

Preface

This volume finds its origin in a colloquium on Logic and Argumentation, held in June 1994 in Amsterdam and sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. The papers included have been selected for the role they can play in illuminating current thinking about the various kinds of relations between logic and argumentation. In order to complete the picture, the editors requested a few of their colleagues who hold views that were not represented at the colloquium to add to the volume by contributing a chapter.

Logic arose from argumentation theory as it was developed in antiquity. Gradually, a difference emerged between formal logic as the investigation of mechanical reasoning patterns and argumentation theory as the study of argumentative discourse in a more general sense. The latter has been mainly fed by argumentation theorists stemming from the humanities who often call themselves ‘rhetoricians’ or ‘informal logicians’. Some of them, Toulmin and Perelman being the most prominent, even strongly argued against modern formal logic.

Although there is nothing against an academic division of labour, we feel that the opposition between logic and argumentation theory is artificial and should be overcome. Building on insights provided by Evert Beth, Paul Lorenzen, Charles Hamblin and many others, broader applications of logic can be pursued than so far have been recognized. A more clearly defined idea of the direction that a development towards a ‘logical argumentation theory’ may possibly take can already be gained by looking at the game-theoretical dialogical accounts of rational communication that have recently been given. Another helpful starting point can be drawn from the communication-oriented theories of argumentation that have been developed in the humanities and are, as it were, waiting to be formalized. Artificial intelligence, where many researchers have become interested in the role of argumentation-theoretical structures in programming languages, can be a further source of inspiration.

This volume aims at providing some background to the academic endeavour of exploring the connections between logic and argumentation. It offers the reader some representative specimina of current thinking about this subject. The volume starts with two introductory chapters. First, Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst give a survey of the state of the art in argumentation theory. Johan van Benthem then discusses some interfaces between current developments in logic and argumentation theory.

In several chapters, the links between argumentation and logic are immediately at issue. Robert C. Pinto attempts to clarify the relations between arguments and inferences, between the normative study of arguments and inference, and between logic as the normative study of inference and the study of argumentation. Diderik Batens devotes his chapter to the challenging task of bridging the gap between logic

and argumentation. Richard J.C.M. Starmans discusses the relation between modern argumentation theory and formal logical theories of commonsense reasoning in Artificial Intelligence.

Traditionally, intriguing ideas ensue from the study of the distinctions between validity and invalidity and the related problem of coming to grips with the fallacies. Maurice A. Finocchiaro argues that the Oliver-Massey asymmetry between showing that a given argument is formally valid and showing that it is formally invalid does not hold. Sally Jackson proposes an explanation for the persuasiveness of fallacies. Erik C.W. Krabbe discusses some circumstances in which a formal fallacy can be tracked down. Douglas Walton gives an analysis of the straw man fallacy as a misrepresentation of someone's commitments in order to refute that person's argument. John Woods points out that the logical and semantic paradoxes push theorists, unannounced and often unaware, into idealism.

In the study of communication, argumentation has been a focus of attention from several angles. David Zarefsky distinguishes between four forces that have shaped argumentation studies in the speech communication discipline: the evolution of competitive debate, the infusion of empirical perspectives and methods from the social sciences, the recovery of practical philosophy, and the growing interest in social and cultural critique. From a psychological angle, Daniel J. O'Keefe discusses some interconnections between argumentation studies and persuasion effect research.

The volume closes with three chapters concentrating on linguistic aspects. Keith Stenning proposes a fresh approach to the tension between language as a formal structure and language as a social practice. M. Agnès van Rees makes an argument for taking into account the social interactional aspect when reconstructing discourse as a critical discussion. Francisca Snoeck Henkemans establishes a connection between the semantical descriptions of 'anyway' and 'even' and the characterization of independent and interdependent arguments.

The editors regard this volume primarily as a gambit. They hope that it will provoke the reader to follow up on it. Only if this happens there is a real chance that the various kinds of relations between logic and argumentation tentatively indicated in this volume can develop into a real bond.