

The Attitude Theory and the Disagreement or Controversy within Philosophy and between Philosophy and Science

A plea for a Theory
of Persuasive Communication and Argumentation.

I — Preface :

This article deals with the disagreement and controversy within philosophy and between philosophy and science, in other words with the disagreement and controversy between different “thought systems”. We shall try to find an explanation for this disagreement and controversy, and, at the same time, we shall suggest a possible solution.

Whoever concerns himself with philosophy must be struck by the great lack of agreement within philosophy, as opposed to the relatively greater agreement in science and in everyday life. Moreover, this disagreement (and controversy) is obviously not an incidental phenomenon, as it apparently plays a predominating part in philosophy. It is not only a constant factor throughout the history of philosophy — perhaps even the one and only constant factor — but obviously, every so-called “philosophical activity” necessary implies disagreement. Philosophers disagree, not only about the truth of a particular statement, about the history of philosophy, about the object of philosophical thinking, about “method” in philosophy, but also about the meaning of the concept “philosophy”, that is about how the question “what is philosophy?” should be answered, and even about the meaning of that question. Within philosophy, no item can be pointed out about which there would be even but comparatively small agreement.

It is true that one may speak about “trends in philosophy” and “philosophical schools”, but within those there are controversies too, even about fundamental aspects such as the method of philosophical reflection. (cf. the phrase “phenomenological method” and the divergent interpretations

given to it.) In this way it would be possible to view the development of philosophical thought as a sequence as well as a coexisting of "one-man philosophies", having only one thing in common, viz. that they disagree among themselves.

Philosophers can agree about one thing only, viz. about the fact that they fundamentally disagree, even as to the status of philosophy, the conditions which must be fulfilled to have a philosophical dialogue ... and as to the criteria of a "valid disagreement". From this it follows that, at least theoretically, it is impossible in a discussion to distinguish between a serious "philosophical" point, and one that is made for a joke.

The age-long controversies in philosophy (and, on the other hand, the great agreement in the field of science) have forcibly struck the members of the Vienna Circle, and, viewed from this angle, their desire for "an objective, undogmatical philosophy, which cannot possibly have any opponents, because it makes no assertions at all" (1), becomes perfectly comprehensible. Yet the logical empiricists have not achieved their purpose: their philosophy does have opponents. The reason for this will be made clear in the course of this inquiry.

This article can be considered as an effort to find an adequate solution for the problems of disagreement and controversy which continue to exist, in spite of Logical Empiricism.

It could be argued that disagreement or controversy in philosophy is not to be considered as a "negative" but as a very "positive" factor, a relevant illustration of the fact that philosophical thought is a non-authoritative kind of thinking.

There is no doubt that this is true, as far as, in rationalistic thought, reason, intelligence, the "lumen naturale" was really opposed to tradition, Bible and Church. This, however, does not imply that disagreement in philosophy is justified and that it should be approved of.

Philosophical thought, if it is to bear a meaning, must be communicative first. Indeed, "meaning" presupposes a minimal possibility of communication between A and B. But philosophy is not merely communicative: it is communicative in a well-defined way. Philosophical thinking is in the first place an *argumentative* way of thinking as it wants to *convince*. Consequently, philosophical thinking can be defined as a non-authoritative thinking, as a creative thinking, or it may be defined in a way whatsoever (even in no way at all), but this kind of thinking is only then meaningful,

(1) cf. Waismann (Fr.), member of the Vienna Circle. (quoted in Zuurdeeg (W. F.). A Research for the Consequences of the Vienna Circle Philosophy for Ethics, Utrecht, 1944, Kemink en Zoon, N. V., p. 141).

and is only a truly philosophical thinking, when it is convincing. Considering the predominance of disagreement in philosophy, it is clear that, up to the present, philosophy has not attained its end, viz. has not proved “convincing” at all.

We begin our article with an exposition of the Attitude Theory of Ch. L. Stevenson (II). This theory will be “improved” by us (III) and applied to the disagreement and controversy within philosophy and between philosophy and science (IV). Further, the distinction between “to persuade” and “to convince” is to be dealt with (V). Finally we will conclude from the preceding (VI).

II — The attitude theory of Ch. L. Stevenson (2):

The object of “Ethics and Language” is “to clarify the meaning of the ethical terms — such terms as “good”, “right”, “ought”, and so on”, and “to characterize the general methods by which ethical judgments can be proved or supported”. (3). Stevenson starts his analysis of ethical terms with a clear distinction between — what he calls — “ethical disagreements” and “disagreements in belief”. The latter, he says, require only little attention. They are “the disagreements that occur in science, history, biography, and their counterparts in everyday life”. “Questions about the nature of light-transmission, the voyages of Leif Ericsson, and the date on which Jones was last in to tea, are all similar in that they may involve an opposition that is primarily of beliefs ... In such cases one man believes that p is the answer, and another that not-p, or some proposition incompatible with p, is the answer ; and in the course of discussion each tries to give some manner of proof for his view, or revise it in the light of further information. Let us call this “disagreement in belief”.(4)

A disagreement in belief differs from an ethical disagreement in that “the former is concerned with how matters are truthfully to be described and explained”, while “the latter is concerned with how they are to be favored or disfavored, and hence with how they are to be shaped by human efforts”. (5)

(2) s. Stevenson (Ch. L.). *Ethics and Language*, New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1944. (see also of the same author: *Facts and Values*, New Haven-London, Yale Univ. Press, 1963, which is a collection of articles, originally published in different journals.)

(3) *Ethics and Language*, p. 1.

(4) *ibid.*, p. 2

(5) *ibid.*, p. 4.

When two persons disagree as to their value judgments (i. e. when there exists an ethical disagreement between them), "they have opposed attitudes to the same object — one approving of it, for instance, and the other disapproving of it — and when at least one of them has a motive for altering or calling into question the attitude of the other". (6)

"It is disagreement in attitude ... that chiefly distinguishes ethical issues from those of pure science". (7).

Nevertheless the most remarkable difference between disagreements in belief and ethical disagreements (at any rate those ethical disagreements not being the result of disagreements in belief) can be shown as follows: the problem which of the two beliefs (if one), contradicting each other, would be correct, could be solved by rational methods; the reasons however, mentioned to support or to attack value judgments are "related to (them) psychologically, rather than logically". (8). The reasons, urged to justify a value judgment, "represent efforts to change attitudes, or to strengthen them, by means of altering beliefs. Hence, although the reasons themselves are of an empirical character, and may be rendered probable or improbable by scientific methods, one must not say that they render the ethical judgments "probable" or "improbable" in the same sense. They are simply of a sort that may lead one person or another to have altered attitudes in consequence of altered beliefs, and so, thereafter, to make different ethical judgments". (9).

Ethical disagreement, not resulting from disagreement in belief, can be solved by nonrational methods, of which the most important one is the persuasive method which "depends on the sheer, direct emotional impact of words — on emotive meaning, rhetorical cadence, apt metaphor, stentorian, stimulating, or pleading tones of voice, dramatic gestures, care in establishing *rapport* with the hearer or audience, and so on". (10) Other nonrational "methods" are: "the use of material rewards and punish-

(6) *ibid.*, p. 3

(7) *ibid.*, p. 13; "(Disagreement in attitude) occurs when Mr. A has a favorable attitude to something, when Mr. B has an unfavorable or less favorable attitude to it, and when neither is content to let on the other's attitude remain unchanged". (Facts and Values, p. 1) Stevenson still makes a distinction between two kinds of ethical disagreement: the first kind consists of those cases in which the disagreement in attitude entirely results from the disagreement in belief; the second occurs when the initial disagreement in attitude results from divergent attitudes and remained unchanged, even if both disputants agree in belief.

(8) E. and L., p. 113; therefore, the idea of the so-called "scientific morals" is rejected by Stevenson.

(9) *ibid.*, p. 118.

(10) *ibid.*, p. 139.

ments, and also (for instance) the various forms of public demonstration and display". (11)

III — Two critical remarks on the Attitude Theory:

1. The Attitude Theory, especially the distinction between "disagreement in belief" and "disagreement in attitude", has been much criticized. (12). The most important objection seems to be the criticism of V. Thomas. (13) His principle idea is that Stevenson's disagreement in belief assumes an agreement "about the criteria by appeal to which a rational decision can be reached". This agreement is an agreement in attitude, whereas a disagreement "about the criteria by appeal to which a rational decision can be reached" can clearly not be solved by using the "criteria by appeal to which a rational decision can be reached". Indeed, the reasons which are mentioned to support or to attack the "criteria by appeal to which a rational decision can be reached" are "related to them psychologically, rather than logically" (to use Stevenson's words). This means that there is no essential difference between a disagreement (or agreement) in belief and a real ethical disagreement (or agreement), for both are based on an attitude. It follows that also a disagreement in belief can only be solved by an a priori agreement in attitude (about the "criteria by appeal to which a rational decision can be reached"), or ... by applying persuasive methods. (14) Hence it follows that both science and ethics result from nonrational attitudes and that the disagreement or agreement within and between those disciplines must be understood from this point of view.

2. We have said that the Attitude Theory of Ch. L. Stevenson has been criticized by many authors. We ourselves have used one of these critical remarks to "improve" the Attitude Theory. One can ask now if the disagreement about the Attitude Theory itself would be a disagreement in attitude or a disagreement in belief (in the sense of Stevenson).

(11) *ibid.*, p. 140.

(12) s. e. g. Wellman (C.). *The Language of Ethics*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1961, Harvard Univ. Press; Frankel (Ch.). *Empiricism and Moral Imperatives*, *J. of Phil.*, vol., 50, p. 257-69; Brandt (R. B.) *Some Puzzles for Attitude Theories*, in Lepley (R.) ed. *The Language of Value*, New York, 1957, Columbia Univ. Press; Aiken (H. D.) *Emotive "Meanings" and Ethical Terms*, *J. of Phil.*, 1944, vol. 41, p. 456-470; Zink (S.). *The Concepts of Ethics*, London, MacMillan and Co., 1962.

(13) *Ethical Disagreement and the Emotive Theory of Values*, *Mind*, 1951; we represent this objection in a modified way.

(14) This means that rationalism is not only "rational", but, in the first place, *persuasive* or *nonpersuasive*.

A disagreement in belief "is concerned with how matters are truthfully to be described and explained".¹⁵ Stevenson also says that an agreement in belief supposes a proof "by demonstrative or empirical methods".⁽¹⁶⁾ The disagreement about the Attitude Theory will be a disagreement in belief, if it can be demonstrated by empirical methods that Stevenson's description of the use of ethical terms is adequate or inadequate, true or false.

How should this be understood?

Stevenson (in the chapter about "agreement" and "disagreement") says: "It is disagreement in attitude, which imposes a characteristic type or organization on the beliefs that may serve indirectly to resolve it, that chiefly distinguishes ethical issues from those of pure science".

"These conclusions are based upon observations of ethical discussions in daily life, and can be clarified and tested only by turning to that source:

The trustees for the estate of a philanthropist have been instructed to forward any charitable cause that seems to them worthy. One suggests that they provide hospital facilities for the poor, the other that they endow universities. They accordingly raise the ethical question as to which cause, under the existing circumstances, is the more worthy. In this case we may naturally assume that the men are unselfish and farsighted, having attitudes that are usually referred to, with praise, as "moral ideals" or "altruistic aims". And we may assume that each man respects the other's aims, being no less interested in reconsidering his own suggestion than in leading the other to accept it. There need be no hint of disputatiousness or acrimony; but obviously, there will be a tentative disagreement in attitude. Since the one man begins by favoring the hospitals, and the other the universities, their discussion must continue until one shares the initial attitude of the other, or until both come to favor some intermediate or alternative policy".⁽¹⁷⁾

This quotation shows that the truth of the assertion "It is disagreement in attitude, which imposes a characteristic type or organization on the beliefs that may serve indirectly to resolve it, that chiefly distinguishes ethical issues from those of pure science", is grounded on and can be tested by observations of instances of ethical discussion in daily life. The falsity of this assertion can only be demonstrated by observation of the *same instances*. (The assertion: "This wall is red", can only be false if, and only if, it would be established by observation that *this wall* is not red.)

(15) *ibid.*, p. 4

(16) *ibid.*, p. 31.

(17) *ibid.*, p. 13-14.

“Observation” means “analysis” in the “language game” of Ch. L. Stevenson.

Stevenson analyses the above quoted instance of ethical disagreement as a case which implies an initial disagreement in attitude which can only be solved if both disputants accept the same attitude; for, although undoubtedly the discussion also implies a disagreement in belief (which is important), the “disagreement in attitude is the factor which gives the argument its fundamental unity and motivation”.⁽¹⁸⁾

This leads to the assertion with which the quotation (see above) begins.

Thomas (V.), however, also analysing the instance given by Stevenson, concludes differently. According to him, this instance shows that there is no difference between a disagreement in belief and a disagreement in attitude. Hence it follows that the assertion of Stevenson: “It is disagreement in attitude ... that chiefly distinguishes ethical issues from those of pure science”, is false. If we are confronted here with an “opposition of beliefs, both of which cannot be true”, this opposition must be solved “by demonstrative or empirical methods”, i. e. by analysis of the same instance, though we have seen just now that the “opposition of beliefs” results from this analysis.⁽¹⁹⁾

Evidently both Stevenson and Thomas apply a different form of analysis on the above mentioned instance of ethical discussion. The disagreement between them is *essentially* a disagreement about the *way* the meaning of ethical terms must be clarified, i. e. a disagreement about the criteria by appeal to which a rational analysis of ethical terms can be reached. This disagreement cannot be a disagreement in belief, since we are faced then with a “regressus ad infinitum”.

According to the theory of Stevenson, this disagreement is a *disagreement in attitude*, i. e. “an opposition of purposes, aspirations ... and so on”, which cannot be solved by rational methods, since the relation between reasons and attitudes is not logical but psychological.⁽²⁰⁾

(18) *ibid.*, p. 14; “In the first place, it determines what beliefs will relevantly be discussed or tested ... In the second place, it determines when the argument will terminate”. (*idem*) (see also: *Facts and Values*, p. 4-5)

(19) Stevenson, defining “disagreement in belief” (E. and L. p. 2), states that an agreement in belief can also be reached “in the light of further information”. “Further information” would mean, in our case, the analysis of other similar instances. Here, however, raises the problem of the *relevance* of these instances. Disagreement or agreement about it implies an attitude, since it will be a disagreement or agreement about the criteria of relevancy. (It should be stressed how important the notion “instance” is for the meta-ethics of Stevenson, and how obscure its meaning.)

(20) Thomas states: “disagreements in attitude like disagreements in belief, presup-

Stevenson himself, however, says: "In discussing the *proper* place of science in ethics, we must remember that our conclusions, themselves normative, may be the occasion for disagreement in attitude".⁽²¹⁾ This disagreement in attitude bears on the analysis; for: "although analysis is concerned with observing and clarifying, as distinct from judging, it cannot pretend to sever its studies from all evaluation whatsoever. The reason for this is that analysis, like any other inquiry, must introduce certain evaluations (though they will not be peculiarly "moral" ones) in the course of marking off its field of study".⁽²²⁾ Further: "But ethical analysis can, no less than science, mathematics, and logic, limit itself *solely* to those evaluations which are essential to the pursuit of its descriptive and clarificatory studies ... To evaluate for purposes of analysis is not to take sides in the many other evaluative issues of men".⁽²³⁾

Here, Stevenson should be well understood.

When he speaks about evaluations, inseparably connected with analysis, he means that the researcher must decide "whether his inquiry is *worth* pursuing" and "which aspects of his study are *worth* developing in full, and which ones *deserve* only passing mention".⁽²⁴⁾ Stevenson is right when he says that these evaluations can be an occasion of disagreement in attitude. This disagreement in attitude, however, can also bear on the analysis itself, viz. on "those evaluations which are essential to the pursuit of its descriptive and clarificatory studies", consequently on the form of analysis, and, according to our problematic, on the criteria of a correct analysis.

This is what we meant when speaking, in connection with the disagreement between Stevenson and Thomas, about a disagreement in attitude concerning the analysis resulting from opposite attitudes.⁽²⁵⁾

pose criteria of correctness". These "criteria of correctness" imply an attitude (in the sense of Stevenson). (see Thomas, p. 212-213)

The paradox is that Thomas demonstrates, by his analysis of the meaning of ethical terms in the instance given by Stevenson, that the disagreement between Stevenson and himself is essentially a disagreement in attitude, whereas this disagreement just bears on the analysis by Thomas of Stevenson's instance.

(21) E. and L., p. 319

(22) *ibid.*, p. 160

(23) *ibid.*, p. 161

(24) *idem*

(25) The implicit assertion of Stevenson that among the scientists there exists an agreement in attitude about the evaluations of scientific analysis, is untrue. The history of physics shows a constant controversy between the so-called "rationalists" and the so-called "empiricists". To-day, this controversy appears very clearly from the disagreement about the so-called "principle of indeterminism" of Heisenberg in the quantum-mechanics. Personally, we think that this disagreement between "rationalists" and "empiricists"

Conclusion: It follows from this criticism on Stevenson (a criticism which results from reflecting consistently on the Attitude Theory), that:

- (a) not only ethics, but also science is based on nonrational attitudes,
- (b) the Attitude Theory can be applied to itself, i. e. it is also based on nonrational, psychological attitudes.

IV — A consequence of the attitude theory

So far we have seen that the disagreement (or agreement) within science and within ethics and also the disagreement between both disciplines is based on opposite (or similar) attitudes, and that an agreement in attitude can only be reached by an act of the will ("I agree") or by using persuasive methods (in default of such an act). At the same time we have demonstrated that also *this assertion*, that the Attitude Theory, itself is grounded on some psychological attitude.

The question we had in mind at the beginning of this article was: "How can we find an explanation and a solution for the age-long controversies within philosophy and between science and philosophy?" At this moment we can answer this question: From the "improved" Attitude Theory we learn that these controversies are essentially the expressions of opposite attitudes; that an opposition of attitudes and the disagreement resulting from it, can only be solved by including philosophy and science in a Theory of Persuasive Communication and Argumentation (T. P. C. A.) which would replace rhetoric by grounding and building up the latter scientifically. The truth of this opinion clearly appears when considering the disagreement between different epistemological systems. Indeed, from this disagreement results the disagreement among philosophers and the controversies between philosophers and scientists.

The epistemological controversies result from the fact that some assertion X is only true within some "epistemological game", in which the truth of assertion X is to be argued, starting from some premises or presuppositions. If I opt -and this is a question of *attitude*- for another "epistemological game", for other norms of argumentation, for other premises or presuppositions, assertion X becomes untrue or (cognitively) meaningless.

Moreover, an epistemology can not be true according to the definition of "truth" within the "epistemological game". For it seems impossible

is not very essential, because the pragmatic character of science can be considered a very efficient "persuasive" method" (for instance, a "reward").

to prove the truth of a system by using that meaning of "prove", which "prove" has within the system. (26)

It seems equally impossible to demonstrate the validity of an argumentation according to the meaning of "validity" in the expression "validity of conclusion". (27) Look at the game: the rules evidently cannot be valid according to the meaning of "validity of victory".

"But what about the premises or presuppositions?"

"If you have a pro attitude towards them, you will play with them. But don't forget it: they are meaningless without the rules".

"Why?"

"Look at the pieces in chess".

It is our conviction that the disagreement within philosophy and the disagreement between philosophy and science result from the impossibility of establishing an "epistemological game", acceptable according to its own rules. The assuming or the rejecting of these rules, i. e. of these premises or presuppositions and norms of argumentation of an epistemological system, is based on a pro or con attitude towards these particular rules. (28).

A dispute about the validity of the rules of an "epistemological game" can only be solved by persuasive methods applied to the existing con attitudes. Moreover, since a pro attitude towards some epistemological rules points to the persuasive character of these rules, the latest and most important "epistemological" question bears on the persuasive character of a specific truth, of a specific epistemology. This question can only be answered within and by a Theory of Persuasive Communication and Argumentation, in which the relation between attitude and epistemological system (philosophical, scientific system) is examined and in which the means are given to alter attitudes (by which the philosophical ideas are automatically modified). *Conclusion*: The controversies within philosophy and the controversies between philosophy and science are essentially of a psychological kind and

(26) A similar remark — though in another connection — is to be found in Pap (A.). *The Verifiability of Value Judgments, Ethics*, vol. 56, 1946, p. 178-185.

(27) Usually, when speaking about the validity of an argumentation, one means "validity of the conclusion according to the valid norms of argumentation". If, however, there exists a disagreement with regard to the norms of argumentation, this disagreement cannot be solved by using the disputed norms of argumentation.

(28) The assuming or rejecting of a specific epistemological system on the ground of another "higher" system leads to a "regressus ad infinitum". This problematic has been seen by L. Wittgenstein who, therefore, concludes his "Tractatus logico-philosophicus" with the paradoxical assertion: "Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen".

The problem of Wittgenstein, however, can be solved within a T. P. C. A.

point to the existence of distinctive and opposite psychological attitudes towards man and world.

To assume a "thought perspective" on man and world as "valid" or "true" results from the persuasive character of this "thought perspective" and points to the existence of pro attitudes towards this "thought perspective". (29).

Dispute and disagreement, however, point to the existence of con attitudes as the result of the fact that a specific "thought perspective" fails to be persuasive; they can only be solved either by intensifying the persuasive character of the "thought perspective" (so that a greater persuasion can be reached) or by turning the con attitudes into pro attitudes, this — in both cases — by using nonrational methods, i.e. persuasive methods.

In this way philosophy and science become parts of a T. P. C. A.

V — "To Persuade" and "To Convince":

We have argued that philosophy and science, i. e. every so-called "thought perspective", must be included in a so-called "scientific rhetoric" which would be a T. P. C. A. (30) Since Plato's time, however, philosophers have made a clear distinction between "to persuade" and "to convince". It can be questioned now if this distinction, or rather this antithesis, is legitimate.

This question is of great importance because the antithesis between rhetoric and philosophy has been based on the antithesis between "to persuade" and "to convince".

Paragraph 6 of the "Traité de l'Argumentation" (31) deals with this problematic and it seems to be relevant to our argumentation to give an outline of the authors' ideas.

It is generally admitted — the authors argue — that "to persuade" and "to convince" should be distinguished on the ground of the rational character of the "conviction".

This rational nature "(tantôt) tiendra aux moyens utilisés, tantôt aux facultés auxquelles on s'adresse". (32)

(29) The notions "valid" and "true" take their meaning from the rules of the "thought perspective"; the "persuasive character", however, bears exactly on the rules: hence its priority.

(30) This theory will be constructed on the ground of experimental data concerning attitude change.

(31) Perelman (Ch.) and Olbrechts (L.)-Tyteca, *Traité de l'Argumentation*, P. U. F., 1958, 2 vol., 734 p.

(32) *ibid.*, p. 35; "Pour Pascal, c'est l'automate qu'on persuade, et il entend par là, le corps, l'imagination, le sentiment, bref tout ce qui n'est point la raison ... Selon Dumas, dans la persuasion on "se paie de raisons affectives et personnelles", la persuasion étant

This means that from a whole, a whole of processes, a whole of faculties, some elements, considered as rational, are isolated. This "isolation" "au sein d'une pensée vivante", is rejected by the authors. Nevertheless they point out that "il faut ... reconnaître que notre langage utilise deux notions, convaincre et persuader, entre lesquelles on estime généralement qu'il existe une nuance saisissable". (33) Therefore: "Nous nous proposons d'appeler *persuasive* une argumentation qui ne prétend valoir que pour un auditoire particulier et d'appeler *convaincante* celle qui est censée obtenir l'adhésion de tout être de raison". (34) Thus, the nature of the audience is decisive for the distinction between "to persuade" and "to convince". (35)

The authors ask themselves then: "Comment se représentera-t-on les auditoires auxquels est dévolu le rôle normatif permettant de décider du caractère convaincant d'une argumentation?". (36) They find three kinds of audiences "considérés comme privilégiés à cet égard, tant dans la pratique courante que dans la pensée philosophique. Le premier, constitué par l'humanité tout entière, ou du moins par tous les hommes adultes et normaux et que nous appellerons l'auditoire *universel*; le second formé, dans le dialogue, par le seul *interlocuteur* auquel on s'adresse; le troisième, enfin, constitué par *le sujet lui-même*, quand il délibère ou se représente les raisons de ses actes". (37) But: "Disons immédiatement que c'est seulement lorsque l'homme aux prises avec lui-même et l'interlocuteur du dialogue sont considérés comme *incarnation de l'auditoire universel*, qu'ils acquièrent le privilège philosophique confié à la raison ... " (38).

Evidently, the authors ground their distinction between "to persuade" and "to convince" on the difference in *temporality* and *extensiveness* of the audiences. Temporality and extensiveness determine the kind, the nature of the audiences: hence the distinction between particular and universal audiences.

The philosophers — the authors argue — have always claimed to address a universal audience, though to them "*l'accord d'un auditoire universel n'est ... pas une question de fait, mais de droit*" (39).

souvent "sophistique". Mais, il ne précise pas en quoi cette preuve affective différerait techniquement d'une preuve objective." (idem)

(33) *ibid.*, p. 36.

(34) *idem.*

(35) "C'est donc la nature de l'auditoire auquel des arguments peuvent être soumis avec succès qui détermine dans une large mesure et l'aspect que prendront les argumentations et le caractère, la portée qu'on leur attribuera". (*ibid.*, p. 39)

(36) *ibid.* p. 39.

(37) *ibid.*, p. 39-40.

(38) *ibid.*, p. 40 (our italics)

(39) *ibid.*, p. 41

This claim to an universal audience can only be motivated by pointing to the quasi infinite variety of audiences and the innumerable problems with which the "orator" who wants to adapt himself to all their particularities is confronted.

This "claim" is in fact an *ideal, a desire* to transcend the historical and local particularities, in such a way that the defended propositions can be assumed by every man. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

From the history of philosophy, however, we learn that hitherto this claim remained a devout wish and that the "universal audience" is *in fact* a particular one.

It follows that the distinction between "to persuade" and "to convince", made on the ground of extensiveness and temporality, is untenable since both a persuasive argumentation and a convincing one address themselves to a *particular audience* ⁽⁴¹⁾

Indeed, the authors state: "Nous nous proposons d'appeler persuasive une argumentation qui ne prétend valoir que pour un auditoire particulier et d'appeler convaincante celle qui est censée obtenir l'adhésion de tout être de raison". ⁽⁴²⁾ But the expressions "prétendre valoir" and "être censé obtenir" only cognitively bear a meaning if one can point out an argumentation which is *factually* considered valid by a particular audience, or which has been considered so, and one which *factually* acquires or has acquired the approval of every rational creature; or, if one can establish the *factual conditions* in which an argumentation will be considered valid by a particular audience or in which it will acquire the approval of every rational creature.

The facts now prove that some argumentations are assumed and have been assumed as valid by some particular audiences. They equally prove, however, that up to now no argumentation has met with the approval of every rational creature. Moreover, in our opinion, the philosophers to-day cannot define (according to the accepted conception of "philosophy"), any factual conditions, in which "l'adhésion de tout être de raison" can ever be reached.

(40) *ibid.*, p. 34

(41) In fact we see that the universal audience declares itself as an "auditoire d'élite" "considéré comme le modèle auquel doivent se conformer les hommes pour être dignes de ce nom: l'auditoire d'élite crée la norme pour tout le monde, ... est l'avant-garde que tous suivront, et à laquelle ils se conformeront. Son opinion seule importe, parce que c'est, en fin de compte, celle qui sera déterminante". However: "L'auditoire d'élite n'incarne l'auditoire universel que pour ceux qui lui reconnaissent ce rôle d'avant-garde et de modèle. Pour les autres, au contraire, il ne constituera qu'un *auditoire particulier*. Le statut d'un auditoire varie selon les conceptions que l'on entretient". (*ibid.*, p. 44; our italics)

(42) *ibid.*, p. 36

It could be said that the particular audiences evidently differ with respect to quality (43); that thus a particular audience X requires argumentation X, while particular audience Y requires argumentation Y, taking into account that X means "persuasive" ("irrational", "rhetorical") and Y "convincing" ("rational", "philosophical").

The notions "to convince" and "to persuade", "rational" and "irrational" "philosophical" and "rhetorical", are then notions of classification, indicating classes of audiences and classes of argumentations. The class of audiences Y and argumentations Y could be named "philosophy".

We have seen, however, that every argumentation, in virtue of its "normative nature", is based on an *attitude*, so that *every argumentation is primarily persuasive or nonpersuasive*. The notions "to persuade" and "to convince" are *names* for classes of *persuasive-argumentations*. In this way, "to persuade" and "to convince" are both "persuasive" in the "language game" of the Attitude Theory.

This means that philosophy really forms part of a T. P. C. A.

VI — General Conclusion :

From the preceding it appears that the disagreement and controversy within philosophy and between philosophy and science can be solved by a Theory of Persuasive Communication and Argumentation, of which philosophy and science form parts and in which the attitudes, grounding every "thought system", are determined by a psycho-sociological research, and in which the means to change attitudes are indicated.

Two difficulties can be raised here: first, one may say that the notions "disagreement", "agreement", "controversy" are extra-philosophical notions: that philosophy has nothing to do with them, and that the philosopher does not aim at an agreement; secondly, it can be said that a T.P. C. A. presupposes some epistemological system (some philosophy): a disagreement about the validity of the rules of this specific "epistemological game" again raises the problem which could be definitely settled by a T. P. C. A.

The first objection has been already rejected by us in the Preface. Besides we have seen in the preceding chapter that it is generally assumed that the philosopher wants to convince (though we know now that in fact he wants to persuade). "To convince" implies — without any doubt — "to agree", and in so far we could say that "to attain agreement" is the aim of philosophical activity.

(43) This qualitative difference must be made on the ground of data resulting from psycho-sociological researches into the features of the particular audiences.

Nevertheless, maybe someone will argue that "to attain agreement" is only one of the aims of philosophical activity, but not the most important. The real one would then be some X.

But then we can ask: "Why should X be the real aim?" "Why not Y or Z?" These questions imply that if someone says: "To attain agreement is not the real aim of philosophical activity, X is the real one", he has to convince us, to attain our agreement about the truth of his assertion or about his good reasons. And in answering our questions, he tries to attain our agreement. If, answering our questions, he pretends that he does not try to convince us, he has not given any answer at all; he could have done everything, except answering.

If he answers that it is *evident* that X is the aim of philosophy, or that he *personally* presumes that X is the aim, he has answered our question by explaining his early assertion, and we can ask him: "Why is it so evident that ... ?" or "Why do you personally think that ... ?" and he has to give good reasons for his explanation, he has to convince us, to attain our agreement about these good reasons.

He can say that it is impossible to answer our questions ... and in this case he has to attain our agreement about the reasons for this impossibility.

Maybe, he will say that a justification for the aim of philosophy and the willingness to agreement, which is implied by the justification, are extra-philosophical elements. But: "Where does "philosophy" begin, where does it end?"

Maybe, he can say: "Justifications and explanations come to an end somewhere"; and in so far there is nothing more to say: philosophy comes to an end without having had any beginning.

Personally we think that the attainment of agreement is the principal aim of philosophy because other possible aims *suppose* and *imply* it.

As to the second objection, it is true that a T. P. C. A. needs some epistemology (some philosophy), but this does not mean that a disagreement about the validity of the rules of this "epistemological game" again raises the problem of disagreement.

We will say that this specific epistemology is *valid*, if, and only if, it enables us to determine attitudes and to elaborate persuasive methods so that a maximal number of real and possible disagreements or controversies, *including the disagreement or controversy about the epistemology of a T. P. C. A.*, can be solved to a maximal extent.

Finally: those who do not agree with what has been said here, claim that they have attitudes different from ours; therefore: *everything that has been said here has been said prematurely and must be said within a T. P. C. A. (including this assertion).*

F. VERBRUGGEN