

# The Coherence of Hamblin's *Fallacies*

**RALPH H. JOHNSON**

*Senior Research Fellow*

*Centre for Research in Reasoning, Argumentation and Rhetoric*

*University of Windsor*

*Windsor, ON*

*N9B 3P4*

*johnsoa@uwindsor.ca*

**Abstract:** Hamblin's *Fallacies* remains one of the crucial documents in the development of informal logic and argumentation theory. His critique of traditional approaches to the fallacies (what he dubbed "The Standard Treatment") helped to revitalize the study of fallacies. Recently I had occasion to reread *Fallacies* and came to the conclusion that some of my earlier criticisms (1990a, 1990b) had missed the real force of what was going on there, that I and others have perhaps not fully appreciated what Hamblin is up to. In this paper, I plan to revisit *Fallacies* and make manifest its coherence.

**Résumé:** Le livre *Fallacies* de Hamblin reste l'un des documents cruciaux dans le développement de la logique non formelle et de la théorie de l'argumentation. Sa critique des approches traditionnelles aux sophismes (ce qu'il a nommées «le traitement standard») a aidé à revitaliser l'étude des sophismes. Récemment, j'ai eu l'occasion de relire *Fallacies* et je suis venu à la conclusion que certaines de mes critiques antérieures (1990a, 1990b) avaient manqué la force réelle de ce qui se passait dans cette œuvre, et que moi et d'autres n'avaient peut-être pas pleinement apprécié ce que Hamblin accomplissait. Dans cet article, j'ai revois *Fallacies* et rends manifeste sa cohérence.

**Keywords:** dialectic, equivocation, Hamblin, logic

## 1. Introduction

Hamblin's *Fallacies* remains one of the seminal documents in the development of informal logic and contemporary argumentation theory. Discussion of that vital work tended at first to centre on his critique of fallacies in Chapter 1, what he called "The Standard Treatment." Later there was also widespread discussion of his proposal (in Chapter 7) that dialectical criteria (based on acceptance) are better suited to "the logic of practice" than are either alethic or epistemic criteria. Indeed, Hamblin's arguments for dialectical criteria have been a major influence on the issue of premise-adequacy. Hamblin's investigation of Formal Dialectic presented in Chapter 8 has also captured a lot of atten-

tion. However, the last chapter on Equivocation<sup>1</sup> has not been much discussed.<sup>2</sup>

The question that occurs to me is: Why does the path that begin with a critique of “The Standard Treatment” in Chapter 1 end up with a treatment of Equivocation in Chapter 9? The “logic,” as it were, of this plan of development has not been made clear enough by Hamblin. The result is that the fundamental coherence of *Fallacies* is not as evident as it might be.

In this paper, I want to answer the questions posed above, and hope to make clear the fundamental coherence of *Fallacies*. I begin in Section 2 by tracing the path through *Fallacies*. When we have seen the path, the purpose and the rationale become clearer. That will be the focus of Section 3: The Real Purpose of *Fallacies*. In Section 4, I will then be in a position to discuss what I call “the fundamental coherence” of *Fallacies*.

## 2. The path through *Fallacies*

It seems to me that Hamblin’s exposition somewhat obscures what he is up to in *Fallacies*. It begins, as is well-known, with the critique of what he calls “The Standard Treatment” of fallacies in logic textbooks. Hamblin then proceeds to trace the history of the treatment of fallacies in the next four chapters, though to what purpose, it is not entirely clear. In Chapter 6, he turns from a historical account of fallacies to an “analytical logical one.” Then, in Chapter 7, the focus seems to shift to the concept of argument. Why the apparent shift? Chapter 8 provides a treatment of what Hamblin calls “Formal Dialectic”; why, the reader may ask, is that inquiry being introduced here? Chapter 9 deals with Equivocation, and the reader looking at the Table of Contents may wonder just why Hamblin chose to end his book in this way. Why is Equivocation so important to the project?

These and other questions suggest that the path through *Fallacies* is not as clear as it might be. Yet I believe there is a definite plan at work, that Hamblin could have done more to guide his reader through the book. So my next step will be to retrace the voyage Hamblin takes the reader on in *Fallacies*.

Hamblin begins in Chapter 1 by discussing what he calls “The Standard Treatment” of fallacies in textbooks. This chapter introduces his subject—fallacies—and signals part of his project: to provide a critique of the treatment given by logicians, principally in logic textbooks. In Chapter 2, “Aristotle’s List,”

---

<sup>1</sup> I shall follow Hamblin’s practice and capitalize this term.

<sup>2</sup> See J. Mackenzie 1988, 2007; and L. Powers 1995.

Hamblin goes back to the Aristotelian treatment of fallacies. Why? Because the tradition described is, he thinks, so incoherent that, Hamblin says, we have every reason to look for enlightenment at its historical source. In Chapter 3, "The Aristotelian Tradition," Hamblin traces post-Aristotelian developments and then turns to the much more important contributions of the Middle Ages (89) where much emphasis is placed on the work of William of Sherwood (115ff). In Chapter 4: "Arguments 'Ad'," Hamblin discusses developments that led to the addition of the "Ad" fallacies. The authors discussed in this Chapter include Mill, Bentham, Whately, Schopenhauer, DeMorgan and Sidgwick. On p.135, he writes: "Whatever the explanation, although the medieval logical synthesis continued to be at the base of university studies, it clearly became progressively rigid and fleshless in the absence of new stimulus." The chapter ends abruptly, with no summary or conclusion.

In Chapter 5, "The Indian Tradition," Hamblin reviews that tradition and finds its running "curiously parallel" (177) to the Western tradition. In Chapter 6 he turns from his historical account of fallacies to an "analytical logical account" (290). He begins the chapter by stating: "The most remarkable feature of the history of the study of fallacies is its continuity. [...] The lesson of this [the enduringness of tradition] must be that there is something of importance in it" (190). To the question whether it is possible to give a general synoptic account of the traditional fallacy-material in formal terms," Hamblin answers: "No" (205).

At this point in the book, then, Hamblin thinks he has shown that there has not been a successful treatment of the fallacies; logic textbooks have failed (Ch1); other traditions fare no better (Chs2-5) and formal logic cannot do it (Ch6). Where then can we turn? Hamblin says "we must postpone this discussion [...] until we have built some groundwork for it" (223).

We come then to Chapter 7, "The Concept of Argument." The reader may wonder: "What accounts for this shift of focus to the concept of argument?" From the comments above, we may infer that the turn toward the concept of argument is meant to provide some of that groundwork, though exactly how it will do so has not been made clear. Hamblin notes as well that the concept of argument is part of the idea of a fallacious argument; i.e., "an argument that *seems to be* valid but *is not* so" (12),<sup>3</sup> and that "the concept of an argument is quite basic to Logic but seldom examined" (224).<sup>4</sup> Hamblin calls attention to three prob-

<sup>3</sup> Hansen (2002) argues that this is not the traditional view of fallacy. However, it should be noted that Hamblin was not himself endorsing this definition.

<sup>4</sup> We must remember that this was published in 1970, and we might wonder where someone like Hamblin might have looked to find the concept of argu-

lems that, he believes, require us to take a close look at the concept of argument. First, there is the problem of nailing a fallacy. Second, he asks us to “consider the problems surrounding argument on the fringe of Formal Logic: inductive arguments, arguments from authority” (225). Third is the assertion by Mill that every valid argument is question-begging. He then adds: “I think that, if we give an *accurate account of what an argument is*, we completely dispose of this third problem, and go a long way towards drawing the sting from the other two” (228, emphasis added), though one may well wonder just how the concept of argument holds the key to the solution of these problems. Hamblin does not here mention the obvious reason; that is, that the very idea of fallacy is dependent on the idea of argument. In any event, Hamblin thinks that an accurate account of argument will help solve these problems that have emerged in the historical review.

After some pages of reflection on the idea of argument, Hamblin brings this line of investigation to a rather abrupt halt, saying: “There is little to be gained by making a frontal account on the question of what an argument *is*.” (231). This may seem a trifle odd, given that he had arrived at what seems to be an important insight—that what he calls “the theory of arguments” has to be distinguished from Formal Logic (231).<sup>5</sup> Instead, Hamblin says, we should discuss how arguments are appraised and evaluated. Given that Hamblin refers to the ideas of the later Wittgenstein (and thought of himself as a Wittgensteinian, see my 2011), Hamblin might here by following the strategy used by Wittgenstein when he was wrestling with the problem of meaning. In *The Blue Book*, Wittgenstein asks: “What is the meaning of a word?” He then says: “Let us attack this question by asking, first, what is an explanation of the meaning of a word [...]. Roughly: ‘let’s ask what the explanation of meaning is, for whatever that explains will be the meaning’” (Wittgenstein, 1958, 1). In a similar vein, one might suggest that Hamblin thought that looking at how an argument is evaluated would help clarify what an argument is.

In Chapter 8, “Formal Dialectic,” Hamblin shows his hand and introduces (Formal) Dialectic<sup>6</sup> as his choice of the best set-

---

ment carefully examined. I cannot think of a source. Neither Informal Logic nor Argumentation Theory had yet come into its own.

<sup>5</sup> Hamblin here refers to a “theory of arguments” but does not develop the idea behind this phrase: “All this sets the theory of *arguments* apart from Formal Logic and gives it an additional dimension” (p. 231). It seems to me that much of his work here in Chapter 7 falls under just such an inquiry. See my 2000, pp. 37-48.

<sup>6</sup> I use the parenthesis here because Hamblin sometimes writes “Formal Dialectic,” sometimes “Dialectic.”

ting for the inquiry into fallacies. To give an account of the fallacies, one must deal not with  $p$ 's and  $q$ 's of Formal Logic, but with actual statements, so one must have some account of meaning. To that end Hamblin proposes, following, he says, Wittgenstein, to develop a dialectical meaning criterion.

Any system of dialectic must be able to explicate Equivocation—which occurs when a word shifts its meaning in a given context. Hamblin explores the rudiments of a two-language model, which seeks to explain the fallacy of equivocation in terms of there being two distinct languages. Hamblin rules out that approach cannot work because it cannot illuminate the phenomenon of multiple meaning. On p. 223, he indicates where he is heading:

We shall later be led to analyze Equivocation... very differently from this. The nominalism of Carnap finds its ultimate expression not in the erection of a distinction between words and their meanings, but rather in some dissolution of the concept of meaning into that of systematic use; and, if 'meaning' goes, 'equivocation', which is variability of meaning, will have to go too...<sup>7</sup>

Hamblin says that this discussion must be postponed until the proper groundwork has been laid. That groundwork is the dialectical meaning criterion fleshed out in Chapter 8.

The subject of Chapter 9 is Equivocation, perhaps a puzzling choice at first glance, and something of a problem for the task of showing the coherence of *Fallacies*. It begins by asking a question, which is natural given the developments in Chapter 8: "Where do dialectical rules derive their authority [...]?" What is the source of the rules for Formal Dialectic? The problem for the reader is that there is no apparent link between this question and the title of the chapter, a matter I take up in the next section.

---

<sup>7</sup> Hamblin here seems to want to defend a distinction between words and their meanings, and attributes to Carnap the dissolution of meaning into systematic use. The irony here is that Hamblin seems to think his views about meaning are Wittgensteinian; but Wittgenstein is explicitly skeptical of the distinction between words and their meaning: see *PI*, # 120 (Wittgenstein, 1953). And it might also be said that Wittgenstein—like Carnap, at least Hamblin's version of him—can be described as wanting to dissolve meaning into [systematic] use. See *PI*, # 43 (Wittgenstein, 1953) and also the famous directive attributed to him by Wisdom and others: "Don't ask for meaning; ask for use."

### 3. The real purpose of *Fallacies*: The revival of dialectic

Hamblin's purpose(s) in *Fallacies* are at once critical and constructive. He is critical of the logical approach to the study of fallacy but the critical purpose eventually gives way to his proposal of an alternative approach through what he calls Dialectic which, in Hamblin's view, is the field in which the study of fallacies is properly located. Hints have been dropped along the way, but the picture only really becomes clear in Chapter 7 where Hamblin argues for dialectical criteria (based on acceptance) in the evaluation of argument; and in Chapter 8 where a system of Formal Dialectic is offered (as contrast to Formal Logic).

This claim raises two very important questions: First, what does Hamblin understand by Dialectic? And, second, what does Hamblin understand by Logic? We begin with the latter, for only when we understand his views about Logic (3.1) will we understand why he thinks Dialectic is the proper location for the study of fallacy, which will be discussed below in 3.2. In Section 3.3, I provide my account for the choice of Equivocation as the topic of the last Chapter, making plain the connection between Dialectic and Equivocation.

#### 3.1 Hamblin's conception of (Formal) Logic

In Chapter 6, Hamblin writes: "...there is much in Logic that has not changed since Aristotle" (191-92) and proceeds to set forth a series of propositions numbered (1) through (7) which he refers to as "an impressively long list of seldom-questioned presuppositions [of Modern Formal Logic]" (192). His conception of Formal Logic seems to be implicit in these presuppositions. According to Hamblin:

- (1) Logic is conceived as having rules expressible in schemata, involving variables, whose logical properties are independent of what is substituted;
- (2) Logic produces truths, or rules, which are common to all other disciplines, and hence of a different order from [...] those of other disciplines;
- (3) the logical unit is the proposition, and its leading logical property is its truth-value [...], whence it is associated with the concepts of negation, of contradiction and 'excluded middle';
- (4) there is a primary concern with rules of deduction (or inference, or implication) [...]; [which are] essentially reflexive, non-symmetrical, and transitive;

- (5) proof is conceived as a kind of deduction, [as] knock-down [argument];
- (6) speaking generally, the theory [Logic] is exclusive in the sense that reasoning processes of other kinds—inductive, extrinsic, emotive—are accorded a lower status;
- (7) the theory [Formal Logic] is impersonal and context-free.  
(192)

Propositions (1)–(3) are fairly straightforward and conventional. But the other four contain important indicators of Hamblin's reasons for being skeptical about the power of Logic (as he understands it) to provide an illuminating treatment of fallacies. Proposition 4 makes clear that this logic is "deductive." Exactly what this problematic term means is not spelled out by Hamblin, though we may infer a close relationship between deduction and proof from something he says in Chapter 7 where he writes:

While we are berating philosophers for neglect of non-alethic criteria of argument we should take time off to accord special dispraise to the modern formal logician [...]. His conception of argument is well illustrated by the formal concept of *proof*. [...] Formal proofs [...] have the virtue of precision but it is totally misleading to take such a proof as a model of rational argument.  
(248)

Proposition (5) is associated with the idea of an argument's being "knock-down"—a point that looms large in Chapter 7, where Hamblin is presenting an alternative approach to argument. Proposition (6) registers the commitment to deductivism—the view that deductive reasoning is the best, and all other forms—e.g. inductive reasoning—are of lesser status. Hamblin opposes this view, as his statement above about it being "totally misleading to take such a proof as the model of rational argument" makes clear. Proposition (7) is that formal logic is impersonal and context-free, whereas Hamblin believes that the study of fallacy requires a dialogical treatment that is context-sensitive.

We can extrapolate from these propositions to the following view about the nature of Formal Logic. First, Formal Logic is deductive in nature; it is the study of the rules of deduction, whereby one proposition follows from some other(s). It is a formal science; thus it is abstract (without content), universal (applying to all inquiries) and impersonal. By contrast, Dialectic, will be marked by opposing features: it will be non-deductive, situated, personal; viz., dialogical.

To complete the account, we need to be clearer on how Hamblin understands "formal." Here is an important text:

... some modern books [sc. logic textbooks] even refer to a large class of them [sc. Fallacies] specifically as ‘Informal Fallacies’ [The reference here is to Copi *Introduction to Logic* Chapter 3.] The contrast of ‘informal’ with ‘formal’ suggests the contrast of lounge-suit with dress uniform, and this was never the burden of the older ‘formal’–‘material’ dichotomy ... (205).

This passage raises two questions. First, exactly what is meant by ‘formal’ here? This is no simple matter, since there are many ways in which the term ‘formal’ can be taken.<sup>8</sup> But Hamblin seems to think of it in the traditional way, as opposed to material; formal logic has to do with the structure, the inferential link between premises and conclusion; material logic with the content—the premises. Second, Hamblin has noted what appears to be a shift in that at some point the traditional “formal vs. material” dichotomy was replaced by the “formal vs. informal” one.<sup>9</sup>

Hamblin’s conception of Formal Logic, as I have laid it out, helps to make clear why he regards it as ill-suited to the task of providing an adequate treatment of the fallacies:

Our first question, then, is whether any general or synoptic formal theory of fallacy is possible. We shall need to be a little bit clearer about what the word ‘formal’ means.<sup>10</sup> In particular, it is not at all clear what a ‘formal fallacy’ is. This is partly because it is not clear whether the rules of Formal Logic are supposed actually to declare certain arguments invalid, or merely to declare certain ones as valid and leave the rest open; but the trouble runs deeper and is concerned with the relationships of formal languages or canonical forms to the natural languages in which Logic must be put to practical use. (193)

In pointing to these limitations of Formal Logic, Hamblin was poised to take a step that he did not take: and that would be to recognize that the study of fallacies, because it was situated in natural language, required a different kind of Logic, one not committed to the deductivism and formalism of Formal Logic; viz. an Informal Logic. However, he opts to pursue Dialectic as the appropriate inquiry.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> See Barth & Krabbe (1982), Johnson & Blair (1991), and Krabbe (2011) for further discussion of how ‘formal’ is to be understood.

<sup>9</sup> An interesting question which I cannot deal with here is: When and why did that shift occur?

<sup>10</sup> As far as I can tell Hamblin does not follow up on this important point.

<sup>11</sup> Still his thinking on these matters raises the question: What might Hamblin have thought about Informal Logic?



### 3.2 Hamblin's conception of Dialectic

In the Index, Dialectic is characterized as the “study of dialogue” (320). “Let us start,” says Hamblin, “with the concept of a *dialectical system*,” which is essentially a “regulated dialogue:” “We suppose that we have a number of participants—in the simplest case, just two—to a debate, discussion or conversation and that they speak in turn in accordance with a set of rules or conventions” (255). The study of such systems may be pursued either *formally*—and we have some examples of that in Chapter 8—or descriptively. Hamblin writes:

The overriding task for Formal Dialectic will be to generate and justify the rules that will govern the dialogue. Hamblin leans heavily on what he takes to be a Wittgensteinian view: “If we want to lay bare the foundations of Dialectic we should give the dialectical rules themselves a chance to determine what is a statement, what a question, and so on. This general idea is familiar enough from Wittgenstein” (285).

Another feature that comes to the fore in his conception of Formal Dialectic is that of a presumption:

It is of some interest that the phenomenon of the complex question also receives a mention in connection with recent work on the formal logic of questions, where it is essential to recognize that questions may—and, in fact, usually do—involve presumptions and that there are various differently appropriate kinds of answer in such cases. (40)

To summarize, then: Dialectic is a systematic study of dialogue conducted according to rules the participants agree to. A principal task for Dialectic is to develop and justify these rules which must have an essential reference to the criteria for determining meaningful expressions. This conception allows Hamblin to claim that Dialectic is “the theory of the use of language in practical situations” (40).

### 3.3 Why Dialectic is the proper home for the study of fallacy

Hamblin's critique of the way in which formal logic treats the fallacies has revealed the shortcomings of “The Standard Treatment” (Ch1) and led to criticisms of Formal Logic along the way, like this one: “There is a case to be argued, even in modern times, on behalf of studies like Dialectic and Rhetoric against a Logic, which is pursued in disregard of the context of its use.

Logic is an abstraction of features of flesh-and-blood reasoning [...]” (69). The formal approach of logic abstracts from the realities of flesh and blood reasoning, from the concrete situation in which arguers exchange views about contentious matters. This is the vantage point from which fallacies can best be studied, and why Dialectic is the true home for this inquiry, as Hamblin indicates when he says: “Work of this kind is a contribution to the theory of the use of language in practical situations: what Carnap calls Pragmatics and what we shall find reason to call Dialectic. It may be in this field that the discussions surrounding some of these so-called Fallacies find their true modern home” (40).

### 3.4 *Dialectic and Equivocation*

Why did Hamblin choose Equivocation as the topic for his last Chapter? Two possible reasons come to mind. First, Equivocation (like with Begging the Question) is a fallacy that clearly outruns Formal Logic. Formal Logic does not prohibit *begging the question*; any argument that begs the question is, *eo ipso*, a valid argument. Second, arguments are inescapably conveyers of meaning, so any attempt to diagnose a linguistic fallacy will depend on an account of meaning. In formulating the rules for Dialectic, meaning constancy [that terms retain their meaning throughout a given contact of argument] is important, so Equivocation, which is an obvious threat to it, is a natural focal point. Equivocation occurs when a term undergoes a shift in meaning; so meaning constancy has been violated.

On page 287, Hamblin poses the question that will frame his efforts over the next pages: “What are the external criteria of meaning constancy?”<sup>12</sup> Hamblin now offers a series of reflections [A)-(D), pp.287-294] that bear on the matter of how we are determine meaning and meaning constancy.<sup>13</sup>

The first proposal, (A), pp. 287-89, suggests the following criterion: what a speaker means is what he says he means. Hamblin tests this against three objections which can be met. However, this proposal won’t work because, Hamblin says, sometimes a person does not know what he means, or knows but cannot give a satisfactory account of what he means.

The second proposal, (B), pp. 289-93, is that a speaker’s meaning can be garnered from his use of words in zero-order contexts. A zero-order context is one in which the speaker uses

---

<sup>12</sup> The task is variously described as the development of a dialectical meaning criterion, or a criterion of meaning constancy

<sup>13</sup> Though Hamblin never informs us what these capital letters designate, it seems clear that they itemize various attempts to formulate a method for determining meaning/meaning constancy.

the term in a statement. Thus instead of saying, "by 'paradigm,' I mean such and such" (which approach to meaning has just been set aside), the speaker says "Aristotle's *Physics* is a paradigm," [giving an example]. The problem with this proposal is that for a given equivocating speaker "it is not clear [...] that there is or need to be any feature of *his own* zero-order utterances that betrays or indicates this Equivocation," (292). So Hamblin sets aside this proposal.

A third proposal, (C), pp. 293-94, is that we consider cases where someone is deceived by Equivocation (some sort of meaning criterion would be implicit here); and that leads Hamblin to a consideration of a dialectical theory of truth and falsity. But Hamblin rules this approach out largely because of the problems earlier discussed when considering alethic criteria (pp.236-244).

The fourth proposal (D), pp. 294-95, is that whatever theory of meaning constancy we adopt, it must explain a certain asymmetry between "Yes" and "No" answers to questions of meaning constancy. Hamblin is thus led to consider the suggestion on p.294 that there is a *presumption of meaning constancy*.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, then, Hamblin solves the problem of meaning constancy by invoking a *presumption* of meaning constancy and urging that we handle problems of meaning, meaning constancy and equivocation by means of a procedural (dialogical) approach.

Let us return, then, to the question: Why the focus on Equivocation in the last chapter? My answer is that although the chapter is titled "Equivocation," this chapter is really Hamblin's attempt to flesh out the idea of a dialectical meaning criterion that emerged in Chapter 8. Some such criterion is a requirement for any attempt to develop a Dialectic of the Fallacies. By the end of the chapter, he has worked up what he regards as a promising position regarding meaning constancy. The task begun in Chapter 8 has here reached its culmination: Hamblin has, at the very least, made a *prima facie* case for the proposition that Dialectic is the proper home for the study of Fallacy.

#### 4. Conclusion: The fundamental coherence of *Fallacies*

In spite of a certain appearance to the contrary, *Fallacies* does possess a fundamental coherence that becomes clear once one understands the *purpose* behind this project. It was undertaken not merely to critique "The Standard Treatment" and the logi-

---

<sup>14</sup>This view is in line with the idea that Dialectic will have many presumptions (295).

cians who developed it, but rather to show that the proper locus for the study of fallacy is Dialectic—a discipline with a venerable history which, Hamblin seems to think, has been overshadowed by the development of Formal Logic.

Hamblin begins his inquiry with his critique of “The Standard Treatment” and continues by tracing historically the logical tradition of inquiry into fallacy where the default assumption is that logic is the proper home. But by the end of Chapter 6, Hamblin has exposed the flaw in that reasoning, thereby opening the door to the answer he wishes to give. Chapter 7 focuses on argument—which must be part of the foundation for any rigorous treatment of fallacy—and his point is that the logician’s approach cannot illuminate fallacy, and needs to be replaced by a dialectical approach. Chapter 8 enlarges the scope of Dialectic to show what is possible in this type of inquiry. Chapter 9 deals with perhaps the most complex informal fallacy—Equivocation, and shows how a meaning criterion can be developed for Dialectic. There is reason to think that Dialectic appropriately developed can provide a successful treatment of the fallacies that Logic cannot offer.

The purpose of this paper has been expository rather than critical. There are many places where one might want to take exception, or raise objections, to Hamblin’s project, or to his reasoning. For example, I am not at all sure that Hamblin is correct in claiming a Wittgensteinian line of justification for his dialectical theory of meaning.<sup>15</sup> Further it seems to me that many of his reflections grow out of an undeveloped theory of arguments. But such criticisms seem to me best undertaken only after one has understood the coherence of the project presented in *Fallacies*—which is the task I have undertaken in this paper.

**Acknowledgements:** The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Michael Baumtrog (Bommer) and is especially grateful to E.C.W.Krabbe for his careful editorial work and helpful suggestions.

## References

- Barth, E.M. & Krabbe, E.C.W. (1982). *From Axiom to Dialogue: A Philosophical Study of Logics and Argumentation*. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter.
- Hamblin, C.L. (1970). *Fallacies*. London: Methuen.

---

<sup>15</sup> See the author’s “Wittgenstein’s Influence on Hamblin’s Concept of ‘Dialectical,’” forthcoming.

- Hansen, H.V. (2002). The Straw Thing of Fallacy Theory: The Standard Definition of 'Fallacy'. *Argumentation* 16(2): 133-155.
- Johnson, R.H. (1990a). Hamblin on The Standard Treatment. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 23(3): 153-167.
- Johnson, R.H. (1990b). Acceptance is Not Enough: A Critique of Hamblin. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 23(4): 271-287.
- Johnson, R.H. (2000). *Manifest Rationality: A Pragmatic Theory of Argument*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Johnson, R.H. (2009). Some Reflections on the Informal Logic Initiative. *Studies in Logic, Grammar and Rhetoric*, 16(2): 17-46.
- Johnson, R.H. (2011). Wittgenstein's Influence on Hamblin's Concept of 'Dialectical'. Forthcoming.
- Johnson, R.H. (2011). Informal Logic and Deductivism. *Studies in Logic*. Forthcoming.
- Johnson, R.H. and J.A. Blair. (1991) Contexts of Informal Reasoning: Commentary. In J.F. Voss, D.N. Perkins & J.N. Segal (Eds.), *Informal Reasoning and Education*, pp. 131-50. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Krabbe, E.C.W. (2011). Formals and Ties: Connecting Argumentation Studies with Formal Disciplines. Forthcoming.
- Mackenzie, J. (1988). Distinguo: The Response to Equivocation. *Argumentation* 2(4): 465-482.
- Mackenzie, J. (2007). Equivocation as a Point of Order. *Argumentation* 23(3): 223-231.
- Powers, L. (1995). The One Fallacy Theory. *Informal Logic*, 17(2): 303-314.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical Investigations*. New York: The MacMillan Company.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1958) "The Blue Book" in *The Blue and Brown Books*. New York: Harper and Row.