Argumentation, Metaphor, and Analogy: It's Like Something Else

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Abstract: A "good" arguer is like an architect with a penchant for civil and civic engineering. Such an arguer can design and present their reasons artfully about a variety of topics, as good architects do with a plenitude of structures and in various environments. Failures in this are rarely hidden for long, as poor constructions reveal themselves, often spectacularly, so collaboration among civical engineers can be seen as a virtue. Our logical virtues should be analogous. When our arguments fail due to being uncivil and demagogic, since we inhabit the arguments we build, we are all crushed beneath our flawed reasoning. This mixed metaphor takes us to a self-referential analysis of argumentation, analogy, and humor. I argue that good argumentation strives to collaboratively convince rather than belligerently persuade. A convincing means toward this end is through humorous analogical arguments, whether the matter at hand is ethical, logical, theological, phenomenological, epistemological, metaphysical, political, or about baseball.

Keywords: argument by analogy, argument as war, collaboration, deep disagreement, humor, metaphor

I. Why Do We Still So Often Argue as if We're at War?

Many years ago, but not so many that it's no longer embarrassing to me, I presented a paper at a conference. During the Q&A session a fellow in the audience pointed out a flaw in my reasoning. He was called on first because his hand was raised before the obligatory clapping had ceased; I might have still been talking while his hand went up. You're not supposed to do that. This happened quickly and with no initial commentary regarding points of agreement or what might have been enjoyable about the presentation. But that is not what concerns me now—nor did it at the time. I don't recall what his critique was specifically, though I

know he accused me of committing a fallacy; he even used the word, "fallacious." I remember that part. I also recall thinking something along the lines of, *Shit. That's a damn good point.* But I didn't say any of that. Instead I "hmm'd" and "huuh'd" a bit, and then offered a bullshit counter-argument. I say "bullshit" because I don't recall caring all that much whether my counter-attack was well supported or even whether my claims were true. I cared more about not looking like a loser who had just been defeated in a debate. This is problematic on a number of levels.

I approached argumentation with the attitude one ought to bring to a battle. This mentality almost inevitably pits interlocutors as enemies against me. Because of this, I felt the need to defend my position so as to not give up, or better, not be seen to have given up, any ground. I know there was a bit of this mindset in the trigger-happy fallacy-accuser in the audience as well. I'm pretty sure it was in him as that is how I often am in the audience listening to a paper, waiting for my turn to publicly pronounce my fine points of disagreement, and if lucky enough, be able to include the word "fallacy" somewhere in my erudite counter.

As it turns out, I do not recall how the whole encounter ended up. I do remember being in the plane, flying across the country, stewing over the fact that I did not have a good rebuttal to that jackasses' rebuttal to my paper.[1] THAT is what I focused upon. It was not how I might improve my argument based upon the critiques; again, I don't even recall what the particular fallacy was, and that is revealing. I was more interested in winning, so much winning, that I was unconcerned about *repairing* the weak spots in my argument. So, I both looked like a loser *and* the argument remained flawed—a double loser.[2] I should have said that was a great point, you jackass, and then opened an avenue for further discussion and possible repair to my argument. This of course means something is broken, but this structural deficiency is less jarring and damning than a pugilistic loss typically assumed in the argument-is-war milieu.

Everything I just said I imagine you all already know. So, here is a bit more of self-divulging embarrassment that you might not have suspected: all of this happened *after* I had read Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By*. It was after I read critical pieces by people like Phyliss Rooney, Janice Moulton, and Daniel Cohen on the overly-common mindset found in philosophical argumentation as unnecessarily adversarial and counterproductive. And, I'm afraid there's more, this all happened *after* I had amended my class syllabi with a long statement on collaboration regarding how I hope the class would conduct ourselves around arguments—NOT as WAR. I had already made the conscious effort to try and maintain the strengths and avoid the weaknesses of the attitude espoused (partly in jest?) by Robert Nozick: "'What if philosophical arguments left the person no possible answer at all, reducing him to impotent silence? . . . Perhaps philosophers need arguments so powerful they set up reverberations in

the brain: if the person refuses to accept the conclusion, he dies. How's that for a powerful argument?'" (quoted in Cohen 1995: 178). *He dies*!

We need to take a reflective step back and ask, "Why are philosophers intent on forcing others to believe things?[3] Is that a nice way to behave toward someone?" (Cohen 1995: 178–179).[4] In philosophical circles, we like to tell ourselves we are above the fray of the internet comment-section squabbles where attacking others in the hopes of "owning" or "destroying" them is the norm. However, there are those laypeople who have an inkling of what happens in a logic class in philosophy, and look forward to the section on fallacies; this is where one can acquire the intellectual tools of destruction. One of my students expressed his joy in finally getting to that part of the class (I used to cover all the fallacies I could fit into a two- to three-week window—awful!) so that he could "learn how to take advantage of others." And we all *laaaaughed*. Until I realized he was not joking.

So why do we still argue as if at war? It is likely due to long-term habituation and constant reinforcement. One take-away is that even those who consciously try to habituate themselves out of the argument-as-war mindset can fail, miserably. How much more unlikely is it that those who are unconcerned about these issues will attempt to change their outlook? We need a better metaphor that will stick and be causally efficacious in a positive way. I start by taking on Daniel Cohen's suggestion: "The argument-is-war metaphor does both reflect our thought and inform our practice, but it is still just a metaphor. It is not an immutable part of the conceptual landscape; it can be changed. . . . For this, new metaphors for arguments are needed, metaphors that can accommodate cooperation as well as competition" (Cohen 1995: 179). So what is a better metaphor for argument and how might we encourage students to adopt a newer and improved metaphor,[5] accepting the fact that we likely will only fully succeed in this, if at all, within the microcosm of our own classrooms?

II. Argument as Civic and Civil (Civical)[6] Engineering

A "good" arguer[7] is like an architect with a penchant for civic *and* civil engineering. A new coinage is useful here: "civical engineering." Such an arguer can design and present their reasons artfully about a variety of topics, as good architects do with a plenitude of structures and in various environments (this metaphor is purposely malleable, thus we should not be ruffled by the distinctions between architects and engineers).[8] They succeed in displaying structurally sound lines of reasoning, as a civil engineer maintains the integrity of their buildings, bridges, and roads. Further, simultaneously using the ethical-political connotations of "civil," "civic," and "integrity," they foster social cohesion rather than division like a good civil and civic engineer constructs unifying, inviting spaces

rather than obstructive partitions. Regarding integrity, good arguers cultivate open and honest attitudes seeking dialogue and truth rather than belligerent debate and victory as an end, as the civical engineer builds ethical, sustainable, creative dwellings available to all, rather than esoteric redoubts isolating the few from the many, or towering, gilded buildings emblazoned with their names.

The virtuous arguer builds upon sturdy premises, cognizant of a multiplicity of possible viewpoints and vantages, not to take advantage, but to learn from a plurality of perspectives, constructing inferences toward improving our collective lot (the idealism here is intentional). The civical engineer's *premises* must also be sound, with the intention to safely shelter those within their buildings and not harm those around them. The engineers' integrity is proportionate to their genuine concerns about the integrity of their projects. Along with this virtue ought to be the epistemic humility to accept criticism and the capacity to amend their own cherished ideas. Failures in this are rarely hidden for long, as poor constructions reveal themselves, often spectacularly. We should want our logical virtues to be analogous.

But when our arguments fail due to being uncivil and demagogic rather than care-ful and civic-minded (civical), since we inhabit the arguments we assemble, we are all crushed beneath our flawed reasoning—crushed to *death* if we wish to resurrect Nozick. This is a mixed metaphor, but it's a useful mixture.[9] The failures in reasoning might not be as dramatic as a collapsed building (that had no business collapsing),[10] but the consequences can be as bad or worse. They are not often seen immediately, but rather cumulatively creep toward disaster, like the slow leak in our collective boat. The more we become habituated to view arguments as combat, the less we (collectively) will be concerned about the actual truth-value of our claims, and the less interested we will be in "reality." This is happening now and might be a manifestation of a "post-truth era."

Good argumentation strives to collaboratively convince rather than belligerently persuade,[11] the latter being a consequence (but also a goal) of much propaganda and conspiracy theorizing; this is neither good nor funny. One concern here is that a new metaphor will be ineffective unless it can be embedded in the culture in which it is used: "in order for metaphors to work, they must draw upon a system of 'associated commonplaces' shared by the writer and intended readers . . . [where] an assumed background function[s] essentially as a missing premise" (Rooney 2010: 225). This is not only true of the overriding metaphors, in this case argument-as-civical-engineering (inexorably on its way to ensconcing itself into our collective background), but of the specific arguments in everyday social interactions.[12] One of the most convincing means toward this cooperative end where some degree of common background is sought and/or relied upon, is through humorous analogical arguments, whether

the matter at hand is ethical, logical, theological, phenomenological, epistemological, metaphysical, political, or about baseball.[13]

III. Why Analogy in Argumentation?

Analogy is our best guide in all philosophical investigations; and all discoveries, which were not made by mere accident, have been made by the help of it.—Joseph Priestley

Susan Stebbing in *Thinking to Some Purpose*, is not all that optimistic about the positives of this mode of reasoning, but she offers a very good example for us to analyze here. It comes, perhaps surprisingly, from the Bible. It is that famous (or infamous?) story of Nathan chastising King David for taking Bathsheba for his own, impregnating her and then sending her husband Uriah to the front lines of a battle where David could be sure Uriah would be killed—typical stuff for a logic class. Before presenting that story, I want to provide a more direct argument that is *not* the mode of presentation employed by Nathan in response to David's transgression in God's version, but one more often found in an informal logic course. In fact, God's version, we will see, might be superior in a few ways to the argument that follows, and not just because God is omniscient. So, imagine Nathan confronting David over his actions, in standard logical form:

1. David, you have misused your power and influence as a king.

2. Such kingly personages understand right from wrong.

3. You should understand right from wrong.

4. Forcing oneself onto a person is wrong (it is left out whether Bathsheba was a willing accomplice to this adultery—I have my doubts).

5. It is an additional wrong when that person is married.

6. Having Uriah killed is wrong (an additional argument by analogy could be employed to support this premise, finding an example of a hit man being hired/ordered to kill).

7. You, King David, did both of these things.

8. YOU ARE IMMORAL! QED.

Nathan has a pretty good case here. But there are a few factors that need to be addressed to see whether this mode of argumentation is ideal in situations like this. What is the relation between David and Nathan? For instance, if there is not already some degree of trust between them this form of reasoning is likely to be counterproductive. Caterina Novaes contends that "since argumentation is a form of epistemic exchange and that all exchanges involve evaluations of trustworthiness" (223), it follows that establishing trustworthiness in arguments is needed.[14] So, an

argumentative approach that ignores the actual social situation, the "real messy life" scenarios, as Novaes puts it, can easily lead to a negative confrontation with all of the martial metaphors at play, especially if framed in such a way that David perceives it as an attack on his identity. Knowing which "game" we are playing is essential even when there is already significant trust among the interlocutors. When my son was around 4, I was teaching him chess. I corrected him saying, "Whoops, that's cheating. The little horsies can't move that way in chess." His reply, "We're not playing chess, *father* [a long awkward pause]. We're playing war!"[15] He might have said "battle," in any case, he had brought a sword to the game so I should have suspected something other than chess was afoot.

We might look at some of Donald Trump's brute assertions for which there is no discernable attempt at justification, and imagine responding to him with "Hey, you're begging the question," or, "Hey, that's an *ad hominem*!" Or, "Hey that's *hundreds and hundreds of them*!"[16] His retort might be something analogous to my 4 year-old's: "I'm not playing your game, so those rules don't apply to me. And what's an *ad honimom?*" Of course I do not want to make the analogy too strong, because my son is not a "Melting pot of uninformed apricot Jell-O," nor "A demagoguing bag of candy corn," nor even a "Sociopathic seventy-year-old toddler," to borrow some colorful analogies from Samantha Bee (quoted in Young 1). But one can easily see the potential blowback.[17]

Put another way, it matters who your audience is and what the arguer's intentions with respect to the audiences are. Do they hope to persuade them that they have the truth? Is the goal to reach an agreement on the best course of action? Is it a form of negotiation? Or is it to amend the beliefs of others, or commitments one has, or some combination of all the above (see Castro 2021: 258)? This is not a trivial point (see Tindale chapter 1 and Gilbert 1997: 1, 7, esp. 104), as having some grasp of each other's positions and not just the logical claims being put forth, matters. In fact, such deeper issues are likely *more* significant in most arguments than the purely logical premises explicitly stated. So, it might not be ideal to open with a completed argument in standard logical form outside of a logic classroom or conference. Most real-world arguments happen elsewhere, so it benefits students to have an expanded conception of argumentation that goes beyond formal structured reasoning. When we constrain argument to a narrow scope we likely brush off peoples' positions that do have reasons in support, but just not in the traditional logical sense. This attitude and practice undermines our students who will need to be able to think critically and logically in a class on deduction but also in the everyday world in which there are more central reasons for one's committed positions.[18]

Regarding the content of the argument, notice that even if we remove the language that connects immorality to the person as opposed to just the acts,[19] it is still adversarial in the predominantly negative sense de-

scribed by Moulton, Cohen, Rooney, and especially Lakoff and Johnson, where the latter note, "Not only are all the 'rational' arguments that are assumed to actually live up to the ideal of RATIONAL ARGUMENT conceived of in terms of WAR, but almost all of them contain, in hidden form, the 'irrational' and 'unfair' tactics that rational arguments in their ideal form are supposed to transcend" (Lakoff and Johnson 64). I think they go a bit too far here in asserting that the very mention of fallacious reasoning, e.g., can constitute veiled threats, insults, or belittling, but their main point about the conceptual underpinning of argument via war metaphors is convincing, as noted above.

Now consider an improved version of an argument in response to a David-like situation, this time from God Himself. Same situation, here is the Lord's response via Nathan:

> "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor [by the way, this is how it is in the scriptures. There's no "Hey, Dave how are you?" Nathan just jumps right in with what will eventually be seen as an analogy]. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him." David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12:1b–7a, NIV)

Why is this a bit better than my initial foray, ignoring the unintentionally amusing contradiction from David—this man must die, and *then* "pay for that lamb four times over"? Susan Stebbing claims that this allegory avoids the "fallacy of special pleading, since we pass judgment first, and are then shown the application to our own case" (Stebbing 1941: 90). Recall the first premise of the direct argument I offered was, "David, you have misused your power and influence as a king," to which, we might imagine, someone like David *immediately* interjecting, "I'm gonna stop you right there. How dare you!" and the like. But in God's version, David does not have the opportunity to place himself, and thus, all of his biases, into the exchange. Stebbing continues, "To achieve this aim the resemblance implied in the parable must be striking *as soon as it is pointed out* but [and here I think is the most salient point] *not sufficiently detailed to indicate the moral from the start*. . . . [I]t is not a defect that the resemblance should be slight; all that is required is that it should be a relevant resemblance. . . . Further, its use is confined to instruction; it is *not a form of argument*" (Stebbing 1941: 90, my emphasis). There

is a lot in this quotation, much of which will be useful in the following sections, but that last bit, will be a point with which I disagree.

First, her concern with the very common error in reasoning, "special pleading," is something that can be categorized under the general cognitive bias known as "first-person exceptionalism." In my first argument, the moral is clearly "detailed from the start" leaving David with little room for his own collaborative input. There is no logical space between the premises that certain actions are immoral and that those very actions are the ones performed by David; they occur simultaneously, or nearly so, within the straightforward argument. Beyond simply comprehending the meanings of the concepts in the premises, there is little cognitive effort needed on the part of David. In case there was any possible confusion, Nathan clears that up at the end.[20]

Stebbing rightly, but on the face of it, confusingly, points out that it is the *dis*analogies within the comparison that have the most impact in convincing David. Stebbing continues, "The considerable *unlikeness* between the action of the rich man who stole the poor man's ewe lamb enabled David to judge the action without personal bias [Nathan has not performed all of the relevant cognitive and emotional work for David; indeed, it is not clear that he could succeed in that regarding the emotions]. When the point was brought home to him [explicitly by Nathan], he *was enabled to see* that what held in the case of the man he had condemned held also in his own case" (Stebbing 1941: 90, my italics). In legal jargon, *similar cases ought to be decided similarly*, and in law, as with most instances of logical arguments, we want this to be made explicit and clear. But when the issue involves more delicate matters where critique could be interpreted as an affront to one's cherished beliefs, values, or, in the case of David, one's sense of self, a direct, explicit, completed argument might be counter-productive, precluding the possibility for the cognitive-emotional space "to elicit from David a disinterested judgment" (Stebbing 1941: 90). Note: *dis*interested is different from *un*interested or completely disengaged; an important distinction that will be relevant below.

Tamar Gendler uses the same biblical story as Stebbing as an example of how to overcome the tenacity of biases common to hubris, a likely trait among those with socio-political power: "By framing the story so that David is not in a position to exhibit first-person bias with respect to what turns out to be his own actions, Nathan has enabled David to acknowledge a moral commitment that he holds in principle, but has failed to apply in this particular case. . . . The story he has been told is fully effective; it reshapes his cognitive frame, and brings him to view his own previous actions in its light" (Gendler 2007: 82).[21] Gendler views this as an example of a successful thought experiment. We can maintain that notion but point out how this thought experiment, like so many others, involves analogies within a narrative, and one not unconnected to humor: Gendler even states that David finally "gets" the "punch line"

(Gendler 2007: 82), but by way of an indirect, imaginative construction. Gendler does not extend the comedic metaphor here, but I will soon.

IV. Why a "Toolbox" Approach Fosters Argument-as-Civical-Engineering

A second point, one where I disagree with Stebbing, is her insistence that this case is merely an example of God (via Nathan) *instructing* David, and manifestly not an argument; at most she considers it little more than a parable with "a concealed analogy" (Stebbing 1941: 90). I think this is too narrow of a conception of "argument" and I will make this case using the recent work of Diego Castro with his pluralist "toolbox" approach to argumentation which is complementary to my notion, and soon everyone else's, of "civical engineering." From a pluralistic as opposed to monistic account of argumentation, there are various functions of argument: "to persuade, to obtain knowledge [Stebbing's mere "instruction"], to make a deal, to impress the audience, to even deepen the disagreement" (Castro 2021: 248). In this way, we are able to maintain many of the positive elements of "argumentation" such as it being one of the best means to track the truth in an objective way, so it can offer epistemic advantages, and it can be an open way to establish a best course of action/policy.

Martha Nussbaum offers additional support with her defense of Socratic argumentation: With "logical analysis . . . [i]nstead of claim and counter-claim, we can exchange views critically, examining one anothers' reasoning. . . . Doing without it [logical argumentation] would mean forfeiting one of the most powerful tools we have to attack abuses of political power" (Nussbaum 1997: 35–36). This sort of direct, critical, logical argumenta-tion is rare outside of a logic class, and, as Nussbaum contends, perhaps it ought to be more prevalent everywhere. But many of the "real world" types of disputes might be better handled by a different sort of argumentative dialogue than that found in the monistic view where the *sole* intention is to persuade or bring the opponent to the proponent's side (victory!).

For example, in some cases where there is deep or persistent disagree-ment, "the type of disagreement that is usually resistant to persuasive resolution" (Castro 2021: 250), we still desire to move toward what we think is true, but realize that the traditional approach to persuasion through argument might not be ideal. The David example I initially invoked could be seen as an example of "an exchange of reasons that cannot be reduced to persuasive argumentation" (Castro 2021: 256). The monistic approach too easily falls into the war metaphor and limits the ways we could engage others argumentatively. Furthermore, this view is "too narrow . . . we remain mired in technical studies lacking practical utility to acting individuals (Gilbert 1997: 29). The monistic approach to argument is not ideal when we know, or at least suspect, that our

interlocutors "do not share the relevant background necessary for the resolution of disagreements. . . . In some cases, such disagreements are 'immune to appeals to facts.' . . . They are persistent since they do not refer only to isolated propositions 'but instead to a whole system of mutually supporting propositions . . . that constitute . . . a form of life'" (Castro 2021: 252, quoting Fogelin and a bit of Wittgenstein). The broader pluralistic approach to argumentation provides a more accurate description of what we do, and more importantly, what we *ought* to do, when we argue in everyday life as opposed to the often arbitrary and contrived examples employed in deductive and inductive logic classes (see Gilbert; Hundleby; Rooney). All of this is to show that "argument is not just a sterile tool, but makes a difference in [our] lives" (Nussbaum 1997: 44). But this expanded conception of argument also smooths the way toward incorporating emotionality, humor in particular, into argumentation and preempting criticisms that we are not even engaging in argument when humorous narrative analogies are presented.

V. Why Humorous Analogy in Argumentation?

"This guy being the president; it's like there's a horse loose in a hospital. I think eventually everything's going to be ok. But I have no idea what's going to happen next. And neither do any of you! And neither do your parents cus' there's a horse loose. In the hospital. It's never happened before. No one knows what the horse is gonna do next, least of all the horse. He's never been in a hospital before. He's as confused as you are."—John Mulaney[22]

"They can be following me without my knowledge, choose to read my tweet and then take that personally. That's like going into a town square, seeing a big notice board, and there's a notice, 'guitar lessons.' And you go, 'But I don't fucking want guitar lessons! What's this? Ah, there's a number here. I'll call that. Are you giving guitar lessons. Yeah? I don't fucking want any!'"—Ricky Gervais, on his Twitter followers who are offended by his tweets[23]

"Whenever cops gun down an innocent Black man, they always say the same things: 'Well it's not most cops. It's just a few bad apples. It's just a few bad apples.' Bad apples? That's a lovely name for 'murderer.' It's like, how'd they get that one? 'Bad apple,' that almost sounds nice. I mean I've had a bad apple. It was tart. But it didn't choke me out. . . . American Airlines can't be like 'You know, most of our pilots like to land. We just got a few bad apples that like to crash into mountains. Please bear with us.'"—Chris Rock[24]
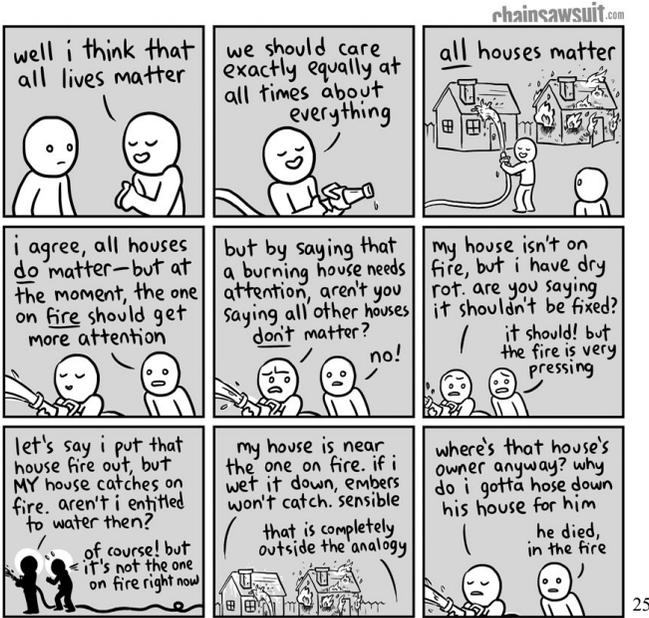
The final sections of this paper will attempt to bring together the newly coined, yet surprisingly popular metaphor, which I've noticed catching on, argument-as-civical-engineering, with humorous analogies as a mode of collaborative reasoning that can foster trust, empathy, and eventually world peace.[26] My analysis springboards from Willett and Willett's *Uproarious: How Feminists and Other Subversive Comics Speak Truth*:

> If reason as a persuasive tool is at best only indirectly effective, a weak tool on its own, might not the sting of ridicule or the contagion of joyous laughter prove to be more effective weapons for social change? Or to turn the question around, what devices are more explosive in the social sphere, more discomforting to our conventional modes of thought, more invasive of our quasiprivate store of associations, than the well-placed joke, the display of wit, or the well-honed use of ridiculing irony? (Willett and Willett 2019: 22)

They have much to offer in their work, but, as I have found with Stebbing and the monistic view toward argumentation, their conception of "reason," at least in this quotation, is too narrow. I think it is a mistake to cordon reason off from the emotionality of mirth, as Willett and Willett do above (though interestingly, not through most of their text, see Willett and Willett 2019: 129–130, 135–141, for example, where they decry the arbitrary divisions between emotion and cognition). Appeal to, and use of, reasons in social exchange is essential to any practical conception of argumentation. But the category of "reasons" is broader than typically allowed for in most logic textbooks and classes. My goal here is to maintain

the positive notions of argumentation with the collaborative elements embedded in humor, particularly, humorous arguments by analogy.

This is why I invoke Castro's pluralism which is largely indebted to Michael Gilbert's *Coalescent Argumentation*. The connections between this and the use of humor can be seen in Castro's summary:

> In coalescent argumentation, then, arguers use a multi-modal approach that includes not only logico-rational arguments but also emotional, visceral, and kisceral (intuitive) ones. To be successful, then, arguers should be empathic and try to understand where the counterpart is coming from (their position [as opposed to mere logical claims that might purposely conceal one's motivations— note the similar root here with *emotion*]). Then, they should use multimodal argumentation to build mutual understanding and, ultimately, change the way in which they approach the situation. (Castro 2021: 264)[27]

In Gilbert's view, "*Coalescent Argumentation*" seeks to bridge the historical and arbitrarily constructed gap between the rational and emotional. This form of reasoning can "increas[e] the heuristic element and decrease the eristic element while at the same time maintaining a realistic attitude to the essentially goal-oriented nature of most argumentation" (Gilbert 1997: 106, italics in original).[28] The heuristic element fosters openness and "exploration," akin to civical engineers collaborating on a project, as opposed to debaters constantly ratcheting up degrees of resistance manifesting in eristic, or argument-as-war mode of thinking.

Further, it is "coalescent" in that the goal is "a joining or merging of divergent positions by forming the basis for a mutual investigation of non-conflictual options that might otherwise have remained unconsidered" (Gilbert 1997: 103). Without something that encourages an opening up of one's own viewpoints to scrutiny, we run the risk of ignoring, as they "remain unconsidered," potentially fatal flaws in our positions, which, with constructing buildings, can be literally fatal. But we also might miss an opportunity for discovering an underlying commonality from which we can reason collaboratively. This is a further foible of the argument-as-war metaphor: "in the midst of a heated argument, when we are intent on attacking our opponent's position and defending our own, we may lose sight of the cooperative aspects of arguing" (Lakoff and Johnson 9). Combining the civical engineering metaphor for argument with the use of humorous analogies in argument, offers a unique approach to reasoning that can foster collaboration through trust and empathy while critically analyzing claims and actions; keeping the heuristic and avoiding the eristic or bellicosity that is prevalent in debaters.

So, what kind of humor are we looking for here? The opening jokes (arguments by analogy) in this section stand as decent examples, even though there is an element of anger, arguably justified, in the latter 2 comedian's performances. From Gilbert's broadened conception of argumentation, each of them succeed in offering *reasons* for why they think as

they do, knowing there are many who would disagree with them, namely Trump-supporters, Twitter trolls, and anti-police reform and/or anti-Black Lives Matter folks, respectively—some of who are likely in their audiences. The crux of their performance comes from the visceral and emotional personal experiences, especially Gervais' and Rock's. The logical reasons for their views, anyone's view on just about anything, is only one type of reason, in addition to the emotional, visceral, and kisceral reasons for our positions, and perhaps there are others.

The logical space of reasons might be very similar for the comedians and listeners, but the emotionality among various audiences might not, and it is primarily emotions from which these comedians are reasoning. Chris Rock is justifiably motivated by the fear of harm coming to him or his children at the hands of police, whereas white audiences' attitudes might be colored more by feelings of respect for law enforcement and/or fears of lawlessness. We could translate it into a purely logical form but this is not always easy and it's a kind of chauvinism to assume such failures would entail the mode is not an argument.[29] Even if it can be reduced to a logical mode it is essentially emotional and we lose the reasons, which are non-logical, for why he concludes as he does (see Gilbert 1997: 83). So, we might include among the visceral or bodily-material components the comedians' and auditors' socio-economic positions, which could place them in different starting points, some with a greater epistemic advantage than others. Related to this is the *kisceral* which could include one's intuitive feeling that an instance of police violence constitutes excessive use of force or implicit/explicit biases or even systemic racism.[30]

Here our investigation is purely descriptive not normative; which emotionally-laden view is superior is not our concern here, but note that we might not be able to explore this argument further without coming to some common ground *that* this can constitute an argument and thus can be evaluated via reasons rather than dismissed out of hand as little more than a series of loosely associated beliefs, or just a joke. Recognizing where the arguers are coming from, which will almost certainly include more than what could be gleaned from a merely logical spectrum, enables more openings for solidarity, commonality, and clarity on where there are differences; we are more likely to know just what it is we are arguing about and why.

Significantly, audiences are following along with the comedians, fully engaged in the stories, enjoying them as evidenced by the laughter. They have established a level of trust between themselves and the audience. This, according to Gilbert, is not possible without the genuine desire to empathize with one's interlocutors: "It is, perhaps, not too strong to say that the most crucial element in coalescent argumentation is empathy. Indeed, the greater the disagreement, the further apart the initial stances of the dispute partners, the more important (and the more difficult) is the

requirement for empathy" (Gilbert 1997: 111). This provides the setup for the kind of humor that might assist us here. While these performances are primarily one-way conversations, though the audience's reactions through laughter (visceral/kisceral/logical) are importantly participatory,[31] they offer easily analyzable examples of humorous arguments by analogy that can achieve what Gilbert seeks all the while being quite enjoyable, possibly even for those with differing positions from the comedians.

Consider empathic solidaric humor promoted by Willett and Willett: "[E]mpathetic humor cultivates a sense of camaraderie by laughing at others, but only as we would laugh at ourselves. Humor, broadly understood, is a nuanced play of exclusion and inclusion, a dialectic of hostility (laughing at) and joyful solidarity (laughing with), riding an emotional roller coaster of shame and pride" (Willett and Willett 2019: 17). This form of humor calls for self-directed jabs as well as other-directed, critical wit. The parallel with reasoning is fostering self-awareness and an openness to self-critique, as well as taking criticism from others, all while engaged in analysis of various positions. In doing so, this critical humor circles around the ambiguous edges of cognition and emotion, often mixing them together as a means to collaborate with an audience in a fashion similar to how we might expect our civical engineers to do so: "'[F]eeling something was never simply a state of submission but always, also, a process of construction.' Clearly, this need to actively respond and *participate in the meaning of another's experience* is more than listening alone. The other's experience is 'something actual and constructed' by both parties at once" (Willett and Willett 2019: 132, quoting Jamison, with my italics). Of course I am going to read more into this "constructing" metaphor than they do, but the connections go deep. With humorous arguments by analogy, the presenters and listeners are co-participants in the construction of the meaning in the argument-joke. There is a kind of collaboration among the interlocutors that is not found in any other mode of communication.

Whether with jokes or a comedian's story, if they want the reward that constitutes a fix for their addiction to mirth,[32] audiences must follow the humorist to the end, to the conclusion or the punch line, in which expectations are shattered, or at least bent considerably, errors are exposed, obvious (once constructed by the humorist) connections are made, and they like it.[33] We are only *forced* to interpret a joke as a joke, and thus re-cognize the meanings and relations of the terms involved as incongruous, insofar as we can only interpret ambiguous language as humorous or in one way. But this is not so. The wit does not enforce a single meaning on the text or performance, and rarely specifies up front the intended meaning, or with Nathan and David, "the moral from the start," for to do so would limit the need for oscillation or frame shifting in the audience, and remove the participation component in which the

audience discovers their own errors in expectations, or novel comparisons among hitherto disparate states of affairs. Instead, the humorist leaves spaces open for interpretation and hopefully reinterpretation, a "burden" that at least in part falls upon the audience—and they are usually happy to take it on. John Morreall puts it well: "in order to bring about a shift in humor, the person creating the humor must engage the interest of those he wants to amuse, and thus have *some* control over their train of thought" (Morreall 1983, 82–83, my italics). When we seek out the interests of others we must go beyond (without removing entirely) the purely logical, as Hume informs us, we are moved by sentiments far more than intellect.[34]

Even in God's version David played *some* role in collaboratively constructing the meaning of Nathan's narrative use of analogy; he recognized without being reasoned to (or *at*) that what the rich man in the story did was immoral. The ideal scenario would have been for David to arrive at the conclusion himself, with just the prodding of Nathan via a clever analogical setup that does not do all the logical, and more importantly here, emotional labors.

In the original, somewhat in contrast to Stebbing and Gendler, David does not have to play much of a role in making the connection to his own circumstances: "You are the man!" Come on. That's not going to work. David would surely complain, "That's not me! My situation is totally different." It is true, the narrative offered to David might not click immediately, and so his "special pleading" might be *delayed*, but not precluded. Nathan's connecting the dots for him relieves David of the burden of thought, and steals the "aha" eureka moment. Stebbing does not quite have it right when she says "David is *enabled to see*" in the end. That makes it sound like Nathan has merely set before him some claims that he can choose to see one way or another. This is not what happened.[35]

Connecting this to humor, David does not "Get the joke" as Gendler claims, rather the punchline is laid out for him, much like my daughter's early attempts at riddles: "Hey, Dad. What building has the most stories?" Half a second pause, "*A library!* Get it?" I said, no. You did! This is like having another person complete a crossword puzzle for you rather than just offer helpful hints. Without collaboration the situation is intellectually and emotionally unsatisfying. There is no mirth experienced when a joke is preemptively explained, because, while it is recognized as a joke, the audience has no opportunity to cooperate in the meaning-making and of course the "getting" of the punchline; all the cognitive *and* emotive work has been done for them. Or better, the purely cognitive filling in of all the information precludes the emotional mirthful experience. The humor allows for the possibility of a cognitive-emotional space, which is an extension of the analytical phrase "logical space of reasons," but here buttressed with a playful tincture that provides a mechanism for non-

threatening play with ideas, which, only after the playful connections are made, does the subject come to the understanding that, in the David example, the analogy in fact applies to them. They might at this point be convinced, but significantly, their convictions are not undermined, their sense of self and identity is not ruptured beyond repair; indeed they are the ones who have made the connections themselves with only the humorous prodding of the clever and humorous analogizer.

VI. Collaborative Reasoning with Humor

Let's return to the King David story for the last time. We might imagine him protesting in response to Nathan, perhaps engaging in a number of fallacies: "Don't you have better things to do than bother me with this trivial nonsense? You should be concerned about the rapaciousness of the Hittites, not the prurient yet private details of my love life." If I were Nathan I might reply with a true story, and note that it is true: "Just the other day, I was telling my 4-year-old daughter that it is not a good idea to spit. She confidently replied: 'You shouldn't be worried about spitting; you should be worried about bees.'" It is important to note, there were no bees in the vicinity, nor prior mention of bees at all. I was confused, but laughed gleefully. And then, matching my 4-year-old's confidence, I shouted "Red Herring! Fallacy!" She was confused. In this narrative analogical anecdote, we have both a lighthearted representation of the type of error David makes, *and* a flaw in my own retort to my daughter; know your audience! A 4-year-old likely does not benefit from being accused of having committed a fallacy (few people do as the opening story of this paper illustrates). This is a true story but they need not be in order to be effective.

Nathan does not end his parable with "true story," nor does Plato, e.g., inform us we must take literally his allegory of the cave to comprehend his theory of anamnesis, and we also do not fault comedians' thought experiments in which they "make shit up."[36] It is useful to have in your back pocket, so to speak, an example of a fallacy that is obvious and amusing to help highlight an error in anothers' argument—or better, as a means to help them repair it. Setting it up as an amusing analogy provides fertile ground for the ideal form of argument as civical engineering. A good practice is to use examples from your own life, even (or especially) those that could be read as self-deprecating, without being self-demeaning,[37] in the sense described by Willett and Willett. When the humor and critical analysis is redirected at oneself, the other participant who has a contrary view from you will more readily recognize a flaw in reasoning. For example, one way to reply to someone who has committed the *inconsistency ad hominem* might be the following: the other day I was having a serious talk with my 4-year-old daughter (the same one as

before with the bees). I said, "Look, you need to stay away from heroin. That shit is terribly addictive." She retorts: "But dad, you're shooting up right now! Therefore your argument against me doing heroin fails." Then I said, "That, dear Lola, is the fallacy *ad hominem* inconsistency. You FAIL!" This, surprisingly, never happened.[38]

We might say that humor is an ideal medium to bridge the gap between our logical-emotional, argumentative-narrative, persuading-convincing dichotomies. One of the most common forms of humor that can readily be found in stand-up performances and in everyday interactions, are humorous analogies. Significantly, comedians are inclined toward the narrative and/or story form that parallels, if not acts as an actual species of, philosophical argument through thought experiment. These constructions both rely upon and reveal much of the underlying positions among the interlocutors rather than only their straightforward, logical claims (Gilbert 1997: 108–109 and 91 on the importance of anecdote). Note how Rooney makes the connection between argumentation and narration:

> Let us now turn our attention to narrative argument which, perhaps because of its traditional gender association and its association with imagination, has been given woefully little attention in philosophy and informal logic. It is difficult to get a precise definition of "narrative argument," yet it is clear that narrative plays an important role in argumentation, including in philosophy. A good narrative can clearly convey a narrator's position about some issue, and it can also persuade the narrator's audience of that same position. As such, it can constitute an argument, certainly according to a rhetorical view of argument which pays particular attention to audience persuasion. Important evidence relating to personal or cultural experience may be conveyed best in narrative form. In philosophy, counterexamples to philosophical definitions (or arguments) are often presented as narratives about possible situations where the definiens (or premises) are true and the definiendum (or conclusion) is false. (Rooney 2010: 216)

Rooney incorporates rather than completely cordons off the goals of convincing and persuading, or of logic and rhetoric, or of rational argumentation and narrative story. Gilbert notes that sometimes the formal aspects of argument, establishing validity for instance, is not the most essential, rather, in some instances it is "the characters, setting, and plot" or the "situation, context and history of the argument" that are most relevant. In other words, "Arguments in this sense can also be construed as stories" (Gilbert 1997: 62). Here a focus might be on reading rather than analyzing, but again, without completely eschewing the critical elements within argumentation.

Appealing to shared backgrounds, even if they are not at first obvious, is common if not necessary, in narratives and so much humor, especially that which employs analogy. But there is yet another positive connection to argumentation, as Lakoff and Johnson note: "In general, arguments serve the purpose of understanding. We construct arguments when we need to show the connections between things that are obvious—that we

take for granted—and other things that are not obvious. We do this by putting ideas together. These ideas constitute the content of the argument. The things we take for granted are the starting point of the argument" (Lakoff and Johnson 98). Yes, and a humorous attitude facilitates the greater proliferation of ideas in unique and creative ways (Ziv 1983), and this is most evident with imaginative, humorous analogies.

A related point is that creative play also promotes mental freedom. Under the umbrella concept "incongruity" we can see some of the benefits of a humorous attitude: "'Humor is by far the most significant behavior of the human brain. . . . Humor . . . shows how perceptions set up in one way can suddenly be reconfigured in another way. This is the essence of creativity'" (Morreall 2009, 112, quoting Edward de Bono). Fostering this creativity cultivates a greater influx of ideas into one's mind with a facility to make connections where one might otherwise ignore. This is an (if not *the most*) effective means toward divergent as opposed to convergent thinking. With this wider viewpoint, interlocutors are more prone toward oscillating among various and potentially contradictory positions, something that can often be exposed effectively through analogy. Making the analogies humorous does more than merely sweeten the argument, it can become a central facet of the reasoning, cultivating the collaborative spirit among the participants. This comes from the strategic omissions essential to so much humor.

VII. Conclusion

With the comedians' analogies that opened the previous section, we can view them now as a mode of argumentation with the goal of instructing, clarifying, and/or establishing that a claim or position is correct.[39] They are not battling with an audience nor metaphorically *killing*, a common usage of comedians regarding the success of a show, the side effects manifestly different than those imagined by Nozick's irrefutable arguments, namely *not* death! Instead, they are providing a different way of seeing that the audience truly desires to gain and often does with enjoyment; a coalescence of meaning and mirth from which further understanding might be collaboratively constructed.

Notes

1. Note: I am sure he was not a jackass. Pretty sure.

2. This outcome was like George Costanza in the episode of *Seinfeld* where he could not think of a quick and witty repartee to one of his colleagues who mocked him for eating so many shrimp. He ends up with the old chestnut "Oh yeah? Well I slept with your wife!" Only to discover his colleague's wife was in a coma. A double loss. See *Seinfeld*, episode 147, "The Comeback."

3.   Though well beyond the scope of this paper, there are some fascinating connections to the philosophy of religion and the difficulty of maintaining positive conceptions of faith in the face of rational argumentation for (or against) God's existence. If I am confronted with what my reason tells me is a sound argument for the existence and goodness of God, e.g., am I not *compelled* to accept the conclusion? Thus, I am not freely choosing to believe in God, I have in an important sense, *lost* my faith through reason. There is an analogue with the putative *forced* interpretation of jokes that I will address below.

4.   "We routinely speak, for example, of knockdown, or even killer, arguments and power-ful counterattacks, of defensible positions and winning strategies, and of weak arguments that are easily shot down while strong ones have a lot of punch and are right on target. Moreover, we continue to use this language even after we have very carefully and very conscientiously distinguished what we do as philosophers, critics, and educators from the shouting, name-calling, and animosity that characterize dysfunctional families, relationships gone awry, and contentious faculty meetings" (Cohen 178). This seems to be a monumental oversight for a discipline largely devoted to self-reflection.

5.   Here is a bit more on the consequences of the Argument-is-War metaphor or no argument at all:

1.   Win at *all* costs.

2.   Truth is fine, IF it will help me win.

3.   Political opponents become "evil" enemies to be defeated.

4.   Logical disagreement is viewed as an affront to one's identity: *they* are "wrong," not just their claims.

5.   Collaborative discourse with the goal of improving the world becomes difficult.

6.   Confusion, misinformation, ambiguity, vagueness, stoking of fear and anger become the norm.

7.   Feelings of certainty stand in place of rational investigation.

8.   Might makes Right. If you don't believe me, then go fuck yourself.

All of this can lead to fewer people being interested in philosophy.

6.   Admittedly, as a colleague was quick to note upon first hearing this neologism, it sounds a bit like "cervical." To which I fully agreed. That has not dissuaded me from using it, apparently.

7.   Gilbert (chapter 2) makes the important distinction between an argument as object of study, the process of argument or arguing, and arguers. Here we might think of the resultant object of study as analogous to the completed construction (always needing refurbishment at some point), the act of arguing as the collaborative exchanges among the civical engineers (this term implies the ideal of cooperative work, not competing firms fighting for a bid), and the arguers akin to the engineers themselves. As we will see with Susan Stebbing below, *this* argument by analogy, connecting argument to civical engineering, need not be overly specific or exhaustive. In addition, consistent with Diego Castros' "tool-box" analogy discussed below, we need not be tied to a single metaphor for argumentation. Civical engineering is superior to "war," but there might be others that work equally well or better. For example, we might employ something more like "argument as a non-agonistic game" where playfulness rather than aggressive competition is emphasized; we play with ideas rather than force them upon others (see Lugones 2003).

8.   My metaphor is not all that different from Daniel Cohen's "barnraising," though he does not develop it much beyond this: "The best arguments, then, rather than being destructively adversarial, involve a constructive co-operation between their participants. If

debate is to be constructive for everyone involved, then instead of being a kind of war, argument can be more like a barnraising" (Cohen 186). Cohen is indebted in part to the work of Janice Moulton: "In general the inability to win a public debate is not a good reason for giving up a belief. One can usually attribute the loss to one's own performance instead of to inadequacies in one's thesis. A public loss may even make one feel more strongly toward the position which wasn't done justice by the opposition. Thus the Adversary Method is not a good way to convince someone who does not agree with you" (Moulton 156).

9.   For an analysis of coherent mixed metaphors with "argument" see (Lakoff and Johnson 95–97).

10.   See here for an egregious example: Collapsed Miami condo had been sinking into Earth as early as the 1990s, researchers say (msn.com) (accessed 10/25/21). Why buildings collapse (msn.com)

11.   See Stebbing chapter VII and Gilbert 4 on the differences between persuading and convincing. For Stebbing, the propagandist, and many politicians, are interested in *persuading* audiences to follow them, to get them to do *something*, whereas, *convincing* others is an attempt to amend their beliefs. A gun in my face might persuade me to act in a way counter to my beliefs; but it likely will not change them. Persuasion relies compulsion, while convincing "reasonableness" of arguments (Stebbing 63).

12.   There are connections with the rhetorical use of enthymemes as Aristotle conceives them, and jokes, where the benefits of leaving out a premise that is better left filled in by the audience is more effective than doing all the work for them. More on this below.

13.   This paper will be like *nothing* you have ever read before—with the exception of monographs in ethics, logic, theology, phenomenology, epistemology, metaphysics, politics, and statistical analyses of left-handed, bearded pitchers who tend to balk with runners on 2nd and 3rd, and there are no outs. And it's raining. A bit.

14.   In contrast to the Millian presumption that the truth *will out* eventually with the "free exchange of ideas," Novaes reminds us of a number of cognitive biases Mill would not have been aware of, or at least does not consider:

1.   We tend to shy away from sources/views we already believe we disagree with: this leads to echo chambers and epistemic bubbles.

2.   We hate changing our minds regarding our cherished opinions and would rather attack the source of an alternative view than confront the arguments.

3.   We are more prone to engage in motivated reasoning to protect our identities.

4.   If we do engage with argument, greater polarization often results, far from changing minds.

5.   Establishing some background level of understanding and trust is possible through the use of humor even if the interlocutors have just met. More on that in a bit.

15.   I added the "father" bit for effect. That's not what he called me. But, when using examples like this in class, such embellishments are encouraged for *both* the cognitive and affective effect. This will be made clear in the following sections.

16.   If you have the time and the stomach, see Quealy 2021. He truly outmatches all competitors in this arena.

17.   "An ongoing argument concerns whether fact-checking Big Lies and conspiracies ever helps. Some—citing what was called the "Backfire Effect" — claim that it can actually make things worse (by causing those in the grips of the lies to dig in). . . . To those in the grip of arrogant ideologies, convinced that only they know and everyone else is a moron, it is unclear, at best, that just lobbing more facts at them is going to help at all—if by "help" we mean "change their minds" (Lynch, np).

18.   Diego Castro's "toolbox" approach to argumentation will be helpful with this, as will be explained below. See Rooney 2010: 214–216 for different modes of argument based on situation, linear abstract contextual narrative. I will focus mostly on the narrative approach combined with humor and analogy.

19.   See Rooney 2010: 221 where she critiques the view of Trudy Govier on the "inevitability of adversariality" given differences of beliefs or opinions: "To go from saying that I think that your belief not-X is mistaken or incorrect to '*you* are wrong' is surely an extra and unnecessary step. It illustrates a problematic slippage that is not uncommon in argumentation, the slippage from a person's belief or claim (as wrong) to the person herself (as wrong). It introduces a level of adversariality that is unnecessary and epistemically confusing, and, to my mind, borders on the very thing Govier wants to avoid, 'the ancillary aspects of adversariality commonly attendant upon [minimal adversariality] and thus naturally and readily confused with it.'" We might find parallels with the common category mistake in pejoratives like "illegal immigrants/aliens" or even "racist/sexist" when applied to an individual who has made a racist or sexist remark. Note one's political preferences will likely nudge one to accept one of the above as an apt descriptor, while bemoaning the other as unfair.

20.   One might think this is a positive element of an argument. In Nozick's sense, the logic strikes one so clearly and forcefully, one simply drops dead in response. If stunned and passive silence is the goal of an argument, then sure. But this is not the most laudable end for argumentation, especially if we seek to escape the "Argument-is-War" metaphor. By the way, God, in His omnibenevolent mercy, does not strike David dead as punishment for his transgressions. Instead, it's his child that God smites. This *after* David comes to see his own wrong-doing, via Nathan's analogous parable, and professes sincere remorse. Some God.

21.   Hubris or pride is a complex cognitive-emotional element when it enters into, or is in the background of, argumentation. It is not something to be ignored or simply derided from a *frivolous* comedic position: "For the Greeks, acts of humiliation performed by the powerful damage the target's social position and thereby wound their core sense of self. Too often today we misunderstand the ancient concept of hubris as a mere attitude of arrogance rather than as a relational breach that harms the vulnerable. In the ancient democracy, hubris was an act of violation, not a personality trait, and a charge directed exclusively against the entitled and privileged by those who suffered from abuse. Such abuse—for example, the hubris of a tyrant—would call forth truth telling as standing up to power, or what the Greeks termed parrhesia" (Willett and Willett 2019: 8). For more on the role of humor in parrhesia, see (Kramer 2020).

22.   There's a Horse In The Hospital | John Mulaney | Netflix Is A Joke, YouTube. Surely I need not fill you in on who that horse is.

23.   Ricky Gervais Breaks Down Why He Hates Social Media | Stand Up | Netflix - YouTube. Note his use of "post-truth" here.

24.   Chris Rock - Tamborine: Cops and Bad Apples - YouTube. And yes, these should be evaluated as arguments not mere frivolity that is outside the bounds of philosophical reason.

25.   Kris Straub, *Chainsawsuit*, https://chainsawsuit.krisstraub.com/, accessed January 5, 2023.

26.   There is levity here, but it is not completely outside the bounds of possibility. Reasoning well *together* is surely a necessary if not sufficient condition for improving the world's condition.

27.   See also Gilbert 1997: 49 and 79 and chapters 8–9 for a more detailed overview of coalescent argument.

28.   There is a recent development specific to the social sciences at the University of Pennsylvania that seems to borrow heavily (though with no references to him) Gilbert's *Coalescent Argumentation*. It is the *Adversarial Collaboration Project*. Here is their summary

of the work: "As originally conceived by Economics Nobel Prize Laureate, Daniel Kahneman, adversarial collaborations call on scholars to: (1) make good faith efforts to articulate each other's positions (so that each side feels fairly characterized, not caricatured); (2) work together to design methods that both sides agree constitute a fair test and that they agree, ex ante, have the potential to change their minds; (3) jointly publish the results, regardless of 'who wins, loses or draws' on which topics. Each collaborator serves as a check on their adversary to confirm that the hypotheses are falsifiable, the scientific tests are fair, and the interpretations accurately characterize the findings. Because adversarial collaborations restrict scholars' abilities to rig methods in favor of their own hypothesis and to dismiss unexpected results, adversarial collaborations are likely to advance debates faster and generate more reliable knowledge than traditional approaches." Adversarial Collaboration Project | Adversarial Collaboration Research Center (upenn.edu). Accessed January 10, 2022.

29.   For Gilbert (80), even a nonverbal reaction like hanging one's head low, even unconsciously, can be considered a move in an (emotional mode) argument.

30.   Gilbert has an expansive notion of *kisceral* or intuitive, including religious inspiration, new age feeling of auras, etc., but he clarifies that he is not introducing them because he stands by them normatively; rather they are descriptions of how many people in fact do argue, so it makes sense to have an understanding of how to reason about it. My conception of the *kisceral* mode is more in line with Daniel Kahneman's understanding of intuition as "recognition" rather than a mysterious sixth sense (Kahneman 2011, 46–49 and 236–237). A "chicken-sexer" can intuit the sex of a chicken seemingly immediately, non-consciously; but this is only possible due to years of practice, much the same way an electrician or medical specialist can *see* the cause of the power outage or cause of illness, respectively, as if by magic. It is not magic, it is more likely a result of the 10,000 hours put into their trade (See Gladwell, *Blink* and *Outliers*, and with respect to recognizing racism, for example, as if intuitively, see Yancy 2008). Not unrelated, I view much of Daniel Dennett's book "Intuition Pumps and other Tools for Thinking" as a kind of taxonomy of "imagination-extenders and focus-holders" that assist in argumentation; humorous analogies can serve as a similar instrument that can help bridge both cognitive and intuitive gaps among civical arguers.

31.   An additional sense of "collaboration" in these cases is the benefit the comedian receives from the immediate response or assessment from the audience. If the comedian is good, she will be responsive to the audience, tweak her material accordingly, and either amend or omit certain material. This is a never-ending process (see McGraw and Warner 40).

32.   For more on this evolutionary account comparing our addiction to mirth to that of sweets, sex, drugs, and music, see (Hurley et al. 1, 26, 62, 81–82, 253, 290, and 294).

33.   We even pay for it at times, especially at comedy clubs, *mirth labs* to feed our addiction, where we understand the "risks" of being incorporated into the comedian's performance.

34.   The bulk of this paragraph borrows from (Kramer 2015).

35.   "When he becomes aware of these inner conflicts, the conversion process has already reached an advanced state. 'If you want to conquer another man,' wrote [Richard] Gregg, 'do it . . . by creating inside his own personality a strong new impulse that is incompatible with his previous tendency'" (Sharpe 723). I might amend this to create the conditions that will assist the other in recognizing their internal inconsistencies.

36.   See (Kramer 2016) on comedians using thought experiments as performative narration and argumentation.

37.   See Hannah Gadsby's *Nannette* for this distinction, https://www.netflix.com/title/80233611, accessed January 5, 2023.

38.   "Like the comedians of revenge, these humorists expose hypocrisy and other social vices; but by sprinkling ridicule with self-deprecatory humor, they defuse anxiety and generate a counterwave of joy and solidarity . . . but comedy does not rely on a strictly cognitive ap-

proach to expose and untie the knots in a system. Instead, humor turns on a more affectively engaged modality of critique, exposing not just contradictions but also hypocrisy" (Willett and Willett 2019: 63).

39.   For a distinction between mere claims and the broader and deeper sense of an arguer's mindset and commitments, positions, see (Gilbert 105–106).

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