

ANNOUNCEMENTS

At the meetings of the Western APA (Chicago, May 7-10), there will be a panel discussion of the relationship between formal and informal logic. The organizer and chair of the panel is John Hoaglund (Christopher Newport College). The discussants are: Ralph Johnson (Windsor), Gerald Massey (Pittsburgh) and John Woods (Lethbridge). The abstract for Johnson's presentation and Woods's presentation are below, Massey's was not available as we went to press.

Title: Informal Logic's Indispensable Formality

Presenter: John Woods
University of Lethbridge

Contemporary theorists interested in a rapprochement between formal and informal logic might find it instructive to examine the example of the father of logic. It is significant that Aristotle had, and sought, no theory of necessitation or argument-validity. What he wanted was a wholly general theory of argument and a wholly general theory of deductive reasoning. To these ends, he fashioned a core logic, the logic of syllogisms. Syllogisms are valid arguments cut down by restrictions which make their theory a relevant intuitionistic logic. The main restrictions are that a syllogism's premisses must not be idle (relevance and nonmonotonicity), that conclusions not repeat premisses (premiss-consistency), and that conclusions not be multiple (intuitionism). Although Aristotle had no doctrine of logical form, it is clear that the logic of syllogisms is a formal theory. Although Aristotle's interest in syllogisms was motivated by his interest in argument and reasoning, syllogisms are neither pragma-dialectical nor psychological, or cognitive, structures. They are thoroughly acontextual. Even so, Aristotle chose to theorize about syllogisity rather than validity, because syllogisity-principles adapt in a natural way, though not the very same way, to pragma-dialectical rules for argument and psychobiological conditions on inference. Neither the general theory of argument nor its counterpart for inference is, or could be, a formal theory. Aristotle was the first informal logician.

Title: The Relationship between Formal and Informal Logic

Presenter: Ralph H. Johnson
University of Windsor

Abstract: The issue of the relationship between formal and informal logic depends strongly on how one understands these two designations. While there is very little disagreement about the nature of formal logic, the same is not true regarding informal logic, which is understood in various ways (often incompatible) by various people. After reviewing some of the more prominent conceptions of informal logic, I will present my own, defend it and then show how informal logic, so understood, is complementary to formal logic.