individual is the set of facts that are manifest to her. The *total cognitive environment*, that is, the shared cognitive environment between and among individuals, is a function of the physical environment and the collective of individual cognitive environments, the facts that an individual is aware of and the facts that she is capable of becoming aware of (*Ivi*). Cognitive environments are analogous to visual environments in the sense that we have access to information in our visual field, yet we do not necessarily process all of

the information in our visual field. However, someone else in our visual field might see something that we do not, and bring that idea or object to our attention (*Ivi*).

As shown before, to have weight a thing must be material. If the cognitive environment is analogous to the visual (or sensible) environment, then the thing in question would have matter. While it is true that even air has weight, the analogy holds best when considering material objects that are perceptible to the naked eye. If to have weight something must be material, and if something is material it is sensible, then we see that weight is a kind of presence as it is a perceptible thing in that environment that we are or are capable of being made aware of it.

While there are similarities between weight and amplification (i.e. the additive nature), there are also qualitative differences. As amplification is concerned, we find that one or another object *seems* larger than it is; in giving weight that thing *is* larger than it was. Here we find the difference between the pejorative sense of rhetoric, “making the weaker argument the stronger” and the non-pejorative that Fahnestock hopes to maintain. The cognitive environment shows that, through our language, we have the ability not only to amplify the importance of one argument, concept, meme, or another; we have in our language to manipulate the materiality of the argument, concept, or meme, to the extent that it “matters more”. This is an important distinction that helps to show why rhetoric is not necessarily merely style or adornment, but a social force, a tool we use to build our environment. It also sheds light on the importance of outlining the concept of weight as a rhetorical device.

4. The Brexit Deliberation

One recent political deliberation is the British referendum to decide whether or not to leave the European Union (dubbed ‘Brexit’). This case serves as a good example of a deliberation dialogue because it is a rather simplified example in politics, with many arguments for both sides. Furthermore, there are only two sides to the vote: vote to remain in the E.U. (hereafter referred to as ‘remain’), and vote to leave the E.U. (hereafter referred to as ‘leave’). What follows is an analysis of a summary of the arguments for and against as found on the website www.marketwatch.com. The analysis will highlight some of the uses of amplification, versus the uses of weight. The article (REKALITIS 2016) presents five arguments for the remain camp, and five arguments for the leave camp.

Points for the leave camp:

- 1) Control immigration
- 2) Make Britain great again
- 3) Reject the Brussels bureaucrats
- 4) Reject what the establishment wants
- 5) Lower prices

Points for the remain camp:

- 1) It’s the economy, stupid
- 2) Avoid scary uncertainty
- 3) A more secure World
- 4) Keep that easy access to sunny Spain
- 5) A hit to households

Here we see a summary of the arguments. For the leave arguments, we have the five points as reasons that support the conclusion, “Britain should vote to leave the E.U.”, and then five premises that support the conclusion “Britain should vote to remain in the E.U.”. The article provides further support under each heading for each point.

The first example of amplification is in the form of *auxesis* in, “Avoid scary uncertainty”. Similar to the use of the word “Saint” to describe a good person, the use of the word “scary” to describe the aftermath of a leave outcome amplifies the emotion that a person might feel in the aftermath of the decision. Despite the balanced nature of having five points for each argument, the *auxesis* amplifies the point in this case.

The second instance of amplification comes in the form of an allusion. On the leave side, the second point, “Make Britain great again” alludes to Donald Trump’s 2016 campaign slogan for President of the United States, “Make America great again”. This is an example of heightening through reasoning because the audience is to make the inference that this argument for the leave side is analogous to positions of nationalism held by Donald Trump. This device is used again in the remain side, in, “It’s the economy, stupid”. This was part of the campaign slogan of Bill Clinton in his presidential campaign in 1992. This heightens by reason as the audience is to infer that this point is analogous to Bill Clinton’s position on war and healthcare in that campaign.

The third example of amplification is by way of comparison between the two heightening by reason examples above. The audience draws the comparison of the leave vote being associated with the views of Donald Trump, and the remains vote as associated with the views of Bill Clinton. This constitutes the difference between a Republican in Trump, and a Democrat in Clinton; and a generally disliked candidate in Trump, with a generally liked candidate in Clinton. The comparison reveals something about the connotation that the article has, despite the fact that the sides are balanced with an equal number of arguments.

As examples of amplification, these points serve to heighten or diminish on one side or the other. However, this article also contains examples of adding weight. While there are, on the surface, only five arguments for each side, each premise has a line of sub-argumentation associated with it. For example, under the “Make Britain great again” premise, sub-arguments such as «The U.K. would be more competitive because it could make its own trade deals with other nations and legislate in the interest of British manufacturing» (REKALITIS 2016) add weight to the original point. This is adding weight in terms of quantity, not in terms of density as the sub-argument is an added premise to the original premise. They go on, «The billionaire co-founder of broker Hargreaves Lansdowne has argued a Brexit ‘would be the biggest stimulus to get our butts in gear,’ likening it to the Dunkirk retreat during World War II» (*Ibidem*). While we see that the devices of amplification may be present in these points as well, adding these premises to the argument set changes the weight of the deliberation by adding premises and/or argument-1s. The initial premise may not be particularly convincing or persuasive, but adding weight to the point helps to sway the deliberation to that side.

While I do not purport to establish what weight these points are given, it is clear that there is a qualitative difference between the device of amplification, as embellishment, and weight, as tipping the scales in a deliberation.

5. Weight, Amplification, Strength

The end result of a deliberation is often a decision (GOODIN 2000). The factors that influence the decision are the result of weighing the options on either side of an issue. Matters that have any importance are put on the scale to be measured. If something has no matter or, does not matter, it will not affect the outcome of a deliberation. This is the main difference between the rhetorical tool of amplification versus the concept of weight in deliberative rhetoric¹⁵.

In a deliberation, the amplification is not material, and so, cannot tip the scales. This seems to be contrary to an everyday intuition that the louder argument might be more influential than the more important one. It might just be the case that the scale and setting are different, and sometimes there is a reason to use multiple measuring devices (a scale vs. a sound level meter). This brings to light the difference between weighing and measuring, and the importance of applying the appropriate measuring device in the appropriate circumstance¹⁶.

Up to this point, I have purposely avoided the relationship between weight and strength. Analyzing the metaphor of strength given the metaphor of weight might help to better understand the rhetorical importance. Given structure mapping theory, the structure of the source and/or target domains can be stronger in the sense of being sturdier due to increased density or increased size, for example. There is more to be said on this topic, but not here. Furthermore, strength seems to be a metaphor that relates in important ways to both amplification and weight. The strength of an argument could say something about its amplification or its weight. One possibility is to say that if an argument is strong, but not convincing, then that argument might be amplifying its point. On the other hand, if the argument is strong and convincing, maybe the argument has more weight, the points are substantial, they matter more than the strong argument that makes use of amplification. Of course, there is no

¹⁵ There is an important distinction that I have not mentioned that may present an objection to my argument. It is an issue that is dealt with by Christian Kock in his paper *Norms of Legitimate Dissensus*. The objection is that, because different audiences assign different kinds of importance to any given argument-1 or argument-2 (i.e. practical importance, epistemic importance, normative importance), then the disambiguation between “weight” and “amplification” breaks down. That is, if there is no way to know how the audience is receiving the argument, and if there is no way to gauge the effect, then there is no way to tell the subjective reception of the argument. I grant that the difference between the objective and subjective conditions in terms of audience reception is a legitimate objection to my account. I have a very simple response to this claim: the subjective aspect is diminished by the fact that audiences share cognitive environments. So, while individuals may assign different value, and even different categories of value to any given argument, the shared cognitive environment provides the context, and therefore, moves towards a degree of objectivity. Furthermore, “objects” in the cognitive environment do not abide by physical laws but established norms of reason, or logic. Extending the metaphors slightly beyond their capacity, it is possible in principle that an argument interpreted as amplificative is given “weight”. What I mean is that a consensus of people may see a certain feature of an argument as “merely amplificative”, but through sub-argumentation, that feature shifts from amplificative to “weighty”. So, examining the physical or literal concepts helps to show differences in subjective interpretations of arguments, and how the value assigned to them can be altered.

¹⁶ I see the fact that certain weighing or measuring devices can and should be used in difference scenarios as a defense of Toulmin's fields of argumentation. Questions remain, however, when and why we take certain factors to be more important than others, how do we deliberate in cases of multiple fields, and does the metaphor break down in this meta- example?

absolute frame by which to judge which technique is preferable to another, but there is an important difference here as well¹⁷.

Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca provide a treatment of strength in *The New Rhetoric*. In this treatise, they deal with strength in terms of audience adherence, subjective interpretation of arguments, and effectiveness and validity. I agree with their account regarding the strength of an argument relative to an audience. However, there are two concepts that relate to weight as I have treated it. In their treatment of convergence and congruence, the pair note, «The convergence of arguments may cease to carry weight if the result arrived at by the reasoning shows up elsewhere some incompatibility that makes it unacceptable» (PERELMAN, OLBRECHTS-TYTECA 1971: 472). As we have seen, amplification describes features of embellishing arguments, and the strength of an argument is evaluated relative to some audience. The weight of an argument is a feature of converging arguments (with accompanying rhetorical devices), or congruent reasoning, that causes a tip of the scales in a deliberation. In other words, the multiple senses of weight each describes a nucleus of considerations that combine to give weight. Weight is distinguished as its own rhetorical concept by moving towards an objective¹⁸ feature of that argument. This consideration is over and above audience adherence, as the object (argument) in question “has matter” in the shared cognitive environment.

So, we see that amplification, weight, and strength may all have different and important senses in which they can be applied in rhetorical theory. Most important to rhetorical deliberation as a rhetorical citizen is the metaphor of weight. Further research studies that deeply engage the physical conception of weight might help to further precisify the concept, the following are possible areas of further study. The first engages or exploits metaphors in argumentation and rhetoric in a similar fashion carried out here. Metaphors might only be epistemically valuable to an extent, but exploring the limit to which they yield insights might prove useful for rhetoric. Furthermore, there are two types of deliberation as outlined by Goodin, internal and external, where the metaphor might apply differently¹⁹. Internal and external deliberation are two interesting lenses through which to examine the metaphor of weight. Further study might also draw on the nuanced differences between weight, amplification, and strength in a textual analysis so as to highlight the important aspects of each concept. Finally, I think that there is an important difference between adding weight by way of facts, versus adding weight by way of values. This distinction seems that it would be fruitful, as changing the nature or factual premise to one that states the same fact in terms of value might have a drastic effect on the reception of that argument. We might also find here that the weight of an argument that is based solely on facts fluctuates in audience reception from context to context, implying that certain audiences value certain facts more than others. How the rhetorical concept of weight applies in a given context, and then across contexts

¹⁷ This discussion could slip dangerously into the ancient Greek debate between the sophists and the philosophers. I do not here wish to engage the merits or extent to which “man is the measure of all things”, but, understanding the differences between the use of these metaphors in a discussion such as this might help and would be an interesting line of further investigation.

¹⁸ Objective in the sense of the agreement of a group of subjects, that is, consensus in a shared cognitive environment.

¹⁹ Cf. Goodin (2000: 54-79).

would appear to play with the fact/value distinction, an interesting line of research for argumentation theory.

6. Conclusion

Drawing on our physical knowledge of mass and weight, we see that the metaphor of weight is an important rhetorical concept. In the theory of rhetorical citizenship, this metaphor plays a role in the agency of the rhetor in a deliberation as to what they add, and how they modify the cognitive environment in the context of a deliberation. Decisions are made when the scales are tipped, so, adding the concept to the quiver of a rhetorical theorist can help to account for certain argumentative moves where an interlocutor shifts or adds importance to their argument.

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