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Natural Normativity: Argumentation Theory as an Engaged Discipline

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ABSTRACT: Natural normativity describes the means whereby social and cultural controls are placed on argumentative behaviour. The three main components of this are Goals, Context, and Ethos, which combine to form a dynamic and situational framework. Natural normativity is explained in light of Pragma-dialectics, Informal Logic, and Rhetoric. Finally, the theory is applied to the Biro-Siegel challenge.

KEYWORDS: argumentation theory, context, dialectic, ethos, goals, informal logic, natural normativity, pragma-dialectic, rhetoric.

1. INTRODUCTION

What I want to do today is to examine where we are as a field, and suggest how we might move forward to integrate the various parts and approaches that now form the corpus that is Argumentation Theory. I have neither the time, the knowledge, nor the wisdom to try and address every issue and approach, so I must limit my scope. I want to particularly address the approaches known as the Rhetorical, the Pragma-Dialectic, and the Informal Logical. I will argue that all of the approaches need to expand their borders in order to create a more useful and inclusive view of what argumentation is, and, especially, of what governs it. I will conclude that argument is governed by something I will call *natural normativity*, and that this organic, dynamic phenomenon is what, in most cases, controls and limits our argumentative behaviour.

Now I take it as obvious that the overarching goal of Argumentation Theory is the improvement of argumentation skills, and, in particular, the improvement of the average person's argumentation skills. Moreover, the motivation for this is the belief that improvement in argumentation skills will reduce the inclination to use violence and other non-rational coercive means to achieving goals. This does not, however, mean that *any* argument is all right. Rather, the goal is to educate people about how to recognize a *good* argument and avoid a bad argument. This, naturally, leads to the creation and identification of rules – and this is where things get tricky. In Argumentation Theory, just as in Ethics, rules must be grounded; limitations must be defended; the distinction between the acceptable and unacceptable must be supported. This, of course, leads immediately to the inevitable bootstrap problem: how can rules that *ought* be followed be grounded so that they *must* be followed?

In general the several approaches take distinct, but not entirely different paths, each of which I will outrageously caricature. The pragma-dialecticians begin by framing the *purpose* of an argumentative encounter, and then propose what rules need be followed if that purpose is to be met. So, for example, if you are going to play baseball, then you need to follow these particular rules, or you will simply not be playing the game to which you have committed yourself to play. Informal logicians use the notion of fallacy and the avoidance thereof to keep participants in an argument from breaking the rules. In other words, there is a game being played, and it is baseball, but if you do not play it correctly, the umpire will call you out, or, even, remove you from the game. Finally, the rhetoricians expect you to be reasonable because the audience demands it. So, to belabour the metaphor, if you do not play baseball by the rules, you will be booed, and the audience may well leave the stadium. I believe that the issue of how we ground the rules of argument is the greatest issue we face, and this is especially so since the pragma-dialectic movement has inched closer to the rhetorical model with the introduction of the concept of strategic manoeuvring (Frans H. van Eemeren & Peter Houtlosser, 2000 p. 131; 2001).

I want now to make several assumptions, or, if you prefer, lay down a number of parameters. These indicate first, my personal prejudices and, secondly, to be honest, the realms in which I believe Argumentation Theory should be focussing. Note that when I refer to Argumentation Theory I mean to indicate an area that is at least somewhat distinct from Classical Rhetoric, Informal Logic, Formal Logic, and Formal Dialectic. The first parameter is my limiting these remarks to interpersonal argumentation. By this I means argumentation that involves at least more than one person in an interactive communicative framework. This does not include public speeches, formal or political debates, the recently popular advertorials, or forms of what Leff calls “advocacy” (2006). I believe that interactive dialogic situations are the paradigm cases of argument, and where our minds tend most often to be changed.¹ It is in the interactive context where we must react to objections, consider alternatives, and are, therefore, forced to alter our views and positions. It is much easier to ignore or dismiss counter-arguments when we do not have an interlocutor immediately present to keep track of our commitments and consistencies.

My second assumption is that most of the arguments we have, as opposed, say, to many of the arguments we hear, are with people with whom we will likely argue again. This is to say that the majority of arguments in which we are involved are with people we know, including our family, our colleagues, our friends, and our acquaintances, as well as service personnel, professionals and advisors with whom we interact regularly. Your dispute partner might be a spouse, child, friend, colleague, regular tradesperson, physician, or so on. I will refer to these people generally as “familiar.” Certainly, you may interact with someone who is not a familiar; someone with whom it is unlikely you will ever interact again. This person might be a telephone agent, door to door solicitor, shop clerk, or what have you. In these cases you might not care about the results of the interaction other than getting your way, and the only behavioural limits might be internalised politeness and guilt. Remember that even in circumstances where we do not know everyone, such as the context in which we find ourselves today, we know that the

¹ Please understand that I have absolutely no scientific evidence for the assertion that our minds are changed more often in dialogic contexts than in others.

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people present are colleagues and it is likely that we will encounter them again. So, while this presentation would not be among the situations I include, the discussions we have while having a coffee or a beer, would be among those that I am considering.

So, I have laid down one parameter: my concern is with interactive arguments; and one assumption: most of our interactive arguments are with people with whom we will argue again. I would now like to add one axiom: no one argues without a reason.² I take this to be obvious, even trite, and so I will not spend time defending it. However, I will want to derive a corollary from this axiom that will be controversial insofar as it raises the spectre of psychologism, the sworn enemy of dialectics. For the meantime, however, I want to talk about goals.

2. GOALS

Within Communication Theory goals play a very important role. It is understood that the way in which a communicator deals with her own goals and the goals of others will determine how she proceeds, how, indeed, she communicates, and, potentially, how successful she is. (Dillard, Cody, & McLaughlin, 1990; O'Keefe, 1988; Tracy & Coupland, 1990) Indeed, Berger (2000) says with respect to, "the ability to detect goals and the capacity to deploy actions and messages that achieve them efficiently," that "it is difficult to imagine an adequate model of human message production that fails to take such notions into account" (p. 164). As researchers interested in argumentation, it is not surprising that our focus with respect to goals is that a successful argument is one in which the claim of the argument is accepted. That is, *prima facie*, the goal of arguing. However, without denying the existence of such a superficial goal, there are always goals other than the core strategic goal at play in an interactive dialogical argument. That is, I may enter an argument or a communicative interaction in order to achieve goal *G*, but there are always other goals, generally referred to as *face goals* or *relationship goals* that are in play as well. Indeed, sometimes these other, secondary goals, can become more important than the primary goal. (A very full discussion of goals in argumentation can be found in (Gilbert, 1996).) Regardless, it is essential to understand that there is always a multiplicity of goals in an actual argumentation situation of the sort to which I have limited this discussion. I emphasize this because in classical analyses of static, i.e., textual, arguments, e.g., letters to the editor, advertorials, speeches, and so on, the only goals that are immediately evident are those of the proponent. In the contexts to which I am limiting my remarks, the goals of the proponent, the goals of the opposer, and the goals that exist between the participants are all in play.³

These goals, strategic, face and relational, form a complex which directs and at the same time limits the choices and moves available to us in an encounter. I may very well dearly want the next hire in my department to be in Argumentation Theory, but I will not threaten, bribe, or intimidate my colleagues *beyond the limits of normal political manoeuvring* in order to achieve my goal. This is due to the other goals at play that

² It's conceivable this is not absolutely true, but I don't care. If pushed I will change from the term 'axiom' to the term 'assumption.'

³ I do not mean to suggest that the reasoning presented here cannot be applied, by extension, to these other situations. Rather, I want to say that these interactive situations are the basic cases from which we generalize.

concern our relationships and self image. I care what my colleagues think of me, and I want them to know that I respect them. In departments where this collapses we say there is turmoil, things have gone bad, maybe an outside chair should be brought in, and so on. Sometimes we end up in situations we might call feuds or battles that are akin to war, but where, fortunately, people do not die, but rather may be fired or forced to resign. Like physical violence, Argumentation Theory hopes that skill and wisdom in argumentation can help avoid such destructive confrontations.

3. CONTEXT

Goals are not the only things that determine how an argument can proceed. Another major component is the context, or, if you prefer, the situation. This is a reality grounded construct consisting of, but not limited to, the relationship between the participants, the location of the interaction, and the political, social, and economic factors at play in the disagreement. While not every factor plays a major role in every argument, the potential is certainly there, and we cannot determine the relevance of any component until we examine the actual situation. The context, then goes a long way to determining what information we need to consider in evaluating and analysing an argument. In some contexts ignoring one sort of information might be acceptable, while in another unacceptable. The determinants include the field and its consequent backings, rules, and procedures, In addition, the relationship between the participants is also central. The extent to which they share certain assumptions and background information, have longstanding disagreements, and simply how well they know each other will impact on the context.

The context, and especially the shared context can be vital factors in the efficiency of communications.

Critical to establishing common ground and efficient message production is the ability to estimate the degree to which conversational partners share a common fund of knowledge relevant to interaction goals. Individuals engaging in even casual conversations about books, music, movies, and the like, must somehow establish the extent to which they are familiar or unfamiliar with various referents included in the messages they exchange. (Berger, 2000, p. 161)

One reason why it is often easier to communicate with familiars is just the shared background and assumptions. Similarly, Willard points out that one needs to understand the relationships between people in order to understand their arguments. People who know each other use shorthand and make Gricean type assumptions that may not be transparent in a textual rendering (Willard, 1978, p. 127).

The notion of context is a very broad one. We might, for example, talk about a business context, or the context of personal relationships. An academic setting is one sort of context, while a hospital might be another. Each of these components, however, can cut across one another, as can the intensity of relationships, the socio-politico-economic factors, geography, and so on. If a student enters my office to discuss an essay, she is not entering the equivalent of a geographic or situational *tabula rasa*. To the contrary, she is entering a *professor's* office, and when she enters she brings her entire set of luggage that contains our historical relationship, her desires and needs regarding the course, her career, and on and on. During the meeting we will each be paying attention to the other. We will

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be watching, consciously or not, for indications of agreement and disagreement; assent and dissent; interest and inattention.

The kind of communicators involved in the exchange will also impact on the context. Referring, for example, to B. O’Keefe’s categories of Message Design Logic (1988), the degree of sophistication of the participants can make a major difference in the context of the argument. Argument styles and assumptions about arguing are also relevant to context. Research has been done on argumentativeness and verbal aggression as personality traits, and we know that these factors influence how argumentative interactions will proceed. (Hample, 2005, provides an excellent survey and summary.; Infante, McCroskey, & Daly, 1987, are good examples of this research. ; A. S. Rancer, Dierks-Stewart, Stewart, & Ting-Toomey, 1987.) As academics, and especially those of us who are philosophers, we learn that not everyone appreciates having every statement questioned and examined. We learn that while our colleagues expect, and generally want us to put everything they say under an argumentative microscope, our friends and spouses often do not share that particular delight. We learn, to put it simply, to pay attention to the context. The same applies to conversations where emotions become important. If both participants are becoming highly emotional then the argument may go awry, but if only one is, then an alteration of the context and/or goals may move the argumentation to a more fruitful avenue.

The idea of context is hardly a clear one, and this is both good and bad. It is bad because we cannot clearly define for the purposes of a model what should or should not be included in the examination of an argumentative encounter. But it is good because it allows the analyst the flexibility to observe what is really occurring rather than adhering to a strict guideline or map. In light of this, I want to postulate that what is salient in the context is whatever causes us to put forward arguments or respond to arguments in a given way. That is to say that those aspects of the environment and/or the relationships of the participants that influence how we argue can be said to be components of the context. Thus, one’s professional background might be context relevant in one situation, but not in another, as might be one’s marital status, culture, socio-economic status, and on and on.

One consequence of paying attention to context is that it allows us to consider what rules and what methods are legitimate in given circumstances. Rules of arguing can vary, and certainly background assumptions, loci, and the kind and amount of evidence required to make a case. A particular instantiation of a fallacy in one field, moreover, might not be one in another. An appeal to a particular authority, for example, might be legitimate in one arena, but not in another.

I take it as obvious that context and goals work together and interact. Indeed, separating various aspects into context or goals might be difficult or even impossible. So be it. The power relationships, for example, that exist within a context are also integral to the relationship goals that exist between the participants. Being a friendly approachable professor might be a goal that impacts on the context. Having just returned an exam where the results were dreadful, can well impinge on that goal. Nothing exists in isolation.

4. ETHOS

I am, let me remind us all, trying to build a foundation for normative controls on everyday argument. So far, I have introduced two components, goals and contexts, that will play important roles in this foundation. Now, I want to introduce the third, and perhaps the most important component, viz., ethos. Admittedly, we tend to think of ethos more in a larger, epideictic framework, but, in fact, ethos is a player in every interaction. Ethos has to do with what we think of our interactant as a person who can be trusted and relied upon. In the larger sphere of, say, international politics, the ethos of various world leaders is clocked and counted like sports scores. We know, for example, that the “approval rating” of President George W. Bush is at a record low of 40%. His “trustworthiness” or “credibility” is extraordinarily low at 36% (ABC News). Two thoughts come to mind. The first is how happy I am that my approval rating is neither calculated nor published (unless, of course, we include *ratemyprofessor.com*.) and the second is how important ethos always has been and is to public figures.

But it is not only public figures to whom ethos is important. On a day to day basis, we are continually assessing and altering our ethotic judgements of people, especially of those who are not the closest to us. Provis says, “the ethotic element...is the single most important factor in argumentative behavior. We rarely bargain, or persuade, with someone for only one communicative event” (Provis, 2004, p. 97). For those who are our familiars, we have established an idea, an ethotic rating, if you will, and while it is always subject to alteration, we do not expect it to fluctuate wildly. We begin, typically, with a more or less neutral or positive assessment, given the context.⁴ But then, as interactions accumulate, as we learn more and more about an individual and her beliefs and behaviours, the judgment may go up or down. Over time, individual instances may have less impact on the judgement in much the same way the effect of an individual quiz impacts less on an average as the number of quizzes increases. Indeed, the analogy is a good one, as one major deviation from the mode may have a disproportionate impact, especially when we are assessing and not simply calculating.⁵

The importance of ethos is witnessed by the ways we have of categorizing it in our culture. Someone who ranks people too high or too hastily may be described as gullible, while the opposite characteristic we label cynicism. In other words we expect people to have a moderate approach to ethos, and neither have standards that are ridiculously low or impossibly high. We also generally assume that people we do not know are, *ceteris paribus*, of fair ethotic standing. This can be viewed as a consequence of the assumption that that our interactants are following Grice’s Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975, *passim*), and we assume that they are not lying or otherwise violating the usual principles. As van Eemeren & Houtlosser explain, “an assumption of reasonableness is conferred on every discussion move,” (2000, p. 7); people want to be seen as reasonable, and fear being seen as unreasonable (F. van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2003, p. 394). Evidence to the contrary, however, can quickly lead to a re-evaluation of

⁴ The *context* can impact on ethos by presenting someone to us initially in, say, an unfavourable light, or, at least, one that raises a minimal amount of suspicion. Someone arriving at your door during an election campaign sporting a button of your least favourite candidate comes to mind.

⁵ By this I mean that one outrageous anti-social act may have a very damaging effect on someone’s ethotic standing, even though there is substantial positive history.

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their reliability and the degree to which our trust is warranted. This is witnessed by the old adage, “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.”⁶ In other words, it is expected that an individual’s ethotic rating will be impacted by her behaviour. What we are looking at is described by Willard as “attributions of credibility, status, expertise, and attractiveness people make as communicators” (Willard, 1989, p. 131)

Our ethotic judgments of others are matched by our self-awareness of our own reputation. That is to say that our behaviour is governed by our desire to be considered in a certain way. Most of us want to be seen as trustworthy, considerate, intelligent, and worthy of respect.⁷ That is, we want to be seen as possessing those very characteristics that induce us to rank someone’s ethos high. We do not want to be considered bullies or wusses, and we govern ourselves accordingly. To quote Provis again:

In very many cases, where you and I are in disagreement about something, it would be wrong of me to appeal to force to get you to agree with me, not just because that would constitute the fallacy *ad baculum*, but because it would violate some principles of respect for you as an autonomous person. (op. cit., p. 109)

Remembering my presumption that we mostly argue with familiars, the consequences of incurring a bad reputation can be devastating. We need others to accomplish most of our goals, strategic and otherwise, and if they are not willing to cooperate with us, not willing to work with us, then the chances of success are lowered. The result is that the kinds of arguments we present and the sorts of argumentative moves we undertake, are limited by the desire to be seen in a good light and to protect or enhance our ethos.

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I have spoken above about three aspects of communication: goals, context, and ethos. I would now like to suggest that the various approaches to Argumentation Theory, especially Informal Logic and Pragma-dialectics must broaden their range of permissible components and understanding of what is part of an argument in order in order to permit the complex that is Goals-Context-Ethos to play a larger role. This means a loosening of the textual emphasis in Informal Logic, and a loosening of the Principle of Externalization in pragma-dialectics. This loosening will, I believe, lead to a deeper understanding of what controls argumentation, and how argumentation is both formed and regulated by the Goals-Context-Ethos complex.⁸ Together these three components form a system of normative control over argument that is stronger and more enduring than any abstract rules. The underlying fact, of course, is that argument, like life, is a social undertaking. As such we are guided and controlled by a myriad of forces, many of which we are ordinarily quite unawares. These forces arise from the mixture of our goals, the context, our sense of our own ethos, and the ethos of our argument partners.

⁶ This saying has been described as everything from an old Chinese proverb, to a Tennessee saying, to a bit of Klingon wisdom.

⁷ There are, of course, those who want the exact opposite, and want to be seen as ruthless and unfeeling. Moreover, the ethotic goals may vary by context.

⁸ I want to reiterate that I am not claiming that there are hard and fast distinctions between the three components.

The normative aspect of natural normativity arises from social pressures. These pressures come from others, ourselves, and the situation itself. This idea goes back as far as Aristotle, when he says, for example, “character is almost, so to speak, the controlling factor in persuasion” (Aristotle, p. 38), to Brown and Levinson’s analysis of the complexity of face (1987, *passim*), and on to more recent commentators such as Willard (1989) and Tindale (1999). It is, perhaps, tempting to think that in an argument the sole concern of the protagonist is persuading her partner of her conclusion, but that greatly oversimplifies the endeavour. Simply getting what you want is rarely a sufficient condition for success.

The normative aspect of natural normativity does not exist independently of the natural aspect. To the contrary, what is natural about natural normativity is that it arises organically from the three core elements of goals, contexts, and ethos. Unlike the strict rules of Pragma-Dialectics or the fallacy violation of Informal Logic, the situation itself must be examined in order to understand the rules involved. There simply is no model that can apply to the enormous variety and variation we find in everyday arguments. Any time we do so, we are losing a great deal of important information and underlying interaction that must be removed in order to meet the requirements of the model. (Willard, 1976, p. 309 ff.) Moreover, it is rarely the case that textual or transcript materials do not require clarification, (Gilbert, 2002, p. 25) and most often we cannot separate the various aspects of an argument into neat components (Manolescu, 2005, p. 149).

It might now be thought at this point that natural normativity is simply the Universal Audience dressed in a different guise. But unlike the rhetorical models of Tindale (1999) or Perelman & Obrechts Tyteca (1969), natural normativity does not involve an abstract Universal Audience, the definition of which seems to elude everyone. It is true that the notion of audience is included under the triumvirate of Goals-Context-Ethos, but there is also much more there than Perelman included. Moreover, and very importantly, there is *not* an appeal to an abstract idea of a reified Universal Audience. Rather, all audiences are quite concrete and situated, and where Perelman & Obrechts-Tyteca appeal to the Universal Audience as an arbiter, natural normativity does no such thing. Rather, natural normativity depends on the dynamic nature of the argumentation process itself. Natural normativity uses the communicative, social, and philosophical nature of the argumentative endeavour to establish reasonable criteria through a dynamic process.

The proposal I am making may not be abhorrent to all. As Pragma-Dialectics moves further into the area of strategic maneuvering, (a less frightening term than ‘rhetoric,’) and as Informal Logicians consider classical fallacy theory, argument diagramming, and rule application as a tool of Argumentation Theory rather than its end, we find more common ground. Moreover, natural normativity can aid in answering a number of objections that have bedeviled Communication Theory views of Argumentation Theory which themselves have great difficulty in describing any normative limits at all.

To clarify and illuminate the nature of natural normativity, I would like to consider how it operates in light of the Biro-Siegel challenge. They write,

Two disputants are arguing about the upcoming election. Both believe that the most handsome candidate (or the Black candidate, or the Jewish candidate, etc) should be elected. They disagree,

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at the outset, about which candidate is most handsome and so worthy of election; but after some discussion, the dispute is resolved and the participants agree they should vote for candidate C. The problem is that this resolution appears to be patently irrational, since handsomeness is itself irrelevant to a rational assessment of the worthiness of the candidates. (Biro & Siegel, 1992, p. 90)

The Biro-Siegel challenge, (hereafter the BS challenge,) first of all, needs amending. In what I hope is a friendly amendment, I would like to say that the allegation should state that the resolution be termed “patently unreasonable,” rather than “patently irrational.”⁹ Now, first of all, we can imagine upcoming elections where the handsomest candidate *should* be the one voted for. The election for Warrior-To-Be-Sacrificed-To-Appease-The Gods comes to mind, as does the election of the president of the Most-Handsome-Guy-or-Gal club, which, by the way, could well be the alternative name for most high school government elections. But, the BS challenge will respond, “You know very well that the election being considered is a state or provincial or federal election; a serious affair, not a frivolous one.” Ah, this is true. *And it is the context* that tells me that.¹⁰ So, let me not be glib about the BS challenge. What Biro and Siegel want is a way to say that selecting a candidate in a real governmental election on the basis of cuteness or hotness is not a good way to proceed, regardless of the amount of agreement.

Natural normativity does have a way of dealing with this situation, but I am not sure if it will satisfy Biro and Siegel, or, for that matter, diehard Informal Logicians. The reason I suspect that natural normativity will not satisfy the aforementioned, is because there is no absolute way of proceeding. In other words, one cannot say, *simpliciter*, that the speakers who agree in the BS example are absolutely, once and for all, wrong. Rather, *one must engage them in argument*. As soon as you engage the speakers in argument, the context changes, new goals come into play, and both your ethos and their ethos are suddenly relevant. Now, they do not merely have to agree with each other, but with you, and the criteria they have been applying which might have seemed fine to them, may not look so brilliant.¹¹ In other words, there is no absolute way of dismissing their arguments in and of themselves. Within the realm or field or situation in which their argument from cuteness is compelling, there is nothing to be done. Within that context the argument might be acceptable, or, must be challenged on its own terms, i.e., is the designated candidate actually the hottest? Clearly, however, neither Biro or Siegel are interested in debating the charm factors of leading candidates. This means that the context must be moved from beyond that in which the current rules apply to one in which there are other rules of which they are more approving. This is where they must engage the participants in order to demonstrate the inadequacy of the disingenuous rules.

It also does not matter whether the argument is at the object level or meta-level, supposing that we can make this distinction. Aside from the reality that both will likely end up in the same way, they still both require the intervention of actual arguments. Whether that argument is about the candidates or the rules for choosing is immaterial. Natural normativity only says that the argument taking place within the new frame opens

⁹ My comments are still pertinent if we use the term ‘irrational,’ but the challenge is stronger and easier to defend with the amendment.

¹⁰ In fact, the context does no such thing, as no more direction is given than what is found in the quotation.

¹¹ I do not mean to exclude the possibility that they have a more sophisticated argument for their criterion than anticipated. They might, for example, be highly cynical of politicians’ public statements and commitments, and so choose their frivolous method very consciously.

the possibility of changing the participant's minds. Simply pointing to a set of rules or accusing the actors of being irrational would not only fail, but it would also violate the very rules on which the BS challenge is based. Natural normativity answers the BS challenge because it can say that the method used to choose the best candidate was not a good one, but it can only say that by first being willing to enter into a conversation and proving the point. But, that is what argument is all about.

6. CONCLUSION

There is actually a great deal more I would like to say, but time does not permit me to go on. I believe that work currently being done in various areas is both interesting and taking the right direction. Tindale's refreshing view of interactive rhetoric (Tindale, 1999), Groarke's efforts to understand imagistic communication (Groarke, 2002), all add to the important work done by Johnson, Blair, Walton, and a host of others. Recent work by the pragma-dialecticians that moves away from the abstract and toward the concrete is also very important. This is complemented by the recent considerations in Jacobs' "normative pragmatics," (Jacobs, 2000) recently explicated by Manolescu by Manolescu (2004; 2005; 2006). Indeed, I believe that natural normativity can play an important role for both pragma-dialectics work in strategic maneuvering and normative pragmatics.

I believe it is also important for Argumentation Theory to pay close attention to work being done in Social Psychology as well as Communication Theory. The research being undertaken by Rancer, Infante, Hample, and their colleagues has a great deal to offer Argumentation Theory in terms of understanding the actual psychological and sociological process that take place when real people have real arguments. New books by Rancer & Avtgis (2006) and by Hample (2005) should be read by everyone working in Argumentation Theory. We need to take a more integrative approach if we are to make progress.

I have argued in this presentation that understanding argument, when taken as an interactive, interpersonal activity, entails looking for rules and evaluative components within the very context of the argument itself. This in no way means that models that offer us rules of various sorts, be they fallacies, the pragma-dialectic commandments, or the Gricean principles of conversation, ought to be thrown out or eschewed. Rather they ought to be applied in a context when called for by the goals and ethotic elements of the situation. Aristotle divided argumentation into logos, pathos and ethos, but he never intended for these distinctions to become separations. Now, two thousand years later it is incumbent upon us to repair this error. This may be fine and well, and even useful, but if we are to move forward as a discipline, then we need to integrate the perspectives. We need to draw upon research and work from all aspects of argumentation, and be aware of its complexity, subtlety and ubiquity.

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