

Reasoning and Arguing, Dialectically and Dialogically, Among Individual and Multiple Participants

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Abstract Within three of the most well-known contemporary approaches to argumentation, the notions of solo argumentation and arguing with one’s self are given little attention and are typically argued to be able to be subsumed within the dialectical aspects of the approach being propounded. Challenging these claims, this paper has two main aims. The first is to argue that while dialogical argumentation may be most common, there exists individual (monological) dialectical argumentation, which is not so easily subsumed within these theories. Second, in order characterize this type of argumentation the paper also offers distinctions between the interrelated notions of dialectical, dialogical, and quasi-dialogical, reasoning and argumentation, within an individual or between multiple participants, which I hope provide useful precision for the field.

Keywords Dialogical · Dialectical · Reasoning · Argumentation · Solo argument · Interior argumentation · Practical argumentation

1 Introduction

The study of argumentation is commonly distinguished along three lines: the dialectical, logical (including informal logic), and rhetorical, which focus on argument as a procedure, product, and process, respectively (Wenzel 1990; Tindale 1999, 2015; Johnson 2009). Each theory includes elements of the others and despite their differences, all three perspectives keep “dialectical” considerations near the core. This is clearly the case with van Eemeren and Grootendorst’s Pragma-dialectical model (2004) which

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prioritizes the dialectical, but it is also explicitly stated in Johnson's Informal Logical theory of Manifest Rationality (2000, pp. 159–161). Even Tindale's articulation of the Rhetorical Model of argumentation provides a prominent place for dialectical considerations (2004, p. 89).¹ Within these theories, the notions of solo argumentation and arguing with one's self are given little attention and are typically argued to be able to be subsumed within the dialectical aspects of the approach being propounded. Challenging these claims, this paper has two main aims. The first is to argue that while dialogical argumentation may be most common, there exists individual (monological) argumentation,² which is not so easily subsumed within the aforementioned theories. Second, in order to characterize this type of argumentation the paper also offers distinctions between the interrelated notions of dialectical, dialogical, and quasi-dialogical, reasoning and argumentation, within an individual or between multiple participants, which I hope provide useful precision for the field.

To achieve these aims, the remainder of the paper begins by reviewing how internal argumentation is addressed in three contemporary theories of argumentation (Sect. 2). Having argued that there is a consistent necessary dialogical element in these theories, in Sect. 3 I discuss Blair's (1998) request to distinguish the dialectical from the dialogical. Pushing the distinction between dialectical and dialogical, in Sect. 4 I argue that individual dialectical argumentation is not easily subsumed within the theories discussed, which results in a distinction between quasi-dialogical and individual dialectical argumentation. Section 5 highlights the conflictual aspect of "dialectical" to ground a characterization of argumentation, distinguishing it from reasoning, which, following Broome (2013), is taken to be a rule-governed operation on the contents of your conscious attitudes. To fill out the story, Sect. 6 streamlines the previous distinctions and shows how they apply differently depending on whether they are occurring within one participant or among multiple participants. To show the benefit of the distinctions offered, in Sect. 7 I provide a brief application of the ideas to a real-world example provided by Zampa and Perrin (2016). Section 8 concludes the paper by summarizing the results of the arguments and pointing to their implications for future research.

2 The Dominance of the Dialogical

Many of the most cited theories of argumentation identify as dialectical theories. These theories also claim that despite being dialectical, they are able to account for solo/individual instances of argumentation and arguing with one's self. In this

¹ One notable exception to these approaches that does not prioritize the notions of the dialectical or dialogical is the epistemological approach developed and advocated for by Biro and Siegel (2006a, b). In time, the developing field of virtue argumentation (Aberdein 2010; Cohen 2013) may prove to be another case.

² One aim of this paper is to clarify and/or distinguish some related notions such as "internal," "individual," and "solo" argumentation. I ask for the reader's patience before clarifying my view on these notions and suggest that for introductory purposes, "solo argumentation" can be understood as arguing with an absent interlocutor (Blair 1998) and "arguing with one's self" as what has been called intrapersonal argumentation.

section I will provide a brief overview of how the notion of individual argumentation is addressed by the leading dialectical theories to set the ground for consideration of a problematic case and justify the need for the conceptual clarifications argued for in the rest of the paper. We begin with the Pragma-dialectical theory developed by van Eemeren and Grootendorst, before addressing the Informal-Logical approach as developed by Ralph Johnson, and then the Rhetorical approach as developed by Christopher Tindale.

2.1 Van Eemeren and Grootendorst's Pragma-Dialectics

One of the most well-known and influential theories of argumentation, the Pragma-dialectical theory, defines argumentation as “a verbal, social, and rational activity aimed at convincing a reasonable critic of the acceptability of a standpoint by putting forward a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed in the standpoint” (2004, p. 1). As a social activity, they claim that argumentation is “as a rule directed at other people” (p. 2). Attached to this quote, however, is a footnote which quickly points out that “[e]ven seemingly “monological” argumentation as used in self-deliberation can be considered social because it is part of a “dialogue intérieur”” (p. 2, n. 3). Thus, in the pragma-dialectical view, internal argumentation can still be considered a dialogue, and accordingly, be dealt with using the pragma-dialectical theory in the same way it would be used to analyse and assess dialogical argumentation between two independent people.

Noticeably, however, after this brief discussion of monological argumentation the wording in the extrapolation of the rest of the theory predominantly changes from argumentation being directed at other “people” to concerning different “parties”. This change in terminology seems crucial for accommodating a monological perspective into their framework. This could be because a monologue involves one person, while a dialogue involves (at least) two persons. In order to model the argumentation a single person has by himself or herself as if it were a dialogue, there has to be a way of introducing the duality or plurality of a dialogue into the situation of the monologue. This is achieved by replacing the role of the “person” with that of the “party”—i.e., the representative of a point of view. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst write:

The pragma-dialectical argumentation theory assumes that, in principle, argumentative language use is always part of an exchange of views between two parties that do not hold the same opinion, even when the exchange of views takes place by way of a monologue. The monologue is then taken to be a specific kind of critical discussion where the protagonist is speaking (or writing) and the role of the antagonist remains implicit. Even if the role of the antagonist is not actively and explicitly performed, the discourse of the protagonist can still be analyzed as a contribution to a critical discussion: The protagonist makes an attempt to counter (potential) doubt or criticism of a specific or non-specific audience or readership (2004, p. 59).

The notion of a party rather than a person moves the focus from people to disagreements. A “party” could then be any given number of people advocating the

same standpoint. In short, a party is a representation of a position rather than a referent for a person holding a position. In this way, one person could also have multiple parties in mind which (who) disagree.

The separation of party from person is not, however, always clearly made in the text and it seems that different people, rather than different abstract parties, are the assumed main focus. For example, van Eemeren and Grootendorst emphasise the institutional and non-institutional settings where “the inhabitants of the realm can have their exchanges—from official deliberations in law courts and political gatherings to unofficial get-togethers and encounters in offices, pubs, at home, or at the proverbial village pump” (pp. 31–32). Reference to gatherings, get-togethers, and encounters, combined with a lack of mentioning situations where an individual is isolated, points to the subtly but deeply ingrained notion that argumentation is conducted via multiple people, even if theoretically they do not think this necessarily has to be the case.

It might be expected that a self-declared dialectical theory of argumentation typically involve multiple participants, but what about a product-oriented approach? Johnson’s theory of Manifest Rationality is one such approach and is the topic to which we now turn.

2.2 Johnson’s Informal Logic

For Johnson, who develops the theory of Informal Logic, argumentation is a practice that leads to the production of a product, an argument. The practice of argumentation, on his account, is “the sociocultural activity of constructing, presenting, interpreting, criticizing, and revising arguments” (2000, p. 12). As a practice, argumentation is conducted by an agent or agents. When discussing the agents involved in the practice of argumentation, Johnson proposes that “arguing involves two participants; or if you prefer, it has two poles and the process takes place between those poles” (2000, p. 157). He then separates the two poles into “the arguer” and “the Other”—the critic. Even more forcefully, he argues that “the agent of the argument—the arguer—cannot really be understood as apart from the receiver of the argument—the Other. Both are essential participants in the process, and both have an active role to play” (2000, pp. 158–159). He is quick to point out, however, that “[i]t may be the case that the same individual plays the role of both arguer and critic. The arguer puts forward an argument, then steps back and criticizes it” (p. 157). In this way, one agent can represent both “poles”—function as arguer and critic—or in pragma-dialectical terms, represent both parties.

Things become less clear, however, when, after discussing the agents involved in argumentation, Johnson moves on to characterize the practice of argumentation along the lines of three central features. The practice is characterised as being teleological, dialectical, and manifestly rational (2000, pp. 159–161). Discussing the dialectical character Johnson makes a direct link to the dialogical and separates them both from monological speech:

The root meaning of dialectical is dialogue - a logos (which I take to mean “reasoned discourse”) that is between two (or more) people. That requires

more than just speech between two parties because as we all know, such talking may be nothing more than a monologue conducted in the presence of another. Genuine dialogue requires not merely the presence of the Other, or speech between the two, but the real possibility that the logos of the Other will influence one's own logos. An exchange is dialectical when, as a result of the intervention of the Other, one's own logos (discourse, reasoning, or thinking) has the potential of being affected in some way. (2000, p. 161)

The possibility of one logos influencing another, when applied to an individual playing both roles of arguer and critic, requires an explanation for how one individual can maintain multiple logoi. One common answer is to argue that every individual can think of another individual and argue with herself as though that Other was there—a sort of role playing.³ In this way the individual would have their own logos as well as a representation of what another's might be. However, this line of thought is not without its problems, one of which Johnson recognizes and addresses—the limits of individual imagination.

Even if we grant one individual multiple logoi it is unclear how well stepping back and performing both roles can be done. Johnson recognizes that, “it is also known full well that intellectual imaginations may be limited, that there may be a failure to see certain limitations in the arguments produced. In eagerness, certain items of evidence may be overrated and others may be underrated or ignored. And it does not matter how fertile imaginations are; there will be objections that cannot be imagined or anticipated.” He goes on to suggest that “[t]hese are the limitations for which the Other can compensate” (2000, p. 158). Indeed, work done on cognitive biases provides confirming empirical evidence for the worry that an individual might overrate, underrate, or ignore certain evidence (Kahneman 2011; Sunstein and Hastie 2015). Consider, for example, the confirmation bias, which describes the human tendency to confirm the views we hold rather than be critical of them (Ross and Anderson 1982: 149–150).

If an Other is required to compensate for these limitations, however, we are faced with a tension in the theory regarding how many participants are required to participate in the practice of argumentation. On the one hand, Johnson specifically states that we can conduct individual argumentation by stepping back, by thinking of two poles rather than two people. On the other hand, since individuals have limited imaginations and stepping back may still result in overlooking evidence or reasons, more than one individual is required to compensate for this imaginative limitation. Aiming my argumentation at the imagined Other in my mind can only take me so far and in some cases not very far. Consider, for example, if my limited imagination fails to provide any opposition at all—either in failing to imagine an appropriate Other as the bearer of critical reasons, or as a failure to imagine the critical reasons themselves.

At this point it should also be noted that individual's differing imaginative abilities also remain an important issue for the Pragma-dialectical theory mentioned above. Although they provide useful suggestions for how to mine the context of an

³ See Jacquette (2007) for a discussion of this activity.

instance of argumentation for clues regarding the standpoints and reasons of the real and/or imagined party/ies in conflict (van Eemeren 2011), addressing the limitations of human imagination in the construction of another party would strengthen the case that single-participant argumentation can be subsumed within a dialectical/logical framework in both theories.

2.3 Tindale's Rhetorical Argumentation

Along with the pragma-dialectical and informal logical perspectives, a third major stream of argumentation studies deserves our attention, namely, the Rhetorical theory. Rhetoric, which classically evokes images of one speaker (a rhetorician) reciting a persuasive piece to a listening group of others, has also undergone theoretical developments which highlight its multi-participant aspects (Tindale 2004). Tindale declares that the audience, against the traditional view, "is not a passive consumer of arguments but plays an *active* role in the argumentation. The nature of the audience sets the terms of the premises, which are formulated in light of theses accepted by those to be addressed" (2004, pp. 21–22). The goal of a rhetorical arguer on this account is to gain the adherence of the audience to a thesis in a reasonable way (Tindale 1999). Thus, unequivocally, "[r]hetorical argumentation is dialogical" (2004, p. 89).

The audience can in some cases be a single "auditor", but in many cases is much more diverse—a "composite audience" (Tindale 2015). In this way a number of identifiable audiences may be considered as contributors to argumentation beyond proponent and opponent. Consider a case in law where each lawyer may be seen to be arguing with the other, but also with the judge and/or jury while also considering public opinion. In addition, a speaker may be considered to be addressing more than one opponent simultaneously while using a single utterance, as happens quite often in political argumentation (Mohammed 2013a, b). In these and other like cases, argumentation may be best understood as more than mere binary dialogue.⁴

It should be noted that this dialogical sense and the accompanying idea of the monological are different from both views presented above. First, on this view, the dialogical nature of argumentation permeates below the level of argumentative turns as indicated by sentences or propositions. Rather, "every word is directed toward an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates" (cited in Tindale 2004, p. 97). Building up from the level of the word, an utterance too "has essentially both an author and an addressee; it cannot exist in isolation" (Tindale 2004, p. 96). Thus, rather than identifying the number of participants, this notion of dialogical highlights interaction and cooperation and is

⁴ On another rhetorical perspective, argumentation can be considered inherently tripolar. On the tripolar view, an arguer and opponent may both be influenced by an audience (present or imagined). On this view, during a dialogical exchange each side may operate as though "searching for allies" even if they are physically only two. Doury writes: "La parole rhétorique, en tant qu'elle est adressée à un auditoire, constitue une recherche d'alliés, qui oeuvre par le biais de la persuasion. Dans le même temps, comme lieu de l'affrontement entre un discours et un contre-discours, elle est une forme de guerre verbale, où chacun cherche à prendre l'adversaire en défaut, et peut-être, finalement, à le réduire au silence" (Doury 1997, p. 16).

contrasted with monological, which rather than meaning “single” means uncooperative, dominating, and aimed at victory (2004, p. 98, see also, pp. 91, 101).

In this way we can see that the rhetorical perspective has incorporated consideration of multiple and diverse audiences, but we are still left to ask if such a view leaves room for arguing with one’s self, or if it requires more than one interlocutor? In some places, Tindale’s discussion of participants appears quite close to the previous two views presented above. For example, he credits Bakhtin with enabling us to see that “the argumentative context is alive with the contributions of *two (or more) parties*” (Tindale 2004, p. 115 emphasis mine). The use of a term such as “parties”, however, seems to allow that the imagination of one individual could account for two parties without attaching people to them. As will be argued below, however, it is no easy task to answer the question, “what constitutes a party?” and to separate a party from a person.

Further, as was mentioned above, claiming that every word is directed toward an *answer*, leaves open the possibility that the answer can come from one’s self. Tindale addresses the issue of the personification of the Other in a footnote, advising that “[w]here an interlocutor is not present, ‘one is presupposed in the person of a normal representative, so to speak, of the social group to which the speaker belongs’” (2004, p. 114, n. 4). This “person of a normal representative (...) of the social group to which the speaker belongs” is then further elaborated using Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s notion of a universal audience (2004, pp. 127–130) and later clarified via a discussion of composite audiences (Tindale 2015). Without digressing into a discussion of the universal audience, it suffices to say that also in the rhetorical model, it seems argumentation requires at least the imagining of a separate other person, be it a real or typical individual, or a hypothetically constructed universal or composite audience derived from an actual audience.

3 Dialectical and Dialogical

The discussion thus far has shown how there is a consistent thread of an Other that runs through all three of the abovementioned approaches to argumentation. In these theories, the Other is used (among other things) to explicate how the dialectical/dialogical aspect of the theory remains even when applied to an individual arguing with him or herself. This Other (be it a party, pole, or general representative) is said to interact with the arguer, to be a critic playing the opposing side of an internal dialogue. Rarely, however, is it made clear what if any difference there is between these theories being referred to as dialectical or dialogical. As we have seen, Johnson even explicitly links the term “dialectical” with “dialogue” making them appear nearly synonymous.

At the end of his discussion of the limits of the dialogue model of argument, however, Blair expressed a wish that the terms “dialogical” and “dialectical” be consistently distinguished. “It would be nice” he suggested, “if the term ‘dialectical’ were reserved for the properties of all arguments related to their involving doubts or disagreements with at least two sides, and the term ‘dialogical’

were reserved for those belonging exclusively to turn-taking verbal exchanges” (Blair 1998, p. 338). In short, Blair wants us to separate a dialogue between people from the notion of doubt or disagreement.

In what follows, I take Blair’s suggestion seriously and develop it in relation to a practical example in order to bring to light some problematic cases of individual argumentation that cannot be dealt with in the ways suggested by the three theories considered above. In light of the fact that Blair and I are up to related but ultimately different things, it will help to first briefly sketch Blair’s motives for separating the “dialogical” and “dialectical” so that our differing concerns are clearly distinguished.

Blair begins his discussion by addressing Walton’s view “that dialogue is a necessary condition of argument, that arguments always occur in a context of dialogue” (1998, p. 326). His argument proceeds by presenting a hierarchy of 12 argument-dialogue types moving from what he sees as their most basic to most complex forms. The first simplest type is identified as a dialogue wherein “the typical objective is for one party to force the other into conceding a proposition that contradicts some other proposition that the other party had earlier endorsed” (1998, p. 327). In low level dialogues, turns are so simple that arguments are distributed over several turns. With each dialogue type, the participants gain new permissions and abilities thus adding to their complexity. Type 8, he observes, marks the beginning of a sea change in that “[o]nce an interlocutor in a dialogue is permitted to offer, and in turn support, several lines of argument for a proposition, he or she is no longer responding to a single question or challenge from the other party” (1998, p. 330).

The most complicated type of turn, type 12, is identified as the type of dialogue that occurs in forums such as two papers exchanging views or as in an entire academic monograph. In such “turns” the interlocutor can present all of the characteristics comprising the lesser complicated dialogues, such as two or more arguments against a challenge, that also contain two or more lines of argument in support of new propositions. Beyond this, however, they can also include “(a) arguments intended as refutations of alternatives to the main proposition, and (b) arguments intended as refutations of arguments aimed at refuting the main proposition” (1998, p. 330). Dialogues approaching type 12, Blair argues, are “solo performances” best considered non-engaged or quasi-engaged, as opposed to the first 7 types of dialogue which are engaged by necessity. As such, he chooses to call these “solo arguments” as opposed to engaged “duet arguments” (1998, pp. 332–333).

Why does Blair find it important to highlight the difference between engaged and non-engaged arguments? First, he notes that in solo cases the respondent is typically absent. This means that the argument must be developed without directly questioning the respondent, leaving doubts about how they would reply. In addition, in some cases the identity and opinions of the respondent(s) are not known, leaving the arguer free to choose which audience to address. Further, in regards to the norms of argumentation, Blair notes that “in non-engaged dialogues in real life, the arguer has no such guidance as to the norms he or she is expected to satisfy. In

some cases, the arguer's best recourse is to examine the current practice in the context and try to meet the norms exhibited therein" (1998, p. 334).

He then points to a number of the rules provided in the pragma-dialectical theory and questions their application to these solo arguments.⁵ For example, he points out rule six which states "[a] party may not falsely present a premise as an accepted starting point or deny a premise representing an accepted starting point" (cited in Blair 1998, p. 335). His concern here is that "[i]n solo arguments, just what the audience accepts as starting-point premises will often not be known, and when the audience's own arguments are not known, *eo ipso* neither can be their premises" (ibid). He also questions rule nine, which "says that 'a failed defense of a standpoint must result in the party that put forward the standpoint retracting it and a conclusive defense in the other party retracting his doubt about the standpoint'" (ibid). He doubts the applicability of this rule to solo argumentation because used "in solo arguments, the speaker will tend not to recognize a failed defense of his or her position, and certainly cannot be expected to do so, nor can the arguer have any assurance that arguments which conclusively establish points the audience initially doubted will successfully persuade the audience" (1998, pp. 335–336). His main point through these illustrations is to question the applicability of rules designed for ideal dialogues to instances of solo arguments in non-engaged dialogues.

4 Quasi-Dialogical and Dialectical

Blair is openly concerned with what happens when an individual aims at presenting arguments to an audience that does not or cannot respond or interact. He discusses the implications resulting from "non-engaged" argumentation, that is, argumentation with an Other who is not present. However, I think there is another sense of solo argumentation worth addressing. Taking inspiration from, but moving in a different direction than Blair, I would now like to consider a hypothetical example of individual practical argumentation, which can also be considered "solo", to see how it relates to his observations. The definition of this activity will become clearer below, but as a first pass, we can consider it as one individual conducting internal argumentation regarding what he or she intends to do.

The example is the generally familiar experience of deciding what to eat for breakfast. Further, using the first person, let's pretend I have narrowed it down to eggs or cereal (but not both).⁶ Thus, in my mind there are conflicting options and I could elaborate a line of reasoning supporting a decision to eat eggs and elaborate a line of reasoning supporting a decision to eat cereal. Those lines would then come into conflict, creating argumentation. For now, let us pretend that the first turn/thought I have is, "I will eat cereal because it is quick and easy" and that the

⁵ Blair addresses 9 rules in total. While I do not fully subscribe to all of his thoughts on each of the rules he discusses, addressing all of our differences does not add to the point being made here.

⁶ This is not to say, however, that this is the simplest form of individual practical argumentation. The example could be simplified to posit only one reason for eating eggs and a challenge against it, without considering a positive proposal of alternative options at all. Using this slightly more complicated example is useful for illustrative purposes, but nothing hinges on its complexity.

possibility of eggs remains in mind although no line of reasoning supporting it has yet been extrapolated.

At this point we can already make our first comparison with Blair's work. Whereas Blair notes that in cases of non-engaged dialogue the respondent is typically absent, in the breakfast example, this is not the case. Rather than being called absent, in our example it might be said either 1) that there is no respondent who could be absent or 2) that the respondent is not absent at all, but rather, is fully present. Taking the first position, that there is no respondent, one might cite the fact that what I eat for breakfast does not involve anyone else. When I think or say the turn regarding eating cereal, even if eggs are an option, no respondent is around to defend such a position. If, however, we take the second position and I am considered the protagonist and antagonist for both "I will eat cereal" and "I will eat eggs", then the respondent is not absent at all. The respondent *can* be questioned directly (because it is me) and any doubts about how they (I) will respond are only a product of the fact that they have to be thought about, i.e. they have yet to be created.

A similar point also becomes clear when considering how Blair deals with the sixth pragma-dialectical rule about falsely presenting starting points. How can one falsely present a starting point (mutually agreed initial premise) to one's self? If I don't agree with my own starting points (e.g. I should eat breakfast), I cannot continue the argumentation any further. Since I am the only agent, I am also immediately aware if such a conflict arises.⁷ Blair's concern here clearly indicates a dialectical but yet still imagined dialogical argument with a separate person, in that his concern is with the imagined other's acceptance or rejection of the starting points. In this sense, the arguer is proceeding semi-dialogically rather than non-dialogically or totally in the solo realm. In a full solo sense, where I am arguing with myself about what to do, all of the starting points are known because I have direct access to them. Thus, the problem is not about the certainty of the starting points being falsely presented as agreed upon when they in fact are not, as Blair was concerned with in a quasi-dialogical situation, but rather about the benefit of such a rule to the case at all.

Further, Blair's concern about the ninth rule, that "in solo arguments, the speaker will tend not to recognize a failed defense of his or her position, and certainly cannot be expected to do so", also seems problematic applied to our example. When I settle on an intention to eat either the eggs or the cereal (or not), the failure of the defence of the other position(s) becomes immediately clear and it does not seem problematic to say I am expected to recognize this failure.⁸

⁷ An individual may unknowingly smuggle in a starting point un/sub-consciously. In such a case the starting point is not "falsely presented" but is not presented at all.

⁸ Another critique of the dialectical/dialogical perspective on argumentation comes from Finocchiaro for whom "an argument is an attempt to persuade someone that a conclusion is true by giving reasons in support of it *or* defending it from objections" (Finocchiaro 2003, p. 5. Emphasis in original. See also p. 18; 1999). It is important to note that he does not emphasise speakers or turn exchanges, but rather the support and defence of a conclusion. As such, his view could be considered to constitute an evaluative approach rather than dialectical or dialogical.

As is now clear, there are at least two notions of “solo”. Solo in Blair’s sense means “without an independent respondent *but* imagining one”. As such, a situation where a respondent is imagined could better be called “quasi-dialogical”.⁹ Quasi-dialogical argumentation seems to be what is envisioned as arguing with one’s self in the above-mentioned theories as well as in all of Blair’s examples. Pushing the distinction between the dialectical and dialogical, however, “solo” can also mean “*without* an independent respondent and *not* imagining one” which may be best described as “arguing *by* one’s self” so as to remove the dialogical connotation associated with “with” in “arguing *with* one’s self”.¹⁰ When I am arguing by myself about breakfast, I may not be concerned with anyone else at all, real or imagined. I think “Do I want eggs?” and I answer “Yes, because...” or “No, because...”. Then I think, “Do I want cereal instead?” and I formulate similar answers to this question. I then go on to juxtapose the content of the answers and settle on an intention to have one or the other. In such individual practical argumentation, no one else need enter the situation.

Of course, *sometimes* another person does enter this conversation. For example, while I am trying to decide on breakfast I might think, “My mother would tell me to eat eggs.” In such an instance, it could be argued that this shows the dialogical character of all argumentation, even what I am calling individual practical argumentation.¹¹ I am not convinced it does, however, based on the following few responses. First, this does not happen in every instance and thus the qualifier “all” would need stronger proof. Second, when it does, Blair’s observations once again become pertinent. If I imagine my mother, the assumption then would be that I am arguing with my mother about what to eat even though she is not there. In that case, the situation is better described as quasi-dialogical, if indeed it were an argument with my imagined mother about what she believes I should do. But that is not what is happening here. Instead, I am arguing by myself about what I intend to do, and my guess at a reason my mother might give could count simply as one reason in support of one option rather than as a discussion with her as a critical “Other”. The content of her suggestion becomes a reason of my own. As my reason, the situation remains dialectical without being dialogical and remains practical (concerned with intention), rather than theoretical (concerned with belief).

What then about using the depersonalized “party” to identify an opposing side or position? Abstracting a person to a party for argumentation still seems to require the creation of a persona in order to be able to argue with it. This is because a party cannot simply be a doubt or opposing conclusion. A party is the *holder* of a doubt or conflicting argument or conclusion. To participate in argumentation, the party has to have doubts, reasons, and/or standpoints unto itself. But which reasons and why? Changing the answer to this question will undoubtedly change the argumentation between the parties.

⁹ I am thankful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that Krabbe (1998), in his commentary on Blair’s original presentation of this work, uses similar terminology when he relabels the most complicated dialogues as “quasi-dialogical monologues”.

¹⁰ I am very grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

¹¹ Cf. Dascal (2005) and Greco Morasso (2013).

Consider, on the one hand, if I am arguing with myself but imagining two of me as the two parties in argumentation.¹² In this case, both of me have all of the same reasons and the only difference between them are their conclusions. This seems to be an unnecessary and complicating step to settling the matter. Rather than dealing directly with the content of my reasons and weighing the reasons themselves, I am duplicating everything to force the reasons into a procedure designed for two people where both of the “mes” immediately share all starting points and understanding of acceptable rules of conduct.

One objection here is that there can be two “mes”, as may be thought to be the case in a game of chess against yourself. In another example, one part of me may value solidarity, while another values competition and the two “mes” can argue as separate entities. As the objection has it, I would not then be disposing of the same premises.¹³ I think, however, that these are idealized examples. To take the second example first, I do know, in fact, that I value both solidarity and liberty even if I also recognize that these sometimes conflict. This is precisely because these values are not housed in restricted, compartmentalized, and separated mes who cannot interact. Rather together they are “me”. I thus have access to and can make free use of all supporting and opposing reasons from both beliefs. If need be, I can try to bracket one value as a sort of thought experiment, but I can never actually instantly rid myself of it to such an extent as to lose knowledge of the reasons why I hold it. Perhaps clearer, trying to play chess with yourself is quite difficult to do naturally precisely because of the feeling that you are always cheating. This cheating feeling, I think, comes from the fact that you cannot help but have access to the thoughts of the “other side” and as such are always rigging the game either directly through knowledge of the other side’s strategy or move, or indirectly by pretending not to be able to know.

If, on the other hand, I do not consider the Other party as another me, but rather try to abstract to make an imaginary interlocutor—perhaps as Tindale suggests, a “normal member of the social group to which I belong”¹⁴—and attribute that Other a web of reasons and beliefs, then all I would have to do is call the party “Jane” and the same concerns regarding the separate but absent Other raised by Blair apply. The situation would be quasi-dialogical argumentation, which I have agreed is problematic for the reasons Blair provides, but is also qualitatively different from individual practical argumentation. Further, and perhaps most importantly, when a separate interlocutor is present in argumentation, he or she brings all of their own creativity and knowledge to the situation. When someone is only represented in my mind, however, it may spur new thoughts to try to think like he or she may, but it cannot compete with the new

¹² This and the remaining concerns in this section become especially important when considering the externalization of argumentation assumed in pragma-dialectics and other commitment based theories of argumentation.

¹³ I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for this second example.

¹⁴ This point applies equally to other suggested imaginary audiences such as a community of model interlocutors (Blair and Johnson 1987) or a universal audience abstracted from the real audience (Tindale 1999, 2004). In the breakfast example, the universal audience would also have to be abstracted from me—the real audience.

creativity in reason-giving or objection-creating and responding an actual interlocutor would bring.¹⁵ Here rises again our concern with the imaginative ability of an individual arguer mentioned above. Recall Johnson's concern that our imaginations are limited, no matter how fertile they are.

Of course, we also do not reason in a vacuum (Perret-Clermont 1980). Indeed, all sorts of factors influence us, including other individuals such as the above-mentioned hypothetical mother. At what point, however, does a piece of information I have learned elsewhere become mine?¹⁶ If we follow the Bakhtinian line presented by Tindale above, every word I use has an Other associated with it. While this may be the case, it does not seem that stopping to identify that Other for every word would be possible or useful for argumentation or reasoning analysis or evaluation. Instead, in instances of quasi-dialogical argumentation, recognizing that I am arguing with a *represented* other, and in instances of individual practical argumentation, recognizing that I am arguing by *myself* dialectically, seem like more accurate descriptions of the phenomenon and starting points for suggestions of norms for analysis and evaluation. In short, although argumentation may be built up from, and only possible because of social factors like those that are required to learn language more generally, it does not always seem to be of value to try to reduce it back down to its social origins when analysing or evaluating it.

At this point I have stressed the distinctions between dialectical and dialogical in terms of individual practical argumentation. I have used this discussion to argue that given the unique characteristics of individual practical argumentation, which in some cases can be considered dialectical but not dialogical, it is not as easily subsumed within the above-mentioned theories of argumentation in the way they generally propose—by considering it to involve an Other and thus be considered as a quasi-dialogical situation. However, to be clear, I am not claiming that this criticism warrants abandonment of these theories or that there is any foundational problem with most often considering argumentation as (quasi-)dialogical in one way or another. I only hope to have pointed to one under-considered, but relatively commonly conducted form of argumentation that poses difficulties and questions the benefits of the predominant approaches to the situation.

To help fill out the distinctions already made and provide some indication of their place among other argumentative activities, the next section will address how these distinctions can apply to the distinction between reasoning and argumentation.

¹⁵ Real interlocutors have also been found to be especially creative in situations of genuine dissent, which emphasises their benefit to argumentation as compared with contrived dissent, which may be imagined by a single agent (Schulz-Hardt et al. 2002).

¹⁶ I am sympathetic here to the idea expressed by Michel de Montaigne: “for, if he embrace the opinions of Xenophon and Plato, by his own reason, they will no more be theirs, but become his own”.

5 Reasoning and Argumentation

I generally agree with Broome's characterization of conscious reasoning as "a rule-governed operation on the contents of your conscious attitudes" (Broome 2013, p. 234). On this conception, reasoning is a phenomenon that occurs in the mind. While reasoning may in some instances be sub- or unconscious, it is also often an active phenomenon—a conscious activity that we do. Here, I am only concerned with its conscious manifestation. As conscious, reasoning can also be made explicit by putting it into words (2013, p. 222) and these words may be written or recorded. However, as a mental activity, "reasoning is a process whereby some of your attitudes cause you to have a new attitude" by following certain rules (2013, p. 221ff). You may also reason using attitudes you already have, in which case reasoning confirms that attitude. For theoretical reasoning, some belief attitudes in the process of reasoning can cause a new belief attitude. For practical reasoning, some belief and intention attitudes in the process of reasoning can cause a new intention attitude. On this characterization, reasoning can be used for a multitude of purposes, including, but not limited to, deriving new knowledge, confirming or finding new support for existing beliefs and intentions, and for providing an answer to an open question.

Although Broome is not an expert in argumentation, I believe his account of reasoning is also in basic agreement with Walton's claim that reasoning can be identified "as a kind of abstract structure, which can nevertheless be dynamic and interactive in some cases, as well as static and solitary in other cases. In this account, reasoning is characteristically used in argument, but it can be used in other pragmatic contexts as well" (Walton 1990, p. 401). Considering these two characterizations together, it is important to note that reasoning can be interactive—it can be dialogical. While I think it is most common for reasoning to be conducted individually in the silence of one's own mind—insofar as people tend to think more than they speak (even if actively using words)—there is no reason why this has to be so. Reasoning can be conducted with multiple participants and is quite often done so. Think, for example, of working out a mathematical problem with a colleague, or coming to a conclusion regarding what time the train will depart. Such conversations may simply be ones where each participant contributes reasons leading the discussants to a joint conclusion. If, however, reasoning can be dialogical, then what is argumentation?

I take argumentation to turn on the notion of conflict.¹⁷ In the description of reasoning, the emphasis was on getting to a conclusion from a starting point. A conflict may occur when there is disagreement or doubt about any of the steps in, or the conclusion of, the reasoning. As such, conflict is extra to reasoning (or an unreasoned conclusion) and can thus be thought of as something theoretically separate, though in practice the two are often intertwined.

¹⁷ A number of scholars recognize the importance of conflict, be it direct challenge or mere doubt, to argument(ation) albeit in varying ways and degrees (cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004; Johnson 2000; Walton 1990).

For example, the notion of an argumentation scheme combines reasoning and argumentation. The scheme in isolation can be thought of as a pattern of reasoning. Only when the pattern of reasoning is accompanied by corresponding critical questions, which by their nature of being critical involve doubt or disagreement—in other words, conflict—does it turn from a pattern of reasoning into an argumentation scheme.¹⁸ Reasoning, strictly speaking, does not involve doubt or disagreement. Reasoning produces a line of reasoning leading to a conclusion. That line of reasoning, in part or whole, can then be challenged or put to test against other lines of reasoning for alternate actions or conclusions (including refraining from action) resulting in argumentation.

Centring on the notion of conflict to distinguish reasoning and argumentation meets Blair's distinction between the dialogical and dialectical. Recall that for Blair, "dialectical" can be "reserved for the properties of all arguments related to their involving *doubts or disagreements* with at least two sides" (emphasis mine). Taking his suggestion seriously, then, we can say that all argumentation is necessarily dialectical, but is not necessarily dialogical and no reasoning is dialectical even though it may be dialogical.

Such a strong theoretical distinction is admittedly not always easy to apply in practice. For example, one objection comes from mathematical proofs. From one point of view, a mathematical proof can be considered "the non-argumentative, non-dialectical reasoning that deduces [a] proposition from axioms, postulates, and previously proved theorems"¹⁹—what I am calling reasoning. However, from another point of view, a mathematical proof "is an argument for sure" (Krabbe 2013, p. 34), one which "typically attempts to persuade oneself or others of the truth of the theorem in question by rational means" (Finocchiaro 2003, p. 11). As such, the non-argumentative, deductive reasoning of a mathematical proof can be argued to also operate on a dialectical dimension.²⁰

I think that fully answering this objection would require a discussion regarding whether or not the creation of a proof necessarily implies a challenge to its related theorem. If it does, then on the characterizations presented in this paper, a proof would be an argument in all cases. However, I am sceptical that this is the case. Although I think it is uncontroversial to say that a proof always contains reasoning, often deductive, two complicating factors have to do with the creation and the use of the proof. If the proof is created after the theorem and in response to a doubt or challenge, it is easier to think of it as reasoning being used in an argument. However, if the proof comes first and is only an expression of the steps taken to reach an associated theorem, then I do not think it would be accurate to refer to it as an argument. As such, there are important aspects of mathematics that are paradigm examples of (non-dialectical) reasoning so conceived, and there are important aspects of mathematics that consist of argumentation and are dialectical.

¹⁸ This characterization is not explicitly spelled out in the literature but does not seem opposed to it. I am grateful to Fabrizio Macagno for discussion on this point. See also, Macagno and Walton (2015) and Walton et al. (2008).

¹⁹ This wording comes from an anonymous referee to whom I am grateful for pressing this example.

²⁰ For discussion regarding this and other similar issues see Aberdein and Dove (2013).

Perhaps more pragmatically, however, I would also like to suggest that using my proposed distinction could provide communicative clarity to the case. Using “dialectical” to indicate doubt or disagreement could signal that at least the speaker or writer is understanding conflict to be present. If someone were to say (as odd sounding as it may currently be) “here is my dialectical proof”, we would understand that the proof was created in response to a real or perceived challenge. Whereas, if she or he said “here is my non-dialectical proof” we would understand the intent of the proof as an expression of reasoning. In other words, it would allow us to determine which view the speaker is holding between the two points of view raised above: a proof as the reasoning deducing a theorem or as a dialectical defence of it.²¹

To conclude this section, in light of these distinctions, I thus prefer to avoid the expression “an argument” to point to the abstract object of a premise conclusion complex that lacks conflict.²² Most often, “a line of reasoning” can be used in its place. Where reasons are used to support a conclusion which is in opposition to another claim or which is produced as a result of doubt, “argumentation” can be used to capture the conflictual character.

6 Individual and Multiple Participants

Having addressed much of the discussion regarding the number of people involved in reasoning and argumentation above, I only wish to draw a few points together here. As has been demonstrated thus far, participants in reasoning and argumentation can be both real and imagined. Given the power of imagination, an individual can conduct monological reasoning and argumentation by coming up with reasons for a conclusion and using that reasoning to compete with doubts or conflicting reasoning of their own creation. But an individual can also imagine arguing with an identifiable Other. Of course an individual can also conduct genuinely dialogical argumentation with a real Other, but she or he can also genuinely reason with an Other without conflict. Further, this characterization generally fits for both practical and theoretical reasoning insofar as an Other can attempt to persuade you of a belief or to intend to take an action.

The following chart can help summarize the above discussion, and amounts to a characterization (rather than strict definition) along with few examples of each activity, which might serve as useful illustrations. Since argumentation is always dialectical, where it is also dialogical I have indicated dialectical in brackets (Fig. 1).²³

²¹ It would be interesting to see if proofs (number and/or quality) change depending on an argumentative or non-argumentative motivation.

²² Perhaps contra Simard-Smith and Moldovan (2011) who argue for arguments as abstract-objects.

²³ I recognize that there might be room for individual reasoning that is quasi-dialogical. This could happen, for example, if while alone and trying to figure out the train departure time an individual asked herself “How would X figure this out?” In light of my position that reasons from another (real or imagined) become one’s own, however, I have chosen to omit it from the diagram. One could add the branch to the diagram without any detriment to the points I have made here.

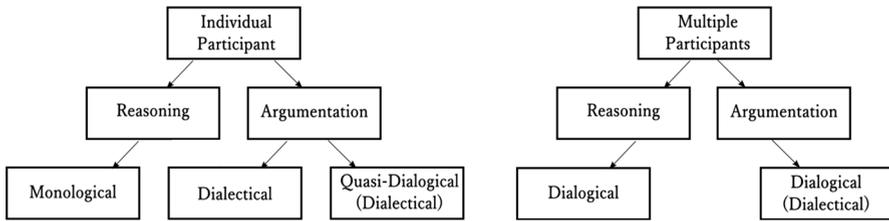


Fig. 1 Reasoning and argumentation conceptual distinctions

6.1 Individual Participant

Monological Reasoning: A lone individual using reasons and rules to come to a conclusion.

Examples: Thinking the common “Socrates is a man” example; Reasoning (although perhaps incorrectly) that “If the streets are wet, it must have rained.”

Dialectical Argumentation: A lone individual challenging (including doubting) their own line of reasoning and/or its conclusion.

Examples: Deciding what to eat for breakfast; Considering the reasons pertaining to why the sports team I expect to win, might lose.

Quasi-Dialogical Argumentation: A lone individual imagining challenging, or responding to the challenging (or both), of the line of reasoning or conclusion of another individual.

Examples: Imagining a disagreement with Descartes about his proof for the existence of God, or how he might disagree with yours; Imagining how my partner would argue against buying a new television.

6.2 Multiple Participants²⁴

Dialogical Reasoning: Two individuals contributing reasons that, following rules, lead to a conclusion.

Examples: Two detectives sharing information to discover the identity of a killer (Broome 2013, p. 223); Jointly contributing to the solution of a math problem with a teacher.

Dialogical Argumentation: Two engaged individuals in a discussion involving challenging, or responding to the challenge of, at least one of their lines of reasoning or an unreasoned conclusion.

Examples: Arguing with a child about cleaning his or her room; Arguing with a colleague about whether or not it will rain this afternoon.

²⁴ The use of the word “multiple” in this title is purposeful. The term “dialogical” identifies precisely two participants, but I believe the points made in this paper may also apply to what have come to be known as “polylogues”—communicative situations with more than two participants (Lewinski 2010; Lewinski and Aakhus 2013)—and as such, anywhere the word “dialogical” appears, it may be replaced with “polylogical”. I have limited discussion here to dialogues to fit with previous research and for clarity.

7 An Application

Before concluding, using the distinctions presented above, I would like to provide a brief sketch of how they could be applied to a real world case. The chosen case has been taken from the work of Zampa and Perrin (2016) who analysed the decision making of a journalist identified as “MB” who works for the Swiss newspaper *Corriere del Ticino*. Using a method called retrospective verbal protocol (RVP), Zampa and Perrin analyse a corpus of statements by MB articulating his reflections of his decision making while producing the news. In all cases, MB was working alone when preparing the news items and his thoughts, collected shortly after the activity of news production, are characterized as reflections of him ‘speaking to himself’. In the remainder of this section I will (with thanks) borrow two of their examples from MB to show how my distinctions apply.

The first example concerns MB’s selection of one part of a long speech to use for quotation. Zampa and Perrin explain that “The part of the British Prime Minister’s speech the journalist is elaborating at this point concerns the European Union’s ability to properly deal with the diversity of its members. This matter regards Switzerland too, a country that has chosen not to join the Union, but has tight economical (sic) relations with it” (Zampa and Perrin 2016, pp. 19–20). Following the numbering system provided by the Pragma-dialectical theory (van Eemeren et al. 2002, pp. 68–78), Zampa and Perrin (2016, p. 20) reconstruct MB’s statements as:

- 1 It is useful to quote this part of the speech²⁵
 - 1.1 by speaking about this topic, one keeps the reader stuck to the text
 - 1.1.1 Swiss citizens identify with the topic
 - 1.1.1.1 Swiss citizens realize that Switzerland is in the same situation, even though it is not explicitly stated
 - 1.1.1.1.1a Swiss citizens have “a series of schemes for the interpretation of reality”
 - 1.1.1.1.1b if these schemes are evoked (sic)

In lieu of the distinctions presented above, I think this reconstruction is best classified as monological reasoning. The conclusion “It is useful to quote this part of the speech” is arrived at by the reasons identified below it, all of which come from MB, himself. And, since there is no indication of doubt or disagreement, this example does not appear to me to be argumentation.²⁶

It may be argued that since MB takes Swiss citizens into account, this example is better classified as quasi-dialogical reasoning. However, as mentioned, appealing to what he thinks about their knowledge is just a reason of his own. Further, his

²⁵ Each utterance is taken from an originally collected corpus and has been translated from Italian. Corpus location indicators for each reference can be found in Zampa and Perrin (2016).

²⁶ Cf. Zampa and Perrin (2016, p. 20) who, using pragma-dialectical terminology, classify this as an example of argumentation: “a non-mixed difference of opinion, i.e. a standpoint confronted with doubt.”.

consideration of the audience here only operates as a part of the content of his reasons and is not a matter of engaging with them as an imagined interlocutor.

The second example concerns an instance where MB “wonders whether he should add a particularly significant quote” (Zampa and Perrin 2016, p. 21). This example is reconstructed from the corpus as:

1 I should include “we cannot harmonize everything”

1.1 it’s important

1.1.1 what the European Union wants from Switzerland is harmonizing

1.1.2 in the discussion between Switzerland and the European Union there is exactly the issue of harmonizing

2 I should not include “we cannot harmonize everything”

2.1a “we cannot harmonize everything” is only one of many things I have not been able to say

2.1b I cannot include everything

2.1b.1 I have no space left

2.2 I did not manage to include it before

(Zampa and Perrin 2016, p. 21)

In this example there is a clear conflict between whether the quote should be included or not. The first line of reasoning supporting the standpoint that the quote should be included (1), is in conflict with the second line of reasoning supporting the quote’s exclusion (2). As such, following my distinctions from this paper, the two conflicting lines of reasoning taken together qualifies as argumentation. Further, I think the example is best classified as individual dialectical argumentation. This is because the conflict is not the result of a real or imagined dialogue with an Other. If MB had been addressing his imagined boss as taking up one of the conclusions and supporting line of reasoning, I would then classify it as quasi-dialogical argumentation.²⁷

8 Conclusion

In this paper I have distinguished and touched upon some of the relations between dialectical and dialogical, reasoning and argumentation, among individual and multiple participants. I have sided with Broome (2013) that reasoning is a mental process that takes an individual from one or more attitudes (e.g. beliefs, intentions) to another. Argumentation has been characterized as involving a challenge to a claim or to reasoning making it dialectical, in the sense of involving conflict—i.e., doubt or disagreement. Although argumentation always involves conflict, I have

²⁷ Cf. Zampa and Perrin (2016, p. 21) who classify this as a mixed difference of opinion, i.e. where one party’s standpoint is met by another party’s opposing standpoint (van Eemeren et al. 2002: p. 3).

also argued that argumentation is not necessarily dialogical, which involves a conversational interchange with one (or more) other persons taking turns. Nor is it necessarily quasi-dialogical, which involves imagining such an interchange. An individual can engage in monological reasoning or in argumentation that is dialectical or quasi-dialogical. Multiple participants can engage in dialogical reasoning or in dialogical argumentation. In light of these conceptual clarifications, I have also argued that individual practical argumentation cannot be as easily fit within the leading argumentation theories as has thus far been posited.

Working with this conceptual framework may add a dimension of clarity as well as raise new questions within and across the theories of argumentation addressed at the outset (and perhaps beyond). For example, it would help clarify the tension in Johnson's exposition of the theory of Informal Logic by separating a situation where one person has two positions and where one needs to rely on an Other (real or imagined) for imaginative/creative purposes. It could supplement the Pragma-dialectical approach by separating situations of (quasi)dialogue from the resolution of a doubt or difference of opinion by one's self. While the Pragma-dialectical theory has demonstrated great power applied to dialogical and quasi-dialogical cases, a further development could address monological (in my sense) resolutions of a difference of opinion especially in terms of the application of the rules for a critical discussion and their corresponding connections to fallacy. Finally, Tindale's Rhetorical theory of argumentation could use these concepts to develop new articulations of the process of the gaining of one's own adherence to a thesis, as well as to clarify the relationship between addressing a universal audience and determining one's own subjective course of action. Although unlikely to ever happen, agreement on these characterizations would also help keep the meanings of the ideas being represented clearer as researchers in reasoning and argumentation work across differing theories.

Acknowledgements I am grateful to the anonymous referees of this article for their detailed and insightful comments on earlier drafts. Many thanks also to all of the members of the ArgLab at IFILNOVA, who actively participated in the development and challenge of these ideas. All errors remain my own. Funding was provided by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (Grant No. PTDC/MHC-FIL/0521/2014).

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