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HASTY GENERALIZATION REVISITED, PART ONE: ON BEING REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLE

David M. Berube
University of Vermont

This essay addresses the ongoing discussion on resolutorial focus in three sections: an indictment of whole resolutorial focus: a review of current perspectives and a deeper level of criticism, a defense of the inductive method: justifying example analysis, and a phenomenological analysis of representativeness: a test of the fallacy of biased statistics and hasty generalization. The purpose of this paper is to help objectify standards by which both debaters and critics may resolve debates involving whether the affirmative warrant(s) or negative counter-warrant(s) is sufficient to determine to probable truth of the resolution. Too many debates have devolved into whining matches about what's fair and how best to punish one another. Before rules can be applied to help resolve this sniveling, criteria needs to be examined, but even before reassessing hasty generalization as a criterial argument form, the controversy in CEDA regarding what we try to do needs to be clarified.

INDICTING WHOLE RESOLUTIONAL FOCUS

The debate over resolutorial focus has regressed into bickering over externalities. Bile (1987) argued that "the more generic arguments are, the greater their educational utility substantively promoting a more general education" (p. 9). Confusing whole topic focus with holistic and synthetic thinking, with general education as both cause and characteristic, and with a liberal art curriculum, his criticism centers entirely upon the implications of whole resolutorial focus. In response, though Madsen and Chandler's article (1988) effectively rebutted that his perspective "cannot be drawn from traditional educational theorists" for "critical to any theoretical position are the specific operationalizations of its assumptions and predictions," and though "a student can be taught theoretical knowledge, it is difficult to provide useful information to students without any application to the everyday world of existence" (p. 32), they also examine the consequences of whole resolutorial focus without examining its intrinsic justification.

Furthermore, Bile asserted that students in non-policy debate are asked to make decisions regarding general concepts, and under the cloak of holism, he sententiously epigrammed that "the whole always exceeds the sum of its parts" presumably done to convince us that some greater truth is discoverable with a whole-istic method in debate. However, he failed to prove that some of the parts are not sufficient to reveal the truth of the whole. Berube (1983/1987) wrote: "What is at

issue is whether a subset example of the resolution is less likely to produce probable truth than a full set example" and considering that "the full set of the resolution is merely a large example of sorts" (484), this facet of the controversy cannot be ignored. Berube concluded that especially since "we define debate as argumentation to discern the probable truth of the resolution, a subset of the resolution can be argumentatively sufficient to justify a broad consensus about the acceptability of the resolutional statement" (484).

Next, Bile unequivocally wrote that the "only way to encourage real breadth and depth is by focusing on the relatively generic topic" (p. 11). In defining relatively, he suggested that debaters insert modifiers or quantifiers intuitively to redefine the resolution.

Lyons defined quantifiers as word-concepts used to "tell us how many entities or how much substance is being referred to" (1977, p. 455). These terms have been "recently employed by linguists with reference to such words as all, some, each, every, and any (p. 454). While each standard-form categorical proposition begins with one of these words, "some categorical propositions contain no words at all to indicate quantity [and] where there is no quantifier, what the sentence is intended to express may be doubtful," and linguists are near unanimous that "we can determine its meaning only by examining the context in which it occurs" (Copi 1961, pp. 138, 205-6). Copi, unlike Bile, envisions a context beyond the debate round found instead in historiocritical method.

Madsen and Chandler indicted Bile's quantification mandate as groundless. First it "assumed ordinary language and conversation between ordinary people. The appropriateness of these theories in the debate situation is unclear" especially since resolutions are not haphazardly constructed, they are "ontologically different than the imprecision and ambiguity of everyday language." Indeed, "modifiers may be intentionally left out in order to allow the implications of a single sentence to be debated" (p. 33). Second, "there are no standards to govern which specific modifiers to include" (p. 35). Since there is no such thing as the correct interpretation of a sentence (Lyons 1977, p. 194), there is no place to turn for guidance. Third, "adding words to the topic also may increase the ambiguity inherent in the resolution which would serve to counter the initial precision sought by the framers" (p. 35). The employment of parameters by NDT topic framers makes this observation painfully apparent. Of course, in a competitive setting it is unlikely that debaters can be trusted to work from an altruistic perspective which leads to Madsen and Chandler's fourth and final argument against resolutional reconstruction. "As soon as debaters are encouraged to alter a resolution for educational reasons, the floodgates of addition would be opened" (p. 35). The implications might be ravenous and topicality arguments would become a deeper semantic quagmire.

Bile continued. "If the negative wins objections to the resolution (counter warrants) more generic than the affirmative case, then it should win the debate even if the affirmative wins the case" (p. 12). This belief would completely invalidate the

inductive nature of academic debate, would severely restrict affirmative privilege of definition, would skew negative bias beyond the negative block, would make clash unprofitable for the negative, and would figuratively billow the sails of those proverbial ships passing in the foggy night.

He, also, suggested that "until and unless such a proof (that one can infer a general truth from a specific example) is offered, a subset should be presumed to be nothing more" (p. 12). This belief not only assumes that any induction must be presumed fallacious on its face, but it weakly suggests that a resolutional subset is by definition suspect enabling the negative to argue that any affirmative proof minutely less than the full resolutional set, if that is discernible, is unacceptable. This is patently absurd.

Here are two additional reasons why whole resolutional focus is a pipedream and unlike the Bile and Madsen/Chandler polemic, these justifications are not drawn from the products of such a focus, they are found implicit to the character of a resolution.

First, if debate should be on the resolution, how is that possible "when a resolution entails contradictory examples" (Berube 1983/1987, p. 484). Absent the interjection of qualifiers, it is paradoxical to oblige the affirmative to defend the promulgation of human rights with both the threat of military intervention and disengagement (see 78-79 topic), the addition of health requirements and cutting of the same sacrificing educational quality (see fall 83 topic), etc. (Church and Willbanks, 1986, p. 337).

Second, there is no whole resolution. There are at least three reasons. First, no two things are identical. For Hume, "an object is the same with itself" (Flew, 1961, p. 63). He found only formal identity statements "x is (is identical with, is the same as) x" as a truism. Non-Aristotelian semanticists like Korzybski define the concept of identity more precisely. For them, even formal identity statements, such as "1 = 1", are false by virtue of grammatical form: a subject cannot simultaneously serve as its own object (see 1958, pp. 194-5). For non-policy debating purposes, whole resolutional focus is more analogous to something called material identity statements: x = y: an observation which together with the aforementioned confounds identity. "The function of material identity statements is precisely to assert of which appear to be, and thus could be taken to be, two things that in reality they are one thing," both informative and a posteriori, they "constitute the very backbone of thought and discourse" (Butchvarov, 1979, pp. 15 & 18). Discourse, of all sorts, demands the expansion and restriction of concepts; meaning is enhanced as parameters of a discussion are juggled.

Second, the implicit ambiguity of language precludes true material identity statements. In *Tractatus* 5.5303, Wittgenstein wrote: "Roughly speaking, to say of two things that they are identical is nonsense" (1961, p. 105). Why? Because all statements are inherently vague. "Vagueness isn't something provisional, to be

eliminated later on by more precise knowledge, this is a characteristic of logical peculiarity" (Wittgenstein, 1975, p. 263). Of course, in order to keep debates interesting, vagueness may even become part of the framing process. Husserl, in surprising agreement with Wittgenstein, insisted that some concepts "are essentially and non accidentally inexact" (1962, p. 74). Merleau-Ponty (1952) put it best when he argued that demands for absolute self-evidence ironically leads to a declaration that the world is absurd. Immutable meaning feeds intellectual stagnation and converts searches for knowledge into an oxymoronic exercise. Third, Cook (1975) found that trying to define things like the whole resolution produces an infinite regression. This is especially true since the topic is an open class, "one whose members could not be listed, because their number has no determinable limit" (Lyons, 1977, p. 155). The process is like a lottery official attempting to validate a winner without knowing the winning numbers.

DEFENDING THE INDUCTIVE METHOD

Implicit to Bile's thesis is a reluctance to accept the inductive method. Given that "there is a dominant viewpoint that the entire resolution should be debated in CEDA, not just part of the resolution" (Ulrich, 1984, p. 4), Walker citing multiple works (Tomlinson, 1981; Rowland, 1983; Tolbert and Hunt, 1985; Bile, 1987) recently found that a "significant consensus exists concerning the resolution as the focus of discussion in non-policy debate" (1989, p. 185). However, these findings do not mean that the whole resolution needs to be debated, *per se*. It only means that the focus of probable truth finding should refer back to the resolution. In its simplest sense, this defines the process of induction.

To reject a non-whole resolutional focus on its face would delegitimize the inductive method. This is senseless since induction has been forced upon us by nature. The primary logical drawbacks associated with induction come from Hume's skepticism regarding the need to examine all subsets of a set in order to predict that an explanatory universal theory is true. Biggers made a similar statement in 1985. "Induction can only be perfect when all the cases to which a generalization applies are examined" (p. 33). Russell, however, found Hume's and Biggers' reservations impractical for if true then "every attempt to arrive at general scientific laws from particular observations is fallacious" (Russell, 1945, p. 698).

Russell's solution was to reduce the problem for non-universal language just as science has done believing that "an inductive argument is valid if its conclusion really is as probable as the argument claims it to be" (Coyne, 1984, p. 264). In discussing science's approach to this problem, Popper commented that "although it would be irrational to accept any of its results as certain, there is nothing better when it comes to practical action: there is no alternative methods which might be said to be more rational" (1972, p. 27). He continued "We can sometimes say of two competing

theories, A and B, that in the light of the state of the critical discussion at the time *t*, and the empirical evidence (test statements) available at the discussion, the theory A is preferable to, or better corroborated than, the theory B" (1972, pp. 18-9).

Additionally, there seems to be no alternative in non-inductivism. Even Karl Popper was forced to realize that a non-inductivist system was undesignable (see Ayer, 1968, p. 100; O'Hear, 1980, p. 22). In addition, "there is no assurance that non-inductivist systems are more reliable than inductivist ones. In truth, they may suffer from the same or even more damning fallacies" (Berube 1983/1987, p. 485). Non-inductivism may simply not exist at all. McGee may be right. "One must recognize that the premise from which a deduction was made was arrived at inductively" (1988, p. 64).

The aforementioned may disenchant absolutists. However, considering the nature of the proofs addressed in non-policy debate, a similar perspective is inevitable. "This absolutist approach to the resolution seems incompatible with rules of correct language interpretation" (McGee, 1988, p. 66). We are not constructing an explanatory universal theory set in time, we are merely establishing a level of probable truth. Without the rigors of universalizability, the inductive method becomes a usable tool, and "the debate team winning the more inferentially sound warrant about the truth of the resolution should win the debate round" (McGee, 1988, p. 63).

JUSTIFYING EXAMPLE ANALYSIS

The inductive method legitimizes the use of example(s), and "affirmative teams in non-policy debate have begun to claim [with increasing frequency] that it is only through *example analysis*, proving the resolution true by representative examples of the resolution, that truth can be learned" (Berube, 1984, p. 3).

Before comparing whole resolution and example(s) focuses, an important observation about error tradeoff is useful. Ulrich summarized the problem. "To attempt to avoid the commitment to a false claim (Type II error) inevitably increases the risks of failing to affirm a true claim (Type I error)" (1984, p. 6). Thus, "if we increase the probability of Type I error, we decrease the probability of Type II error, and vice versa" (Williams, 1971, p. 71). In all sense, therefore, as we do more to avoid accepting a false claim, we are drawn more to rejecting a true claim. We must strike a bargain. and, as a result, we are only searching between imperfect options.

In addition to the metaphysical problems associated with determining the whole resolution, there is an issue of error. Whole resolutional focus must be rejected since "generic reasons without reference and without points of clear contention are unreasonable, increasing error rather than the reverse" (Berube, 1984, p. 3). Berube based this conclusion upon his observation that "in non-policy debate, without an explicit statement about what the resolution means or was intended to

mean, debate over the truth of the resolution [may] involve general evidence on very general topic areas. The evidence is often contextually inaccurate and prone to overclaim" (1984, p. 4). For example, rights to privacy may be governmental or individual. Eugenics may include human genetic engineering or germplasm transplants in agriculture. American education may mean in-classroom government subsidized instruction or homeschooling. As Povinelli wrote, "Authors do not produce statements of fact written in a vacuum. Especially in debate research which places such a high premium on predictive claims; statements by authors are directly tied to their own set of assumptions" (1985, p. 9). Focusing on example(s), consequently, "reduces evidence abuse by discouraging the citation of non-referent evidence" (Berube, 1983/1987, p. 483).

Berube concluded. "It is the thesis of *example analysis* that error is less likely with example(s) than without. As long as the example(s) [are] quantitatively and qualitatively representative, the probability of a false claim being proven true is negligible" (1984, p. 5), and evidentiary error is mitigated.

The weight of the representativeness issue in non-policy debate is foreboding. Sklansky found subtopicality as "a completely valid argument" (1975/1979, p. 81). Adams and Wilkins noted that "the affirmative case is therefore only acceptable if it is typical and representative of the resolution as a whole" (1987, p. 21). For Bile, "underjustification is logically, and ought to be pragmatically, an absolute voting issue against unjustified claims" (1988, p. 58). For Tolbert and Hunt in the original version of their essay, "a subtopical case is untopical" (1984, p. 4).

In response, the affirmative must be prepared to resolve this claim of unrepresentativeness. To do so, fundamental standards have been offered.

DETERMINING REPRESENTATIVENESS

Just any example will not do in inductively proving a resolution probably true. "If correct and exacting controls have been imposed upon the experimental design which produced the example(s), the likelihood of error is mitigated" (Berube, 1984, p. 5). Those controls involve two fallacies within the genre of Type II errors.

1. One infers from an insufficiently large or quantitatively unrepresentative sample to the whole population. We can call this the fallacy of small sample.
2. One infers from a peculiarly selected or qualitatively unrepresentative sample to a whole population. We call this the *fallacy of biased statistics* (Carney and Scheer, 1975, p. 44).

The fallacy of small sample has been discussed elsewhere. Berube argued that "the affirmative example(s) must be sufficiently large to be useful as a proof from which to infer the general truth of the resolution" (1986b, p. 10). In greater detail, he

suggested that two means were available. First, "if terms in the resolution are collective or mass terms, then the affirmative must prove the resolution true for the entire collectivity" (1986a, p. 3; Berube 1983/1987, pp. 485-7). Second, he suggested that sufficient size may be discernible by imposing "a simple formula which evaluates the number of affected actors times the gravity of harm" (1983/1987, p. 486). Biggers introduced a third method drawing from "rates of adduced incidences to the instances possible" (1985, p. 35). Unfortunately, "the notion of number of examples is based upon borrowed statistical measuring techniques that have little relevance in non-statistical sentential propositions" (McGee, 1988, p. 67). Though this level of discussion is important, it must wait until another day, the focus of the following will be on the second fallacy.

The *fallacy of biased statistics* requires that "the affirmative must be able to demonstrate that the example(s) share fundamental characteristics of the resolution from which it is drawn" (Berube, 1983/1987, p. 486). Biggers felt that the affirmative must somehow "establish the germane nature of the example used" (1985, p. 35). Initially, Berube argued that "the affirmative subset must be reasonably similar to the resolutional set from which it is drawn" (1986b, p. 10). However, both these viewpoints offered little guidance to the debater who must defend her example(s) against the negative claim of representativeness. Some tools may be found in the field of phenomenology.

Phenomenology is primarily concerned with determining the essences of things. "There are some properties that an object must have; if the object didn't have them, it wouldn't exist at all. These are the properties that an object has essentially" (Brody, 1980, p. 84). When Butchvarov discussed essence in an Aristotelian sense, he delineated three features: "a character, a content, [and] properties" (1979, p. 122). Though Bahm seemed correct when he asserted that "current mechanisms of resolutional interpretation have not offered clear means of combatting multistability" (1988, p. 26), (perceptual objects vary according to their context), which may be at the heart of determining representativeness, he also failed to present tools which can be applied for this purpose.

Bahm drew from phenomenology when he considered the intrinsicness argument in non-policy debate (1988). However, the process of optimal illustration also seems an appropriate perspective by which to determine the representativeness of the affirmative example(s) used in the inductive proof to prove the resolution probably true. Through reduction via perceptual variation, the affirmative may be able to demonstrate that their example(s) share characteristics from the resolution from which they were drawn and, consequently, evidence that their example(s) are not guilty of the fallacy of biased statistics.

Essence can be demonstrated in many ways "arrived at by the comparison of many examples of a type of object and extracting from the descriptions of all these examples the common features by means of some kind of generalization" (Schmitt,

1967, p. 139). Husserl talked about a procedure that he called **free imaginative variation**. "Here we describe an example and then transform the description by adding or deleting one of the predicates contained in the description. With each addition or deletion, we ask whether the amended description can still be said to describe an example of the same kind of object as that which the example originally describe was said to exemplify" (Schmitt, 1967, p. 41).

There are at least two ways to discern and defend against this type of representativeness argument.

First, **defining the necessary**. Butchvarov wrote. Defining the necessary is "what is stated in the definition of the thing, a definition being understood as real rather than nominal (i.e., not as a stipulation of linguistic usage)" (1979, p. 134). Using Aquinas, "the definition telling what a thing is signifies that by which a thing is located in its genus or species" (1968, p. 31). This process of definition centers a term or word within a certain group while maintaining its uniqueness. Branching from a genus to a species to a class is a linear process which though bidirectional cannot accommodate identicalness between species or classes drawn along independent lines from a given genus. To consider definition in this context, "an essential statement classifies what it is about, subsumes it, under a concept, establishes its place in conceptual space" (Butchvarov, 1979, p. 140). Butchvarov further explains that it involves the conception of "an entity in terms of its sort, e.g., as a man or number, and this is why an entity's sort is usually a paradigm of a property it has necessarily, of one it cannot be conceived as not having" (1979, p. 132). Butchvarov, however, denied the use of definition by simile. Semi-automatic weapons are like handguns but are not handguns. Police are like civilians but they are not civilians. That's why, in turn, we call them semi-automatic weapons and police and not handguns and civilians. Since an essential statement will assert of an object that it is a certain entity, it expresses the relationship between an object and the entity the object is, "it is neither necessary nor sufficient that one recollect or single out in some other way an previously encountered thing" (p. 142). This process is a conceptual pursuit and not metaphysical sleight of hand. For example, on the handgun topic, necessary characteristics may include "controls" as restrictions versus "bans". Controls would be presumably on weapons which are hand held versus howitzers. Deeper analysis may require that handguns fire a projectile using an explosive charge. As illustration, though a vaccination gun used by a health professional is like a handgun and even shares some, if not most, of its essential characteristics, it is only near identical by simile or metaphor and has a fluid place in conceptual space, a non-place. It is, consequently, not really but nominally defined, and not an essentially representative example(s) from the class or resolutorial set from which it is drawn.

Second, **defining the invariant**. Essences are "the necessary and invariant features of objects" (Schmitt, 1967, p. 139). Laycock considered a criterion of

particular-identity through time. "An object *m* at *t*₁ is identical with an object *n* at *t*₂ if *m* is spatiotemporally continuous with *n* between *t*₁ and *t*₂ under some covering concept *F*. A sub-task of the elucidation of this criterion, for any particular value of *F*, requires spelling out what changes *m* can tolerate while remaining *F* — what are sometimes called the **persistence conditions of *F*'s**" (1972, p. 28). Butchvarov explained that "a necessarily true statement is one whose subject matter consists solely of nontemporal entities, or one that is an instantiation of a universal statement which subject matter consists solely on nontemporal entities" (1979, pp. 128-9). This test insists that a good example in not time or scenario dependent. In other words, the reason the generalization that the resolution may be true based upon the observation that an example(s) is true is not due to an aberrant point in time or due to an improbable hypothetical reality. For example, magnet trigger locks on police firearms may be desirable in the present but not in a future scenario with police using non-lethal force like stunguns or with police functioning unarmed as in Great Britain. Also, handgun accidents in the home may justify restrictions on possession of handguns but not in a scenario whereby gun locks, lock boxes, or gun education programs are common, a hardly implausible set of scenarios. This adding/deleting process involves predicates of the description which would naturally discredit the application of fanciful, trivial, and unrealistic assumptions.

Though this paper hardly closes the door on the protometaphysics of inductive fallacies and the employment of phenomenological method as a tool for establishing representativeness, it demonstrated an important observation. Without whole resolutorial focus, *example analysis* will require a deeper level of subtropicality argumentation. Critics will demand good reasons to accept or reject affirmative example(s), and the phenomenological method not only provides a tool to test for accidental properties within proofs as Bahm claimed, it also serves as a tool to test example(s) as representative entities of the resolution. Further tests of qualitative representativeness need to be explored, and the entire field of quantitative representativeness will need a deep re-examination in future scholarship.

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