

greater than at present. Or possibly, a decision was made on presumed suburban reliance on automobile transport because of greater affluence; that could have the effect of a selffulfilling prophecy. In any event, decisions are made, if not done out of negligence, for reasons. To decide between the two analyses, one would want to ask the reasons for the original decision for the present level of service. If City Hall made a

potential usage study, the citizens are guilty of a Contrary-to-Fact fallacy. If no such study was made, there would not appear to be any fallacy--not as the argument is stated, in any event.

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BOOK REVIEW

Dialectics: A Controversy-Oriented Approach to the Theory of Knowledge, Nicholas Rescher. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977. Pp. 218 + xiv. Cloth.

Statement of Purpose. For Rescher, dialectic is the discipline of "disputation, debate and rational controversy." He says in the Preface that the book "explores a disputational approach to inquiry" and in the introduction that "the goal of this exploration is the development of a dialectical model for the rationalization of cognitive methodology--scientific methodology specifically included."(xii) It is "the communal and controversy-oriented aspects of rational argumentation and inquiry" which he wants to illuminate and to contrast with "the cognitive solipsism of the Cartesian approach." Accordingly, the first three chapters of the book present Rescher's account of dialectic--the basic outlines, as it were, of rational controversy; the last four chapters apply that account in a consideration of issues in epistemology and the philosophy of science.

Table of Contents

- One. The disputational background of dialectic: the structure of formal disputation.
- Two. Some dialectical tools: burden of proof, presumption, and plausibility.
- Three. Unilateral dialectics: a disputational model of inquiry.
- Four. Facets of "dialectical logic".
- Five. What justifies the dialectical rational of probative rationality.
- Six. A dialectically based critique of skepticism.
- Seven. Evolutionary epistemology and the burden of proof.
- Eight. The disputational model of scientific inquiry.

Special Features

****Ch. 1 presents a method for representing the structure of a "formal disputation" in

which there are two participants: someone defending a thesis (the proponent) and someone challenging that thesis (the opponent). In this method, there are three fundamental moves: 1) categorical assertion (available only to the proponent); 2) cautious assertion (which is available only to the opponent and amounts to saying "P is the case for all that you have shown") and 3) provisoed assertion (which amounts to saying "P generally or usually or ordinarily obtains, provided that Q" and is available to either participant in combination with the categorical or cautious assertion of Q). Various "dialectical countermoves" are built up out of these fundamental moves and fairly complex courses of formal disputation can be represented thereby.

****Ch. 2 explains the concepts of burden of proof and presumption, orienting itself from the legal tradition. Roughly, to establish a presumption is to shift the burden of proof. These concepts, together with the concept of plausibility, are taken to be central in the adjudication of a disputation. As a result, "A shared procedure for the assessment of plausibility and the allocation of presumption thus emerges as a critical factor in dialectic--indeed as one of the crucial presuppositions of rationality throughout the context of rational discussion."

****Ch. 3 "explores the doctrine that disputation and debate may be taken as a paradigmatic model for the general process of reasoning in the pursuit of truth". The root idea is that dialectic provides a method of "evidential cost-benefit analysis"--i.e., of testing the evidential support of ideas and theses.

****Ch. 4 attempts to show that although dialectical reasoning "seemingly departs from that in orthodox logic in various ways", it does not in fact violate the canons of orthodox logic.

****Chs. 5-7 address the question "just what are the credentials of the established probative rules--the standard machinery of evidence, plausibility, presumption, etc.?"

A fairly complex response to skepticism is developed in the course of answering this question.

****Ch. 8 illustrates a number of ways in which a "disputational model" shows promise for illuminating aspects of scientific inquiry.

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