

Logic is a branch of Rhetoric

Edwin Coleman

conspectus

exordium, in which I gain your sympathetic attention

I will show how we can better evaluate reasoning.

narratio, in which I state the case I intend to make

Logic is a branch of rhetoric, and better seen so.

refutatio 1, in which I refute prejudice against my case

Rhetoric was for over 2000 years a respected social institution.

Rhetoric is a rigorous and articulated art of argument.

So Rhetoric is not, as people commonly think, mere bombast.

confirmatio 1, in which I argue for the first part of my case

Rhetoric is the study of what makes texts persuasive.

The modes of persuasion are inference, authority and emotion.

Logic is the study of what makes inferences good.

So logic is a branch of rhetoric.

refutatio 2, in which I refute the obvious objection to my case

Appeals to ethos and pathos are necessary.

Appeals to ethos and pathos are not fallacies.

So appeals to ethos and pathos are legitimate.

confirmatio 2, in which I argue for the second part of my case

"Fallacy" is not a purely logical concept.

So rhetoric gives a better account of bad reasoning.

"Good reason" is not a purely logical concept.

So rhetoric gives a better account of good reasoning.

So, logic is better seen as a branch of rhetoric..

peroratio, in which I conclude my case

I have shown that logic is branch of rhetoric, and better seen so.

Exordium

In which I gain your sympathetic attention

I will argue that logic is a branch of rhetoric and better seen so. I am arguing for this thesis because I believe that the purposes of logic cannot be achieved unless it is accepted. By the purposes of logic, I mean the clarification of the notion of 'good reasoning' and the creation of tools for the composition and recognition of good and bad reasoning. I have been driven to my present views by my attempts to find out how to teach students to criticise texts which are trying to make a reasoned case. Recognising the inadequacy of formal logic for this purpose does not supply one with a satisfactory alternative, and the various notions of informal logic on offer seem to me insufficiently systematic and insufficiently well-grounded in the millenia-long traditions of textual criticism to which we are all heir. I believe that we can do better by reviving rhetoric.

Narratio

The statement of what I propose to show

My case is that logic is a branch of rhetoric, and better seen so.

First, I argue that Rhetoric is not what people commonly think. Rather than mere persiflage, it is the rigorous study of means of persuasion. Its present bad reputation deserves both explanation and contestation.

Next, I argue that since Rhetoric is the study of what makes texts persuasive, and since persuasion relies on three modes, inference authority and emotion, while Logic is the study of only one of these, namely what makes inference good, therefore, Logic is only one of three branches of rhetoric.

I go on to refute the obvious riposte that two rhetorical modes, the appeals to authority and emotion, are illegitimate. On the contrary they are both legitimate and necessary.

Finally I argue for the value of recognising logic to be only a branch of rhetoric. The previous arguments show that not all "fallacies" are bad arguments, so fallacy is not a purely logical concept and rhetoric gives us a better account of bad reasoning than can logic alone. Since persuasive worth depends on the author and audience as well as text, and not every reasoning tries to win assent to propositions, rhetoric which recognises these things, gives a fuller account of good reasoning than can logic alone. Therefore, rhetoric gives a better account of both good and bad reasoning than can logic alone, and logic is better seen as a branch of rhetoric.

Refutatio 1

Rhetoric is not, as people commonly think, mere bombast

Rhetoric has a bad press these days. Most people identify rhetoric with 'mere rhetoric' or 'empty rhetoric', allied with sophistry, trickery, hoodwinking, highly elaborate and flowery language. For example, the entries for 'rhetoric' and 'rhetorical' in the Macquarie Dictionary are these:

rhetoric: 1. *the art or science of all specially literary uses of language in prose or verse, including the figures of speech*

2. *the art of prose in general as opposed to verse*

3. *(in prose or verse) the use of exaggeration or display, in an unfavourable sense*

4. *(originally) the art of oratory*

5. *(in classical oratory) the art of influencing the thought of one's hearers*

and

rhetorical: 1. *belonging to or concerned with mere style or effect*

2. *having the nature of rhetoric*

3. *over-elaborate, bombastic in style.*

But if one examines the historical facts, it cannot be seriously held that Rhetoric is mere bombast, mere emotional appeal, or mere adornment, still less meretricious verbal trickery.

Rhetoric was for over 2000 years a respected social institution

The social institution of Rhetoric began in Greece about 500 BC and was associated with the development of societies in which political and legal decisions were made

on the basis of cases made by disputing parties in front of a persuadable audience. To the court and the political assembly was added the ceremonial occasion on which were made speeches of praise or blame, again for judgment by an audience. The immediate object of rhetoric was originally the preparation and delivery of these three kinds of speech. Anyone aspiring to power or status needed a grasp of rhetoric.

This need for rhetorical preparation assumed a considerable role in the education of the ruling classes from antiquity through the medieval period into the renaissance, though from the beginning it was in more or less overt competition and complementarity with philosophy, logic, grammar and other teachings. At times it assumed a complete dominance as the essential education. Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, probably the most canonical work on rhetoric, written about 100AD, has been claimed to be the most influential educational tract ever written.

As the social constellation changed from the rudimentary democracies of classical Greece and the early republic of Rome to the anti-democratic Roman Empire and Church/State systems of Christendom, rhetoric showed a surprising resilience in face of the narrowing of arenas for the speeches it allegedly concerned. In fact, from early times it had also been concerned with written texts, and this became much more prominent in the medieval period as the important genres of the sermon and the administrative letter took over from the legal and the political speech, though of course these were not eliminated. The third classical genre, the ceremonial speech of eulogy or censure, obtained a written form as in "On the Consolations of Philosophy", etc. In medieval education, the Trivium (the first three of the seven liberal arts - i.e. of the knowledge requisite for the free citizen) consisted of logic, grammar and rhetoric. The balance changed over time in favour of one or the other of these three, as did that between the Trivium and the Quadrivium (music, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic).

In the Renaissance, rhetoric was reasserted at first in opposition to the long predominance which logic had gained in scholasticism. It continued as a liberal art, but gradually as the two cultures separated, rhetoric was condemned on the specious grounds first assembled by Plato, and reduced to little more than the study of figures of speech, compensating for this narrowing of focus by a certain taxonomania; the last great works in the classical tradition are mainly enormous galleries of quaint terms for literary effects - anadiplosis, zeugma, asyndeton, prosopopeia, hypallage, bathos and all the numerous rest. These days Rhetoric is only a shadow of its former self, living on in stylistics and other forms of literary criticism, in Departments of Speech, and in the industry in "how to write a thesis/book/scientific paper etc". In my view it is overdue for a revival as a central intellectual tradition. I shall come back to the question why Rhetoric died as an intellectual tradition around 1800AD. Now it is time to examine the doctrine of Rhetoric.

Rhetoric is a rigorous and articulated art of argument

The subject of rhetoric is *the available means of persuasion in any given case* [Aristotle]. The art is practical as well as critical, providing guidance in the composition of persuasive texts as well as their evaluation. Classically, the texts of interest were speeches and fell into three genres, the forensic [court], the deliberative [assembly], the ceremonial [occasion]. These correspond to three important arenas for making speeches in the ancient world, the court, the political assembly and the formal occasion - funerals etc. This is the reason for interest shifting, in changed social circumstances, to other genres I have mentioned, such as the sermon.

The starting point for rhetoric is the recognition of the three main elements in the rhetorical process, the author, the text and the audience. Now this is quite a crucial point for us since the tendency in logic has been, particularly in our time, to concentrate on the text in abstraction from the author and audience. In a later section I will argue that the concept of good reason cannot be severed from these contextual elements. For the present let me continue sketching the bare elements of rhetoric.

We need to bear in the mind the kind of effect desired by the makers of the speeches which are the original subject of rhetoric. A speaker in a law court is looking for a favourable judgment, and a speaker in a political assembly for a favourable decision. In these two cases the speaker seeks finally to persuade the audience (the judge or jury, the voting body) to act in a certain way. I call this **persuasion to**. A speaker at a ceremony seeks to obtain a favourable attitude in the audience, to persuade them of the merits or short-comings of the subject of the speech - usually a person. This is **persuasion of**. These aims of persuasion stand in contrast to what is generally taken in logic as the sole point of argument, which is to gain the assent of the audience to some proposition - this I shall call **persuasion that**. This distinction which I have introduced should not be thought to create three different fields of endeavour, however, since each kind of speaker is likely to seek all three kinds of persuasion. But the main or final point of a text is generally one or the other.

The parts of the art of rhetoric are generally reckoned as five: heuresis, taxis, lexis, mneme and hypokrisis; or in latin, inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria and actio. That is, finding things to say, ordering what you say, how to put it, how to remember it and how to say it. The last two - how to remember it and how to say it - relate primarily to spoken texts and were gradually neglected as writing became more salient in western culture. Though interestingly they are ripe for revival in the electronic age, I shall ignore them here. Now for a few words about each of the other three parts of the art.

Heuresis, inventio, finding things to say

Classical rhetoric included standard lines of argument, known as topics, or places, including commonplaces and special places, which can be used to generate arguments for any given subject-matter. For example, the first on Aristotle's list is the topic of the opposite. Should you want to prove that temperance is beneficial, then you can consider the effects of its opposite, licence, and suggest that temperance is beneficial because licence is bad. And so on for a great number of standard ways to dream up arguments. The English term 'commonplace' has now lost almost all connection with this important technique, except in the phrase 'commonplace book'.

Rhetoric recognises two main kinds of argument, following Aristotle, the syllogism and the example. The first is still familiar, but the latter has been adopted into logic rather grudgingly as argument from analogy, allegedly a kind of induction.

Taxis, dispositio, ordering what you say

Rhetoric recognises that a text will have several levels of structure and that different parts of it will have different functions. For example, the introduction or *exordium* has the function of *gaining the sympathetic attention of the audience*. The other main parts usually distinguished are *narratio* or statement of the case, *confirmatio* or positive arguments for your case, *refutatio* containing negative arguments against the opposition, and the *peroratio* or summing-up. One can make further more detailed considerations of order.

Lexis, elocutio, how to put what you say

The third of the five "offices" of classical Rhetoric is lexis or elocutio, called style or expression in English. There are two main divisions here, first the study of grammar, diction and style in the narrow sense - there were thought to be three main styles, the low style, the grand style and the medium style, each appropriate for different circumstances. The second division of lexis concerns figures of speech: the study of tropes and schemes. Tropes are expressive choices which amend the plain or literal meaning of the words, as in metaphor or irony; schemes are expressive choices of balance, repetition and other structural features such as alliteration and isocolon.

Thus Rhetoric is not, as commonly supposed, mere bombast.

Confirmatio 1

Rhetoric is the study of what makes texts persuasive

Persuasion involves good inferences, authority and emotion

Having identified the three main elements in persuasive action as the author, the audience and the text, it is entirely natural to suggest, as Rhetoric classically does, that the persuasive good will be fostered by suitable attention to each of these; thus there are three **modes of persuasion**. These are the appeals respectively to ethos, logos and pathos, the powers respectively of evincing a credible personal character by the author, of proving by means of arguments, and of stirring the emotions of the audience.

The rhetor must present himself as authoritative, which in Aristotle comprises being *prudent* - that is capable of discerning the truth about the matter at hand; *virtuous* - that is, characteristically a teller of the truth; and *well-intentioned* toward the audience - so that the truth will be told on this occasion. The reason for this presentation is to motivate the audience to give the author credence. The means adopted by the author in order to do so are called generically the **appeal to ethos**, ethos meaning here the character of the rhetor.

Secondly, the text must be composed in such a way as to give the audience good reasons to accept the case being made. This is to some extent the province nowadays of logic as a sieve for arguments, but as we have seen Rhetoric is also concerned with standard ways to obtain arguments, as well as ways to organise them into a text and their means of expression. This is called the **appeal to logos**.

Thirdly, the author must present the case in such a way that the appropriate emotions are engaged in the audience, since emotions are involved in making some response to the case. Two thirds of Book II of Aristotle's Rhetoric (out of three books) is devoted to analysis of the various emotions and the circumstances under which they are felt. The rhetor needs this knowledge in order to put the audience in the right frame of mind for a favourable decision. This we call the **appeal to pathos**.

It is taken for granted that all three of these appeals are made in the text. Clearly if it is accepted that the rhetor must attend to all three of these appeals, rhetoric must comprise not merely the study of argument but also elements of ethics, psychology, politics and various related studies. Aristotle and all later writers agree on this. Naturally this point will only have force if we can show that the rhetor must indeed so attend. I will argue that he or she must; but first let us turn to consider the nature of logic.

Logic is the study of what makes inferences good

Logic is first and foremost the theory of the syllogism, i.e. of "discourse in which, certain things being stated, something other than what is stated follows of necessity from their being so" (Aristotle, Pr An 1.1). I am happy to adopt the view that logic concerns the notion of **following of necessity**, otherwise known as logical consequence, or entailment. but the phrase "of necessity" here is a troublesome one. No-one has given a satisfactory account of it. I think myself we would do better to abandon this formulation altogether. Nor do I think we should construe logic as the invention of a kind of contentless discourse in which everything else but consequence has been eliminated. The formal method, which consists in stipulating what formulas and what transitions among formula are permitted, and identifying necessity with derivability, simply extracts at one end of its machinery the modality which was inserted at the other. It does not explain but uses the notion of necessity as part of the concept of a derivation. The point of the study of logic is certainly in part to be able to appraise discourse for its value in respect of 'following of necessity'. But all real discourse has other kinds of value too. Moreover typically text-books on logic rarely limit themselves to the relation of following of necessity and also deal with non-demonstrative arguments. These are usually called 'inductive' interchangeably with 'non-demonstrative', and though this ludicrous identification seems to have passed relatively unchallenged for far too long, I shall not be taking it up here [see elsewhere in my writings, particularly **Three Kinds of Argument**].

Aristotle begins his Prior Analytics with the statement that the "subject of our

enquiry is demonstration"; but demonstration is soon relegated to the Posterior Analytics, his theory of science, because the premisses needed for demonstration are necessary and eternal - and these properties do not belong to the premisses of every syllogism, and anyway they need explanation. The Prior Analytics applies, it would seem, to all syllogisms, whatever the nature of the premisses, and therefore its topic is really the study of the syllogism in general. Yet not only that: Book II discusses the methods of induction and example, so that logic seems not to be confined to the study of the relation of entailment. But these arguments are labelled "akin to syllogism" and are included in that book along with *defects* in syllogisms thereby beginning their long association with disdain and condemnation.

One can jump several ways here: construe 'logic' broadly as is usually done in text-books, as comprising the study of entailment, non-demonstrative arguments and defects in arguments; or to restrict it to just the first two of these, abandoning "fallacy" as too unsystematic, or even just the first, abandoning non-demonstrative arguments as not good enough. Since arguments as used in practice are not typically demonstrative, and since in practice the treatment of argument by logicians is not so limited either, it seems to me reasonable to describe Logic as simply the study of what makes for good in appeal to logos. Anyone who wishes to restrict it must recognise that such a restricted subject of study is part of logic in the wider sense, and since I shall now argue that logic in the wider sense is part of rhetoric, the same conclusion holds, a fortiori, for logic more narrowly conceived.

Therefore, logic is a branch of rhetoric

Rhetoric recognises and studies three modes of persuasion, the appeals to ethos, logos and pathos, of which the appeal to logos is only one. Moreover, and for this reason, Rhetoric not only considers how to judge arguments but also where to get them and what to do with them. For each of these reasons it is apparent that Logic is simply part of Rhetoric, or as I have claimed, one branch of it.

This point may well cut no ice with logicians, even if my premises are not disputed, for one simple reason. The other two kinds of appeal - the appeal to ethos and the appeal to pathos - have often been denigrated by logic as worthless. If this were so then Rhetoric would be a broader study than Logic only in a rather Pickwickian sense, a bit like claiming that literature includes psychology because literature considers both real and imaginary characters while psychology is limited to real ones.

But this repudiation of the appeals to ethos and pathos is not correct, as I will now try to convince you. Incidentally this repudiation was not the course taken by Aristotle, nor even perhaps that of his more severe, more harrasing master, Plato.

Refutatio 2

Appeals to ethos and pathos are necessary and not fallacies, so legitimate

The rejection of the appeals to ethos and pathos stems from two mistaken ideas which I shall refute in turn, the idea that they are unnecessary, and the idea that they commit fallacies.

The appeals to ethos and pathos are necessary for quite simple reasons.

Most real cases are made in circumstance in which most of the propositions involved are uncertain. Every case involves ultimate, unjustified premises. Most often some or all of these will not be matters of common knowledge. If they are neither accepted or rejected by the audience already, they must be accepted on the author's say so if the case is to succeed. This is not reasonable unless the audience can put credence in the author. Therefore the author must make it plain, as far as possible, that the audience can so put credence in him or her. So the appeal to ethos is necessary.

In most situations in which people put forward persuasive cases, they wish to get the audience to act in some way. In order to get people to act you have to convince them that the action is desirable, and this involves enlisting their interests, which is precisely what the appeal to pathos is. So the appeal to pathos is necessary too. It is true that one can make a case that this is not so in scientific discourse, that there the aim of persuasion is simply to obtain assent to propositions. But even if that is so, which I do not believe but will not contest here, it remains the case that there

are many arguments which are directed to obtaining action. To restrict logic to the study of science, or even just pure mathematics, is in my opinion quite unjustified, but if it is done it must be done recognising that there is a more extensive study of argument in general which we will call something else if you wish, including this narrower 'logic', and itself in turn part of rhetoric.

One reason why some people are tempted to restrict their interests to pure cognitive discourse such as mathematics, and to redefine logic as concerned only with such discourse, is the idea that the appeals to ethos and pathos commit fallacies. Let us examine this widespread but mistaken idea.

Appeals to ethos and pathos are not fallacies

I begin with the appeal to pathos because, under the name appealing to emotion, this is unequivocally condemned by logicians. Copi dismisses it as "so evidently fallacious as to require little explanation here". Let us look briefly at the examples discussed in some exemplary texts.

Here is a first example which shows rather nakedly what's gone wrong:

Salmon defines the fallacy of **Appeal to Force** thus: "This fallacy occurs when a threat of force is somehow put forward as evidence for a conclusion."

I do not dispute the implication here that a threat of force rarely if ever constitutes evidence for a conclusion. But that is not the point, and Salmon is committing the fallacy of misconceived refutation. People do not put forward a threat of force as evidence for a conclusion; rather, threats of force are used to give people reasons to do things. Notice that I say "to do things": threats are rarely used to get people to assent to propositions, but usually to secure some action. The first confusion here is the erroneous attempt to treat all discourse as aimed at the fixing of belief - a characteristic error of intellectuals. The second confusion is the replacement of the good general term 'reason' by the more specific and theoretical term 'evidence'. One does not offer someone evidence when one threatens them; on the contrary, one is generally offering them violence or some more symbolic hurt.

Well all right, you may so, but it's still fallacious isn't it? A threat isn't a good reason to do something, is it? Well, if you think that you are clearly an intellectual living in an ivory tower. Of course a threat can be a good reason to do something. Only a fool refuses to hand over the money when confronted with the gun.

Still, the feeling may linger that there is something logically wrong with threats, if not pragmatically. I agree that there is, but we need a rather different framework in order to make clear what it is. If we suppose that all discourse is aimed at truth-stating then perhaps we do have to call an appeal to force a fallacy. But if we take a more realistic attitude to the nature of discourse we can simply observe that indeed a threat does not constitute evidence for a conclusion; but we keep in mind that 'good reasons' comprises much more than evidence.

Appeal to force is generally treated as a species of the fallacy of appealing to emotion, although this does not really make sense. Copi treats it as a separate fallacy, argumentum ad baculum, but his treatment is as bad as Salmon's. He give the example of Howard Baker warning White House staff in 1988 to have confidence in Ed Meese or else. Copi comments: "One may say that nobody is fooled by argument of this sort; the threatened party may behave appropriately, but need not, in the end, accept the *truth* of the conclusion insisted upon."

- Well, what argument, what conclusion? What Copi quotes Baker as saying was this: "The President continues to have confidence in the Attorney-general and I have confidence in the Attorney-general and you ought to have confidence in the Attorney-general, because we work for the President and because that's the way things are. And if anyone has a different view of that, or any different motive, ambition, or intention, he can tell me about it because we're going to have to discuss your status." The only possible conclusions here are

[1] You ought to have confidence in the Attorney-general.

[2] You can tell me about it.

Now as to the first, I think we should take 'having confidence' as showing support in public, when the argument becomes: you should do that because the President

does and we work for him and if you work for him you should do likewise. Now maybe the last premise is debatable - maybe you shouldn't always do likewise. But even if so, there's no mistaken inference here.

As to the second conclusion, the argument would seem to be: if you mean not to show support in public then you should tell me because if so you can't work for the President. I don't see any incorrect reasoning here either; of course it relies on the previous inference, but so what?

What's wrong with this example is that Baker is not trying to prove some proposition but to get people to do something, namely, close ranks. And he uses (quite) good arguments. Perhaps people ought not to get the sack for public disloyalty, but wanting not to lose your job simply is a good reason to toe the line (which is not to say that it is the only consideration).

Copi identifies appeal to emotion as *argumentum ad populum*, that is appealing to the mob - a curious identification in itself - and treats appeals to force and pity as different from appeal to emotion. I'd have thought pity was an emotion, but perhaps Copi is guided by the existence of a plethora of names for fallacies of the form **argumentum ad something or other**. [Hamblin has discussed the invention of these "fallacies", (which are not listed by Aristotle), by Bacon, Locke and others, as part of a psychological turn given to logic in the aftermath of the dismemberment of Rhetoric and the enthronement of Logic by Petrus Ramus.] This confusion reflects the fact that all the faults in question concern the relation of the audience to the case being made - something logic cannot deal with.

Copi's examples of appeal to emotion are Hitler's speeches, though he doesn't cite any, and advertisements, again with no examples. He admits that actually advertisers don't generally give arguments, But "an argument ad *populum* commonly lies not far beneath the surface". He goes on "When it is suggested that we ought to make the purchase because the item in question is "new" or "sexy" or "best-selling" or is associated with wealth or power - the implicit claim that this conclusion follows from those premises is plainly fallacious. " Well, it is not plainly fallacious: it can be made quite valid by providing another implicit premise, namely that we ought to buy what is new or sexy. If he can find implicit claims, so can I. This one might be false, but the argument is not fallacious for that reason, it just has a false premise; ironically, only a few pages earlier, Copi makes the usual solemn point that logicians unlike mere mortals only call fallacies mistakes in reasoning, not mistaken beliefs! But let's pretend that this does not matter. The really important confusion is Copi's saying "the implicit claim that this conclusion follows from those premises". Is there such an implicit claim? Do advertisers really imply such things? They do not. What they imply is that novelty or sexiness is a good reason to buy something; and so it may be, particularly if you want something new or sexy. No-one is claiming that X being novel *entails* that Y should buy X. This muddle is symptomatic of the way logicians like Copi admit non-demonstrative inferences in one place but define them out of existence elsewhere. His definition of fallacy, as an argument whose conclusion could be false though the premises be true [8th ed p92], actually includes all non-demonstrative arguments.

Copi's discussions of appeal to pity, which apparently is not an emotion, is equally shoddy. Throughout the discussion there is a constant suggestion that these various appeals **replace** genuine argument. But if this were so, they would **therefore** not be mistakes in reasoning at all. It is hard to believe that this is the best that celebrated logicians can do.

Let's try Barry and Rudinow instead (they are less celebrated). We find exactly the same nonsense: taking as example Mark Anthony's classic speech urging revolt against Brutus ["friends Romans countrymen"], they say "to the extent that the speech is deliberately designed to fuel, direct and exploit the crowd's reaction, rather than present an argument in support of rising up against Brutus, it is case of mob appeal." Well, it may be - but is it then a case of fallacy? Surely not, since it is not an *unreliable inference*, which is what they call a fallacy, since it is not an inference at all, just to the extent that is fuelling etc rather than presenting an argument, i.e being a mob appeal.

These treatments of the appeal to pathos are not very convincing. let's try the

appeal to ethos. The appeal to ethos is discussed by Quintilian as using the **authority** of the speaker [Q IIIviii13]; the latin translation of 'ethos' is 'auctoritas', from which comes our word 'authority'. Appeal to ethos is labelled fallacious by logicians under the name of the appeal to authority. Actually this latter generally means something different in current logic texts - namely, appealing to the "authority" of persons other than the author of the text, and in classical rhetoric that falls under the heading of external means to persuasion, in the notion of **testimony**. I have three main points to make: [1] exerting authority in the more original sense is necessary because all texts have unjustified ultimate premises, as I have already argued; [2] appeal to the authority of others can be perfectly reasonable - as all logic texts admit; but [3] the legitimacy of appeal to the authority of others must rest ultimately on appeal to authority in the original sense of appeal to ethos.

Good authors tend to hedge a good deal about appeal to authority. This fallacy, it turns out, is only a fallacy some of the time. This qualification in itself is incoherent; but I will illustrate via our exemplary texts that actually it is not fallacy any of the time [see also my paper ***There is No Fallacy of Arguing from Authority***].

The "fallacy " of appealing to authority

For example the following remark of Salmon's is just false: "To argue that a conclusion is correct merely because some authority figure accepts it is fallacious." Such a way of putting things itself commits a fallacy of equivocation, between "arguing for X, because Y accepts it" - i.e arguing for that reason - and "arguing that [X is so because Y accepts it]", i.e arguing that Y's acceptance is the reason for X's being so. This simply confuses the knowledge of the fact and the knowledge of the reasoned fact, which Aristotle distinguished for us some time ago [An Post ch13]. That some authority accepts a fact C is a good, though defeasible reason to believe it; but - of course - it does not explain why C is so. Other reasons for believing it might make plain why it is so, and therefore be preferable. But often such desirable reasons are not to be had and we must fall back on what we do have, such as authoritative opinion. Appealing to testimony is actually perfectly legitimate. It goes on all the time in scientific discourse. In fact a scientific paper which does not appeal to authority by proper references is unacceptable.

Consider the way Copi characterises this fallacy: it is the fallacy of **inappropriate** authority. American logic books seem to be obsessed with the way sports stars endorse cars and things in ads (perhaps logicians are not asked to). But to say that "We are urged to drive an automobile of a given make because a famous golfer or tennis player affirms its superiority..." is one thing; to gloss this two lines later as "Whenever the truth of some proposition is asserted on the basis of the authority of one who has no special competence in that sphere, the appeal to misplaced authority is the fallacy committed" is quite another. We are not being urged by such ads to accept the truth of some proposition P, but to take some action A; and the argument being used is generally not that the sports star S affirms P but that she does A, and we should too if we admire S. There is nothing wrong or irrational in trying to emulate people we admire; what is wrong with these ads is usually the lie that the sports star does in fact use the brand advertised. Their "authority" is in fact not being appealed to in any useful sense, but rather their emulability.

Consider by contrast what Barry and Rubinow have to say about appealing to authority. They distinguish a variety of fallacious ways to appeal to authority - claiming an authority to be invincible, or appealing to someone not really expert in the relevant field - they are severe on testimonials too - or who is mendacious, or when expert opinion is divided, or by appealing to popular opinion or tradition or alternatively novelty, or provincialism. But in each case they can only show that the desired conclusion might still be false, that appeal to authority is not demonstrative. We have already recognised that good arguments need not be demonstrative, so there must be some other fault here - surely. Let's see what if anything is really wrong in their examples.

[1] Invincible authority. 'P must be true since Aristotle, who is never wrong, says so'. Well, no authority is indefeasible, so it is the claim that Aristotle is never wrong, not appealing to him, that is the mistake. There's no bad *inference* here.

[2] To say that Einstein's views about politics should not be given weight just because he is an expert on physics, *presupposes* that appeal to genuine authority is sound. Here again then the problem is a simple mistaken *belief* - that Einstein is authoritative; not a mistaken *inference* of appealing to authority.

[3] I have already dealt with testimonials: if Don Meredith, whoever he is, says Lipton's tea tastes good to him, then this is either a good reason for my drinking it if I want to ape him, or not, if I don't or more probably simply a lie; if there is a mistake it is caused by lying or the advertisers' wrongly thinking I want to ape him.

[4] To appeal to unspecified authority ['studies show'] is not a fallacy just a poorly executed appeal to authority.

[5] Appealing to an expert with an axe to grind - say, tobacco company scientists on cancer - is once again not a fallacy but either an indirect lie or a poorly executed appeal.

[6] To appeal to one expert when others disagree is not fallacious but the only way to settle disputes. Barry and Rudinow say that in a climate of controversy of it is no good citing just one expert "in support of an assessment"; but it is if you believe that view and want it accepted. Controversy is all about pushing your view. It is not fallacious to make your case rather than the opposition's - except on a very narrow view of the point of argument - which I dispute below.

[7] To appeal to popular opinion that P won't prove P, of course, but if there is no acceptable expert view to counter it, you use what you have: Aristotle was happy to do so, and when they say "since it is possible for a large population to be mistaken or misled, as history has amply demonstrated time and again, such an appeal is not a reliable guide to the truth" they are twice wrong. They abuse the term 'demonstrate' and they conflate "reliable" with "indefeasible". Of course one can and must rely on popular opinion - until it is corrected. Philosophers frequently go into battle against the received wisdom - as perhaps I do here - which implies that there is such received wisdom which others generally rely on. For example in recent decades one has not had to argue that the analytic/synthetic distinction is flawed, that's been the common opinion and generally assumable in debates. Similarly, the fact/value distinction, if not justified silently as common opinion, is backed up by appeal to the authority of Hume, rather than by repeating his arguments.

[8] Appealing to tradition is not fallacious if one's audience wishes to be traditional. Their example is the alleged fallaciousness of urging a woman to change her name on marriage because it's traditional. Of course it is true, as they say, that tradition need not dictate present behaviour - if it did argument would be superfluous; but that is not, as they claim it is, the point. The point is really, what the woman in question wants to **do** with her name - to conform or to show independence. In either case, knowing what is done traditionally will be highly pertinent; and someone who likes conformity is quite right to cite it in urging the change on her. Similarly with appeals to novelty or provincialism. The real fallacy here is Barry and Rubinow's, in ignoring the need for the appeal to pathos.

So, appealing to authority is simply not a fallacy.

To tighten the screw a little further, consider why it is in fact good to appeal to authority in those cases which our authors will admit. Appeal to the authority, of others is just indirect appeal to authority in the original sense of the appeal to ethos; but then the basis for it can only really be found starting from such appeals.

The argument

Aristotle says X, so X

rests for its worth, if it has some, on the prior claim made by Aristotle

I say X.

So the question is, when should one accept bald claims? And the answer is, as I have already argued, when the claimant is authoritative. And how do we judge that? Well, that's precisely the point of all the attention in Rhetoric to the need for the rhetor to have and to evince prudence, virtue and goodwill.

I conclude that appeals to ethos and pathos are legitimate.

Confirmatio 2

Logic is better seen as a branch of Rhetoric

Rhetoric provides a better account of bad reasoning

All these mistaken claims of a fallacy rest on two errors. Appeals to authority may go wrong but that's not because they are appeals to authority. Promises may not come off either. Second, most of these discussions ignore the real aims of parties to disputes, which are rarely simply to tell truths. Many so-called "fallacies" are simply not bad inferences. Why is the concept of fallacy so confused? No two writers seem to agree on exactly what fallacies are or how to classify them. This is particularly odd in that one might expect the notion of fallacy to be correlative to that of validity, on which as an explanation of good reasoning there is much agreement. However this is not so. One reason is that there is a persistent desire to attach some psychological element to fallacy - "an argument which seems valid but is not" - and the other I think is that there is an essential incoherence in the way the notion of fallacy is usually linked to that of good argument.

It goes like this in Barry and Rudinow [and essentially the same in Copi]: there are two kinds of argument, deductive and others. These others are called inductive, wrongly but traditionally; we're not going into that. The good deductive arguments are the deductively valid ones, this being a binary notion explained in terms of truth and possibility; deductively valid arguments are completely reliable [given the premises]. Inductive arguments are not deductively valid but they are still valid to greater or lesser degree. A fallacy is defined as an unreliable inference. Unreliable is not explained but it seems to mean not very reliable, probably some idea of less likely than not is being used; it is not made clear. But when various kinds of argument are described as fallacies, it is on the grounds that they *could* lead us astray: the conclusion could be false, even given the premises. But this is the notion of invalidity, so that any non-deductive argument should be called a fallacy; but of course it is not. The incoherence shows up in the common hedging about whether a particular fallacy is really fallacious or not. Yet if a type of argument is a fallacy it surely just plain is one - and moreover one would expect all arguments of that type to be bad. The psychological element is useful here in covering the confusion - the suggestion is that fallacies involve mistaking a bad argument for some similar good one. Not that this is shown in any of the examples, though.

What is wrong with all this is that good arguments can be less than compelling without being inductive. One reason for this is that their worth depends on the audience they are addressed to: giving 'name-changing is traditional on marriage' as a reason for Ms X to change hers on the big day is bad if she wants to be an independent person, but good if she wants to please convention; it is simply unclassifiable in ignorance of the audience.

So rhetoric gives a better account of bad reasoning.

Rhetoric gives a better account of good reasoning

Attacks on rhetoric, beginning with Plato's, condemn it because it allows a place for bombast, appeal to the emotions and adornment. But it cannot be reduced to these things on that account, nor can it without a further argument be condemned for its association with them. Speeches largely bare of these elements are easily found in rhetorical discussions. For the speech must be suited to the case in hand and the devices to be used accordingly chosen. In rhetoric one recognises appeal to reason and ethics as well as appeal to the emotions; bombast may serve if good arguments are lacking, but is not mandatory; and the kind and level of figuration again depends on the case. The idea that successful communications ignore the emotions, and just state the facts and nothing but in purely literal language, is an ideological position which should be accepted by no-one prepared to examine real cases.

Persuasive worth depends on the author and audience.

Behind such accusations there is an image of what argument and reasoning should be. This image has it that rational belief is based only on valid inference from true premises; that believers are disinterested, seeking only to know truth, unconcerned about money, fame etc; and that the purpose of persuasion is solely to spread truth. All three of these ideas are completely erroneous. In reality, communicators have different interests which frequently come into conflict and occasion case-making; more generally, they have different perspectives and interests which come

into conflict and occasion discussion. Limited, interested, motivated, plural: that's what communicators are like - why else would communication have come to exist? Nothing could be further from the truth than this pretence that the man of ideas is above interest, is pursuing knowledge for its own sake, that all we scientists have the unique and common aim of knowing the truth, in the service of which all valuable communication exists. The truth is real people have interests, and they have aims other than knowing truths; Not every reasoning tries to win assent to propositions; important issues require decisions under uncertainty; engaging the will requires firing the emotions; self-defence against rhetoric requires a knowledge of it; and rhetoric is always used anyway, particularly by its opponents, starting with Plato. Of course, rhetoric can be put to bad use - but so can logic; of course rhetorical technique can be used in the absence of real content - one sees that in every issue of a philosophy journal. The essential point is this: rhetoric is not an optional extra in communication, an idea enshrined in the notion of the rhetorical flourish. On the contrary, communication is rhetorical, inevitably and throughout. Oddly enough, the extension of rhetoric to texts not apparently concerned to make a case has been relatively painless - the Rhetoric of Fiction, stylistics, literary criticism in general - somehow the idea has gained a stranglehold that in many arenas - science, logic and philosophy in particular, texts are produced whose purpose is incontrovertibly to put a case, but which are not rhetorical. This is plain nonsense. Rhetoric is concerned with, precisely, how to put a case. The myth that it's your case not how you put it that counts, is actually light-years from the true state of affairs in all these fields.

So rhetoric gives a better account of good reasoning.

Putting these two lines of argument together, then, by returning to rhetoric we can move towards a better account of both good and bad reasoning than logic alone can furnish. Therefore, logic is better seen as a branch of rhetoric.

Peroratio

The conclusion of my case

I have been arguing that we would do well to acknowledge logic to be a branch of rhetoric. In doing so, I have been exemplifying my thesis, in ways which can be found in most philosophy papers. I have appealed to ethos and pathos in addition to logos. By making it plain that I know something about the history of rhetoric, I have encouraged you to accept as true assertions about it for which at present you may have no direct evidence. By suggesting that to the extent we are all concerned to "teach reasoning" we shall find it valuable to adopt my view I have appealed to you via pathos. I have used unexceptionably both analogy and example, methods which conventional logic treats with suspicion. My paper is organised according to the format long-sanctioned by rhetoric, while on such issues logic is quite silent. By refuting the common misconception of rhetoric and sketching its real content, by showing that appeals to ethos and pathos are both legitimate and necessary, by showing how rhetorical ideas can improve our notions both of fallacy and good reason, I have shown that logic is a branch of rhetoric - and that it is better seen so.

Bibliography

Some background information in the rhetorical tradition can be found in
Barthes, R [1988] "The Old Rhetoric",
translated in *The Semiotic Challenge*, Oxford, Blackwell
Corbett E [1965] *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, New York, OUP
Nash, W [1989] *Rhetoric*, Oxford, Blackwell
Quintilian, trans. H Butler [1921] *Institutio oratoria*, London, Heinemann,
(Loeb Classical Library, 4 vols)
Vickers, B [1988] *In Defence of Rhetoric*, Oxford, Clarendon Press

The example texts I cited are

Barry V and Rudinow J [1990] *Invitation to critical thinking, 2nd ed*,
Fort Worth USA, Holt Rhinehart and Winston
Copi I and Cohen C [1990] *Introduction to logic, 8th ed*,
New York, Macmillan
Salmon M [1989] *Introduction to logic and critical thinking, 2nd ed*,
San Diego USA, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich