79>

To bestow an argument, idea, contention or assertion with value, we must attempt to persuade those who hold contrasting views. Once we manage to convince our opponents, our argument seemingly gains fresh significance. This inclination to persuade others with our ideas presumably derives from the action embodied in the verb "argue": to persuade people with relevant reasons that we are correct. While this might be one way to prove our argument's validity and value, we do not always need to resort to this method. Additionally, sometimes, attempts to persuade might even prove futile.

To begin with, I must express my appreciation for the reason part of this issue. It is exactly at the moment when we are forced to defend an idea against doubts and contrasting views that we begin to form a comprehensive understanding of the idea's value. It is also at such a moment that we should grasp the opportunity to show our rivals the advantages of our argument and earn their approval. This perspective is emphasized by how a debate takes place. In a debate, speakers strive to elucidate the advantages of their point of view. It is also during this phase that the audience comes to establish a holistic understanding of the topic and its value. In addition, even though the debaters may not be utterly convinced by their opponents, they ultimately benefit from questioning their opponents and defending their own views, and further build up an unprecedented understanding of their argument's value.

However, tenable as the assertion may hold in most circumstances that an idea receives value by overshadowing its opponents, I contend that the value of an argument can be also realized in other ways. Consequently, this raises doubt about the issue's reason. Since we do not argue exclusively to disapprove our rivals, but also to clarify our own principles, or support allegations, we do not always have to start a battle in which one argument is bound to knock down another. Academic papers serve as a simple but persuasive example. It is not difficult to find out that not all the articles we read, write or cite attempt to disapprove others, but in more circumstances concentrate on either clarification of the methodologies the paper itself utilizes, or on supplementary explanation to similar studies. One semester I read a series of articles written by archeologists, historians and anthropologists regarding ancient Chinese ritual. Despite their contrasting arguments, these scholars did not focus on discrediting each other's works. On the contrary, they simply offer different interpretations of the same issue. The value of these papers is therefore achieved through their interpretations rather than through contentions between the authors.

What is more, the writer's over-optimistic attitude is betrayed in the claim of the issue, which is supported by an unsubstantiated assumption that everyone can be convinced by an opposing viewpoint. This assumption further theorizes that an absolute truth exists, or to put it in another way: everything can be explained in only one way. Clearly, this is not true. The example previously discussed about three different interpretations of one issue supports my opinion. Since academic research is based on different methodologies, scholars can never be truly convinced by each other; otherwise, they would have used identical systems but not diverse ones. In addition, in some circumstances, the superficial debate between two arguments actually reveals an irreconcilable conflict, which concerns more fundamental factors, such as benefits. For exemplifications, we can look at strife between political parties all over the world. Due to the irreconcilable contention about respective interests, their quarrels never cease, and probably no one can foretell the day when they will actually convince each other.

To sum up, while I partly agree with the issue’s reason, I reserve my approval of both the claim and its assumption. That is to say, the value of an argument may be realized through debate with someone holding a contrasting viewpoint, yet we cannot rely on that to always be true.