

# The Arguers

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**Abstract:** I wish to argue in favor of a particular orientation, one expressed in Brockriede's remark that "arguments are not in statements but in people." While much has been gained from textual analyses, even more will accrue by additional attention to the arguers. I consider that textual materials are really only the artifacts of arguments. The actual arguing is done exclusively by people, either the argument producers or receivers, and never by words on a page. In fact, most of our textual interpretations are quietly founded on the assumption that the artifact is fully informative about what people think.

**Résumé:** Je veux soutenir une orientation exprimée dans une remarque de Brockriede que « les arguments ne sont pas dans des énoncés mais dans des personnes ». Malgré les bénéfices des analyses textuelles, on bénéficiera davantage d'une plus grande attention sur les personnes qui argumentent. Je considère le matériel textuel comme des objets façonnés par l'argumentation, mais celle-ci est façonnée exclusivement par des personnes qui produisent ou reçoivent des arguments, et jamais par des mots sur une page. En effet, la plupart de nos interprétations se fondent silencieusement sur la supposition que ces textes nous informent de la pensée des gens.

**Keywords:** arguers, arguing, informal logic, Pragma-dialectics, rhetoric, text

## 1. Introduction

Argumentation studies is dominated by four main academic orientations: informal logic, pragma-dialectics, rhetoric, and the communication specialization called argumentation. All four take an essentially textual view of arguments. Some scholars from these fields are insistent on seeing arguments as propositions, some consider them to be speech acts, and some regard them as literary compositions. Nearly everyone implicitly treats them as static texts.

I wish to argue in favor of a different orientation, one that takes to heart Brockriede's (1975, p. 179) remark that "arguments are not in statements but in people." While much has been gained from textual analyses, even more will accrue by additional attention to the arguers. When we encounter a structurally or morally awful argument, besides detailing its textual horror we should also be asking "who would say that?" and "who would be convinced by it?" When we find a vein of excellent arguments, we should wonder what kind of person is capable of such

fine arguing, and whether it will resonate with its audience. The pedagogical implications of this view are obvious, but the additional descriptive information about arguing will also deepen our community's grasp of its own topic.

My thesis follows from the perspective that textual materials are really only the artifacts of arguments. The actual arguing is done exclusively by people, the argument producers or receivers, and never by words on a page. In fact, most of our textual interpretations are quietly founded on the assumption that the artifact is fully informative about what people meant or understood.

To show what I mean, I will begin by displaying the textual orientations of our community, and then try to indicate what we miss by ignoring the human questions. After that, I will outline what we have already learned about arguers and what additional understandings we might wish to have.

## **2. The Transparent Text**

Though few are naive enough to say that texts fully express the arguers' meanings, contributors to our main traditions often write as though explicit arguments are transparent. Scholars often go beyond the text in their interpretive and theoretical efforts, but they treat these moves as small ones, as obvious inferences needing little justification. This faith in transparency is a rationalization of the methods we use in our investigations. Let me illustrate this in each of our four main orientations: informal logic, pragma-dialectics, rhetoric, and the communication specialization called argumentation.

### *2.1 Informal logic*

Informal logic, as we all know, began as an internal resistance to the discipline of formal logic. Scholars wanted to study arguments not as systems of sterile propositions but "in their native habitat of public discourse and persuasion" (Johnson and Blair 1980, p. 5). Ordinary discourse was contrasted to syllogisms (e.g., Toulmin 1958), and the basic aim of informal logic has been to generate methods for analysis of face-to-face conversation and day-to-day writing.

But even if the motivating impulse was to understand normal discourse as generated and understood by ordinary people, it proved hard to break away. Attention immediately went to fallacies, qualified conclusions, the argumentative import of pointed questions, and other pragmatic topics. Nevertheless some scholars still applied formalizations drawn from symbolic logic or linguistics to these matters. Examples of these approaches appeared in the first ISSA conference in 1986 (e.g., Brown 1987; Hirsch 1987; Peña 1987). Even though Toulmin (1958) argued that natural expressions should not be summarized in formal language, his was only one voice among many. Everyone was committed to studying informal arguments, but not everyone was willing to abandon formal methods.

Formalization, by its nature, requires the analyst to abstract content and form from natural messages. A person's talk is largely a product of his or her internal life, and formalization of the talk removes the person one step further away. People are not much involved in formally stated premises, and they are absolutely invisible when the premises are given symbolic summary. In practice, formalization de-personalizes arguments, and to a lesser degree, so does diagramming them (Willard 1976).

This willingness to de-personalize is evident in our literature. Walton's (1990) *Practical Reasoning* is a book I admire, particularly because he delivers on his subtitle, which asserts that such reasoning is "goal-driven, knowledge-based, action-guiding argumentation." This project required him to pay attention to people's motivations, cognitive stores, and behaviors. But when he went to refer to people, he insisted on calling them "argument agents," precisely because he did not want to exclude software from the domain of argument producers.

But let me take on a more challenging case, Johnson's (2000) *Manifest Rationality*. This, too, is a wonderful book, and it makes very substantial advances in how we should think about arguing. Johnson makes some very welcome remarks about people and the quotidian reality of face-to-face arguing (Johnson 2000, Ch. 6). But when all is said and done, the object of study is still only text:

Finally, then we come to the argument itself, best represented as the product (or the distillate) of the process. At a certain point in the process, the arguer distills elements from what has transpired in the process and encodes them in the form of an argument. It may be set forth in either speech or text. (p. 159)

This defining passage makes it easy for the reader to suppose that the arguer extracts everything important from the process, and that the encoding is straightforward and complete. But how, exactly, would one encode angry ambition or loving correction? Are these to be excluded from our studies?

Johnson (2003, p. 562) renews his commitment to the idea that arguments are text in a paper discussing various scholars' objections to his idea of a dialectical tier. He concludes that the criteria for the dialectical tier are accuracy, adequacy, and appropriateness. Accuracy means that one must engage the other's real position, by which Johnson clearly means that the other's text must be respected. Adequacy means that one's own text must satisfy the standards of relevance, sufficiency, and acceptability. All three of these refer to text as well, even if some of us have a different immediate understanding of "acceptability." The third criterion, appropriateness of objections, remains to be worked out. So arguments are texts, and the important information about them must be discovered in other texts.

Now this is not a critique, and I do not mean to be heard as saying that there is anything wrong with this thinking. Like many of you, I have learned a great deal from this approach. I merely intend to show that the informal logicians' impulse to

study how humans argue has been restrained by a commitment to text if not to formalization, and with a few exceptions (most notably Gilbert 1997), people are absent from the analyses.

How could this be? It is obvious to all these scholars that arguments come from people and are aimed at people, and that they take their pragmatic importance from people. These facts are avoided by the apparent assumption that texts are transparent: that they fully express whatever we need to know about arguers' motivations, assumptions, knowledge, reasoning, and feelings. Even work on unexpressed premises neglects to interrogate the arguer, and only tries to guess what must have been meant or what commitments the text entails (e.g., Govier 2001, p. 60). The disinclination to study the arguers means that whole bodies of argument are essentially unavailable to the techniques of informal logic: misunderstood and misspoken arguments, for example. And why a particular argument even appears in the first place cannot be realistically explored by imagining that one text somehow calls out another.

## 2.2 *Pragma-dialectics*

The commitment of pragma-dialectics to text is unmistakable, even though the Amsterdam school rejects the formalizations of logic and says quite clearly that its object of investigation is colloquial argumentation (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1983, p. 4). The project began with the announcement of four commitments (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1983, Ch. 1), and three of these would seem to be clearly oriented toward the study of people: the functionalization of argumentation, which reflects its purposive nature; the socialization of argumentation, which stresses its interactive character; and the dialectification of argumentation, which announces that arguers will be held to be best standards of reasoning. But all of these are colored and restricted by the first commitment, to the externalization of argumentation.

Externalization means that only text will be studied. Whatever personal and internal processes are involved in argumentative interaction, only the textual evidence of them is analyzed, and it is taken as a suitable synecdoche for what the arguers do. This leads to some odd phrasing when the authors try to connect arguing with people. For instance, "By the term *standpoint* (or *point of view*) we mean an (externalized) attitude on the part of the language user in respect of an expressed opinion" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1983, p. 5, italics original). So attitudes and points of view are not private possessions at all in this perspective, but elements of text.

This orientation has continued to the present day. In their current statement of pragma-dialectics, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004, pp. 54-55) re-engage the principle of externalization:

Externalization of commitments is in pragma-dialectics achieved by investigating exactly which obligations are created by (explicitly or implicitly) performing certain speech acts in a specific context of an argumentative discourse or text. In this way, terms such as “accept” and “disagree” take on a “material” sense: They do not primarily stand for being in a certain state of mind, but for undertaking public commitments that are assumed in the context of disagreement and can be externalized from the discourse or text. “Acceptance,” for example, can be externalized as the expression of a positive commitment to a proposition that is under discussion. And “disagreement” can be externalized from the discourse or text as the expression by two different parties of commitments to speech acts that are opposed to one another and seem irreconcilable. On the basis of these externalizations, the state of “being convinced” can be externalized as the expression of acceptance of a positive commitment to a speech act by a person who was initially opposed to that speech act.

As a methodological move, I admire this strategy. Focusing attention on people’s commitments is enlightening, because it helps us understand why arguments go in various directions, and what sorts of things are arguable once a conversation has begun.

But am I the only one who sees them straining to talk about people? Agreeing, disagreeing, being convinced, having attitudes, being committed: surely these are personal psychological phenomena. The very term externalization acknowledges that there is a private internal character to arguing which is being omitted from the theory. Pragma-dialectics centrally wants to understand how people can reach consensus in a rational way and, when they fail to do so, exactly why. But genuine consensus is a thing that people accomplish, and their sentences are only a means to that end (and not even a necessary one, as anyone who has been rebuked or convinced by a spouse’s glance can attest). Agreeing, disagreeing, and reasoning are the basic materials of pragma-dialectical analysis, but the commitment to text means that we can only talk about these matters insofar as they seem to appear in discourse. Again, we see the assumption, or perhaps the hope, that text is transparent.

### *2.3 Rhetoric*

Wenzel (1980) said that critics might take three perspectives in studying argument: logical, dialectical, and rhetorical. The rhetorical view understands arguing as a process, one that is oriented to persuasion. The key evaluative standard is effectiveness. Now to say that an argument is effective is to assert that it changed people’s minds and perhaps even altered their behaviors. So one would assume that rhetorical critics would surely study people. People constitute the process of arguing with their persons and their words. They create the arguments in the first place, and react to the arguments in the second. But here, too, we largely find a focus on text and an absence of people.

Often this is entirely forgivable. Many rhetorical studies concern themselves with historical events, and one has little chance of surveying the people of ancient Rome to see how they viewed one of Cicero's orations. We have to trust Cicero as to what he actually said and why he said it, and must do our best to judge his effectiveness from whatever documentary evidence survives. Perhaps our respect for this heritage of criticism has unduly encouraged us to forego gathering such information when it is available. Even when the discourse engages current controversy, rhetoricians rarely offer data about the people involved. Instead, they prefer to study the rhetoric itself. Frequently this results in a study that looks quite a lot like informal logic. Permit me to offer examples.

Two of the leading rhetorical scholars of argument are James Klumpp and David Zarefsky, and both spoke at the 2005 Alta conference. Each chose a contemporary topic: Klumpp (2006) critiqued the Bush Administration's case for war on Iraq, and Zarefsky (2006) analyzed the war on terror. Either scholar could have examined public opinion polls or collected his own data on public response to the rhetoric, but neither did. Instead, each confined himself to a study of the public statements, with an occasional intuition about the people who generated them. Klumpp explored the use of terms from argument theory in the Iraq discourse, discovering intelligent use of ideas such as presumption, burden of proof, issue, and evidence. He finally found fault with the pro-war advocacy because it was based on false statements, and he recommended that we invigorate our vocabulary for dealing with truth and fact in our theories. Zarefsky showed that the administration's anti-terrorism advocacy had at its core an argument *ad ignorantium*, namely that our very ignorance about terrorists' intentions and capabilities was held out as a justification for taking actions such as the passage of the Patriot Act.

Both of these excellent papers accomplish what they set out to do. Klumpp is persuasive in showing the factual failures of the public discourse, and Zarefsky is effective in showing the centrality and questionable use of the argument *ad ignorantium*. But neither really attends to Wenzel's specification that rhetorical critics of argument should concentrate on whether the argument was effective, and why. Unstated in both papers is the idea that the American public was convinced by the administration's false assertions about Iraq and by the administration's use of the argument from ignorance. The assumption that the rhetoric succeeded displays the importance of understanding how falsities and argument from ignorance work, but the assumption was never explicitly tested. Each paper was about the text, not the people.

Perhaps in Wenzel's scheme it would be better to say that both scholars took a logical perspective rather than a rhetorical one, but I think that both essays are characteristic of what rhetoricians typically do when they study arguments. While I find both papers illuminating, they tell me little about the people involved. We still do not know if the war advocates realized that they were promoting falsehood, nor are we certain whether the argument from ignorance was the key persuasive

element in the anti-terrorist campaign or merely epiphenomenal. Klumpp and Zarefsky teach us a lot about how the arguments looked, but little about their human presence, either when the texts were born or when they were experienced. The papers do have implications for what people might have thought, but these are no more than projections and intuitions. Again, we find that the texts are treated as though they are transparent. In this approach, the invention of the argument is no more problematic than its reception: rhetoricians write as though both can be securely fixed if the text is examined closely enough.

#### *2.4 American argumentation*

It is hard to define the American argumentation community in this paper, especially since I have already placed rhetoricians in another category. Perhaps the simplest method is to examine the roster of Alta participants, but in doing that one immediately sees that most of those scholars are rhetoricians or policy analysts, and others are working within the domain of pragma-dialectics. I want to defer discussion of the small number who study psychological matters until the second part of my paper. So I ask for leniency and permission to mis-characterize the American orientation as focusing on conversational and group argumentation.

Study of conversational argument began in our community with the publication of Jackson and Jacobs (1980), a paper which defined and analyzed interpersonal arguments. An enduring contribution is their definition of conversational argument as having a distinct function and a distinct structure. In examining the key passage, we note again the absence of people:

First [concerning function], arguments are disagreement relevant speech events; they are characterized by the projection, avoidance, production, or resolution of disagreement. Argument attends to the withholding, or potential withholding, of a preferred [second pair part] and the failure to withdraw or suppress the disagreeable [first pair part]. . . . Second, arguments appear as a variety of structural expansions of adjacency pairs. They may involve turn expansions or sequence expansions focusing on either pair part, but they occur within the interpretive frame provided by a dominant adjacency pair. (Jackson and Jacobs 1980, p. 254)

The conversation, not the conversant, is the object of analysis. Whether an exchange is an argument or not depends on whether the participants believe it is, but the evidence for their view is to be drawn from the conversation itself. If people behave as though they are arguing, then they are. So if an assertion is followed by, say, a disagreement, we know we have an argument.

In contrast to other orientations to argument discourse, in this tradition the question of textual transparency receives attention. Conversation analysts argue persuasively that episodic frames emerge visibly from participants' turns. Thus, a

joke is a joke if the next speaker laughs, an insult is an insult if someone becomes aggressive or defensive, and an apparently innocent question (“Are you busy tonight?”) is a request pre-sequence if the other person shows that sort of uptake. So if people act argumentatively, we have some warrant to infer that they believe they are in an argument. While this is somewhat indirect, it is a reasonable claim.

In other respects, the tentativeness of conclusions drawn about the arguers is more evident. Since I have explored this problem elsewhere (Hample 1985), I will not reprise the details of my analysis here. Only with considerable uncertainty can we look at conversation transcripts and make inferences about people’s motivations, their private reasoning, their anticipations, and their sincerity. The possibilities of irony, pretense, lying, sycophancy, playing along, and other sorts of messages are substantial bars to knowing why people say what they do, or what they think of another person’s statements. Saying that an utterance establishes a commitment is an important and illuminating scholarly move, but it is quite different to say that the commitment actually matches the person’s interior life.

Even less effort is typically made to characterize individual arguers in research concerned with small group argumentation. Leading scholars in this area are Brashers, Brossman, Canary, Meyers, and Seibold (see Meyers and Brashers 1999 for a convenient summary). Using an intricate coding system, these researchers classify turns at talk as being assertions, elaborations, agreements, and a number of other things. Recognizable turn sequences are identified as patterns of argumentation. Researchers examine the patterns and draw conclusions about which patterns lead to explicit group agreement, which are associated with continuing disagreement, which seem to result in good group decisions, and so forth.

This research has a family resemblance to informal logic, with two key differences. Instead of studying argument schemes, these analysts search for turn patterns. But importantly, the small group studies have an explicit concern for effectiveness. The features held in common with informal logic are a focus on text, the assumption that the text is uncontroversially informative, and a disinclination to investigate the private experience of the arguers.

So here, as in the other main approaches to argumentation studies, we can see a commitment to the transparent text. Some scholars are simply uninterested in what the arguers think or feel, but most display an impulse to say what people’s attitudes are, from what values a statement emerges, what sort of private reasoning produces a public behavior, and whether an argument resonates with its audience. I find it odd that there is not a larger emphasis in our community on work that explicitly addresses these issues. Gilbert (2002) says that arguers who slavishly focus on text are committing the logocentric fallacy. There is some irony in the possibility that many argument analysts may be inviting the same mistake.



### 3. The Opaque Arguer

Just as text is quietly regarded as transparent, we worry that the arguers themselves are opaque. Much of what we want to know requires information about unconscious processes: recall from long term memory, semantic searches, syntactic construction, private values, automated inferences, inarticulable feelings, person perception, and the like (Hample 1986, 1987). Investigation of these matters is difficult, especially when it is unreasonable to ask people for self-reports (Hample 1984). Nevertheless, progress has been made, and here I wish to summarize some of what we have discovered (far more detail is to be found in Hample 2005). I will concentrate on two processes, argument production and argument reception. I am convinced that both topics must be studied in terms of the arguers.

#### 3.1 *Argument production*

Argument production has two main phases, inventing and editing (Hample 2006). Invention involves the recall or generation of materials to use in an argument, and the editorial process is then applied to shape those reasons into acceptable form. We have partial descriptions of both phases.

Arguments are invited by a subjectively recognized type of social situation, and the invitation is accepted or declined. Whether a person argues or not is predictable by knowing his or her levels of argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness (Rancer and Avtgis 2006). Both are motivational measures, and each can be understood as describing a person's threshold for participating. A person high in argumentativeness is motivated to engage the interlocutor's position, and someone high in verbal aggressiveness has a similar impulse to attack the other's character, appearance, or self-concept. The general sort of behavior an arguer expects to experience and intends to engage in may also be affected by his or her expectations about the general process of arguing: whether it is thought to be self-centered, cooperative, brutish, self-revelatory, civil, and so forth (Hample 2005).

Once the invitation to argue is accepted, a person must invent materials suitable to his or her goals and expectations for the interaction. Invention is mainly a process of recall and adaptation. A person's inventional repertoire consists of the things available for expression. We have found that the size of one's repertoire is predicted by one's academic ability and creativity (Hample 2005). Research shows that repertoires are expressed in two respects. First, the content may directly pass from memory into public utterance (B. O'Keefe and Lambert 1995). Second, repertoire characteristics, such as the degree of politeness and argument relevance, are also reflected in text even when the argument topic differs from repertoire to message (Hample, *et al.*, in press). The argumentative quality of repertoires has yet to be studied.

Although some people are blurters, for many of us an editorial process intervenes between the impulse to say something and any actual production. Meyer (1997)

explains the cognitive sequences in this way. First, the situation provokes possible utterances. This happens by means of situation-message associations, which are stored in long term memory. For example, some have internalized the rule that if a person quotes former President Clinton approvingly, the response is to say that Clinton was immoral. So situation-message associations stimulate particular elements in one's inventional repertoire, and these are nominated for utterance. The second phase, according to Meyer, is that the projected message is checked for its likely outcomes. This is done by means of message-consequence associations, which are also stored in long term memory. For instance, one may have realized that cursing results in condemnation. If the expected consequences of a message are acceptable, the nominated utterance is made public. But if the possible statement would impede attainment of the arguer's goals, it is rejected or altered, and the inventional and editing processes begin again (or the arguer leaves the field). Public utterances are those that have survived this sort of unconscious scrutiny.

Of course, not everyone scrutinizes in the same way. We have found that quite a number of personality predispositions affect one's editorial behavior (Hample and Dallinger 1990). Meyer regards traits as indicants of what goals are chronically accessible to a person. So someone who is high in verbal aggressiveness will often have attack goals, a Machiavellian will lie to manipulate others, and a shy person will likely have avoidance impulses. These goals are reflected in a person's judgment of whether certain message consequences are noticed or tolerable, and that is why people with different personalities generate arguments with different tones.

So we have an initial sketch of how arguers produce an argument. Their intellectual abilities and personalities influence the inventional process, particularly the way people shape arguments to meet their own needs and interactional goals. The research is not yet sufficiently advanced to tell us some of the things we would most like to know: what evidence is preferred, what argument schemes are most natural, and the likelihood of sound argumentation. A further complication is that most of the work deals with solitary arguers, and we should worry that initial impulses may not persist for long in the face of an actual interlocutor (Hjelmquist 1990). Still, we have a template for further investigation of argument production.

### *3.2 Argument reception*

In spite of a wealth of research on persuasion, we have surprisingly little information about how people handle arguments. A prominent research tradition claims "argument quality" as a key variable, but the operationalization is clearly inappropriate to the concept (D. O'Keefe 1995). Other persuasion research commonly uses designs that hold argument quality constant, as when the same message is attributed to authors high or low in credibility. However, we do have some information on two important topics: the degree to which people process arguments logically and how they respond to fallacies.

A number of studies (summarized in Hample 2005) test a Bayesian model of argument reception. The model presumes that two systems of thought influence a receiver. One is the argument conveyed by the message, and the other is everything else the audience member registers as relevant to the claim. Supposing that an arguer supports claim C with evidence D, the model is as follows:

$$p(C) = \tilde{\alpha}_1 p(D) p(C|D) + \tilde{\alpha}_2 p(\sim D) p(C|\sim D).$$

The hypothesis is that a person's subjective probability that C is true will be predicted by two components: the subjective probability that D is true times the subjective probability that C is true given that D is true, and the subjective probability that D is false times the subjective probability that C is true when D is false. The beta weights are empirically determined to reflect the relative weight of each component in a given circumstance (omitting the beta weights permits the equation to be algebraically derived from Bayes's Theorem).

The model conjoins two conditional syllogisms. One represents the message's argument, and the other represents everything else. Thus,

**Message Syllogism**

If D is true, C is true;  
D is true;  
so, C is true.

**Non-Message Syllogism**

If D is false, C is true (anyway);  
D is false;  
so, C is true (anyway).

Fitting such a model to people's self-reports does not prove that they are thinking syllogistically, although if the model fails this would suggest the hypothesis that they do not think in that way. Nonetheless, should the model accurately predict self-report data, this would encourage us in the belief that highly probable and relevant evidence tightly connected to the claim by means of a believable warrant should be an effective argument.

In fact, the model does fit the data well. Multiple correlations on individual-level data commonly produce *R*'s that exceed .60. When the model is applied to grouped data, which minimizes the measurement error inherent in some fairly complex questions, the multiple regression coefficient is about .90. These results do not prove that people are actually using syllogistic patterns in their cognitive systems, and they certainly do not prove that people can solve syllogisms on purpose. The equation is simply a model of cognition, and is not necessarily a summary of it (e.g., a school child can build a model of the solar system out of styrofoam balls without being understood to be saying the planets are made of styrofoam; this is the essential difference between what I am claiming here and what I criticized some informal logicians for doing in their formalization of ordinary discourse). But the results do suggest that some of our basic models of argument are useful in projecting the results of an audience's argument processing.

This work examines solitary argument recipients and its application to people engaged in conversational argument remains to be explored. However, several of us have recently begun to study how people respond to fallacies inserted into conversations (Hample, Jones and Averbek 2007). Our basic method is to ask participants to role play the part of a legislator. We give them briefing materials that incline the person to one side of the issue or another. Then we videotape their conversations. Unbeknownst to the participants, the other conversant is a confederate who inserts prepared fallacies into his or her advocacy.

While it would be interesting to code responses into more precise categories corresponding to the key issues for each fallacy, we chose to classify people's comments into five general groups. These are in order of argumentative sophistication:

1. Accept the fallacy
2. Ignore the fallacy
3. Announce that the fallacy is irrelevant, but without giving a reason
4. Refute the fallacy
5. Take up the fallacy, and try to modify it into a better argument

Only one study has been completed, and it includes the fallacies of anecdote, equivocation, slippery slope, sweeping generalization, appeal to pity, and an *ad hominem* attack on the source of the interlocutor's evidence.

Several of the results are interesting; the details are in Table 1. Only about 15% of the fallacies appear to have been accepted. All the rest were ignored or identified as problematic. The most seductive fallacy was the appeal to pity, although both slippery slope and the *ad hominem* attack were also accepted at noticeable rates. The single most common response overall was to undertake a refutation of the fallacy. The fallacy that most invited respondents to take it up and repair it was slippery slope.

It would be a mistake to generalize results from just a few topics and a few instances of each fallacy, but the results are heartening. Engagement in a serious conversation seems to encourage the sort of scrutiny that we want, and fallacious arguments seem to be quite vulnerable in these little approximations of dialectic. Here, too, we have some evidence suggesting that our first reckoning of how people receive arguments should be that they do so rationally.

Naturally enough, I have featured the information I have about how people generate and receive arguments. But I should report my impression that such data are relatively rare. Compared to the vast literatures on argument texts, the material on the arguers themselves is scattered and not as frequently presented at our conferences. It is fair to say that arguers are still largely opaque to us. But we have developed methods that can be used to illuminate them to a greater degree.

Table 1

*Crosstabulation of Fallacy Type and Response to Fallacy, both Frequencies and (Column Percentages)*

	<b>Fallacy</b>						
	equivocation	ad hominem	anecdote	slippery slope	sweeping generalization	appeal to pity	Total
<b>Response</b>							
Accept	3 (9.4%)	5 (20.8%)	2 (7.4%)	5 (19.2%)	3 (12%)	6 (28.6%)	24 (15.5%)
Ignore	2 (6.3%)	2 (8.3%)	3 (11.1%)	1 (3.8%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	10 (6.5%)
State Irrelevant	4 (12.5%)	2 (8.3%)	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.8%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.8%)	9 (5.8%)
Refute	22 (68.8%)	15 (62.5%)	18 (66.7%)	8 (30.8%)	16 (64%)	11 (52.4%)	90 (58.1%)
Repair	1 (3.1%)	0 (0%)	3 (11.1%)	11 (42.3%)	4 (16%)	3 (14.3%)	22 (14.2%)
Total	32 (100%)	24 (100%)	27 (100%)	26 (100%)	25 (100%)	21 (100%)	155 (100%)

#### 4. Conclusions

I'm aware of a central irony in my talk. I have suggested that we have too great a tendency to represent arguments as texts, but have based my own paper on a single sentence, Brockriede's remark that "arguments are not in statements but in people." This at least should reassure my audience that I support textual analysis. I only want more of something else.

I'm also aware that my presentation is more expressive than original and precise. I know that this sort of message has been brought to Windsor by others (e.g., Billig 1997), and that investigations of the sort I advocate have in fact been conducted by informal logicians (e.g., Gilbert 1997), rhetoricians (e.g., J. Hample 1977; Tindale 2005), pragma-dialecticians (e.g., van Eemeren, et al. 1994; Oostdam, Glopper,

and Eiting 1994) and conversation analysts (e.g., Jacobs, et al. 1985). In generalizing, I have reported my impressions and can only hope that they match your own.

We can understand arguing as having three phases: argument production, the argument's text, and argument reception. Each of the three is complex and textured in many ways. It is understandable that each of us prefers to focus on a single aspect at a time. But as a community, I am convinced that we should try to describe the whole process and all three of its phases. We should abandon the easy assumption that texts are transparent and confront the worry that arguers are opaque.

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