CHAPTER 14.

INFORMAL LOGIC AND THE NATURE OF ARGUMENT

CHRISTOPHER W. TINDALE

Abstract: In this paper, I review the advances informal logic has made in reframing "argument" in ways that fit its everyday uses. This contrasts it sharply with more traditional formal models of argument. But there is still, I argue, a "static" conception behind the way many informal logicians talk about arguments. That is, they view arguments as products torn from the processes of argumentation, sitting lifeless on the page awaiting evaluation. By contrast, I suggest we draw on Aristotle in developing a more dynamic rhetorical model of argument, one that involves both internal and external movement. Such model better prepares informal logic to deal with things like narratives and visual arguments.

It might seem that by now we would have plain and non-controversial responses to the simple question of what an argument involves. But this is not the case. The development of argumentation theory in recent decades, and some of its subsidiary movements like informal logic, has certainly led to a focus on the nature of argument and attempts to settle on a central conception. But so far, those efforts have not been fully successful. As I will argue here, while there have been tremendous advances in

our conception of "argument" and what this entails, there is still a retention of many of the traditional aspects, not all of which are healthy.[1]

If we turn to the textbooks (always a popular move in this kind of inquiry) and look at how "argument" is used and illustrated, then we may be surprised by the results.

We find examples like "New York is in New York, therefore New York is in New York." Such "entailments" are popular in certain kinds of texts. They purport to show what must be the case if something else is the case (See Tindale 1999: 31-2). But how useful is this information? In evaluating arguments, we expect premises to act as *reasons* that increase our acceptance of some further statement, reinforce our holding of it, or persuade us to accept it for the first time. But that New York is in New York could hardly be judged as a reason on these terms. Even as an inference, the repetition of one statement is alarmingly uninformative, and the "therefore" accomplishes nothing. Consider some further examples.

There is the ubiquitous one that all students of logic meet, intended to demonstrate one of the valid figures of the Aristotelian syllogism: "All humans are mortal, Socrates is human. Therefore, Socrates is mortal." If we accept the premises, then we must accept the conclusion, since it is contained within them. But the lessons from this are few and hardly begin to help the student address "real life" arguments.

Then there is the case of Irving Copi, whose textbooks are among the most widely used in North America (or were), having introduced generations of students (and professors) to the subject of logic. In the 4th edition of his *Introduction to Logic* (1972) we find:

---

1. See, also, David Hitchcock (2006) for a detailed discussion of various definitions of "argument" offered by some leading informal logicians, like Douglas Walton, Ralph Johnson, and J. Anthony Blair, and other theorists associated with informal logic (like Charles Hamblin). Hitchcock's own definition of argument is "a set of one or more interlinked premiss-illative-conclusion sequences" (19).

All that is predetermined is necessary.

Every event is predetermined.

Therefore every event is necessary (7).

This has been preceded by the following explanations: "*Inference* is a process by which one proposition is reached and affirmed on the basis of one or more other propositions accepted as the starting point of the process" (5); and "corresponding to every possible inference is an *argument*, and it is with these arguments that logic is chiefly concerned" (6-7). Here, argument and inference are synonymous, which explains why some of the uninteresting entailments are deemed to work as arguments. But what might most strike us is that over twenty years later, in the third edition of a similar text now called *Informal Logic* (1996) Copi, with his co-author Keith Burgess-Jackson, while giving a different initial example, gives the same explanation: "*Inference* is commonly defined as a process in which one proposition is arrived at and affirmed on the basis of one or more other propositions accepted as the starting point of the process (2); and "Corresponding to every possible inference is an *argument* and it is with these arguments that logic is chiefly concerned" (3).

There is certainly a relationship to be noted between arguments and inferences. Robert Pinto (2001), for example, has called arguments "invitations to inference" (37). But as J. Anthony Blair (2012) has pointed out, while it is often possible to shift without any harm from talking of inferences to talking of arguments, "the two should not be conflated." As he explains matters, inferring is one type of reasoning ("making a judgment that one proposition is implied by another or other" 141), and this is clearly basic to the use of arguments in argumentation. But argumentation is not required for inferring, and its use of arguments involves much more. A person who reasons infers or draws inferences. When they then turn to communicate their

reasoning to others, to present an argument to them, the activity involved is different. The reasons offered in the argument may be different from the reasons that person inferred, because the audience is different and requires different strategies. Inference is at the root here, but the communicative act of arguing has become more complex and involves many more considerations. The two cannot be conflated in the simple way that Copi proposes.

What is problematic about the traditional examples I have provided? What do they assume about arguments? The main concern is that the conception of "argument" is a static one. By this I mean that it exemplifies the idea of a product alone, without any relation to the argumentative situation that gave rise to it. It appears "finished"; nothing more needs to be said; it is not part of any ongoing exchange of views (it is not dialectical). It can be evaluated without any concern about the intent behind it, the goals that prompted it, or the audience for which it is intended (it is not rhetorical).

On these terms, the view of "argument" is one that it is solely logical. But even here it reflects what might be called an "impoverished" logic, because we learn so little from it. It teaches us about validity, and that is important (it is less obvious that it teaches us much about soundness). So, there is a place for such traditional examples. But they are not sufficient to explain, reflect and teach how arguments operate in the social world, in everyday life, and so the conception of "argument" that underlies them is similarly restricted in value.

2. THE INFORMAL "TURN" IN ARGUMENT STUDIES

The position of concern that I have identified is the position of some of the major critics of "traditional argument". I will mention just two of them and the points for which they argue. They are both related to the informal logic movement: Stephen Toulmin and Ralph Johnson.

Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* (1958) is a seminal text in the field. He strove to convince the community of philosophers that a traditional model of argument was not sufficient to explain the nature of argumentation across different fields. Toulmin rejects the traditional belief that formal validity (focusing on structure, not content) is the paradigm for assessing arguments. One of his concerns is the simplicity of the traditional model: "It is one thing to choose as one's first object of theoretical study the type of argument open to analysis in the simplest terms. It would be quite another to treat this type of argument as a paradigm and to demand that arguments in other fields should conform to its standards regardless" (133). Hence, the traditional standard of argument analysis is no longer sufficient. His own model (which I do not have space to detail here) addresses a number of problems. For example, he argues that traditional arguments (syllogisms) have an over-looked internal complexity. They fail to distinguish the force of universal premises as warrants and the backing on which they depend. We see this traced through one of his most famous examples—the Petersen is a Swede example (101-02), where a major premise "Scarcely any Swedes are Roman Catholics" can be unpacked as either, "A Swede can be taken almost certainly not to be a Roman Catholic" (= Warrant). Or "The proportion of Roman Catholic Swedes is less than 2%" (= Backing for the Warrant). Also, he addresses existential implications. That is, does a universal premise "All A's are B's" (or "No A's are B's") imply that any A's exist? Since the form of the statement does not help us, Toulmin's model shifts attention to the practical use of the statement (107).

In arguing all of this, Toulmin was cautious in his strategy. While his thesis is a damning one for formal logicians, he discloses it gradually and is clearly conscious of his audience. He leads the reader through an inquiry, exploring a problem, reaching a conclusion. All of which simulates the philosopher's methodology. After each inquiry (what is field-invariant, and

what field variant? How does the analytic differ from the substantial?) he turns to his audience of philosophers and logicians and poses questions for them. His conclusions are often couched in the least offensive manner possible: "If the purpose of an argument is to establish conclusions about which we are not entirely confident by relating them back to other information about which we have greater assurance, it begins to be a little doubtful whether any genuine, practical argument could *ever* be properly analytic" (Toulmin 1958: 117). The enormity of what is suggested here is mitigated by the qualified way in which it is stated.

Ralph Johnson's motivation for challenging the tradition of logic and arguments (he calls this the tradition of formal deductive logic, or FDL) is similar to my own. He cites examples like the following as cases where a sense of "argument" has lost its moorings:

> The sky is blue.
>
> Grass is green.
>
> Therefore, tigers are carnivorous.
> (Lambert and Ulrich 1980: 19; cited in Johnson 2014: 74)[2]

Johnson blames the textbook tradition for this state of affairs and not individual logicians, like Frege or Russell. On Johnson's terms, it is not sufficient that there be reasons leading to a conclusion in order for there to be an argument. "That which is argued about must be controversial, contentious, really in doubt; and for this to occur, there must be contrary views" (75).[3] This points to a strong dialectical vein in Johnson's informal logic, one that comes to the fore in his (2000) book. It leads him to

2. The original publication of Johnson's text was in 1996. I cite the WSIA publication of 2014, since this is readily available on the Internet. Readers should be aware of the chronology involved: the 1996/2014 work precedes his major book of 2000.

3. Another of Johnson's concerns with FDL—one we have already noted—is that "argument" is often taken as synonymous with "inference."

call for the "naturalization of logic" as "the next important task confronting us. Central to this development will be the reconceptualization of argument so that its dialectical nature is fully appreciated. In this process, logicians have something to learn from other disciplines, among them rhetoric" (2014:81).

This reconceptualization of argument is taken up in Johnson's central work, *Manifest Rationality* (2000). There, he defines "argument" as:

> An argument is a type of discourse or text – the distillate of the practice of argumentation – in which the arguer seeks to persuade the Other(s) of the truth of a thesis by producing the reasons that support it. In addition to this illative core, an argument possesses a dialectical tier in which the arguer discharges his dialectical obligations (168).

This is an innovative conception of our central concept and there is much that could be said about it.[4] But the key thing of interest to me here is the dual nature of the definition, offering both a "traditional" core (called the illative core) of statements and a "new" dialectical tier. It is this tier that deserves attention because it begins to push in the direction of a more rhetorical conception of argument (without quite reaching it).

It is in turning to the dialectical tier that Johnson clarifies what he looks for in naturalized arguments that take account of alternatives. While "many arguments consist of the first tier only" (in which case it is a misnomer to call them arguments or, at least, complete arguments), the best practitioners "always take account of the standard objections" (2000:166). It is this taking account that constitutes the dialectical tier. More precisely, it is the addressing of alternative positions and standard objections. There are two things to address here: (i) the relationship between the illative and dialectical tiers with respect to the product of the

---

4. In fact, I analyze the definition in detail in (Tindale 2002).

argument itself, and (ii) the relationship between the arguer and Other(s) implied by the dialectical tier.

Taking account of and anticipating objections is not controversial, even if it has not been a feature of the tradition. But taking this feature and making it an essential component of what *an argument is*, such that if it is absent then the discourse in question is not to be identified as an argument, is a controversial proposal. We should consider whether this dialectical tier is a part of the product or whether it is something that arises afterwards, as participants reflect on the initial argument or an evaluator begins to work on it.

Since what separates rhetoric from argumentation in Johnson's view is the requirement of manifest rationality, then the proposal has negative consequences for understanding argumentation rhetorically. At several points, Johnson discusses the distinctions between rhetoric and informal logic, and the conception of rhetoric implicated in these discussions is not as modern as his conception of argument. One noteworthy difference between rhetoric and informal logic is the difference in purpose. He holds rhetoric to aim at effectiveness rather than truth and completeness. This means that it neglects to recognize the necessity of a dialectical tier. If there is an objection to the argument of which the arguer is aware, then from the point of view of rhetoric he or she has no obligation to deal with it; the argument will be effective (or not) without it. Informal logic, on the other hand, has rationality as a goal in itself. The character of manifest rationality, omitted from the definition of argument, turns out to completely underlie it.

Trudy Govier (1998) has provided a detailed critical analysis of the dialectical tier. Among her concerns is the apparent insistence on completeness and the associated vagueness of knowing when all the objections have been met. As it happens, both of these concerns can be addressed if we observe that, *implicitly*, Johnson's definition of "argument" assumes the underlying

importance of context. In moving beyond the traditional core, he starts to consider aspects of the argumentative situation, or context, and this context should tell us what the objections are that need to be addressed (rather than allowing an infinite number of potential objections). But we need to adopt a rhetorical perspective in order to see this.

Moreover, the inclusion of the dialectical tier within the concept of argument creates an internal tension between the product an argument is and the process it captures. Again, Johnson's project itself does suggest a way to resolve this tension, if we continue to judge it rhetorically. Anticipating the Other's objections, as required by the dialectical tier, informs and *forms* the arguer's own utterances and *in this sense* the dialectical "tier" cannot be divorced from the structure. Understood this way, the line between the two tiers begins to dissolve.

Johnson acknowledges that the arguer is only half the story and that the process is incomplete without the Other, giving us a dynamic relationship of back-and-forth responses. He writes:

> Genuine dialogue requires not merely the presence of the Other, or speech between the two, but the real possibility that the logos of the Other will influence one's own logos. An exchange is dialectical when, as a result of the intervention of the Other, one's own logos (discourse, reasoning, or thinking) has the potential of being affected in some way. Specifically, the arguer agrees to let the feedback from the Other affect the product (161).

This is quite dynamic, and it has echoes of the kind of dialogism that we find in Mikhail Bakhtin's work (Tindale 2004). Bakhtin (1981) invokes the dynamic *internal* nature of discourse, including argumentation. On these terms, dialogism challenges the notion of the separated, self-reliant thinker/speaker who composes a discourse in isolation and then brings it into a dialogue (or argument) with another. As we will see below, recent work by the philosopher Robert Brandom (1994) confirms this valuing of the dialogical over the, singular, monological. All of this suggests

that the dialectical tier is not something that is formed after the illative core is fixed; it precedes the development of that "core," and this in turn begins to collapse any real distinction between what is core and what is not.

In the passage just cited, Johnson, moves toward this position through the remarks made about the logos of the Other influencing the arguer. But he then falls back onto a more traditional separation of opposing discourses when he makes the reference to feedback. What works well, though, and is entirely consistent with Johnson's position, is a Bakhtinian gathering of that opposition within the argumentative discourse itself. But such emendations require a deeper, more natural rhetoric of argument.

3. INFORMAL LOGIC'S RESPONSE TO THE TRADITION

An early statement from Ralph Johnson and J. Anthony Blair defined informal logic as "a branch of logic whose task is to develop non-formal standards, criteria, procedures for the analysis, interpretation, evaluation, criticism and construction of argumentation" (1987). More recently, Blair has settled on "the study of the norms for reasonable non-deductive inference patterns, as well as the norms for premise acceptability" (2012: 47). This is a generally acceptable definition.

In accordance with their definition of informal logic, we find Johnson and Blair tackling much more complex types of argument. In the opening discussion of their first edition (1977), they give four examples. One comes from a letter to a newspaper advice columnist (Ann Landers); the second from a speech given by the president of the Police Association of Ontario. A third is an excerpt for a newspaper editorial. And the fourth is from a letter to a different newspaper. All of these arguments are relatively lengthy (relative to the traditional examples), the shortest being seven lines in length. And they all involve arguments embedded in natural language, requiring the student to extract the argument from the discourse and identify its component

parts. Johnson and Blair point out a further thing they all have in common: "they attempt to persuade us of something by citing reasons intended to support that claim and prove its truth" (3). This is what "is meant in logic by the term **argument**."

In a similar vein, informal logician Trudy Govier in her text-book (4th e. 1997) begins with an everyday, common example: "Eating more than one egg a day is dangerous because eggs contain cholesterol and cholesterol can cause strokes and heart attacks" (1). In defining "argument" as "a set of claims that a person puts forward in an attempt to show that some further claim is rationally acceptable" (2), Govier fits easily into the informal logic cohort that improves upon the traditional examples by drawing on the everyday. And as the above debate over Johnson's dialectical tier indicates, she is a strong proponent of this "core" definition.

The definition of informal logic drawn from Blair and Johnson is still very much a logical one. They would judge informal logic to be just that—a logic. By contrast, another informal logician, Douglas Walton, sees informal logic to be essentially dialectical.[5] This is not the place to explore this disagreement. For current purposes, it simply means that for Walton an argument will be something that arises in a dialogue. This reality affects the way arguments are evaluated. But structurally, they looked much like what we have seen above. Here is one of his examples, lifted from a dialogue between two people (Bob and Helen) who disagree as to whether the practice of tipping for service in restaurants is a good thing. This is Bob's argument:

Premise: University education is a good thing.

Premise: A lot of students depend on tips to help pay their tuition costs.

---

5. Johnson would insist on this in spite of the very dialectical nature of his account, witnessed in the importance of the dialectical tier.

Premise: Discontinuing tipping would mean that fewer students could afford a university education.

Conclusion: Therefore, tipping is a good practice that should be continued (Walton 2006: 5).

In agreement with what we have seen in the traditional model, an "argument" for Walton is simply "made up of statements called premises and conclusions" (6). And this understanding informs the various argumentation schemes characterizing his subsequent work in informal logic (Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008).

There are clear advances in the way "argument" is being understood by this admittedly small, but representative, sample of informal logicians. Born from a need to make the logic class more relevant for their students, informal logicians strive to treat "real" arguments in their natural environments. Rather than the made-up and contrived examples of the older textbooks, the examples are taken from common everyday sources and illustrate how people actually employ arguments in their argumentation. There is also an appreciation of arguing as an activity (Hitchcock 2006 sees it as a speech act), witnessed in the dialectical thrust of Walton's dialogues and Johnson's dialectical tier. Arguments are not just things produced in the world; they are produced by people, and those people are important to understanding them. Stripping arguments from their natural environments and analyzing them in the classroom lost that dimension of understanding. So, there are suggestions of a more dynamic sense of argument here. But they are only suggestions.

This is a place to pause and look at a piece of everyday reasoning and consider how it might be evaluated using traditional and informal notions of "argument".

This piece comes from a speech delivered by president Donald Trump to an audience of Middle East leaders May 21, 2017. At this point, he is rallying his audience against the threat of terror.

If we do not act against this organized terror, then we know what will happen. Terrorism's devastation of life will continue to spread. Peaceful societies will become engulfed by violence. And the futures of many generations will be sadly squandered.

   If we do not stand in uniform condemnation of this killing—then not only will we be judged by our people, not only will we be judged by history, but we will be judged by God.[6]

Informal logicians would recognize and structure this argument as a Slippery Slope, and it can be expressed in terms of the scheme for that argument, in which a proposed event is claimed to set off a causal chain leading to an undesirable outcome.[7]

Premise 1: If we do not act against this organized terror, then terrorism's devastation of life will continue to spread.

Premise 2: Peaceful societies will become engulfed by violence.

Premise 3: The futures of many generations will be sadly squandered.

Premise 4: If we do not stand in uniform condemnation of this killing—then not only will we be judged by our people, not only will we be judged by history, but we will be judged by God.

Hidden Premise: We do not want such judgment [this outcome is undesirable]

Hidden Conclusion: We must act against this organized terror.

The argument as standardized fits the scheme for the Slippery Slope and could be evaluated according to the critical questions for that scheme, which would include an understanding of the critical questions for causal arguments. How likely is each causal

---

6. <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/the-administration/334454-full-speech-president-donald-trump-address-in-saud>

7. I pass over discussion of whether the Slippery Slope is to be judged as a fallacy, as some informal logicians might have been inclined to do. There has been a shift away from a primary fallacy-approach to one that explores argumentation schemes (Walton, et al, 2008).

link? And is the alleged outcome really undesirable? While the first question may allow us to stay with the propositions alone, testing the strength of their relationships, the second sends us outside to the audience for whom the outcome is or is not undesirable. So, there is improvement here on a "traditional" argument analysis that focused only on the product without consideration for its context. We cannot evaluate the argument's overall strength without considering the audience? But is that sufficient to decide the "validity" or cogency of the argument? We will return to this example later.

4. THE GHOST OF THE TRADITIONAL MODEL AND THE NEED FOR RHETORIC

Informal logicians themselves are aware that the transition from earlier conceptions of argument has not been complete or without problems. Johnson (2014), for example, notes that the "informal logic textbooks offer the reader an anemic conception of argument, one which does not differ markedly from that which appears (when it does appear) in other standard introductory logic textbooks, such as Copi; nor indeed from those in the FDL tradition" (79).

The focus, then, is still primarily on the product, and the concept is still largely a static one. What matters are the propositions in the form of premises and conclusions. There are reasons to be concerned about this. Many theorists are now discussing the nature and evaluation of visual arguments and narrative arguments (Olmos 2017). But how can the visual, for example, be an argument on the traditional model or even the informal logic model? Both "reduce" arguments to propositions. This raises the question of whether propositions are all there are to arguments. Is the propositional the "paradigm" case that anything (visual, narrative, and so forth) that purports to be an argument must reflect in some way? Consider, for example, concerns regarding the possibility of narrative arguments. Govier and Ayers (2012)

emphasize those "core" features that any argument must possess, including, as we would expect, a claim and supporting reasons. It would then seem that anything would be an argument only insofar as it exhibits such properties. Of course, to speak of "core" features also assumes some non-core features, and these they provide in a footnote: emotional indicators, counter-considerations, and also jokes or illustrative anecdotes (2102: 166n.9). In fact, a fuller exploration of that footnote, were we to have space for it, might well find a case for understanding some narratives as arguments (Tindale 2017). But as long as the core criterion dominates, then the analyst can demand of the text, "what are the premises?" and in the absence of a suitable response, reject the candidate as an argument. In a sense, the problem is similar to the treatment of images as arguments. All this invites a typically philosophical investigation of the core versus the non-core, which would see the one perhaps displaced by the other. But we do not have to go so far; we can simply question the prejudicial nature of such a division that appears to exclude *in advance* anything that does not fit a definition of argument that reaches back through the informal logic accounts into the traditional models that informal logic had professed to replace.

Again, what much informal logic most lacks, on Johnson's terms, is that appreciation of alternative arguments that involves a wider dialectical grasp of the possibilities in an argumentative situation. And with this comes a growing appreciation of a role for rhetoric (Johnson 2014:81). Another way to capture what is at stake here is to note that logicians of all stripes have failed to make the distinction that Daniel O'Keefe (1977) noted between argument$_1$ and argument$_2$. Argument$_1$ is "something one person makes"; while argument$_2$ is "something two or more persons have (or engage in)" (1977:122). What O'Keefe captures in the second sense is the "personalizing" nature of argument. They are human products, and they need to be recognized as such not just in how they are evaluated, but also in how they are conceived

and structured. A recent text from an informal logician focuses almost entirely on argument₂ (Gilbert 2014). In agreement with the position being argued here, Gilbert holds that all perspectives on argument (and argumentation) depend on rhetoric (24). It is because of this that it is important to establish rhetoric's relation to informal logic.

Like other theories of argument and argumentation, informal logic was developed without any positive engagement with the traditions of rhetoric. Thus, bringing rhetoric into informal logic (or vice versa) is a difficult project because informal logic is already established. Consequently, it may seem as if the subsequent addition of rhetorical features amount to no more than an add-on, or afterthought. We can only speculate on what informal logic would look like if rhetoric had been included from the beginning.

In a posthumous paper, philosopher and argumentation theorist Chaim Perelman makes an interesting observation: "It is on account of the importance of audience that I bring the theory of argumentation together with rhetoric rather than styling it an *informal logic*, as do the young logicians of today who take an interest in argumentation, but for whom the word 'rhetoric' retains its pejorative aspect" (1989: 247).[8] Perelman failed to elaborate on the remark and provide names with which he associates the negative attitude. While rhetoric and philosophy had long since lost the positive connections they held for Aristotle and those who followed him, we cannot simply infer from this that rhetoric has been viewed distrustfully simply because it has been judged irrelevant to the truth-seeking goals of philosophers.

It is possible that Perelman has in mind remarks like this from Copi (1982: 88) who speaks of rhetoric being "of course…wholly worthless in resolving a question of fact;" and the more damning

---

8. Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca offer the same explanation for choosing to call their approach rhetorical rather than dialectical (1969: 5; 54).

statement in his *Informal Logic*: "In political campaigns today almost every rhetorical trick is played to make the worse seem the better cause" (Copi 1986: 97). Yet elsewhere in his standard text, Copi speaks positively about rhetoric, and the 1986 book that seems to associate it with the tricks of eristics did not appear until after Perelman's death.

An alternative possibility is that the source of Perelman's concern was the work of informal logicians like Johnson and Blair, with whom Perelman was familiar.[9] A rhetorician giving a cursory read to the first edition of *Logical Self-Defense* (1977) may well be arrested by a section titled "Eliminating Rhetoric" (107) that offered advice on extracting the argument from the rhetoric and diluting the persuasive force of some characterizations that are built into the language.[10] These selective "glimpses" may well capture the general appreciation of rhetoric (or lack of appreciation) in the late 1970s and early 1980s (when Perelman would have made his judgment). But it also seems reasonable to suggest that this attitude was grounded more in ignorance than ill will. That is, philosophically trained informal logicians were likely unaware that rhetoric could have anything other than a pejorative sense. Recent decades have seen members of the rhetoric and speech communication communities enter into fruitful discussions with those from the informal logic community, discussions that have encouraged a more accurate appreciation of the wider senses "rhetoric" can have, including the positive. Thus, later work by informal logicians has tended to reflect this greater

9. He had declined an invitation to join the editorial board of *Informal Logic* because he judged it to have a purely pedagogical focus, perhaps basing his judgment on the earlier *Informal Logic Newsletter*.

10. While in the Proceedings to the First International Symposium on Informal Logic, Johnson and Blair identify *The New Rhetoric* as one of only three monographs of significance to informal logic, still the program set out there distinguishes informal logic and rhetoric as separate disciplines whose relationship is unclear (Johnson and Blair 1980: 26).

awareness and sensitivity.[11] A case in point is the Johnson and Blair text, which by the third edition (1993) asserts: "In our opinion, rhetoric as a discipline has important insights about argumentation which logicians need to embrace…In our experience, logicians tend to underestimate the importance of audience and context to the comprehension and evaluation of argumentation" (142-3).

It is difficult, then, to see the pejorative sense of rhetoric promoted in the work of serious informal logicians. If anything, there is a tendency toward neglect rather than dismissal. Still, not every informal logician agrees with Johnson and Blair on what rhetorical features it might be important to consider. Trudy Govier (1999), for example, challenges the idea that audience is worth including. She judges that it is not useful to appeal to audience to resolve issues such as the acceptability of premises, and so falls back on other more standard informal logic criteria like whether premises are common knowledge, or knowable *a priori*, or defended elsewhere, or on reliable testimony or authority (199). What is still lacking in mainstream informal logic, then, is a full engagement with positive rhetoric, and that might begin with the explicit recognition of a more dynamic conception of "argument."

5. A DYNAMIC MODEL

The exercises of the logic book in the classroom may have encouraged us to think otherwise, but if any semblance of a real argument appears in the classroom it is only to the degree that it simulates or reflects actual argumentative practice as this is found in the social world. In a fundamental way, the practice of arguing (which gives us the argument specimens of the text books) involves the giving and receiving of reasons. In a dialogical exchange (recall Bakhtin above), those reasons are character-

11. See, for example, the article by Groarke (2011) in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/logic-informal/#Rhe>.

ized by considerations of both parties. Robert Brandom (1994) contrasts what he calls dialogical reasoning with monological reasoning. The monological focuses on the commitments of one individual, expressed in premises and conclusions. But dialogical reasoning involves assessments of what follows from different social perspectives and different background commitments (1994: 497). It is Brandom's contention that the monological is "parasitic on and intelligible *only* in terms of the conceptual contents conferred by dialogical reasoning" (497). For now, it suffices to appreciate the social character of the processes involved and the ways in which Brandom's analyses are given from the perspective of the social. What it amounts to, I believe, is saying that "argument" has to be understood in relation to "arguing." Or, in other terms, that argument$_2$ is not so much different from argument$_1$, it is integrally related to it in the sense of deciding what it will be. In further terms still, this confirms the need to close the gap between the two tiers of Johnson's definition.

One of the core ideas in Brandom's pragmatic model is the commitment made by a speaker. That commitment is understood in terms of what is *attributed* to the speaker as much as what the speaker acknowledges. That is, it is from the perspective of the audience's attributions that meaning should be understood. Of course, a speaker can assert commitments that they are not *entitled* to make, and thus be called upon by the audience to provide reasons that justify the assertion or entitle the speaker to it (Brandom 2000:193). It is part of an audience's task, in the processes of communication, to police such assertions by judging when entitlements exist and insisting on reasons when in doubt.

This more dynamic view of "argument" (in contrast to the static view examined above) is closely related to that which can be extracted from Aristotle. Adopting a rhetorical perspective on argumentation involves the recognition that an argument's purpose and not just its structure must be part of its definition. By that I mean, we have been used to defining an argument as a

series of statements (minimally two), at least one of which (the premise) provided support for another (the conclusion), *and* it has the goal of persuading an audience. Bringing the audience into the conceptual field marks the engagement with rhetoric and the rich collection of ideas available from that tradition. But as we have seen, there is still a tendency to separate out the "structural" part of the definition and treat arguments in the static way, as mere products. To repeat what was said earlier, this effectively tears the product from the process in which it was produced and pins it down for review and assessment, like a butterfly on a display board—colorful, perhaps, but also lifeless. When the argument is then analyzed this is done on its own terms and without sufficient regard for the situation that produced it, along with the participants involved in that situation. Treating arguments in this detached, static way amounts to a failure to recognize the dynamic nature of what is involved.

Stephen Toulmin hinted at what was at stake when he wrote: "An argument is like an organism" (1958:87). In saying this he meant that it has parts, an integrated structure. Toulmin's statement recalls the Aristotle of the *Poetics* (1984), describing the work of art like an organism, with head, body and tail. But, importantly, Aristotle also judged it to be like an animal because it was alive, another animated thing among animated things. The *Poetics*, with its demand for probable and necessary sequences in plots, evinces reasonableness here at the heart of the poetic—a moving train of logic. But if the poetic has a movement, so too must logic itself: logic has a life, and its structures have internal movement. This sense needs to be transported to the study of argumentation. An argument is alive; it is a message of activated potential. In terms of particularly important Aristotelian terms that capture the way he conceived natural and social objects, an argument is a potentiality (*dunamis*) and two actualities (*energeia*).

The relationship between these terms is complicated. Aristotle used it famously in *De Anima*, or 'On the Soul' (1984), as a way to

capture the interactions of the parts of a human being (body and soul): a soul is the first actuality (activation) of a body that has life potentially. Then, the second actuality is any expression of that initial activation. For example an eye (a "body") has the potential for sight (the first actuality) but may be asleep. When the eye is actively seeing it expresses the second actuality.

In argumentation, the first actuality is achieved in the movement within an argument from the premises to the conclusion (while there is not yet any uptake, any adoption (literally) of the claim involved). This internal movement already indicates the way in which an argument is alive with action, dynamic on its own terms. There is a movement from premises to conclusion that the mind follows, or, in Pinto's terms, is invited to follow. This is the level of inferencing, of the illative core. The second actuality is in the audience, the one that adopts ideas in the process of "uptake." This uptake is a complicated matter that cannot be fully explored here. It depends on many variables, including the arguer's skill at recognizing the audience and the means of persuasion available for that audience.

We might see, then, that as a type of discourse an argument is both an organization *and* a dissemination, since it collects ideas and then moves them internally from premises to conclusion, and then externally to an audience. And it has features that facilitate both of these movements. Or at least the arguer has access to such features, many of which are to be found in the wealth of ideas available in the rhetorical tradition.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The static sense of argument sees arguments as products with no essential connection to the argumentative situation from which they arose. They are inert pieces of discourse, connected statements that can be judged "good" or "bad" merely in terms of their structures. (This is clearly the case with the traditional model

and, as we have seen, still the case generally with informal logic models).

By contrast, the dynamic sense of argument sees arguments as social events, personalized by those engaged in them. They are alive with meaning and movement, and should only be judged "good" or "bad" in light of consideration of the entire argumentative situation (including the participants).

It has to be said that dealing with arguments was much simpler on the traditional model. There was less to worry about and more was within the evaluator's control. But there was also a lot that was lost or overlooked. As a case in point, we might return to the example from the Trump speech and discuss it further.

The main claim of the argument was that "we" must act against this organized terror. The scope of the "we" determines the audience for the argument, against which its reasonableness must be tested. In so far as the entire speech was a call for partnerships between the US and Middle Eastern states, then this fits within that scope, identifying the agents who are being called on to act, and who would be expected to find the outcome undesirable.

Support for this claim was gathered in the chain of slippery slope reasoning. This argument needs to be an acceptable instance of the scheme. The first critical question that asks whether the causal links are plausible should be answered in the affirmative for the argument to have objective strength. Still, what we are judging here is the movement *within* the argument. Does it flow according to what is cogent? Does it move the mind from link to link in a reasonable fashion so that any reasonable person would be expected to follow the flow and see the connections between the parts of the argument? It is not my intention to provide a detailed analysis here, other than to suggest that it is reasonable to expect that terrorism, if unchecked, will engulf peaceful societies in violence, and that the futures of many (if not many generations) will thereby be squandered. And from this it is reasonable to believe that the leaders, given who they are and

their belief systems (which again takes us beyond the propositions), being addressed will expect judgment from those parties listed.

Is this enough to encourage uptake? Is it an effective argument? The second movement, beyond the propositions, involves the audience. Although, we have already seen that this audience was implicated in the initial judgment (suggesting that, as with Johnson's dialectical tier, the distinction here between internal and external is largely academic). Informal logicians have been fond of talking about evaluation as if we can assess any argument as if we were the audience (consider Johnson and Blair's examples noted earlier). But to judge uptake, to assess the dialogical aspect that theorists like Bakhtin and Brandom are interested in, we need to consider who will receive and act on this. Who is the potential audience that can be actualized (moved to reflection and action) by the argument? We need to clarify the "we" and then consider the appropriateness of the language, the style of the argument, and even the manner of delivery, in light of that "we". Because we are here positioning ourselves, as much as is possible, in that audience's perspective. In this light, some of the hyperbole becomes relevant (the choice of "engulfed" and the "many generations," for example). It gives presence to the claims, bringing them before the eyes with conceptual vividness. The individuals find themselves addressed in a personal way. The gradatio in the fourth premise contributes to this, with its movement from our people, to history, and then to god, building the impact of the undesirable outcome, which in turn calls for individual reflection, judgment and action. The argument moves people to action (uptake) insofar as it is effective in addressing them, and it is designed to accomplish that effectiveness.

In terms of the prospects for developing informal logic itself: As I suggested earlier, a more dynamic conception of argument better prepares informal logic for dealing with the argumentative possibilities of narratives and visuals. In raising questions about

visual and narrative arguments, bringing the audience into the discussion and exploring potential "uptakes" expands our study of argumentative strategies. How are different media better suited to certain issues and situations, if they are? If we must "reduce" anything that is to be considered an argument to the basic propositions of the traditional model, then the prospects of understanding the different strategies used (in advertizing or propaganda, for example) are constrained before they even begin. More modern conceptions of argument, like the one I have discussed here, take us beyond those constraints to a wider arena of possibilities.

REFERENCES

Aristotle. 1984. On the soul. In *The complete works of Aristotle: The revised Oxford translation*, Vol. 1, ed. Jonathan Barnes. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Aristotle. 1984. Poetics. In *The complete works of Aristotle: The revised Oxford translation*, Vol. 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1981. *The dialogic Imagination: Four essays*, ed. Michael Holquist , trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Blair, J. Anthony. 2012. *Groundwork in the theory of argumentation: Selected papers of J. Anthony Blair*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Brandom, Robert. 1994. *Making it explicit*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Brandom, Robert. 2000. *Articulating reasons*: *An introduction to inferentialism.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Copi, Irving. M. 1972. *Introduction to logic,* 4th e. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

Copi, Irving. M. 1982. *Introduction to logic*, 6th e. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

Copi, Irving.M. 1986. *Informal logic*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

Copi, Irving. M., and Kenneth Burgess-Jackson. 1996. *Informal logic*, 3rd e. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

Eemeren, Frans H. van *et. al.* 2014, eds. *Handbook of argumentation theory*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Gilbert, Michael. 2014. *Arguing with People*. Peterborough: Broadview Press.

Govier, Trudy. 1997. *A practical study of argument*. 4th e. Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Govier, Trudy. 1998. Arguing forever? Or: two tiers of argument appraisal. In *Argumentation & Rhetoric*, eds. Hans V. Hansen, et. al. 14 pages. St. Catharines: OSSA. CD rom.

Govier, Trudy. 1999. *The philosophy of argument*. Newport News, Virginia: Vale Press.

Govier, Trudy, and L. Ayers. 2012. Logic and parables: Do these narratives provide arguments? *Informal Logic* 32: 161-189.

Groarke, Leo. 2011. Informal logic. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/logic-informal/>. Accessed 4 November 2014.

Hitchcock, David. 2006. Informal logic and the concept of argument. In *Philosophy of logic*, ed. Dale Jacquette. Volume 5 of *Handbook of the philosophy of science*, eds. Dov M. Gabbay, Paul Thagard and John Woods. 101-129. Elsevier.

Johnson, Ralph H. 2014/1996. *The rise of informal logic: essays on argumentation, critical thinking, reasoning and politics*. Windsor, Ontario: Windsor Studies in Argumentation.

Johnson, Ralph H. 2000. *Manifest rationality: A pragmatic theory of argument*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates.

Johnson, Ralph H., and J. Anthony Blair. 1977/1993. *Logical self-defense*. 1st e/3rd e. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

Johnson, Ralph H., and J. Anthony Blair. 1980. The recent development of informal logic. In *Informal logic: The first international symposium*, eds. Ralph Johnson and J. Anthony Blair. 3-28. Pt. Reyes, CA: Edgepress.

Johnson, Ralph H., and J. Anthony Blair. 1987. The current state of informal logic. *Informal Logic* 9: 147-151.

O'Keefe, Daniel. 1977. Two concepts of argument. *JAFA: Journal of the American Forensic Association* 13: 121-128.

Olmos, Paula 2017. (Ed.) *Narration as argument*. Springer.

Perelman, Chaim. 1989. The new rhetoric and the rhetoricians: Remembrances and comments. In *The new rhetoric of Chaim Perelman: Statement and response*, ed. Ray D. Dearin. New York: University Press of America.

Perelman, Chaim, and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca. 1969. *The new rhetoric: A treatise on argumentation*, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Pinto, Robert C. 2001. *Argument, inference and dialectic: Collected papers on informal logic with an introduction by Hans V. Hansen*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Tindale, Christopher W. 1999. *Acts of Arguing: A Rhetorical Model of Argumentation*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Tindale, Christopher W. 2002. A concept divided: Ralph Johnson's definition of argument. *Argumentation* 16: 299-309.

Tindale, Christopher W. 2004. *Rhetorical argumentation.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Tindale, Christopher W. 2017. Narratives and the concept of argument, in P. Olmos (Ed.) *Narration as Argument*. Springer: 11-30.

Toulmin, Stephen. 1958. *The uses of argument*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Trump, Donald. 2017. Speech to the Middle East. <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/the-administration/334454-full-speech-president-donald-trump-address-in-saudi>. Accessed November 24, 2017.

Walton, Douglas. 2006. *Fundamentals of critical argumentation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Walton, Douglas, and Chris Reed, and Fabrizio Macagno. 2008. *Argumentation schemes*. Cambridge university Press.

Zhou, Raymond. 2014. Education and the purpose of philanthropy. *China Daily*. <http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/2014-08/02/content_18236987.htm>. Visited 4 November 4 2014.