Editor's Introduction

It would be difficult to overstate Douglas Walton's contributions to the fields of informal logic and argumentation theory. Walton is certainly its most voluminous contributor; his work has gained worldwide recognition, and he has become one of the discipline's leading ambassadors demonstrating its value for, and forging new collaborative relationships in, fields such as communication theory, artificial intelligence, and law.

The Editors of *Informal Logic* conceived of this Special Issue as an occasion to open a number of dialogues addressing Walton's work, and to assemble some the critical responses that it rightly deserves. We begin this Introduction with a brief overview of Walton's work to orient readers who may be less familiar with it, followed by synopses of the papers appearing in the issue.

Walton's work in argumentation and informal logic began in the mid-1970s with a collaboration with John Woods in which they revived the study of informal fallacies through a series of case studies, which in turn led to a re-examination of fallacy theory itself. The Woods-Walton approach, as it has come to be known, has conclusively established that fallaciousness is not merely a matter of an argument's form or structure. Patterns of argument standardly identified as fallacious can be used in non-fallacious ways in everyday argumentation. Consequently the analysis and evaluation of supposed fallacies is not a straightforward matter of considering apparent argument type, but also involves considering contextual features of the argumentation itself, understood as a rational human activity.

From this early collaboration, Walton proceeded to develop a dialogic approach to the study of everyday argumentation which he eventually christened the "New Dialectic." The New Dialectic has several identifiable characteristics, and promises a variety of new tools for the analysis and evaluation of argument. First, an argument is conceived as the product of a linguistic interaction between individual arguers, the basic form of which is that of a dialogue. There are a number of different dialogue-types (a standard list includes persuasion, inquiry, negotiation, information-seeking, deliberation, and eristic), each of which is characterized by its initial situation, the individual goals of the participants, and the goal of the dialogue itself (understood as a shared goal of its participants). And, the reasoning involved in everyday argumentation is conceived of as predominately presumptive rather than deductive or probabilistic. Inherently then, arguments have a dialectical rather than a monolectical structure, involve defeasible rather than deductive reasoning, and are used for human rather than abstract purposes. As a result, the standard tools of logic are unsuitable for the study of everyday argument. In their place, Walton's New Dialectic provides a variety of alternative tools for the analysis and evaluation of argument. To accommodate the dialogic nature of argument, argument norms are broadly conceived as specifying moves in a dialogue that are either permissible or impermissible. Further, different moves are permissible, depending on the type

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of dialogue one is engaged in; so the goal of the dialogue contributes to the determination of argument norms. To accommodate the presumptive nature of everyday argument, Walton sought to identify a number of schematic-types of argument representing commonplace patterns of defeasible reasoning. Accompanying each scheme is a set of critical questions which may be employed by an interlocutor in the evaluation of arguments of the relevant type. Finally, the standard of acceptability is not understood as establishing conclusive proof, but is rather explained as establishing a presumption in favor of a conclusion by discharging a burden of proof that is itself determined relative to the context and purposes of the argumentative activity.

With these tools in hand, Walton has sought to provide dialectically-based answers to many of the typical issues of argument analysis and evaluation. For example, the structure of arguments is explained dialogically, where disputing parties jointly interact to shape the course of argumentation. The goodness of arguments is judged dialectically according to whether the reasons offered meet standards appropriate to the type of dialogue and its situational context, and by how well those reasons stand up to the objections offered by a dialogic interlocutor. Relevance too is explained dialogically according to whether a premise can occur as one of a series of arguments which can be "chained forward" to the ultimate conclusion at issue. Finally, fallacies are explained as illicit shifts from one type of dialogue to another that result in a derailing of the initial dialogue.

All the while, Walton has continued his investigations into the informal fallacies and specific patters of defeasible argument, providing book-length studies of many supposedly fallacious argument types (e.g., begging the question (1991), slippery slope arguments (1992), arguments from ignorance (1996), appeal to pity (1997), appeal to popular opinion (1999), and appeal to fear (2000)) as well as many common types of reasoning used in argument (e.g., practical reasoning (1990), plausible arguments (1992), appeal to expert opinion (1997), and abductive arguments (2004)).

Most recently, Walton has reached outside of the community of informal logicians and argumentation theorists to show how recent work in these fields can make substantial contributions in such practical and applied disciplines as legal reasoning and argument, as well as in such formal and abstract disciplines as artificial intelligence. At the same time, Walton's collaborative partnerships with some of the most established and prominent researchers in these fields have brought a wealth of new expertise and theoretical resources to the study of argumentation.

In this issue, we revisit some of the most traditional and pressing topics of informal logic including the structure of arguments, Aristotle's theory of the dialectic, the nature of practical reasoning, functional approaches to the study of argument, and the theory of fallacies.

In the first paper of the collection, Geoff Goddu critiques the account of linked and convergent arguments Walton provides in *Argument Structure: A Pragmatic Theory* (1996). Goddu expands on his previous work arguing that a theoretically

sound account of the linked/convergent distinction is not forthcoming and that even if it were it would not be useful in evaluating arguments. Here Goddu begins by rejecting the idea that the linked/convergent distinction plays a role in argument identification. He proceeds to consider Walton's proto-theory for distinguishing linked and convergent arguments, which draws on four factors: structural, textual, and contextual evidence, and the degree of support test understood from the perspective of a critic trying to determine which premises need to be refuted. While conceding that the first three factors are relevant, Goddu argues that they are not sufficient to determine argument structure and that the test Walton proposes as the final factor fails like its predecessors. In place of these tests, Goddu proposes a ten-step process for identifying and evaluating arguments which does not rely on the linked/convergent distinction.

From considerations about the micro-structure of individual arguments, the second paper addresses their macro-structure as types of dialogue. In their paper "About old and new dialectic" Erik Krabbe and Jan Albert van Laar compare and contrast Walton's New Dialectic with an Old Dialectic distilled from Aristotle's *Topics* and *Sophistical Refutations*. Working from Aristotle's four domains of argument (Didactic, Dialectical, Examination and Contentious) Krabbe and van Laar extrapolate four dialogue types which they map onto those of Walton's New Dialectic. They then compare the Old Dialectic with the New in terms of their respective explanations of fallacy, and their account of strategy. They conclude that, while there are no strong parallels, some features of the Old Dialectic do anticipate recent developments. For example, they note that while Aristotle's sophistical refutations do not translate well as illicit dialogue shifts, some instances of eristic arguing do anticipate Walton's account. Along the way, Krabbe and van Laar also observe a normative/empirical ambiguity inherent in Walton's dialogue types, a point that informs the criticisms of van Eemeren and Houtlosser in the next paper.

The following three papers raise challenges to some of the central tenets in Walton's New Dialectic: that dialogue-type plays an important role in determining fallaciousness, that argumentation is an activity with a purpose independent of those of its participants, and that practical reasoning has a presumptive inferential structure.

Frans van Eemeren and Peter Houtlosser's paper "The contextuality of fallacies" contrasts Walton's view of fallacies as illicit dialectical shifts to that provided by the Pragma-Dialectical approach. According to van Eemeren and Houtlosser, because the types of dialogue identified in the New Dialectic are ambiguous between normative structures representing argumentative ideals and empirical activity-types, whether the goal of some original dialogue has been subverted through a dialectical shift is insufficient to determine whether the shift-causing move is actually fallacious. By contrast, they claim, the Pragma-Dialectical model offers the normative ideal of the critical discussion, allowing fallacies to be dialectically defined as any move that violates one of the rules of the critical discussion.

A central tenet of Walton's New Dialectic is that there are categorically different types of argumentative dialogues which can be defined, at least partly, according to their different purposes. Jean Goodwin, in "Argument has no function," challenges the very idea that the activity of argumentation (or the various activity-types which make it up) have purposes that can be specified in general and *a priori*, and from which normative consequences emerge. Instead, Goodwin argues that *arguers* have purposes, but that *arguments* have no purposes separate from these. Further, she maintains that even if arguments could be said to have functions, these could not provide the source or foundation for any single set of evaluative norms. Instead of a functionalist approach to argument, Goodwin encourages us to a design approach whereby both the context of argument and argumentative norms are meted out during the argumentative process itself through the speech acts of individual arguers acting to achieve their goals.

In "Is practical reasoning presumptive?" Christian Kock challenges two elements he takes to be central in Walton's account of practical reasoning. First, Kock rejects the idea that practical reasoning is about ought-propositions, arguing instead that it is properly understood to be about actions or action-proposals. Furthermore, Kock rejects the account of practical reasoning as inferential where the presumptive acceptability of a claim is a bivalent property of it, and where challenge and evaluation occurs through raising critical questions. In place of this Kock offers an alternative account whereby acceptability and argument strength is a matter of degree, and the weight of reasons supporting a proposal must be weighed not only against reasons supporting competing proposals, but in relation to the goals of the actor as well.

In the last paper, Walton's original collaborator John Woods returns to the topic of the fallacies with a case study. Woods's paper "Lightening up on the *ad hominem*" raises new challenges to standard assumptions about the operation and fallaciousness of the *ad hominem*, and seeks to reveal its real argumentative function. From Woods's perspective, the most striking feature of the *ad hominem* is that it does not occasion the abandonment of the argumentative process as one might expect, but is rather a move made in an effort to continue dialogue as an attempt to solicit reassurance from the very party whose character is impugned. As a result, frequently the real argumentative function of the *ad hominem* is to articulate doubts about an interlocutor's *bona fides*, thereby signaling to an interlocutor the withdrawal of dialectical presumptions concerning her sincerity or competence, and giving her notice that she must now meet a higher standard of acceptability in order for the discussion to proceed. Woods contends that in viewing the *ad hominem* in this way theorists should not count it as a fallacy either on a logical model, as a failure of reasoning, or on a dialectical model, as a derailing of an argumentative dialogue.

We close the volume with a bibliography of Walton's published works (1971–2007) that is provided, with thanks to Professor Walton, as a resource for interested researchers and as an indication of his prolific contributions to informal logic and argumentation theory.

David M. Godden