

▫ Discussions with David Hitchcock , author of (2003). Toulmin's Warrants. In F. H. van Eemeren, J. A. Blair, C.A. Williard & A. F. S. Henekemans (Eds.), *Anyone who has a view: Theoretical contributions to the study of argumentation* (pp. 69-82). Dordrecht: The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic, and other articles on argumentation. It was this piece on warrants that prompted Adams to send him a copy of the 2008 paper on motivational appeals that Adams did with Cox that can be found in the papers section of this site.

David Hitchcock retains all rights to his part of this discussion; his contributions are presented here with his permission.

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-----Original Message-----

From: W C Adams [[mailto:clifton\\_adams@yahoo.com](mailto:clifton_adams@yahoo.com)]

Sent: August 17, 2008 9:26 AM

To: hitchckd@mcmaster.ca

Subject: article on Toulmin

Professor Hitchcock,

You may be interested in the attached article. It's primarily on communication, but it does support your interpretation of Toulmin on the difference between data and warrant. clifton

--- On **Mon, 8/18/08**, David Hitchcock <[hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca](mailto:hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca)> wrote:

From: David Hitchcock <[hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca](mailto:hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca)>

Subject: RE: article on Toulmin

To: "W C Adams" <[clifton\\_adams@yahoo.com](mailto:clifton_adams@yahoo.com)>

Date: Monday, August 18, 2008, 5:36 PM

Dear Clifton,

Thank you for sending me your paper, which I read with interest. I am naturally pleased that you were able to use my own work on Toulmin's model.

Being a philosopher rather than a communications scholar, I am ignorant of most of the literature that you cite, and find the technical terminology difficult to grasp.

I can however comment as an Aristotle scholar that the logos-ethos-pathos distinction as Aristotle originally presented it in the *Rhetoric* was not a distinction between three types of proofs, but a distinction between three means of persuasion through speech. For Aristotle, only an argument would count as a proof.

I would also analyze some of the examples in your paper differently.

McCroskey's example on page 3, where the claim is "We should try to get a college education" and the reason offered in support of this claim is ""A College education enables a person to achieve financial success", needs as a warrant something like "We should try to get whatever enables a person to achieve financial success". The weakness of the warrant is shown by the fact that it would license inferences to conclusions that we should try to get certification as a

professional plumber, certification as a chartered accountant, ownership of an extremely profitable company, and any number of other things that enable a person to achieve financial success. In other words the supporting reason gives at best very weak support for the claim.

Similarly, the argument on page 10 that I will exercise regularly because I want a long life requires as a warrant something like the principle that whoever wants a long life should exercise regularly. The proposition that whoever exercises regularly lives longer would help to support such a warrant, but needs supplementation. For there are other concomitants of longevity that do not have action-guiding implications, such as having long-lived parents.

I am also somewhat skeptical of your claim that the data in a Toulmin-type argument analysis are always more specific than the warrant. Somebody can use a general proposition to support a claim. For example, somebody can argue, "If you start to skid and you put on the brakes, you can't steer. So, if you start to skid, don't put on the brakes." A possible warrant for this argument is: If you start to skid, don't do anything that makes it impossible to steer. Here the warrant and the datum look equally general to me.

Just some thoughts. As you see, your paper engaged me.

David

## Being engaged with Toulmin

Wednesday, August 20, 2008 6:02 PM

From: "W C Adams"  
[clifton\\_adams@yahoo.com](mailto:clifton_adams@yahoo.com)

To: "David Hitchcock"  
<[hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca](mailto:hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca)>

Dear David,

Thank you for your kind and thoughtful response. As you well know, we spend time writing this stuff in hopes that someone might be engaged by it. Certainly, it is good to learn that we've had some success.

In terms of "proofs:" I'm certainly no Aristotelian scholar. However, I do recognize the truth of your statements about his treatment of ethos, pathos and logos as means of persuasion. It is certainly in that vein that we, and the scholars of Aristotle in the field of communication, discuss the terms. The field discusses them as "rhetorical proofs," i.e. means to gaining acceptance of propositions from audiences. Certainly, there exists no intent to equate them with logical proofs.

It is in this context that our field was drawn to Toulmin's model. In it, we saw the possibility for treatments that did not necessitate defining "reasonable" in absolute terms. As reflected in our paper, we distinguish deduction from induction as two parts of a process as opposed to whether the reasoning falls in the realm of probability. To us, all reasoning is probabilistic.

In terms of your analyses of our examples, I trust that you recognize how much in agreement those analyses are with ours. Indeed, as far as they go, they are in complete agreement with ours. Yours, as ours, recognizes that McCroskey is incorrect in his warrant. Yours leaves his data as is and moves further up the abstraction ladder to

--- On Thu, 8/21/08, David Hitchcock <hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca> wrote:

From: David Hitchcock <hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca>  
Subject: RE: Being engaged with Toulmin  
To: clifton\_adams@yahoo.com  
Date: Thursday, August 21, 2008, 9:51 AM

Thanks for your reply, Clifton. I think that we are largely in agreement on the Toulmin model.

I will just make on brief comment in response to your remarks. I do hold that a warrant for an inference must be general. In Toulmin's most perspicuous formulation, a warrant has the form: Data *such as* D entitle us to draw conclusions *such as* C. (My emphasis.) So warrants are always general.

To put the point another way, anyone who draws a conclusion, or supports a claim by giving reasons for its acceptance, is thereby committed to the legitimacy of parallel inferences about other topics.

But the generality of a warrant does not (in my view) imply that the data are less general. In cases where the "data" are themselves general, it is often difficult to say whether the warrant is more general than the data--they may in fact not be comparable with respect to their generality.

To take a simple artificial example. Someone might say: "All ducks quack, so mergansers quack." Since the only common content between "data" and conclusion is the word 'quack', the warrant for this argument is the following: For any property F, if all ducks have F, then mergansers have F. A little fancy footwork will generate a proof that this second-order generalization is logically equivalent to the statement: Mergansers are ducks. Which is what intuitively most people would recognize as the assumption licensing the inference.

Now take the two statements:

D: All ducks quack.

W: Mergansers are ducks.

You cannot compare them with respect to their generality. In particular, D is not more specific than W. If anything, D sounds more general, since it says something about all ducks, whereas W only says something about mergansers.

I'd be interested in your comments.

David

On Being a Duck

Friday 8/22/08

From: W. Clifton Adams

To: David Hitchcock

I told you, David, that I'm not an Aristotelian scholar. Well, in addition to that, I'm not a Toulmin scholar either. Given Eemeren's publications on Toulmin, one might consider him qualified to be a Toulmin scholar. His take on Toulmin is that whatever is said to justify the claim is the warrant. That's not how I took Toulmin; but I must admit that I felt I understood reasoning when I first encounter Toulmin's model. Since corresponding with Fritz, I have restricted myself to referring to Toulmin's model, not his system, in my writing. Eemeren sees Toulmin as restricted to argument as a subset of external communication. And, indeed, that's how Toulmin explains his model. I just saw Toulmin's explanation as a convenient way, a more streamlined means, of discussing something that can become complicated quickly in its various forms.

Of course, to me, argument IS something that takes place between people and between peoples. However, it is more fundamentally something that takes place within each of us. Indeed, it occurs between persons because with each there is some empathy, some anticipation if you will, that the reasons we've provided ourselves might indeed seem reasonable to others. So, my view of where reasoning starts differs from that of Eemeren. If he is correct about Toulmin's system, then my views differ from Toulmin as well. Because, as you pointed out in your article, warrants have the function of forming a bridge between data and claim. To contend, as Eemeren does that whatever statement is made to support a claim is the warrant, is simply too illogical for my empathetic system to accept.

My warrant is that for something to bridge two elements it must be broad enough to span both elements, not just to connect them, but to have footing in each. My data is that warrants have as their function the bridging of data and claim. My claim is that warrants must be broader than either data or claim. These parts do not change nomenclature simply because I change the order in which I present them to you.

A data field may indeed extend in scope to parallel that of a given warrant. (Indeed, a data field from one argument may itself become a warrant in another argument as illustrated in my previous note, I think). However, in any particular application, the data under consideration is more specific than the warrant that links it to the particular claim. Forgive me as I run on about this; especially if you already accept it or even if you understand my position.

Anyway, the point is that my position may differ from Toulmin, although I use his model. Actually, I think I'm more in keeping with Toulmin than is Eemeren, but I don't want to get in a position of defending my stance based on it being Toulmin's if Toulmin doesn't reflect a logical differentiation of warrant and data.

Your duck example reminds me of Eemeren's treatment of the British citizenship example. That's some of my feeling for the need to run on so above. It also, in a lighter tone reminds me of something that Sherlock Holmes may have said to Watson: "My Friend, you do make complicated this simple process of deduction."

David, the warrant of your example, regardless of when it is stated in a discussion is: "All ducks quack." It has both "duck" and "quack;" thus, fulfilling the bridging function. The data, regardless of presentational order: "Mergansers are ducks." And the claim: "Mergansers quack."

The warrant, "All ducks quack," permits us to draw conclusion such as the one above. We may also draw the conclusion that "Farmer Brown's ducks quack." from the same warrant. That's because, Mergansers are more specific than ducks. So, yes, what you

present as D is indeed more general than what you present at W. That seems to be because in leaving the D to be inferred by the listener, you thought it had to be W. However, the function of W isn't to be inferred, but to link.

Order of presentation is so arbitrary that it is incongruous to me that anyone could define function in these terms. Warrants serve to link – thus they warrant the connection between data and claim. Data, in its function, does provide a basis for accepting the claim because the warrant undergirds the link.

We reason often with only one part being stated. A person walks in the room and someone else says, "It's raining outside." Other people complete the deduction. Or, the person may say, "You're wet." Now, the "you're wet" could function as a claim; but, I doubt that people in the room would see it as a claim given they are seeing the wet individual. They have already reached that conclusion and may be ahead of the speaker in the claim that "It's raining outside." But, then the speaker may start by saying, "Wow, when it rains, you can really get wet." On seeing the person who just came in, others will most likely say (within themselves), "It's raining outside." Regardless of which scenario occurs, (given no one knew it was raining) the functions of the three statements are the same in this context. To code each scenario differently based on order of events is illogical. It doesn't help us to understand the essence of the function of each part and makes generalization about them impossible.

Someone from the room above may go into a more inner, quieter room of the building and start with either: "It's raining outside because Jim just came in and he's wet." or "It's raining outside" and be asked how do you know and he will say looking toward the door where Jim will enter shortly, "When it rains, Jim really gets wet." Or he may say, "Wait till you see how wet Jim is. When it rains outside, he really gets wet." The possibilities don't (generally) change the functions of the parts. Now, someone may ask the speaker in the first example of this paragraph, "How do you know that Jim is wet?" Regardless of how the person answers, the "Jim is wet" element changes function to that of a claim. Note it's still specific in this example. But we can't code the person's response before we hear it. He may say, "I can believe my eyes!" W; or he may say D, "I saw him."

Examples exist everywhere (inside us and out) where the claim comes first, second, third or not at all. The same is true of the other two parts. Clearly, a discussion seems to start when one person rejects a claim from another; but the wise speaker has started the reasoning before the claim by establishing some workable warrants.

Hope you can empathize with some of my thinking here.  
clifton

--- On **Sat, 8/23/08**, David Hitchcock <[hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca](mailto:hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca)> wrote:

From: David Hitchcock <[hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca](mailto:hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca)>  
Subject: RE: On being a duck  
To: [clifton\\_adams@yahoo.com](mailto:clifton_adams@yahoo.com)  
Date: Saturday, August 23, 2008, 10:12 AM

Thanks for your detailed and thoughtful reply, Clifton. I see that you have been thinking about this problem for some time.

I agree that the issue here is theoretical, not exegetical. That is, it is a question of how best to understand arguments and their components, not a question of what Toulmin says or implies in *The Uses of Argument* and his other writings on argument.

I prefer myself to use either claim–reason terminology or premiss–conclusion terminology. For me, an argument is a discourse in which an author supports a claim with one or more reasons, or (equivalently) draws a conclusion from one or more premisses. The claim–reason terminology fits more naturally a discourse in which the author states the claim first, and the premiss–conclusion terminology fits more naturally a discourse in which the author states the conclusion last. But the inferential claim is the same regardless of the order of presentation, given the same content. For example, the discourse "everything outside is soaking wet, so it must have been raining" has the same inference as the discourse "it has obviously been raining, because everything outside is soaking wet."

To that extent, we agree that order of presentation is irrelevant to the role of an assertion in an argument.

However, the warrant of an argument is a general rule that would license the transition from the reason(s) to the claim. Typically, the warrant is unstated. So, if somebody says, "Mergansers are ducks, so mergansers quack", you cannot identify as the warrant the principle that you are entitled to conclude from the fact that something is a merganser that it is a duck. The warrant has to license the transition from the stated premiss /reason to the stated conclusion / claim. The stated reason is that mergansers are ducks. And the conclusion drawn from this reason is that mergansers quack. So you need as a warrant some general rule that would license a transition from the reason to the conclusion. The only general rule that does this work is the rule that from a premiss of the form "Ks are ducks", where K is replaced by the name of some kind, you are entitled to conclude that Ks quack.

If we have a full–fledged syllogism in a discourse, the identification of the reason and the warrant becomes more tricky. Suppose somebody says, "Mergansers are ducks, and all ducks quack, so mergansers quack." I don't see any way of differentiating the role in that discourse of the two propositions that mergansers are ducks and that all ducks quack. So I would be inclined to treat them both as reasons offered in joint support of the conclusion. The warrant would then be purely formal: From premisses of the form "As are Bs" and "all Bs have property F", you may conclude that As have property F.

On the other hand, if somebody says, "Mergansers are ducks, so mergansers quack; all ducks quack", the position of the proposition that all ducks quack indicates that it is being used to support the inferential claim implied by the word "so". Thus it is the warrant of the argument, or (more strictly) the expression in statement form of the warrant.

Again, if somebody says, "All ducks quack, so mergansers quack; mergansers are ducks", the warrant would be the rule corresponding to the proposition that mergansers are ducks.

A fourth possibility. Somebody says, "Mergansers quack, just like other ducks; mergansers are ducks, you know", I would be inclined to take "just like other ducks" as a way of presenting as a supporting reason that ducks quack and "mergansers are ducks" as a presentation in statement form of the warrant.

You wrote: "My warrant is that for something to bridge two elements it must be broad enough to span both elements, not just to connect them, but to have footing in each. My data is that warrants have as their function the bridging of data and claim. My claim is that warrants must be broader than either data or claim."

Ignoring the first of your three sentences, and taking the other two at face value, I would identify as the warrant of your argument the principle that, from data that something has the function of bridging two things, one may conclude that it is broader than either of them. In statement form: Anything that is to bridge two things must be broader than either of them. That is roughly what

your first sentence says, so we agree on the analysis of your argument. The question at issue between us is whether your warrant is justified.

There seems to be a visual metaphor in your argument; I can picture the Golden Gate bridge with one end based on the north side of the entrance to San Francisco Bay and the other end based on the south side, with the footing in each case being much smaller than the bridge itself.

Cashing in the metaphor, I see your point that, with respect to the common topic of data and claim, the warrant is more general. In my simple example, the common topic is mergansers, and the warrant is about more than mergansers. Warrants are necessarily more general than any particular argument whose inference they license, in the sense that they necessarily apply to other arguments as well.

However, if you put a warrant in statement form, the resulting statement is not necessarily more general than the claim or more general than the data. The condition that one statement is more general than another is the condition that the first statement logically implies the second one. For example, the statement that all human beings are mortal is more general than the statement that the human being Socrates is mortal, in that it implies that the human being Socrates is mortal.

This condition is not met by the warrant in my example with respect to the data. That ducks quack does not logically imply that mergansers are ducks; it is logically possible that ducks quack but mergansers are not ducks.

In fact, even if we have an argument where the warrant is that mergansers are ducks and the data is that ducks quack, the warrant is not more general than the data. That mergansers are ducks does not logically imply that ducks quack; it is logically possible that mergansers are ducks but not all ducks quack.

These logical points are (to me at least) quite obvious. I suspect that what is going on here is a difference in how we understand the words “general” and “specific” when applied to statements.

David

Toward a non-conceptual definition of ‘general’

From: Clifton Adams  
To: David Hitchcock  
Monday, Aug. 25, 2008

David, you said, “I see that you have been thinking about this problem for some time.”

Well, no, I’ve only been thinking about this particular problem for a few months now. A reviewer of an earlier version of the paper you read suggested that we needed to read your article. Prior to that, I thought it was simply McCroskey’s problem. It really “blew me away” that leading international scholars of reasoning were using contextual clues to distinguish between warrant and data.

Sam (Cox) keeps saying, “They’re missing the forest for the trees.” (That’s cute since we advocate that recognizing the difference in “forest” and “trees” is a need skill in identifying warrants and data.) However, the confusion doesn’t appear that these scholars and/or you are looking too much at the detail. My analogy is that you’re looking at the wind blowing the tops of the trees and thus failing to recognize



the nature of the forest. – More on that later.

Your suspension that we have different understandings of “general” and “specific” seems to be most accurate. This conclusion is evidenced by your statement, “The condition that one statement is more general than another is the condition that the first statement logically implies the second one.” This conditional (contextual) criterion may or may not appropriately distinguish between general and specific elements, depending on the context, and (apparently) one’s definition of “logically implies.” More importantly, perhaps, it is tied to the very cases where we are making distinctions – it is a contextual difference. A more fundamental differentiation based on the nature of language (independent of argument) is clearly needed.

My differentiation of general (or abstract) and specific is based on how much “reality” is included by the language. I have taken the liberty of attaching a chapter from our manuscript for your consideration. [The essence of this attachment is reflected in the first two pages of the Teaching Thinking paper in the paper’s section of this website] It is based on S. I. Hayakawa’s Language in Thought and Action.

I do believe that my (and Hayakawa’s) understanding of abstraction is essential for independently differentiating a warrant and a datum in the reasoning – and also the argumentation process. I believe anyone who wants to understand the reasoning process needs to understand the nature of abstraction. This belief is the warrant for my claim that you’ll want to consider the attached material. (Yes, the implied datum here is “you’re a person who wants to understand reasoning, and yes, there is an embedded argument here that the attached material helps one to understand the nature of abstraction).

Actually, our definitional difference (as is so often the case) seems to account for much of the delta between your responses to my analyses and what I’d expect you to respond. It may well be that what I write from this point today will also be misdirected since it will be based on my perspective on reasoning. Still, I want to say it because I do believe that we have similar goals in this discussion and thus I write on.

I’ve always talked about the reasoning process, as opposed to argumentation, although my field is speech communication and discourse then has been the obvious focus of my teaching and writing. Still, I see reasoning as the more basic concept. We’d hope that argumentation would be reasoned discourse. Still, in the last few months, the need to distinguish reasoning from argumentation has been intensified. (Studying argumentation seems analogous to examining the rustling of the leaves.) Eemeren told me that he studies argumentation because that what we can see. It is, then, from the prospective of discourse that he interprets Toulmin. Argument then, to him, starts when a statement becomes a claim. What is said to support that claim is data. The missing element is warrant. Since, as he correctly identified, a person can use either a specific statement of a general one as a basis for justifying a claim, then, (to him) there is no functional difference between D and W.

In the “Harry is a British subject.” example, we see this statement challenged. When it was Toulmin’s example, the answer to the challenge was “He was born in Bermuda.” providing (correctly for Toulmin) the data. However, Eeremen, observed that if the listener knew where Harry was born, the speaker might well have said, “A

person born in Bermuda is a British subject.” Thus, Eemeren incorrectly concludes based on this contextual analysis that either supportive statement could be data based on the context. To him, either statement could provide the inferential link needed, thus qualifying as warrant. I really thought I read you refuting in your chapter Eemeren’s analysis in the same way I would.

As I read your discussion of the Mergansers example, I see you making the same type of error that I contend Eemeren made in the Bermuda example, although you do approach it differently.

You say, “All ducks quack, so mergansers quack.” This example only works as a cohesive argument (as with Eemeren’s), if the listener knows that mergansers are duck (as with the listener knowing Harry place of birth). This knowledge is in a sense logically implied within the context of the statement; but, obviously, not logically implied by the nature of the language; so, mergansers who are not ducks may quack also. The same, is true, contrary to your contention, of the “All men are mortal example.” They are parallel examples.

Think about my friend’s cat, Socrates in reviewing your contrast.

“All men are mortal, so, Socrates will die.” Exactly parallel to your example.

W: All men are mortal.

W: All duck quack.

D: Fritz is a man.

D: Mergansers are a type of duck.

C: Fritz will die.

C: Mergansers quack.

These classifications are going to remain the same regardless of order or which elements are omitted or implied. And! I think the classification needs to be consistent for us to advance the understanding of the process.

The order presented, or at least the parts that are omitted, may affect how logical the speaker may appear to the scholar. Clearly, the part that is omitted will be affected by what the speaker thinks the listener already knows and doesn’t know. However, it will also be affected by what the speaker hopes may be most effective in reaching agreement with the listener. By avoiding (or at least minimizing the contextual element of our definitions, we can better study these variables.

Now, your statement, “Typically, the warrant is unstated.” as an empirical statement clearly does not correspond to my observations. (Back looking at the movement of the trees). Typically, what is challenged, thus becoming a claim, is, in its desired function, a warrant. And, unless challenged, which it often isn’t, it remains a warrant. Considering the following examples from a variety of communication contexts:

“You’ll want a pain killer you can trust. You can trust brand X.” What is unstated is “You’ll want x.” Of course, the advertiser wants the listeners to overlook the trustworthiness of other brands as well as to accept the warrant without question. Since it is an ad, there won’t of necessity be backing for the warrant since it won’t be challenged (openly).

“If you make this investment, you’ll gain x over time.” The expectation is that the person wants to gain x over time, thus supplying the data.

“If you don’t want a penalty, you’ll turn your paper (pay your bill) by date x.”

"If you loved me, you'd do it."

Of course, when challenged, the backing provided may well be a specific statement (data), but, I wouldn't use a word as strong as "typically" to quantify that probability. Eventually, however, the ultimate backing is an unstated abstract belief. But the whole process is nested or grouped.

Indeed, the most likely statement is likely to be a compound one: "You don't want to vote for that crook, because you can't trust \_\_\_\_\_, and he clearly is a backstabbing \_\_\_\_\_." Look at how many different parts are unstated – and stated!

Finally, on claim-reason terminology: In my teaching, these terms or conclusion-reason, were most usually used. It avoided much of the discussion we are having. Still, when discussing reasoning, I wanted my students to understand that reasons had two parts: One that provided a "factual" base, and one that bridged to the conclusion/claim. Depending on the context and audience, students were taught to build to warrants with the anticipation that the audience would apply those at the appropriate time or be more explicit and extend warrants to behavior conclusions.

I do hope that some of this advances your understanding of reasoning, if not of argumentation. At the least, perhaps the engagement is of value.

Sincerely,  
clifton

--- On Tue, 8/26/08, David Hitchcock <hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca> wrote:

From: David Hitchcock <hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca>  
Subject: RE: Toward a non-contextual definition of general  
To: "W C Adams" <clifton\_adams@yahoo.com>  
Date: Tuesday, August 26, 2008, 10:17 AM

Thanks, Clifton, for your lengthy and thoughtful reply. I read it and skimmed through the draft chapter that you kindly attached.

I detect two issues in your reply. I have time to comment only briefly on each.

1) How can we arrange statements on a ladder of abstraction, from most general to most specific? The sequences in your chapter that arrange sentences in order of decreasing abstraction operate on a different general-specific distinction than the one I had in mind. They attribute increasingly specific properties to one and the same individual, who in one sequence is identified first indefinitely by the phrase "a man" and then definitely by the name "Joe". In such sequences, logical implication goes from specific to general: a sentence in the sequence implies each of the sentences above it, and is implied by each of the sentences below it, and not vice versa.

2) How do we identify warrant, data and claim in an argument? Not, I would maintain, by their semantic content. Rather, by their function in the argument. The claim is what the author of the argument is supporting with reasons. The data are the reasons offered in support. The warrant is a rule that would entitle one to draw the claim from the reasons offered.

I may be missing the forest for the wind blowing through the treetops, but I find it hard to get a handle on highly general claims without looking at particular examples. (In the preceding sentence, I used "highly general" in the sense that I first used.)

So I offer brief comments on some of your examples:

[Quotes from Adams are in blue for clarity in distinguishing the voices]

In the “Harry is a British subject.” example, we see this statement challenged. When it was Toulmin’s example, the answer to the challenge was “He was born in Bermuda.” providing (correctly for Toulmin) the data. However, Eeremen, observed that if the listener knew where Harry was born, the speaker might well have said, “A person born in Bermuda is a British subject.” Thus, Eeeren incorrectly concludes based on this contextual analysis that either supportive statement could be data based on the context. To him, either statement could provide the inferential link needed, thus qualifying as warrant. I really thought I read you refuting in your chapter Eeeren’s analysis in the same way I would.

Van Eeeren is quite right that someone could offer as support for the claim that Harry is a British subject the reason that a person born in Bermuda is a British subject. I agree with him that in this case the reason (grounds, datum) is that a person born in Bermuda is a British subject. However, the warrant is still a general rule. It needs to be a rule entitling one to draw a conclusion like “Harry is a British subject” from a reason like “A person born in Bermuda is a British subject”. Many rules could do this job. One possible rule is the rule: “From information that a person born in Bermuda has a property F, you may conclude that Harry has the property F.” If one were to put this rule in statement form, it would be the statement: “Harry has every property that a person born in Bermuda has.” That is a general statement, in the sense that it contains a universal quantifier “every”. It makes a universal claim about the properties possessed by a person born in Bermuda: all of them belong to Harry.

It happens to be logically equivalent to the singular statement that Harry was born in Bermuda. Incidentally, in an investigation of a sample of argument selected using random methods from scholarly books in English in my university library, I discovered that arguments whose warrants are second-order generalizations of this type are quite rare.

W: All men are mortal.

W: All duck quack.

D: Fritz is a man.

D: Mergansers are a type of duck.

C: Fritz will die.

C: Mergansars quack.

These classifications are going to remain the same regardless of order or which elements are omitted or implied. And! I think the classification needs to be consistent for us to advance the understanding of the process.

Well, we certainly disagree on this point. In my view, any statement can function as either a claim or a reason or a warrant. It all depends what the speaker is arguing for and what reasons the speaker offers in support of that claim.

Now, your statement, “Typically, the warrant is unstated.” as an empirical statement clearly does not correspond to my observations. (Back looking at the movement of the trees). Typically, what is challenged, thus becoming a claim, is, in its desired function, a warrant. And, unless challenged, which it often isn’t, it remains a warrant.

Do you find that this observation is true of my sample of 50 arguments from books in English in my university library:

<http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~hitchckd/samplingappendix.pdf> ?

I grant that a warrant may be challenged. My view is that it then becomes a claim, which must be supported with reasons to meet the challenge.

Considering the following examples from a variety of communication contexts:

“You’ll want a pain killer you can trust. You can trust brand X.” What is unstated is “You’ll want x.” Of course, the advertiser wants the listeners to overlook the trustworthiness of other brands as well as to accept the warrant without question. Since it is an ad, there won’t of necessity be backing for the warrant since it won’t be challenged (openly).

As is typical in advertisements, when there is an argument, the conclusion is unstated. The reader or hearer is left to draw the conclusion themselves, thus taking ownership of it. In the quotation, I would identify the first sentence as the warrant, and the second sentence as the reason—again, in the context of this sequence. (If the ad also gave reasons why you can trust brand X, the statement that you can trust brand X would be a claim or conclusion relative to those reasons.) “If you make this investment, you’ll gain x over time.” The expectation is that the person wants to gain x over time, thus supplying the data.

The quotation gives a reason for making this investment. The reader is invited to make this investment. This is a piece of practical reasoning, about which Toulmin’s model does not speak specifically. A rule that would license the decision that the reader is invited to make would be: On the basis of the information that you will gain x over time if you make a certain investment, make that investment.

“If you don’t want a penalty, you’ll turn your paper (pay your bill) by date x.”

Not an argument, unless more is specified about the context.

“If you loved me, you’d do it.”

An interesting example. The counter-factual semantically implies a false consequent: You are not doing it. From which there follows, by modus tollendo tollens, the conclusion: you don’t love me. The warrant is modus tollendo tollens: from a conditional and the denial of its consequent, you may infer the denial of its antecedent. The addressee presumably loves the speaker, and is being pressured by resistance to the implicit conclusion into doing it.

David

--- On Sat, 9/6/08, W C Adams <clifton\_adams@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: W C Adams <clifton\_adams@yahoo.com>  
Subject: Fools rush in  
To: "David Hitchcock" <hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca>  
Date: Saturday, September 6, 2008, 2:44 PM

David,

We are obviously beyond the point that I can respond quickly.

It may well be that we have reached the point of saying, “our differences can not be resolved.” From my definitional view, I could reach that conclusion from a warrant that says, “Definitional differences by their very nature are almost impossible to resolve” I don’t think I need to say, “we have definitional difference,” since you pointed that out previously.

But before I continue, I need to say, thank you, for staying with me this far. I want to continue cautiously, because I recognize that when one only has words on a page, it’s difficult to flavors those words to reflect the intent of being constructive.

You have helped me to understand much better your thinking as well as the thinking of Eemeren. That alone has contributed to my growth. So, if the discussion were to end with the conclusion above, it would have been of value to me.

Perhaps, that would justify turning, at this point, to other areas of potential interests. I do want to send you a couple of copies of my little book of fables, SUNSPOTS, one for you and one to give to someone that you think would appreciate it – that would serve as a token of friendship (perhaps?) and as a means to help me promote the book. I do hope that we have started here something that could become a friendship – at least I see the possibility. Perhaps at some point, you (plural as appropriate) might come to visit us here in Missouri. We (Sara and I) have a modest, but comfortable home on seven acres. It's peaceful. Our only daughter is married; we do have four cats. Our place is also an hour's drive of Kansas City with all its diversity in entertainment and activities. So, good judgment might be to continue in different paths.

However, fools rush in; so, I will continue with my attempt to encourage you to think more in my direction. Such rash action is motivated by my belief that you were engaged by our article because you saw something of "truth" in our approach. Perhaps, your engagement was more linked to our saying you were correct (was it?) I still think that you are correct, but not in the same way as I did when writing that paper. I trust that it will be okay to quote our personal correspondence, as appropriate, in a paper that we are presenting at the National Communication Association in November?

It is in this new understanding of your position that emerged the "winds in the trees" analogy. Since you are looking at an argument in discourse, you take a time-orientation, and say, an argument starts when someone disagrees with statement. The focus of the disagreement is then the claim. No one can argue with that approach. The inference underlying the claim (which may never be stated) is the warrant. If you ask the correct question first, you get a specific reason to justify the claim, and we call that reason the data. I understand the perspective. It looks at the process as one of discourse, i.e. argumentation.

To make a distinction between your vantage point and mine for analysis, I say that I'm analyzing reasoning, as opposed to argumentation. We can not always see the reasoning, because it starts within each of us. You can see/hear argumentation in discourse. Forgive me being redundant, but I think this is a key distinction. And, it is an essential one, if, indeed, you want to understand my reasoning. You need to switch, at least temporarily, your frame of reference. I will get to specifics later, but, for there to be advancement in our dialogue, you need to be willing to "see" it from the ground – although, you cannot see into the minds of others, you can see your own reasoning and make good inferences from the discourse of others. To me it's clear: what happens in argumentation reflects that internal reasoning. From that perspective, reasoning starts with abstract principles. You are correct: for any one abstract statement, there is not a necessary implication to any one more specific statement (remind me to apply this statement to our duck example). However, that's not the function of a warrant to make the inference all by itself. Its function is to make a bridge between the two more specific parts. That's why we don't have complete

reasons without three parts in traditional syllogisms. Are using “reason” as you do in claim-reason, the reason has two parts, one that functions to bridge the more specific one to the claim, thus justifying the mental movement.

It is in this new understanding of your position that emerged the “winds in the trees” analogy. Since you are looking at an argument in discourse, you take a time-orientation, and say, an argument starts when someone disagrees with statement. The focus of the disagreement is then the claim. No one can argue with that approach. The inference underlying the claim (which may never be stated) is the warrant. If you ask the correct question first, you get a specific reason to justify the claim, and we call that reason the data. I understand the perspective. It looks at the process as one of discourse, i.e. argumentation.

YOU SAID [Quotes from Hitchcock are highlighted to clarify them as his contributions.]

“How do we identify warrant, data and claim in an argument? Not, I would maintain, by their semantic content. Rather, by their function in the argument. The claim is what the author of the argument is supporting with reasons. The data are the reasons offered in support. The warrant is a rule that would entitle one to draw the claim from the reasons offered.”

Yes, you are correct. The three parts of reasoning are defined by their function, but those functions are independently reflected in the semantic content. The demand for independent (non contextual) criteria for defining terms, I thought was a universal standard; it is essential to safeguard against circular reasoning. The function of a warrant is to link data with claim, providing the basis for accepting the claim if one believes the data. The justification isn't absolute. We often reason incorrectly, and even rationalize; however, these reasonings reflect the same parts and the same functions for each. Warrants function as warrants BECAUSE they have the semantic content that permits them to bridge the more specific elements. Let's consider any (and thus I think all) of the syllogisms.

All men are mortal.

: Fritz is a man.  
Fritz will die.

All duck quack.

Mergansers are a type of duck.  
Mergansars quack.

A person born in Bermuda is a British subject

Harry was born in Bermuda  
Harry is a British subject

Would you agree that all three are complete arguments as listed? Would you agree that “A person born in Bermuda is a British subject.” is both more abstract and linking of the other two statements? But, then you contend that since all three are listed that you can't tell me the function that any of the three serve in the process? Given “A person born in Bermuda is a British subject; therefore, Harry is a British subject” you would create an even more abstract statement that would embody “Harry was born in Bermuda? You don't see that as cumbersome? Do you find support for this position in

examples from instructional materials? Of course, my position is that “Harry was born in Bermuda” is data and required to complete the process – it functions to comply with the linkage of the warrant in arriving at the conclusion. I think Eemeren is incorrect in saying that either statement can make the link to claim from the other statement. However, his position is more logical -- if one is willing to overlook the requirement of a warrant functioning as a bridge, or viewing a bridge as no more than a link – and fits better with examples in texts than yours. I was pleased that you were able to form an image of a bridge in mentally supporting the refutation of bridge only being a link. Simply linking doesn’t warrant the movement. By being more abstract, the warrant does provide some justification, given the data, to move to the claim/conclusion. It just doesn’t make sense to then write another statement that includes both warrant and data to fulfill your definition of “general.” I believe it’s safe to say, it is ONLY in the one example where Eemeren is making the point that you can not distinguish warrant and claim that he fails to place the more abstract statement as the warrant.

I don’t know that it’s worthwhile to return to your treatment of the duck example if what I’ve said about the British subject example doesn’t illustrate the point. However, the fool continues! :-) Just let me say, that yes, from the vantage point of analyzing argumentation, if an argument always starts with claim, and one must accept as THE reason whatever statement is made to support the claim, and yet, the warrant is general, then one must construct a more general statement to make the bridge. AND, it’s possible to create more general statements – from my perspective and from yours. The warrant you generate says most people would recognize as the statement that, if the example was “Mergansers quack, because they are ducks: would be clearly seen as data”. To which I respond, you really complicate a simple process: one where warrants function as warrant because they are abstract enough, and do, bridge two more specific statements, thus justify in someone’s mind moving from data to claim – regardless of the order in which they are presented (Didn’t you agree with me at one point that order of presentation wasn’t the difference between warrant and data? Isn’t your position that function depends on order == what is stated and what isn’t?)

YOU SAID:

“ To take a simple artificial example. Someone might say: "All ducks quack, so mergansers quack." Since the only common content between “data”

[I SAY: you’re reasoning that it’s data simply because it is stated; back off that perspective and see how much your understanding can be simplified] Given that “All ducks quack functions as warrant, you have both ducks and quack covered.) and conclusion is the word ‘quack’, the warrant for this argument is the following: For any property F, if all ducks have F, then mergansers have F. A little fancy footwork will generate a proof that this second-order generalization is logically equivalent to the statement: Mergansers are ducks. Which is what intuitively most people would recognize as the assumption licensing the inference.

Now take the two statements:

D: All ducks quack.

W: Mergansers are ducks.

You cannot compare them with respect to their generality. In particular, D is not more specific than W. If anything, D sounds more general, since it says something about all ducks, whereas



W only says something about mergansers.}

In terms the claim at the end of your duck example: Oh, yes, I can compare the “All ducks quack.” and “Mergansers are ducks.” in respect to their generality. All ducks quack is more general. All ducks include a subclass of Mergansers, warranting me to conclude that mergansers quick. Yes, if there is a person named Mergansers then my conclusion would be false, but that would not negate the reasoning process that prompted me to reach the conclusion. My basis for making this distinction is commonly accepted and authoritatively supported definitions of general and specific.

YOUR DEFINITION:

“The condition that one statement is more general than another is the condition that the first statement logically implies the second one.”

Can I find support for your definition of general from either a common usage or an authoritative standpoint? Do you think it is how Toulmin intended the word? Do you think that his examples, or Emeren’s or that of others support your definition. I feel confident that they support mine. Plus, repeating, within my view is based an explanation for why warrant function to bridge data and conclusion. One must, clearly, see “arguments begin with claim” as an observation of discourse, not a theoretical description of how reasoning works in order to reject the explanatory value of my analysis. Really, can’t you switch your perspective long enough to see the grounds for my perspective?

Moving on perhaps, given that I have not turned you off too much (also hoping that I have not pricked a nerve that makes you want to show me just how wrong I am!):

To my pain-killer example, you respond.

YOU GRANT:

“As is typical in advertisements, when there is an argument, the conclusion is unstated. The reader or hearer is left to draw the conclusion themselves, thus taking ownership of it. In the quotation, I would identify the first sentence as the warrant, and the second sentence as the reason — again, in the context of this sequence”.

Of course, your coding of this argument is exactly the one I’d give. I appreciate that you agree that in most advertisements, it is the claim/conclusion that is implied. Given the vast number of advertisements we’re exposed to each day, I’d say that I’ve trumped easily the 50 arguments you found in your library. Now, David, (1) in every argument there are implied general statements that serve as “warrants” in the chain of backing leading to the ultimate claim. So, from that perspective, your statement that “most warrants are unstated,” has some truth. Given the argument with which I started this letter (so many hours ago!):

“It may well be that we have reached the point of saying, “our differences can not be resolved.” From my definitional view, I could reach that conclusion from a warrant that says, “Definitional differences by their very nature are almost impossible to resolve” I don’t think I need to say, ‘we have definitional difference,’ since you pointed

that out previously."

The statement that I identify as the warrant contains the words, "by their very nature." (From my definitional perspective), these three words chain to an argument containing the assumption about phenomena following their nature. This more abstract statement is (in a backing sense) an unstated warrant. [But, while we're here: my analysis of this argument would not change had I left out the data.] So, you could point to that statement as evidence for your claim about the propensity of unstated warrants. That possibility is there in all reasoning: since our beliefs and attitudes are structured quite in depth (or height for the abstraction ladder treatment) of assumed abstract rules. Still, in this argument, the warrant is stated.

(2) Your analysis should result in many unstated warrants since you define warrant as the implied statement that links "reason" to claim (see the first inserted quote on page 2 (possibly) above). If the reason is stated, one must conclude that that which is unstated is the warrant. Thus, your conclusion that "most warrants are unstated" illustrates, in my view, why you need independent (non contextual) definitions to prevent circular reasoning.

#### CONTINUING WITH SECTIONS FROM YOUR LETTER:

"If you make this investment, you'll gain x over time." The expectation is that the person wants to gain x over time, thus supplying the data. The quotation gives a reason for making this investment. The reader is invited to make this investment. This is a piece of practical reasoning, about which Toulmin's model does not speak specifically. A rule that would license the decision that the reader is invited to make would be: On the basis of the information that you will gain x over time if you make a certain investment, make that investment."

Well, again, if you read Toulmin as talking about discourse, where the claim starts the process, you may be justified in concluding that he doesn't speak to this issue. However, your analysis is more relevant from my definitional perspective – and supports both my claim that often warrants are stated and how warrant bridge data to claim. If you make this investment, you'll gain over time is the rule that the speaker hopes the listener will accept without challenge. Given the listener does, as you suggest, want to gain x over time, s/he will supply the data and the rule will justify (as in the ad example above) for the listener the claim that the speaker wants. If the speaker (as is usually the case) is challenged, s/he must support the rule with backing. However, whenever the salesperson gains the investment, I would identify the statement, "if you make this investment, you'll gain x over time" as the ultimate warrant in the process. To do otherwise would be to negate your excellent analysis as to the listener supplying the data. And, not to lose the secondary point, warrants are often stated.

#### AND NEXT:

"If you don't want a penalty, you'll turn your paper (pay your bill) by date x."  
Not an argument, unless more is specified about the context."

Now, David, you know all of the contexts (many, many – way more than 50) to which this argument applies. I'm sure that you've be both the speaker and the reader/listener in many of

them. Most of your students, being smart as they are, when they see or hear the statement (from other teachers if not from you), get their papers in on time. The statement functions as a rule that warrants their actions. I know that I pay my bills on time, because I hate paying a penalty. I'm smart enough to recognize that the warrant, as stated, applies to me. I might as well press my risk by repeating that this type of analysis is permitted because we have defined the process in terms of how we reason, not how we argue. It is in these types of analyses that I am interested.

AND FINALLY:

"If you love me, you'll do it."

"An interesting example. The counter-factual semantically implies a false consequent: You are not doing it. From which there follows, by modus tollendo tollens, the conclusion: you don't love me. The warrant is modus tollendo tollens: from a conditional and the denial of its consequent, you may infer the denial of its antecedent. The addressee presumably loves the speaker, and is being pressured by resistance to the implicit conclusion into doing it."

I must admit that your analysis illustrates how much over my head your knowledge is. I don't know the terms. [But, doesn't it all boil down to the statement functioning as a stated warrant in yet another communication context?]

And, you may want to reach that conclusion after reading this letter that I'm over my head! – if so, I hope you can still think of me as a friend, just one not able to appreciate how important it is to analyze the process for a lofty position :-).

Sincerely,  
clifton>

--- On Sat, 9/6/08, David Hitchcock <hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca> wrote:

From: David Hitchcock <hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca>  
Subject: RE: Fools rush in  
To: clifton\_adams@yahoo.com  
Date: Saturday, September 6, 2008, 3:50 PM  
Dear Clifton,

Thanks for your long and thoughtful reply, which I read attentively in its entirety. Unfortunately, classes started on Thursday and I am very heavily involved in committee work at the university and in campaigning in our federal election campaign that starts tomorrow. So I can give you only a very brief response.

The brief response is to ask you how you define abstract and general statements. In particular, can you fill in the rest of the following sentence-frame for me?

Statement 1 is more {abstract, general} than statement 2 if and only if ....

I appreciate very much your offer of friendship and the invitation to me and my wife to visit you in Missouri. Your place sounds delightful. Being in southern Ontario (Hamilton), I am unlikely to take you up on it. But I may.

Best wishes,  
David

--- On Mon, 9/8/08, W C Adams <clifton\_adams@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: W C Adams <clifton\_adams@yahoo.com>  
Subject: Disengage  
To: "David Hitchcock" <hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca>  
Date: Monday, September 8, 2008, 10:17 AM

I certainly understand about Fall startups since I was a part of the system for 35 years. And, still, much of my business is connected to school and university life! When, and if, you have time to more completely respond to my last two emails, I'll be pleased to hear from you and reengage!  
Clifton

--- On Mon, 9/8/08, David Hitchcock <hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca> wrote:

From: David Hitchcock <hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca>  
Subject: RE: Disengage  
To: clifton\_adams@yahoo.com  
Date: Monday, September 8, 2008, 10:48 AM

Hi Clifton. I think that my question of clarification is my response to your last two e-mails:

Can you fill in the rest of the following sentence-frame for me?

Statement 1 is more {abstract, general} than statement 2 if and only if ....

David

--- On Mon, 9/8/08, W C Adams <clifton\_adams@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: W C Adams <clifton\_adams@yahoo.com>  
Subject: RE: Disengage  
To: "David Hitchcock" <hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca>  
Date: Monday, September 8, 2008, 6:26 PM

I'm sorry, David, it isn't! Not one question to six pages. The tone of the question is a departure, in my opinion, from our previous correspondence.

The answer to the question is contained in my email of the time before in spades. To attempt to force me into an either/or mode is inappropriate.... But, I think you actually provided an interpretation of the content in exactly that form in your reply to that message. In other words, David, you know my meaning for general. Indeed, you've shown ability to use it in identifying warrants in my examples from the email of the time before last.

So, no, the one question doesn't begin to respond to all of the very thoughtful, and constructively-intended content that I generated.

So, again, when and if you have time to more completely respond to my last two emails, I'll be pleased to reengage.

Sincerely,  
Clifton

From: David Hitchcock <[hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca](mailto:hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca)>  
Subject: thanks  
To: [clifton\\_adams@yahoo.com](mailto:clifton_adams@yahoo.com)  
Date: Friday, March 13, 2009, 9:13 AM  
Dear Clifton,

What a delightful surprise to receive your Sunspots the other day. I have begun to read it, with pleasure, and will savour your stories and accompanying drawings by your daughter.

To respond to your inscription, no, I don't think I won an argument.

I'm not sure whether I will re-engage with the longer response that you requested last September. But I recognize that our discussion was unfinished.

Best wishes to you,  
David

From: W C Adams [mailto:[clifton\\_adams@yahoo.com](mailto:clifton_adams@yahoo.com)]  
Sent: March 24, 2009 7:39 PM  
To: David Hitchcock  
Subject: Re: thanks

Dear David,

How good to hear from you! Glad that you got the book and find it enjoyable.

Probably you won't find the attached as engaging as you did the Brighton paper that began our discussions; however, you may be interested in my present direction. The attached [see Teaching Thinking in the papers section of this website] is from an International Listening Association workshop that I gave at the convention last week in Milwaukee. As you will see, I've decided to leave Toulmin and the entanglements with argument ion. Your position on "premise" had some influence on my use of the term as one bit of the model. Of course, I still contend that there are three essential elements to a "reason." etc.

Hope your elections turned out as you had worked for there.

Hope your year is going well otherwise.

Sincerely,  
clifton

From: David Hitchcock <[hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca](mailto:hitchckd@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca)>

Subject: thanks

To: [clifton\\_adams@yahoo.com](mailto:clifton_adams@yahoo.com)

Date: wed., March 24, 2009,

Thanks for the attachment, Clifton. Your model strikes me as reasonable, and more or less in keeping with my own way of seeing things.

Best,  
David