

Rhetorical Dualism and the Orthodox/Heterodox Distinction in Economics

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Abstract:

This paper attempts to combine elements of the approaches of two influential economists, Sheila Dow and Deirdre McCloskey and expands on previous work (2005) on Dow's concept of dualism. A concept of rhetorical dualism is developed: dualism (defined variously) engaged in for a rhetorical purpose. It is argued by way of example case studies that rhetorical dualism is a significant feature of economics and that several influential authors have engaged in it. Further rhetorical dualism is shown to be prevalent in the current orthodox/heterodox distinction, and in the arguments of heterodox economists; but also that this distinction and type of distinction are unhelpful.

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1. Introduction

Many of the recent developments in economics have concerned pluralism. This has occurred at various levels and involved numerous groups. At one level, philosophers of economics have laboured over what pluralism is (Mäki, 1997; Dow, 1997; Salanti and Screpanti, 1997; Caldwell, 1982). This work has generated a plurality of definitions of pluralism; this may or may not be a helpful development. Also, so-called *orthodox economists* have claimed that in terms of theory, method and empirics, they are – and in some cases they have been – becoming more pluralistic (see Colander, 2000). Of course, so-called *heterodox economists* have argued that in fact the orthodoxy has become more entrenched in its positions and has even acted to reduce pluralism (Lee and Harley, 1998). Such claims by the minority position are not new; indeed, a consistent claim by heterodox economists has been that good ‘heterodox’ principles, such as the importance of time, history, uncertainty and agency, have been appropriated and neutered by orthodox economists (the debate over the *real Keynes* providing perhaps the best examples of such claims). In addition to such debates between orthodox and heterodox, there have also emerged views that the orthodox/heterodox distinction is unhelpful (e.g. Garnett, 2005; Sent, 2003; Davis, 2003; Dow 2000).

This paper will return to that last question towards its conclusion. For now, I should like to claim that the debates above could be viewed as being, in part, about how economists think and argue. This opinion is based partly on the observation that simultaneous with the debates above, two literatures have developed which help us understand the way economists think and argue, and therefore help us explain the debates over pluralism. One is the work developed by Sheila Dow on the prevalent tendency in thought towards dualism (Dow, 1990, 1995, 1997, 2002, 2004, 2005; Chick and Dow, 2001, 2002; see also Mearman, 2005). Dow points out the pitfalls of thinking in fixed ‘either/or’ categories. Significantly, she has argued for pluralism, but for one of a specific type, which is structured and allows room for schools of thought to persist. The second body of work is that, associated primarily with Deirdre McCloskey, on the rhetoric of economics (see McCloskey, 1983, 1985, 1994, 1998; Ziliak and McCloskey, 2004). That literature cautions economists to be more aware of how they converse and the language they use. The rhetoric literature has been accompanied by a focus on the language of economics (see for example, Henderson, Dudley-Evans and Backhouse, 1993).

This paper aims to perform a type of synthesis of these literatures into a concept of rhetorical dualism. Rhetorical dualism is: the creation of dualistic categories for a rhetorical purpose. The concept as developed here is a combination of Dow's concept of dualism and McCloskey's concept of rhetoric. The paper suggests that rhetorical dualism is common in economics. Here, we briefly consider the debate between Monetarists and

¹ This work was partly completed at the University of Amsterdam, where I was a visiting research fellow in March 2006. I acknowledge their assistance. I also acknowledge comments received at a staff seminar at UWE in November, 2006 and at the conference of the International Confederation of Associations for Pluralism in Economics in Salt Lake City, in June 2007. The usual disclaimer applies.

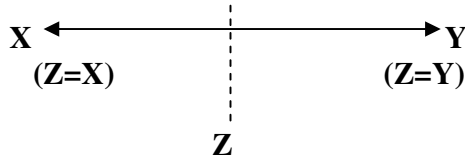
Keynesians as outlined in Johnson (1971). The paper argues that rhetorical dualism is present there. That finding supports conclusions in Backhouse (1993) and Dudley-Evans (1993) who analyse the language used in the debate over the quantity theory of money between Friedman and his critics. The paper then examines the contemporary question of the orthodoxy/heterodoxy distinction. That distinction is shown to be problematic in some ways, such that perhaps it should be abandoned.

2. Dualism and rhetoric

2.1 Dualism

Elsewhere, Mearman (2005) has developed Dow's (1990) work on dualism. For Dow, dualism is "...the [1] propensity to classify [2] concepts, statements and events according to duals, as [3] belonging to only one of [4] two [5] all-encompassing, [6] mutually-exclusive categories with [7] fixed meanings: true or false, logical or illogical, positive or normative, fact or opinion, and so on" (Dow, 1985: 14; 1996: 16-17). Based on an analysis of Dow's work, Mearman argues that in fact, dualism as originally defined (dualism₁) is extremely rare and practically irrelevant. Rather, Mearman argued that Dow's concept of dualism applies best to a situation, which he terms dualism₂, in which there are polar concepts, or in which a continuum of concepts can be found. This can be illustrated by Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: DUALISM₂

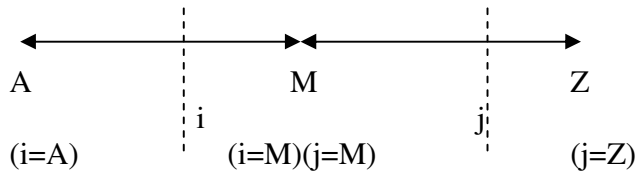


In both cases, a (solid) line connecting all the points between the end points X and Y can be imagined. Mearman argues that the act of dualism to which Dow refers (dualism₂) involves the imposition of a fault line at some point on the line (at Z) between the end points. Thence, all points to the left of this fault line are treated as equivalent to the left pole (i.e. all points to the left of Z are treated as X); all points to the right are treated as equivalent to the right pole (all points right of Z are treated as Y). Thus, if "rational" and "irrational" were two polar extremes, the act of dualism would be to impose some point, to the left of which all behaviour would be considered completely rational and to the right of which, completely irrational. There would be no possibility of bounded rationality, for example.

It should be noted further that the principle of dualism could apply equally to n categories, i.e. a plurality. Thus, a seemingly pluralistic formulation can be dualistic in the same way as described above, except that the number of categories is n . Thus, in Figure 2 below, we have n categories, A, ..., n, lying along a continuum. A, M and Z, are three stations along the continuum. A, M and Z act as attractors, such that fault lines at i

and j , have the same effect as above. Points to the left of i become equivalent to A , points to the right become equivalent to M . The logic is the same as above.

Figure 2: Pluralism as dualism₂



Dow argues that such dualistic thought can be damaging for economics. This is particularly so when the categories get fixed and thought becomes inflexible. Clearly, it is often desirable and sometimes necessary that categories must be fixed for a short time in order for analysis to proceed. Fundamentally, it is epistemologically necessary that a thing be identifiable and placed in a category, which remains fixed for the initial period of analysis. Analysis would be impossible without this step². It may be inevitable that concepts develop dualistically. To define an unfamiliar object in terms of the familiar is clearly a common (general) dialectical technique. However, how this is done is significant, as follows. Often a dualist₂ process occurs. The unfamiliar is defined in terms of the familiar by placing it in opposition to it. Often the similarities between the two are ignored. For example, one might define irrationality in terms of rationality, excluding intermediate concepts. Indeed, this is the central point of Dow's work: that dualism leads to errors. Further, if the categories get fixed for too long and/or objects cannot move between fixed categories, this can inhibit change in theoretical knowledge. Rather, Dow advocates a dynamic approach in which categories (and therefore classifications) can only be fixed temporarily, categories can change and perhaps combine with each other. One example she uses is the (dialectical) process of synthesis.

Dualities, i.e., pairs, then, can be epistemologically necessary. However, another reason Dow objects to dualism as a mode of thought is because the ontological (and epistemological) conditions it requires often do not hold. For example, the mutual exclusivity of categories makes assumptions about the relationality of objects which may imply atomism. The fixity of categories implies unchanging entities and relations between them. The identification of categories may imply a level of certainty which is unwarranted (see Dow, 1990 for more detail). Of course, this is not to say that all dualities are invalid. One cannot be slightly pregnant. It is also now possible to make extremely confident, near infallible, judgements about whether a woman is pregnant or not. Thus, in terms of the categories involved and identifying whether an entity fits into a category, some dualities are unproblematic. However, if the world is complex (implying high numbers of emergent entities arranged into diverse networks with a variety of relations between entities), then theories are highly fallible, knowledge is uncertain and all categories should be provisional. In that light, while dualities can be epistemologically

² Colander (2000) argues that categories must be fixed for them to be useful. That implies that dualism in Dow's sense is in one sense desirable. However, he also goes to argue that some terms may be fixed for too long. He cites the example of neo-classical economics, which he claims changed considerably, yet the category defining it did not.

necessary and sometimes ontologically licensed, dualism as a mode of thought is problematic, and often the creation of dualistic categories is dangerous. The same applies to the level of abstraction adopted by a theorist. This paper now goes on to argue that dualities constructed in either way can be selected for rhetorical purposes.

2.2 Rhetoric

Part of the recent surge in methodology has been the literature on rhetoric. This literature is principally associated with McCloskey (1983, 1994, 1998) and Klamer (Klamer, 1982; see also Klamer, McCloskey and Solow, 1988), although some of the implications and techniques have been taken up by other writers. For example, the method of interviewing economists and publishing these conversations has been adopted by Harcourt and King (1995), King (1995), Dunn (2002) and Colander, Holt and Rosser (2004a). The rhetoric literature embraces many of the themes of the philosophical tradition of postmodernism (for a commentary, see Sarup, 1993). It attacks the modernist/positivist, Cartesian “Received View” and prescriptivist Methodology (e.g. Blaug 1980) in general. It argues that the official methodology of economics, based on objectivism, hypothesis testing and falsification is not the one actually followed by economists; and moreover, that that is a good thing, because it is not the one followed by science defined more broadly. For example, as Ziliak and McCloskey (2004) argue, statistical testing has an arbitrary basis and often reaches meaningless conclusions. Further, rather than rejecting theories for which contradictory evidence has been found, economists believe theories with much greater tenacity than is justified by the evidence: marginalism is one example; the neutrality of money, another.

Instead, economists use tricks of style, code words, appeals to authority; naturalistic/physical metaphors, including the metaphor of mathematics; metaphors of war, battle, games; appeals to aesthetics (e.g. simplicity); and appeals to expertise in mathematics. Their arguments are informed by strong prior beliefs, and, contrary to the strict fact/value distinction adopted in positivism, moral positions too. This process is facilitated by the formation of interest groups (of which there are many examples). Above all, arguments are designed to be (non-coercively) persuasive; and in order to do this; economists attempt to tell convincing stories, to use persuasive narrative. And if the story is not convincing enough initially, economists change tack and attempt to persuade in a different way. These are the techniques of conversation; and economists are engaged in a conversation with other economists (and others). Persuasiveness explains why some methods and theories become dominant; they win particular language games.

Overall, therefore, the rhetoric approach invites economics to be viewed in a different way. In many ways, economics becomes more attractive, lively and interesting, removed from its scientific straitjacket. However, this does not mean that economics descends into chaos; the rhetoric of economics is the rules of disciplined conversation. It is more than “mere rhetoric”; rather it involves probing what people think they (ought to) believe; finding good reasons/grounds for belief; and honest argument to an audience. McCloskey and others argue that an appreciation of rhetoric will create better conversation, greater tolerance and better understanding of disagreement.

There are of course critics of the rhetoric literature. Mirowski (1987) is a good example. One question concerns the definition of rhetoric. McCloskey (1994) has argued that rhetoric is a complex object, like science, which defies simple explanation. However, operationally that can be problematic. For instance, we know that rhetoric is held to be more than 'mere rhetoric', and that implicitly the distinction between rhetoric and truth is rejected: rhetoric is not lying and not just 'spin'. Indeed, McCloskey embraces the Habermasian concept of *Sprachethik*, requiring that argument follow certain rules of engagement, including honesty. But does that imply that all speech and writing is rhetoric?

The picture is slightly unclear. McCloskey writes: "No speech with intent is 'nonrhetorical'. Rhetoric is not everything, but it is everywhere in the speech of human persuaders" (1998: 8). Further: "In other words, rhetoric is speech with an audience. All speech that intends to persuade is rhetorical, from higher math to lower advertising" (1994: 51). She also claims (1994: 78) that while 100% of the value added of lawyers and PR people is based on persuasion, only 25% of the value added of those working in natural sciences is attributable to persuasion. However, given that rhetoric "is the whole art of argument" (1994: 35) and that this includes the range of techniques and evidence, it is hard to fathom why only 25% of what natural scientists do is persuasive. So, McCloskey's definitions suggest that rhetoric may include all written and spoken work by the scientist. However, McCloskey's quantitative estimates suggest that this is not the case.

Given this ambiguity, it may be possible to argue that there is some distinction between rhetorical (for persuasion) and speech/writing constructed for the purpose of working out: that might be called analytical or perhaps heuristic. That would suggest that if a position is established in an argument, it could have one of two (or both) purposes: to persuade, or to think through a problem. Thus, the use of mathematics is rhetorical in its power and prestige, but it may also be used as in Marshall, to work out a question abstractly (at which point, presumably, it is burnt). In neither case is it necessary that the scientist believes the categories to be true in the sense of corresponding with any real object or group; it is not even the case that they believe the categories might exist. However, neither is it the case that in rhetorical arguments, the categories or concepts used are necessarily false³. Rather the key distinction is the purpose of the category or concept: in one case, it may be rhetorical, and in the other it may be heuristic. That raises the further question of intentionality. As noted above, McCloskey (*passim*) holds that rhetoric is speech with intent [to persuade]. However, is this intentionality always conscious? For example, it is possible that the dualism is almost accidental: if Dow is correct that modern thought has tended to be dualist, people might be viewed as being trapped in a Cartesian mindset, unable to escape and merely prone to thinking dualistically. Therefore,

³ This of course raises another question about rhetoric: its relation to realism. The postmodernist roots of rhetoric suggest an anti-realism; but it is possible to reconcile rhetoric and realism (see Mäki, 1988); indeed, as Peter's (2001) discussion notes, McCloskey acknowledges an ontological realism, i.e. that the world is 'out there' (McCloskey, 1994: 200). However, while for realists such as Mäki and Tony Lawson, ontological realism matters for economic rhetoric, for McCloskey it does not.

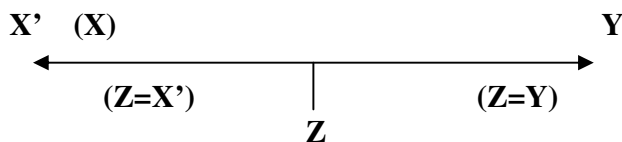
unconscious motives or beliefs are causally relevant in explaining the source of the rhetorical dualism, and thus should be considered.

2.3 Rhetorical dualism

The literature on rhetoric and the work on dualism can be combined into the concept of rhetorical dualism: dualism for rhetorical purposes⁴. The dualism can be of any of the types discussed above. So, for example, the collapsing of polar concepts into two mutually exclusive categories (dualism₂) might be for rhetorical reasons. Thus, in this context it is important to note the scenario in which a dualism₂ is occurring *and* one or both of the polar concepts are knowingly false. That is, the theorist knows that the category captures no real entity, or possible entity. If this was done (or at least interpreted as such) for rhetorical reasons, it can also be described as rhetorical dualism.

Therefore, when a politician attempts to exaggerate the position of an opponent, or a prosecution lawyer tries to convince the jury that a witness is, based on small indiscretions or untruths, in fact a bare-faced liar, this is a form of rhetorical dualism. In the first case, the purpose of doing so is to emphasise that the politician has a very different view. Or it can be to show that the politician adopts moderate positions, compared to his/her extremist opponent. Another case would be that in which a politician aims to push out the boundary of the other's definition in order to create space in the middle for him or herself. The process of this form of dualism, called here dualism_{2a}, is illustrated in Figure 3 below. Here, the rhetorical act has two parts: i) the continuum of concepts between X and Y is split by the fault line Z; and ii) the true point X is transformed into a false version of it, X', which becomes the new pole.

Figure 3: Dualism_{2a}

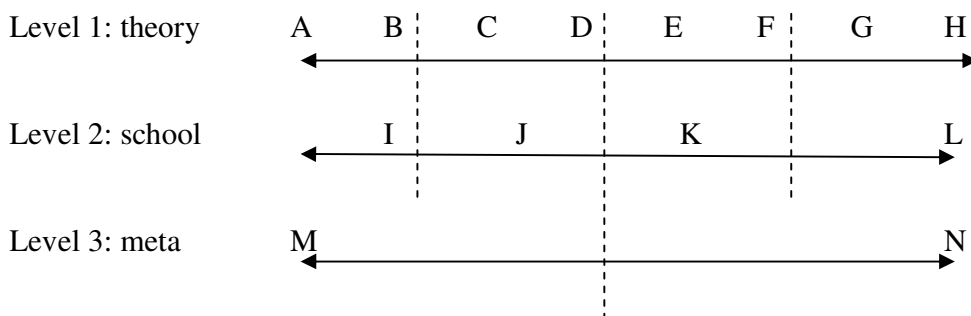


Often rhetorical dualism might take place via the choice of a level of abstraction. Specifically, where at one level of abstraction there are many categories, it is possible to choose a level of abstraction which creates two categories only. For example, it is possible within economics to identify the following levels: theory, schools of thought, and worldview. Clearly to group theories into schools of thought is an act of abstraction from the differences between the theories to claim that they have a common essence. This process (simplified) is displayed in Figure 4. Here we observe the three levels, theory, school and meta-level. The meta-level may be ontological, epistemological, methodological, and even ethical. In each case, there is a continuum of possibilities. It may also be, as above, that the continuum represents a polarity, although in this particular

⁴ Mehta (1993) identifies the use of dualist language in debates over bargaining. Specifically she identifies use of language such 'friends' and 'non-friends'. However, this is not formalised or generalised to "'x'- 'non-x'" language as Dow does, or as proposed here.

case, that is less likely. Let us consider the theory level first. In each case, the continuum is interrupted by a fault line, and the process of dualism is continued as above in Figures 1 and 2. Thus, theories A and B are collapsed into each other in school I, etc. At level 2, there is a pluralism of schools, but that pluralism remains a dualistic process, as explained in figure 3. Finally at level 3, differences between schools of thought I and J, and K and L, respectively are collapsed into meta-categories M and N; whereas the differences between J and K, which previously were small, have been accentuated.

Figure 4: rhetorical dualism via level of abstraction



This manoeuvre can be useful in thought – and can lead to or even constitute genuine insight – but can also be questionable. Clearly, to claim that theories A...D can be placed in the meta-level category M (and likewise E...H are grouped into N) abstracts from what may be some significant similarities between theories and schools of thought on different sides of the claimed divide, as well as differences between theories and schools of thought on the same sides. For instance, though theories D and E are adjacent in the theoretical continuum and therefore similar in many ways, but can be placed into different schools of thought and on different sides of the fault line at level 3; and therefore they are considered fundamentally different. Arguably both Lawson (1997) and Potts (2000) go further, to choose a level of abstraction from actual schools of thought which highlights a specific ontological feature – closed vs. open systems; and integral/non-integral space respectively – to claim that economics can be split down the middle into two highly distinct approaches. Such an abstraction allows both authors to make larger claims about the impact and importance of their own contribution. Again, that is not to claim that the authors were (either solely, or indeed at all) motivated by that consideration; but that the effect has been such.

It would be useful at this point to recapitulate. Dualism is a tendency in thought. It can take different forms. For example, we might find: 1) dualism₁: the segregation of n categories into two mutually exclusive, exhaustive, fixed categories, or simply the tendency to think in terms of those two; 2) dualism₂: the use of a fault line and treatment of end points as attracting poles, in order to achieve the same effect as in (1); 3) dualism_{2a}, which is identical to (2) except that at least one of the poles is false; 4) the choice of a level of abstraction which generates the distinctions found in (1-3). Sometimes these dualisms can be established for heuristic reasons, i.e. in order to develop

a position. In other cases, they serve a rhetorical purpose, i.e. they are used in persuasion. Therefore, it is *not* claimed that if a dualism is identified, it must be rhetorical (or some variant of that). This allows us to define rhetorical dualism as 5) the use of (1-4) for three purposes: a) the creation of opposites, to the benefit of one of the opposites; b) the creation of opposites to establish one of the opposites as a new, innovative position; c) the creation of opposites in order to make space in the middle for a compromise or synthetic position.

Identifying rhetorical dualism is a three-stage process: identify the dualism present in a distinction (either dualism₁ or dualism₂); then, identify whether the continuum has been set up as a split pole (and in the case of dualism_{2a}, whether it was false); and identify a purpose for the dualism, usually for rhetorical reasons. That is how the concept will be defined for the rest of the paper. Of course, it is difficult to show a rhetorical purpose and intent. One objection to this from the perspective of the rhetoric literature is that the act of creating false poles may be considered lying and that this is contrary to *Sprachethik*. That is not to say that such manoeuvres do not happen, but that attaching the label 'rhetorical' to it, and thereby associating it with McCloskey (*et al*)'s work is inappropriate. A further objection is that the creation of the false pole (or even the pole believed to be true) could be heuristic, i.e., a stage in thought, a proposition, a temporary point in the development of an argument. In either case – the rhetorical and heuristic – it suggests that the dualism is intentional. Again, we should note that for McCloskey, rhetoric is speech with intent. A weaker version of rhetorical dualism is one in which even if rhetorical intent is not provable, rhetorical gain can be demonstrated.

Rhetorical dualism is problematic for several reasons, including those general objections to dualism made by Dow (*passim*). Dow emphasises what might be called the path dependency of investigation, and the (*usually* negative) effect of dualism on that investigation. Dualism serves to fix categories, to categorise things incorrectly, and most significantly, to fix the path of the investigation, directing it along incorrect routes and excluding the more fruitful. Also, these types of dualism can lead the researcher to misjudge their target and therefore to embrace imbalanced theories. Also, drawing on McCloskey's approach, rhetorical dualism can reduce the quality of a conversation, by making it more difficult for two sides to communicate with each other, by creating strict, irreconcilable categories. In some cases, admittedly, the rhetorical dualism may be intended to *end* the conversation. For example, accusing one's opponent of being unscientific is a way of ending a conversation prematurely.

A defence of (rhetorical) dualism might be that to focus on oppositions is the basis of dialectical thought. Dow acknowledges this possibility in showing how (what is commonly described as Hegelian) dialectical logic does not commit dualism because a) there is a necessary relation between the categories, b) the categorisation is temporary and c) new synthetic categories are created which replace the original categories. It is significant that many so-called heterodox economists embrace such a logic, for example through Marx or Dewey: McCloskey is an example of the latter. However, even if the intention of the theorist is to think dialectically, many such thought processes result in dualisms₂. Also, it might be claimed that oppositions need to be created if new positions

are to be created. However, thinking dialectically does not license knowingly false categories. Hegel was clear that he believed that the dialectic was the correct way to think about the world because the world operated dialectically. Thus, Hegel demanded an ontological licence as Dow does: a mere appeal to dialectic does not licence departures from reality which are known to be false.

3. Case studies in rhetorical dualism

3.1 Overview

A brief treatment seems sufficient to make the suggestion that rhetorical dualism is commonplace in economics. In general, what is suggested is that there is a (possibly considerable) number of cases in the history of economic thought in which duals have been created for rhetorical reasons, such as to portray an opponent as extremist, or to portray existing literature as being clustered around two extremes, in order to cast one's own work as capturing the middle ground. Famously, Keynes (1936) constructed a category of the 'classical' as anything preceding (and therefore fundamentally separate from) his own work. Likewise, when Friedman (1953) argues that because models are necessarily unrealistic, therefore the realism of assumptions is irrelevant, he is making an argument which leaps from one end of a rhetorical dual to another. When Finn (2003) talks of the debate over markets being conducted in terms of force of argument about 'capitalism' and 'socialism', he is talking about rhetorical dualism.

Feminist economics has done a considerable amount of work in identifying dualisms, which are rhetorical and have oppressive effects on women in particular. They identify series of dualisms in the language of economics which they argue reflects a masculine/feminine distinction, to the disadvantage of the latter (see for example, Kuiper, 2001; Folbre, 1993; Nelson, 1992, 1995). Similarly, as elaborated below, McCloskey (*passim*) identifies a series of rhetorical dualisms. However, these accounts do not attempt to generalise, or place the rhetorical moves in a logical framework of dualism. This paper does so.

3.2 Keynesians and Monetarists

A further example of rhetorical dualism is the debate between Monetarists and Keynesians which took place during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Harry Johnson (1971) gave an early commentary on the dispute. It is a case study on rhetorical dualism. Johnson shows how both the 'Keynesian' revolution and the Monetarist counter-revolution used rhetorical and dualistic devices to attack the prevailing orthodoxies, which were neo-classical and 'Keynesian' economics respectively. Theorists on both sides of the debate created homogeneous, over-simplified (i.e., dualist₂) and even false (dualist_{2a}) definitions of their opponents. This had two strategic benefits for theorists: first, it created an intellectual environment more favourable to their views; and second, by portraying opponents as extremist, the theorists created more space in that environment in which they could operate. Johnson (3) makes the important claim that it is part of the nature of an orthodoxy "to reduce the subtle and sophisticated thoughts of

great men [sic] to a set of simple principles and straightforward slogans...” This suggests that some form of dualism₂ is inevitable; but Johnson shows how protagonists attempted to exploit this opportunity.

For instance, Johnson (1971: 4) argues that both groups developed apparently new concepts, but in fact gave “old concepts new and confusing names” in order to create the impression of being radical and *different*: Johnson gives the example of the marginal *productivity* of capital becoming (he claims) the marginal *efficiency* of capital. Thus, he claims that scholars on both sides of the debate tended to claim to reject certain ideas, while in fact positing new names for the ideas they claimed to reject. That is, they refused to acknowledge the content of the previous orthodoxy (which they were attempting to overthrow) in their ‘new’ theories. This is rhetorical dualism₂, for three reasons: first, Johnson argues (*passim*) that in fact the ‘Keynesian’ and Monetarist positions are at least partially internally related; second, both the internal relationality and the overlapping segments of the two main categories are denied by the theorists involved; and third, it is highly suggestive that this denial is made for rhetorical reasons.

Johnson (1971: 8) also notes that the Monetarists ignored the varieties of Keynesian positions on the neutrality of money supply and that “this *difference was easily and conveniently blurred, to the benefit of the counter-revolution, by seizing on the extreme Keynesian position that money does not matter at all as the prevailing orthodoxy*” (emphasis added). Moreover, Johnson (10) argues, the Monetarist claim that the new quantity theory was validated by the discovery of a stable demand for money function was “justified only by the identification of the Keynesian orthodoxy with the proposition that money does not matter and that velocity is either highly unstable or infinitely interest-inelastic”. These are both examples of dualism₂. Finally, Johnson (11) claims that “[t]he Keynesian revolution derived a large part of its intellectual appeal from the *deliberate caricaturing and denigration of honest and humble scholars*” (emphasis added): this clearly suggests rhetorical dualism_{2a}.

3. 3 McCloskey on rhetorical dualism

McCloskey (1998) without using the terminology, shares much of Dow’s concern about dualistic distinctions in economics. She is more explicit in her arguments against *de facto* rhetorical dualism than Johnson. She argues that there is a rhetoric of distinction within economics. In particular, McCloskey attacks the distinctions [rhetorical dualisms] of content/style, substance/rhetoric and science/literature (see particularly, 1998: ch. 2). For McCloskey, the way the economics is written is as important as the argument itself; indeed, the style and content are inseparable. If all writing has an implicit desire to persuade, then the persuasiveness of the language used is not “mere” rhetoric and is not garnish on the substance of the argument; rather it is as important and inseparable from the argument. Morgan (2001) echoes this argument to claim that economic models are inseparable from the stories they are used to tell. Similarly, McCloskey holds that economic “science is a collection of literary forms, not a Science [and accordingly, that] literary forms are scientific” (McCloskey, 1998: 21). For example, economics is a form of poetry (12, 47). An extension of this argument is her claim that the distinction between science and

aesthetics breaks down, because positivists appeal to virtues such as simplicity and beauty in their arguments (see, for example, Debreu, 1984; and Russell's (1953) description of mathematics). The capitalisation of 'science' signifies that McCloskey wishes to change the definition of science from the modernist, positivist one to a more flexible definition, one which stresses systematicity (McCloskey: 20) but allows a broader range of techniques and types of enquiry to be acknowledged as valid than is currently the case. In many ways, this process exemplifies Dow's preference: McCloskey wants to reject an existing distinction and to in fact change the definition of the categories to reflect dynamic interaction between them: specifically, from Science/literature we move to a definition of science which stresses its literary aspects. McCloskey is therefore challenging further duals, such as Science/science (19), social knowledge/objective scientific knowledge (108), science/religion (173), scientific/humanistic (177) and quantitative=science/qualitative=non-science (20). Many of the same themes are present in McCloskey (1994).

This pattern of transcending dualisms is repeated throughout McCloskey's work. In McCloskey (1998), in addition to those discussed above, she challenges a range of other dualisms: economical/uneconomical (as in Posner, 1972; 3), metaphor/reality (12), evidence/reason (19), theory/experience (31), and official rhetoric/actual rhetoric (37 et passim). McCloskey (16) cites a passage by Mitchell (quoted in Rossetti, 1992: 220) in which a number of hierarchical dualisms are used or which McCloskey imputes: "thought/wishing,..., sciences/mere humanities,..., study/beach reading,..., view/grounded conviction" and challenges them. Later, she quotes another series of duals, in the context of the demarcation problem, including:- fact/value, objective/subjective, positive/normative, rigorous/intuitive, precise/vague, cognition/feeling, hard/soft. It is clear that challenging these duals also implies challenging positivism. Of course, such a challenge is not neutral. McCloskey clearly favours the pragmatist philosophy and wants to attack positivism in order to advance her preferred alternative. She explicitly challenges the distinction between pragmatism and science which is sometimes drawn (5). She also questions the dualisms of correct/incorrect and true/false (passim), and criticises the notion of Truth. It is necessary to attack positivism to establish pragmatism. In so doing, it is rhetorically advantageous to create the stress the flaws in the opponent. Part of this is to stress the divisive nature of the opponent, and the fractured nature of debate it creates. McCloskey's own arguments are served by highlighting and criticising a series of dualisms₂.

4. Illustration: Orthodox and heterodox economists

The previous sections and the literature cited therein hopefully have established the argument that rhetorical dualism is a common technique in economics. It forms an important part of the conscious and intended, as well as unconscious and unintended, sub-text of economic discourse. I have also tried to argue that rhetorical dualism can be problematic. A common theme of the case studies above has been that rhetorical dualism is likely to hinder pluralism. Monetarists and Keynesians each got wrapped up in trying to prove the other wrong, that perhaps fruitful lines of synthesis were missed⁵. Further,

⁵ For example, the effort spent on swathes of empirical macroeconomic work in the 1970s and 1980s on

the tenor of the debate would mean that the post-battle environment would be difficult for the losers. That has proved to be the case for ‘heterodox’ theorists.

Garnett (2005) provides an excellent commentary on the term ‘heterodox’ and the related debate on ‘pluralism’. This section will attempt to translate his and other accounts in terms of rhetorical dualism. Colander, Holt and Rosser (2004b) claim that what is effectively rhetorical dualism has dominated the orthodox/heterodox relationship for a long time: in both Marx’s attack on ‘classical economics’ (juxtaposed with ‘vulgar’ economy) and Veblen’s (1900) use of the term ‘neo-classical’ to disparage mainstream economics (and we could add, Keynes’ (1936) attack on ‘classical’ theory), they claim that “in each case the classification was made by an economist to create a better target for his criticism” (491)⁶. Garnett identifies several strands of argument in ‘heterodox’ circles. Heterodox arguments are usually self-identified, although some who argue for schools of thought reject the heterodox nomenclature. Garnett argues effectively that thought in terms of a heterodoxy is dualist; and that this dualism is a rhetorical strategic response to the perception of orthodox economics as monistic and intolerant.

The basic form of the dualism is straightforward. Substitute orthodox and heterodox for X and Y in figure 1 and that represents the situation quite well. A common feature in all the treatments is that there is a strict split between orthodox and heterodox on some basis. It is usually theoretical but recently it has been increasingly ontological. That will be discussed further below. First, however, we should discuss some subtle differences in the treatments of the orthodox/heterodox dualism in the literature. We can identify four variants on the basic orthodox/heterodox dualism. First, as identified by Davis (2007) and Sent (2003), there is a model of ‘half-pluralism’; i.e., heterodox economists firstly identify orthodoxy, as a monolith, then identify heterodoxy, then acknowledge the pluralism amongst the heterodoxy. There may even be dialogue between the heterodox groups. Fundamentally, the different heterodox groups are allowed to co-exist. Second, is a less pluralistic model, wherein orthodoxy and heterodoxy are identified, then groups within heterodoxy are identified, but where this is merely a temporary stage. The ultimate goal is to create a single heterodox theory but as a synthesis of heterodox strands. This can be associated with work by Sawyer (1989), Sherman (1987) on radical political economy, and Lavoie’s attempt to create a post-classical synthesis. Arestis (1992) is a slight variant, in which he attempts to graft other heterodox elements onto (an already broadened) Post Keynesianism; the result would be a Post Keynesianism which would represent the heterodoxy. Dugger’s (1989) work is a similar attempt to create radical Institutionalism. Third, a stronger version of Arestis’ and Dugger’s model, is the approach taken by, for example, Paul Davidson, in which it is argued again that there needs to be a single heterodox approach, but that this should be squarely based on one (usually existing) heterodox perspective. In Davidson’s case, that would be a particular Post Keynesian reading of Keynes. The result would be an axiomatic system more

how agents would react to an exogenously imposed money supply shock might have been saved had the heterodox recognition of an endogenous money stock been heeded.

⁶ Colander (2000) also claims that the term neo-classical is over-used, particularly by heterodox economists, to describe current mainstream economics, when, he argues, mainstream economics is not neo-classical.

general than the orthodox special case. In all three cases, the purpose is clearly to attack the orthodoxy. A fourth case is a conciliatory version of Davidson's argument: that heterodox economists must engage in debate and exchange with the orthodoxy, with the possibility that there might be mutual fruitful exchange of ideas. This fourth position is significant, because often the position taken up by heterodox economists is simply to ignore the orthodoxy, and to regard them as worthless or incapable of reasonable dialogue (see Lee and Keen, 2004; Fleetwood, 2002). Support for this is provided by Howells' (forthcoming) account of the development of the so-called 'new consensus macroeconomics' in which the obvious Post Keynesian influences and work have been written out of the mainstream description of the model.

A fifth variant, which has been popular in recent years, has been to advocate a line of distinction along metatheoretical lines. That partly reflects that no such distinction can be constructed at the theoretical level. Davis (2007) regards the heterodox alliances developed so far as unhelpful and *ad hoc*. He argues that a distinction can be identified between orthodox and heterodox such that orthodox economists have three core beliefs: individualism, rationality and equilibrium. Potts (2000) claims that all heterodox theory rejects the ontology of integral space (a field) which is held by orthodoxy. Lawson (2006) argues that heterodoxy is distinguished by an orientation to ontology. Lawson (1997) argues that heterodoxy can be identified as advocating depth realism and open systems. Dow (2000) similarly argues that heterodox views share a belief in open systems (although the concept may mean different things to different groups!). Lawson (2003, 2006) has also argued that the orthodoxy is identified with an orientation in method toward an insistence on a mathematical-deductivism. In spite of their attack on dualism, Colander, *et al* (2004b) admit that there may be an orthodoxy in terms of the methods required to be used (i.e., economic modelling). In all of these accounts, a dualism has been created not at the level of theory, but at a different, essential level. Examples from the orthodox side of the dualism could also be presented. Lawson (2006: 489) cites Lipsey (2001) as one who has complained about the modelling impetus of the orthodoxy from within.

There appears to be evidence of dualistic distinctions between orthodox and heterodox. These distinctions are mostly metatheoretical and although in some cases are related, are different. That observations raises several questions: 1) are the dualities rhetorical? 2) whether or not they are rhetorical, are they harmful? Turning to the first question, first the difficulty of the question should be acknowledged, because of the nature of rhetorical dualism. There are several possibilities: 1) the duality could be rhetorical: created in order to attack the orthodoxy more effectively, to instil a combative force in participants, to argue that the orthodoxy are incapable of open debate, or to encourage the formation of anti-orthodox alliances. 2) The duality could be based on essential difference between orthodox and heterodox. 3) The duality could be heuristic (which could also reflect (2)). 4) The duality could capture both (1) and (2): the essential difference between the two bodies of thought could be identified, for instance at some level of abstraction; but this choice may be rhetorical. In cases (1) and (4), of course, the proof of rhetorical intent is difficult to show. The issue also remains of how the duality is used and whether it remains in tact.

As an illustration, let us take the example of Lawson's (2006) argument about methodology, heterodoxy and ontology. Lawson attempts to identify a heterodox project. That would seem to suggest a duality. He is clear (483-4) that he does not intend to reify it and recognises its dynamic nature. Lawson acknowledges that heterodoxy is an umbrella term covering several separate traditions. However, in the course of his investigation, as he acknowledges, Lawson attempts to establish a common basis for heterodoxy and in so doing define the orthodoxy or "the mainstream against which [heterodoxy] stands opposed" (484). That suggests dualistic language. Lawson takes the position that it is difficult to define heterodoxy in terms of theory, except by citing a rejection of the orthodoxy. He regards that as unsatisfactory as a definition of heterodoxy. Partly that is the case because of the problem of defining orthodox or mainstream (the terms are used interchangeably)⁷ economics. Lawson rejects the definition of mainstream as individuality plus rationality (or those plus equilibrium), because he cites Marxists who share those concepts and because he argues that there are mainstream economists who do not hold them all. Rather, Lawson claims that the mainstream is identifiable via a feature which (he claims) remained constant while other aspects of theory or method, i.e., an inclination to mathematise. Lawson marshals evidence to support this thesis, mainly taken from the work of prominent economists. Lawson then argues that if heterodox economics is (by definition) the rejection of the mainstream, then it must reject the insistence on mathematical modelling.

This type of argument resonates with those made by Lawson for many years; of course, it is also a modification. Lawson, and more strongly, those influenced by him, seemed to be arguing against mathematical and statistical methods per se, except under specific conditions (see Downward and Mearman, 2002) for a counter-argument. Lawson's modification is the insertion of the concept of insistence of mathematics, which leaves the door open to heterodox economists to use those methods. The argument remains striking, however, as it is simple and reinforces a simple dualistic distinction, based on rejection. The distinction also serves a rhetorical purpose for Lawson, who has consistently argued against mathematical methods, as discussed. The fact that Lawson has marshalled evidence to demonstrate a difference suggests that perhaps the duality is not merely rhetorical; but to argue that it is *the* difference is a stronger claim, has stronger rhetorical force and requires more evidence. Lawson attempts to bolster the claim by saying that heterodoxy is further distinguished by an attention to ontology. He then identifies features of ontology which he claims are common to orthodox treatments. In contrast, he identifies elements of social reality, such as emergence, interconnectedness and structure, which he claims are held by heterodox economists. It is far beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate Lawson's claim, however criticisms such as Fine's (2006) suggest that the categories are too abstract and insufficiently linked to contemporary capitalism for them to be useful and to provide the basis for heterodox positions.

Thus far, the impression is that Lawson has set up a dualistic distinction between orthodox and heterodox based on ontology. This claim is a large one to make. The question is whether the distinction is as it appears to be, and what purpose it serves.

⁷ Lawson (2006: 491) rejects the term 'neo-classical economics' as misleading.

Clearly, it serves a powerful rhetorical purpose, partly because it bolsters arguments made previously by Lawson. Second, the distinction is subtle, particularly when compared with a position of ‘no econometrics to be used’. Also, it should be said that having established that definition of heterodoxy, Lawson later moves to a subtler position in which differences between heterodoxy are maintained, in terms of the substantive issues they focus on. In other words, heterodox traditions represent a division of labour within economics (just as economics is itself part of a division of labour within social science). That thesis was advanced in Lawson (2003).

This leads us to the second question, of whether the dualism of orthodox/heterodox is harmful. So far, the dualism and its associated fault line remains firmly in place. It is possible to cross it, but usually for purposes of attack. Garnett (2005), borrowing from Fuller (2000) and Fullbrook (2001), argues that the work of Kuhn (1962) is responsible for much of this dualism, because of its underlying Cold War thought pattern, which encouraged an ‘Us versus Them’ outlook, and a tendency to view the other as untouchable and incapable of reasonable dialogue. Differences between paradigms became extremely hard, and rather than promoting pluralism – in the sense of a tolerance and appreciation of other views and the ability to distinguish between different elements of other views – paradigms weaken it. Instead, the form of pluralism we get is more like that shown in figure 3 above.

Second, a simple heterodox/orthodox dual is flawed because it may ignore the diversity on both sides of the divide. Colander, *et al* (2004b), who discuss the fragmentation of orthodoxy, claim that the term orthodoxy is backward-looking, and is largely unrelated to the current state of mainstream economics, much of which may be ripe for potentially fruitful dialogue. Dualism is also potentially self-destructive in that it discourages open-mindedness (except to other heterodox views and perhaps view from outside economics), encourages defensiveness (Rutherford, 2000), can perpetuate isolation (Potts, 2000) and negativism. It may also be that the strategy of disengagement with orthodoxy is self-reinforcing; however, it is clear that there are elements and structures of orthodoxy which are aggressively monistic which preclude engagement on equal (or something approaching equal) terms; Colander, *et al* claim that often is those furthest away from new research (and perhaps instead with responsibility for management or undergraduate teaching) who are the most defensive.

In this light, Dow’s contribution to the debate is particularly helpful. She argues persuasively that the ontological and epistemological grounds for adopting strict dualisms is usually absent. She also argues for a genuine pluralism. However, contra Garnett’s (2005) position on Kuhn, Dow argues that a modification of Kuhn is possible which allows a role for schools of thought, but without the intolerance. Her concept of ‘structured pluralism’ envisages schools of thought as open systems. They have boundaries, but these boundaries are permeable, allowing ideas from elsewhere to affect them. In that way, ideas can even cross the orthodox/heterodox divide (wherever the dividing line is placed) and indeed, no divide is necessary. However, Dow’s schema does not collapse into postmodernist eclecticism: there remains structure, both within each

school of thought, but across the spectrum of perspectives. Further, it is held that definitions be flexible enough that the fixed pluralism of figure 3 is also avoided.

That temporal element is particularly significant. One of the original elements of Dow's definition of dualism is that the categories are fixed. Categorisation is necessary, but one of the arguments against dualism is that categories, once chosen, are fixed, creating a path dependence. Some path dependence is inevitable; however, the question is to what extent the path dependence occurs and whether that is acceptable. It is possible to construct dualistic distinctions between something called orthodox and an opponent called heterodox but is it helpful? Which distinction is the most useful is a question of explanatory power. In any case, though, the dualism may end up being reified, trapping subsequent researchers into thinking in terms of it, perhaps missing valuable opportunities for development.

5. Conclusions

This paper has discussed rhetorical dualism, i.e. the use of dualisms (of various types) for rhetorical purposes. It synthesises elements of Dow and McCloskey's approaches and builds on both and on feminism. The paper formalises the notion of rhetorical dualism implicit in the earlier literature. It has been suggested that rhetorical dualism is common in economics; this is not surprising, given that it is common in life. The debate between Monetarists and Keynesians is shown to display rhetorical dualism.

Overall, dualism is a tendency in thought: it could be Cartesian, could be Hegelian but those cases are different. Dualism in the Cartesian sense is particularly problematic; but even in the Hegelian sense it could be too. Rhetoric has been an influential literature in economics. McCloskey has highlighted specific cases of rhetorical dualism: dualities created for rhetorical purposes. In McCloskey, it is possible that rhetoric encompasses all speech and writing; however, that is unclear. Thus, all dualities can be examined as to whether they are designed for rhetoric. They may not be: they may be heuristic and they may represent accurately concrete entities. Dualities may meet multiple criteria: they may be heuristic and real; or rhetorical and real. Showing rhetorical dualism is difficult because it requires showing purpose and intent. That is difficult. However, there does seem to be evidence that many of the dualities present in economics (and there are many) are rhetorical. There seems to be a tendency to rhetorical dualism in economics.

One possible example is the distinction between orthodox and heterodox. There are many examples of that distinction, most often now at a metatheoretical level. These distinctions are possible examples of rhetorical dualism. Again, though that is difficult to prove. At this stage, the dualities are entities to explain. They may be heuristic and they may have some real basis; but again they involve choices of levels of abstraction which create the dualities. Why this occurs also needs to be explained. One explanation is that they serve a rhetorical purpose.

Whether or not the orthodox/heterodox dualities are rhetorical, they may be problematic. If they are Hegelian, this is less likely to be the case, but even in that case, the duality

may create barriers to conversation and thought, partly through path dependence of debate. If the categories become reified this is problematic. This is particularly the case with respect to orthodox/heterodox, because heterodox can be defined simply in terms of orthodoxy and its positive, constructive elements are ignored. Further, it may be that the dualities are unfounded in reality, and that they could be misleading in other ways. It is likely that it is possible to create a series of dualistic distinctions between orthodox and heterodox, but to focus on one may be unhelpful. Also, in the light of the obvious diversity within 'orthodoxy' and 'heterodoxy', the distinction may be misleading and inaccurate. The orthodox/heterodox distinction may have some value in clarifying some issues in economics, but it is likely that it is more problematic than helpful.

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