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# Persuasive stories

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**Title:** Persuasive Stories

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Since some of the most important and effective forms of persuasion are stories, an appropriate task of informal logic and critical thinking is to consider the use of stories as argument. In what follows, I first sketch a relatively non-controversial reconstruction of the concept of "argument" as an offering of grounds for belief or action. I then describe some paradigm cases of stories that do the work of arguments, and are taken to be important, even by many of those who do not find them persuasive. I then suggest the importance of developing effective ways of responding to story arguments. In doing so, I tentatively take some steps on a road towards a theory of story argument validity.

### Arguments

An argument can be defined as an attempt to persuade or convince someone to accept some claim or course of action, or demonstrate a certain point, on the basis of reasons.<sup>1</sup> We can see, first of all, that this definition applies to certain ordinary experiences (as well as following standard definitions of argument).<sup>2</sup> People do attempt to persuade each other to accept claims, to act in certain ways, to buy soap, to believe in communism or capitalism, to vote for or against candidates, to interfere with or protect physicians who provide abortions. Effective persuasion may lead us into marriages, contracts, religious communities, or wars.

It is clear that there are exceptions to the definition. Formal arguments, for example, would seem to be arguments, but some of them are offered in logic books (e.g., "if p then q; q; therefore p") as examples of bad arguments. Some arguments involving sophistries are offered to amuse (even if some fail at this aim). Nonetheless, despite these, and other exceptions, it seems that arguments can be usefully defined as attempts to persuade or convince someone to accept some claim or course of action, or demonstrate a certain point, on the basis of reasons. Such a definition is coherent with ordinary usage, works well enough with the treatment offered in informal logic texts, and makes sense out of the existence, importance, and practices of informal logic reflected in literature from the times of Aristotle and Plato to contemporary articles, essays, and text-books.

### Stories as Arguments

It should be noted that to claim of a story that it is an argument is not to claim that it is merely an argument, or even that its author, if asked, would admit that it was an argument. For one thing, such an admission might interfere with the effectiveness of the argument. "I'm just trying to entertain my audience," storytellers may explain. Yet, it may be that the best interpretation we can find for

certain aspects of their enterprise is that they are attempting to persuade or convince at the political, metaphysical, or other levels. Other authors, or these same authors at other times, may admit that their works are arguments; that one reason they create these stories is to change their audiences' ways of understanding or acting. Some, like Ayn Rand, or Orson Scott Card, will admit that they write to convey truth and change lives. And some stories are offered by influential thinkers as attempts to persuade or convince in epistemological, religious, metaphysical, and moral contexts. What is more important to the informal logician concerned with attempts to persuade and convince, some of these stories succeed, to a significant extent, in their purpose of changing the way their audience believes and acts.

Let's consider, for example, the effects of the myth of the cave in Plato's Republic (Book VII),<sup>3</sup> Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged (1992),<sup>4</sup> and Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye (1994).

### Stories as persuaders: Plato, Rand, and Morrison

#### The Cave

Many of us are familiar with Plato's myth of the cave in Book VII of the Republic; there the ordinary state of people is like that of prisoners in a cave. These people are chained in place, watching shadows on the walls.

. . . here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets. To them . . . the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images. (Jowett, 514-515c)

The story continues with a description of what happens when one of the prisoners escapes, sees the true light of the sun, and returns to the cave to free others. No longer used to the darkness, the returner can barely see, and seems to be incompetent to manage in the ordinary world. As Plato explains,

. . . if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the den, while his sight was still weak, and before his eyes had become steady (and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit of sight might be very considerable) would he not be ridiculous? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if anyone tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death. (Jowett, 515c-517a)<sup>5</sup>

The escapee who returned to liberate others is a philosopher like Socrates. Like Socrates he is not a successful businessman or politician in the cave-world. Like Socrates he is taken to be somehow both incompetent and a dangerous threat. And for the readers, who perhaps already identify themselves with philosophers by the time they have reached Book VII, it teaches that even if they cannot compete well with ordinary folk for the ordinary rewards, they are better than the others, and merit the better rewards that await them (a lesson reinforced by another Platonic story at the end of the Republic, the "Tale of Er").

As argument, the story is quite effective; it takes the philosopher's apparent weakness (if you know so much why aren't you successful) and turns it into a strength (it is because I know so much that I am unsuccessful in a world that mistakes ignorance for truth), and it frees the philosopher from the task once taken on by the pre-Socratic Thales, of doing well in the Greek analog of the stock market.<sup>6</sup> The story not only makes sense out of the low status of the philosopher in certain societies, it inspires a certain kind of seeker to relinquish that status as comparatively worthless, and to pursue the philosophical light.

The allegory of the cave, and the "Tale of ER," both have long been recognized as stories. It is worth noting that much of Plato's work was the telling of stories about Socrates to rival the stories that others were telling about Socrates.<sup>7</sup> Socrates was put to death because of stories many people believed about him then. The Platonic stories that live today bring him and his work back to life--as many parents have noticed when their child comes back from that first philosophy course asking them to define words like "successful." One (apparently unlikely) response available to these parents, and others suspicious of this Socratic method, would be to look at Plato's stories and to subject them to the same kind of criticisms we offer against arguments whose conclusions seem dubious. How such a task might be accomplished will be left to the next section of this paper. For now, let's consider another author who has an appeal to a certain number of our students, and whose influence extended to Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board.<sup>8</sup> Author of novels and philosophical essays, Ayn Rand has been known to cite her fictional works to make her points.<sup>9</sup> Of these, she, and many of her readers, seem to prize the extended argument of Atlas Shrugged.

### Atlas Shrugged

In Atlas Shrugged, Rand describes a world in which the industrious and creative producers go on strike after millennia of being used by non-producing advocates of what Rand portrays as the pernicious doctrine of altruism. When these Atlases finally shrug off their burden, the world begins to collapse, products break, factories close, trains break down, shipping ceases, the lights begin to go out in the big cities. In the world Rand describes, the advocates of altruism (who say life is not worth living unless lived selflessly for others), like the newspaper writer Ellsworth Toohey in Rand's The Fountainhead, are small-

mindful small people, resentful and cruel. On the other hand, the advocates of selfishness (or egoism) are magnanimous, great-souled individuals. These egoists take joy in the exercise of their creative powers, and take their own lives as the centers of their existence. Their goal is the furthering of their own happiness. Throughout the novel, there are extended philosophical discussions of the virtue of selfishness. These culminate in a three hour long radio speech by the protagonist of the work, John Galt. Those who elevate the abstract interests of the group over the concrete reality of the individual person are portrayed as misguided, crooked, deceptive, vicious, and worse. Those who stand for the individual's right to pursue his or her own life, liberty, or property are portrayed as heroic, dedicated, productive human beings.

In this work, the productive organize, go on strike, and the novel ends with the hints of a promised rebirth of a great society of great souled individuals producing and creating value for their own selfish reasons, and thus generating a greater and more glorious world.

Perhaps the most persuasive scenes (as opposed to the arguments) in the novel occur when we see the destruction and decay which results when there is no longer an egoistic pride in craft, and the great transportation and travel machines (trains in the novel) slowly break down.

The human individual in this work is his or her own purpose in existence. To thrive as a human, requires, according to the logic of the novel, self-respect. Self-respect comes from being productive, being productive comes from surviving and thriving as a human accepting only the authority of one's own decisions based on reason. Family, clan, nation, race, etc., cannot, and according to the philosophy of Rand and Galt, ought not to interfere with individuals living their own lives for themselves.

The novel has a clear appeal to some young men and women who are tired of being told to give up their own desires and career aspirations to enter the family business, or who are counseled to do something practical with their education, instead of what they think will make themselves happy, based on their own self-knowledge. The egoists are portrayed as courageous, and great souled, creating and maintaining factories, philosophies, sculptures and paintings for the joy it gives them. The altruists come across as parasites who delight in keeping the great down to their own level, and who think that the only kind of merit that merits consideration is that introduced by need.

Rand's works, as far as I know, have not been used nearly as much in philosophy and literature courses as Plato. Yet, some college students find a certain appeal in a philosopher who tells them that their lives are their own, that they need not accept any authority but their own careful judgment, and that they should do what makes them happy, even if it frustrates the plans of others.

An interesting feature of Rand's fiction is that it contains what she, apparently, took to be the best statement of her arguments, and in other writings, she quotes her characters to make her points. Furthermore, for those of us who do

philosophy and would like to reach a greater audience, her strategy may merit further study. Later, in the section on how to respond to the special challenges of persuasive stories, I will discuss what I take to be an effective response to this strategy.

### The Bluest Eye

In a society where a certain notion of beauty is central, and where romantic love is portrayed as an ideal state, to create a work in which these are persuasively portrayed as pernicious shows a great deal of rhetorical skill in making what one might have thought the weaker case to be the stronger. Toni Morrison's accomplishment rivals, perhaps surpasses, that of Gorgias, in his "Encomium on Helen." <sup>10</sup> (Kaufmann 1961: 54-57) In The Bluest Eye, popular concepts of beauty and romance are convincingly portrayed as sources of oppression, mainstays of racism, and ultimately corrupting influences. Morrison show how these two ideas of romantic love and physical beauty destroy the life of one of her characters (Pauline) after she's been exposed to them in the movies. These ideas led her into ranking everyone on a scale of beauty, made her feel bad in comparison, made her and her family look bad in comparison, and eventually led her to hate much of her life. As Pauline says, "Them pictures gave me a lot of pleasure, but it made coming home hard, and looking at Cholly [her husband] hard" (Morrison 1994: 123). By the time we learn how ugly she thinks her own daughter is (p. 126), many of us are ready to accept Morrison's claim (on p. 122) that romantic love and physical beauty are "probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought."

This novel, throughout, shows the damage of these ideas, and the racism that this kind of media based valuation reflects and supports. The reader who might have found the parable of the cave in the Republic uninteresting might yet, through the tale of The Bluest Eye, begin to question the rules and standards of a movie theater world in which people come to hate and reject reality because of what they take to be the truer better world projected on the screen before them. Even if unwilling to surrender the ideals of romantic love and beauty, readers of this book will, I suspect, come to question them in light of the destructive effects they are shown to have in this novel. In doing that, these readers will make implicit assumptions explicit, and cease to take them for granted.<sup>11</sup>

### The Importance of Developing Responses to Persuasive Stories

Consider some possible effects of Rand's writing. The influenced reader of a work like Atlas Shrugged will be more likely to accept capitalism as an ideal, vote against programs that allocate resources on the basis of need, and tend to reject any collectivist enterprise that ranks the needs of the group over the rights of individual members. Suppose we think that needs of some individuals or groups of individuals do, at least sometimes, entail obligations on others. We can formulate arguments to this effect. We can even criticize the arguments present in Rand's stories and articles as arguments. But, the reader persuaded by the images in Atlas Shrugged (or Anthem) of a world gone to

seed because of taking needs as right-conferring, will, I would suggest, be likely to continue to take their experiences of the world as portrayed in the Rand stories quite seriously. Look what happens when you do that, they may think. They might even say it: "The altruists of the world keep the productive people like Hank Reardon, Dagny Taggart, and John Galt from making the world a better place. When you reward need instead of merit, people will develop their needs, not their virtues, just as in Atlas Shrugged."

### Three Strategies for Responding to Persuasive Stories

As indicated, we can criticize the arguments in the story or in Rand's other work. Yet, there are at least three other kinds of responses to the challenges the tale offers (also appropriate for those who want to respond to Plato or Morrison): The first kind is more critical; but may lack sufficient rhetorical force. The second way is in a sense, more constructive, more forceful, more profitable (if effective), but more difficult. The third way is more like what we would expect to see offered by an informal logician.

#### 1. Address it as a story

We can criticize the story as a story. One way to do this is to point out that some aspect of the story is not plausible. Truth does not need to be plausible; it just needs to be supported by the evidence. It is not plausible to many of us that most people would administer what they take to be dangerous amounts of electrical shock to others, just because they are told to do so by someone in a lab coat. But the high rate of compliance during the Milgram experiments indicates otherwise. (Milgram 1974; Cialdini 1993: 209-215)

But convincing fiction, unlike the truth, needs to be plausible. So, we can try to show that Galt is an unconvincing character. We could argue that most of the people who hold altruist's kinds of views regarding the merits of need are not like Rand's villains. We might simply argue against the credibility of a plot that is based on the principle that the truly selfish will benefit from each other's true selfishness. To those who do not share Rand's beliefs in limit-transcending human creativity and productivity, it doesn't seem plausible that things would work out so that the world would be a better place if we all looked out for ourselves instead of others, given that resources are limited. So, we can criticize the work as fiction, arguing that people like that don't act like that. The advantage of this kind of criticism, when effective, is that it cuts to the heart of what might have made the story a convincing addition to our experience of the world. But, the disadvantage of this is that it may present some of the same difficulties we encounter arguing with thought experiments. For what many thought experiments do is help us see the implications of our assumptions, and the best our criticism can do is to point out those assumptions.

But, this suggests a second way of responding to the story. Here, we would address the story in terms of its advantages, while indicating that one of the features of a story used as argument involves the implicit acceptance of certain principles. At the critical level, this response can be put into words as, "of

course that is the way things work out in Atlas Shrugged. The book takes place in Rand's world, a world which follows her rules. Another author could tell a story that takes place in a world of their own design, and then things would turn out quite differently."

## 2. Respond to it with another story

One could respond to Rand with other books. "Read Morrison," one could say, "and you'll see that we are obligated to respond to need." Sometimes, when the nature of the response as response needs to be more clear, we can try to present another story, written by as good a writer, which does respond explicitly as story to Rand's work. (The need for good writing has to do with the fact that a refutation that does not command the audience's attention is unlikely to refute an argument which is attractive to that same audience.)

In the case of Rand, there is such a book. Nancy Kress, in her novel, Beggars in Spain (1993), shows how simple egoism, and the good Horatio Alger virtues may fail someone completely in an era of swift technological change. Furthermore, the non-productive needy of today may be the sources of tomorrow's growth. She does this with what seems to be a conscious awareness of Rand's philosophy, which she puts in the mouth of her character, Kenzo Yagai. Chapter three of Beggars (28-32) is explicitly devoted to Kenzo Yagai and his philosophy. Yagai explains the importance of the individual's own efforts, and the importance of being an honest free trader of the results of one's own productive efforts (see especially the quotation from his speech on pp. 30-31). A productive researcher himself, he would have been quite at home as the protagonist in a Rand novel. Beggars in Spain, in a sense, shows what we told in the criticism about how Rand's world works. The Randian world of Atlas Shrugged may work the way it does not necessarily because that is the way the world works, but because that is the way a Randian world works. One can say, if another author were to describe the applications of Rand's principles in a world where Rand does not control the plot, these principles might not work the same way. If the story seems more plausible than Rand's, the characters more three dimensional, the situations more textured, then Rand's polemic will have been replied to at a level that addresses its attractions.

This occurs in the case of Beggars in Spain. Kress's response shows what that criticism tells. Kress presents a world in which people are convincingly portrayed as having productive abilities nourished by wealthy families while others are hampered by familial and social neglect. Kress's world is a world in which one's neuro-physiology can be influenced by the environment. In Kress's story, genetic engineering and high tech medical and psychological care, and educational opportunities are more available to the wealthy. Despite all this, the race is not always to the swift. Since Kress portrays a world of such realities while specifically (and fairly, I think) showing how Rand's position begins to fail when one's accomplishments turn out to be the result of the fortunate or unfortunate genetic planning of one's parents. The similarity to our



world in which even productivity can have unproductive consequences shows how Rand's principles can fail to work out. Also, Kress's story reaches more readers than a criticism in a philosophical journal.

### 3. The Third Way: Informal Logical Analysis of the Story as Argument

For rhetorical and persuasive purposes, I recommend responding to a work in the arena of its greatest effects. Therefore, I think that the best response to Rand is Kress; though a response in an even wider arena, e.g., film or television, might persuade even more people. But, as an informal logician, one does not work only at the level of persuasion. Even when one is aware that the analysis offered in a philosophical journal will not (at least as quickly) have the widespread effects of a profitable novel, there is a concern to ask and answer questions about whether or not a persuasive story offers a good argument. As an informal logician, I am interested in questions about whether or not a particular story taken as argument ought to be persuasive, whether or not we should accept the essentials of its premises, whether these premises present good reasons for accepting the conclusions. In other words, I am interested in the soundness and validity, so to speak, of persuasive stories considered as arguments.

If a story can show, for example, how certain attitudes and behavior lead to destructive consequences, then that story presents a good argument for accepting the claim that these attitudes and behaviors are destructive. For such a story to work it needs to have a certain kind of story validity. For us to analyze such a story in terms of its story validity, we need to consider its premises (implicit and explicit), state them clearly, and determine if these premises are good reasons for accepting the conclusion.

This is not easy. To analyze Morrison's Bluest Eye as an argument about how certain treatment leads to certain results requires a lot of work, and also requires a great effort at fairness. Even if it contains argument, the story is more, as stated before, than the argument it contains. Artistic features of the story, including the possibility of deliberate ambiguity, may interfere with this kind of analysis. Yet, if we can't analyze it with the tools appropriate to ordinary arguments, that does not mean it is a bad argument; it may mean that we need to develop new tools.

In The Bluest Eye, it is, I would argue, clear that Morrison is persuasively showing us how certain attitudes and behavior lead to certain destructive effects. As the narrator states, "since why is difficult to handle, one must take refuge in how." (Morrison 1994: 6.) Yet, to respond to the question "should the story be persuasive?" requires us to consider evidence. (One of the hardest things about doing informal logic, is we often need to consider the adequacy of the evidence offered for a thesis, and this requires investigation.) In the case of The Bluest Eye, we would, for example, need to consider research about the general effects on minority self-esteem of majority ideals and relative deprivation. We would have to consider historical claims about the relationship between skin tone and social treatment within the African American community

and between African Americans and others in the United States. We would have to consider evidence about people responding to media imagery of ideals, and the intersection of such ideals with racism. We would have to consult with social scientists and historians. Then, if they confirmed what Morrison said, we cannot reject her construction on the basis of such researches. To further add to the complexity and difficulty of our task, we need to recall that since Morrison's work is based on her own experience,<sup>12</sup> it is itself important data, and as such the relationship between it and theory is such that either, when accepted, may be used to criticize the other. Thus, if historical and social scientific researches do not make sense of the possibility of The Bluest Eye, then these theories may be what we deem lacking.

But, at least as far as my own limited researches in these areas go, contemporary theories are not lacking in terms of coherence with the data reflected in The Bluest Eye. As a matter of fact, The Bluest Eye is assigned reading in some social science courses and is used by some sociology instructors to bring life to sociological work on stratification.

### A Few Concluding Words about Stories As Arguments

Story arguments may be effective because they enter the experienced worlds of their audiences.<sup>13</sup> As Aristotle noted in the Rhetoric, the argument whose premises are assumed, the argument by enthymeme, is often the most successful. An argument that does not need to be explicitly stated because it is accepted by the audience, has at least three things in its favor in terms of persuasion. First, its premises are less likely to be criticized since they are not explicitly stated; secondly, the premises are accepted by the audience; thirdly, such an argument reflects the persuaders' knowledge of what is and is not acceptable to their audience, and an ability to craft arguments and examples that are consistent with that audience's experience of the world. As Elgin has pointed out, a great deal of the persuasive task can be accomplished by putting it into the framework of a deeply entrenched socially shared story.<sup>14</sup> Stories themselves can sometimes effectively carry the burden of the persuasive enthymeme. Before an audience that shares stories,<sup>15</sup> one story can be rhetorically balanced by allusions to another. An ardent Rand fan from the United States might be effectively challenged by a brief allusion to the Jimmy Stuart film, "It's a Wonderful Life." (Capra 1946)

As indicated, the well told story can be effective because it allows so much to be brought in implicitly. The very presence of a traditional story form carries with it traditional notions about the role of character in moral decision making. Since the time of Aristotle, enthymeme<sup>16</sup> has been considered one of the most effective forms of argument, because it relies on implicit premises which are more difficult to challenge because they are implicit.

In this paper, I have suggested that we can respond to persuasive stories in a variety of ways. These include criticizing them as arguments or by addressing actual arguments found within them. We can criticize them as thought experiments, by telling and alluding to alternative stories, and by treating them

as reports of experience. We can, for example, analyze Rand, Plato, or Morrison as making claims about how people act in certain circumstances, and then test those claims against the best available data.<sup>17</sup>

We won't do a very good job of meeting the challenge of persuasive stories if we ignore them. Stories are an important part of human experience. People change their minds about issues after encountering stories.<sup>18</sup> By concerning ourselves with fiction, we continue the tradition of critical thinkers and informal logicians whose concern with persuasion has led us to examine advertising and the media. We are following through on our awareness that there may be more to the story.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>For an extended treatment of persuasion and conviction, and one way of distinguishing between them, see The New Rhetoric (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 26-31. They "apply the term persuasive to argumentation that only claims validity for a particular audience, and the term convincing to argumentation that presumes to gain the adherence of every rational human being." (p. 28)

<sup>2</sup>S.v. "argument"; Scribner-Bantam English Dictionary (1979). See also The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1966), s.v.: "Argument, controversy, dispute imply the expression of opinions for and against some idea."

<sup>3</sup>Benjamin Jowett's translation can be found on-line at <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.mb.txt>. Another standard translation (Paul Shorey's) can be found in Hamilton and Cairns' The Complete Dialogues of Plato Including the Letters (1973: 575-844).

<sup>4</sup>This 35th anniversary edition of Atlas Shrugged is a facsimile of the edition published in 1957, and includes a new (1991) introduction by Leonard Peikoff.

<sup>5</sup>For comparison, see Shorey's rendering of these passages (Hamilton and Cairns 1973: 747-749).

<sup>6</sup>For more on Thales' acquisition of wealth, see Aristotle's Politics (1259a5-35).

<sup>7</sup>One striking example of Plato's ability to seriously compete with other story tellers like Aristophanes can be found in Plato's Symposium, where he moves from one style of story telling to another, showing his mastery of all. The Symposium itself can be read as a story that ends with a claim about stories and their writers, i.e., "the genius of comedy was the same with that of tragedy, and that the true artist in tragedy was an artist in comedy also." (Jowett: 223d); the same passage is handled somewhat differently by Michael Joyce in his

translation (Hamilton and Cairns 1973: 574).

**8** Three of Greenspan's essays occur in Rand's Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal (1967).

**9** For example, in her introduction to Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal, she describes the book as "a non-fiction footnote to Atlas Shrugged" (p. ix). In the first of the essays, she responds to an objection to one of her points with a long (though abridged) quotation from Atlas Shrugged (part of John Galt's speech, pp. 1063-1065).

**10** For a summary discussion of the status of such work in Greek culture, see Educating Heroes (Kagan 1994: 21-22).

**11** For one discussion of the importance of this, see Alfred North Whitehead's "The Human Soul," in his Adventures of Ideas (1933: 10-25), especially pp. 10-11.

**12** Morrison discusses some of her experiences, including her meeting with an African American girl who wanted blue eyes, in her 1993 "Afterword" (see, e.g., pp. 209-210).

**13** Some stories may work because of the use of enthymeme. Some because they are not taken as argument, and thus don't generate the kind of resistance an argument might. The use of stories to persuade is one way of avoiding the adversarial paradigm discussed in Janice Moulton's, "A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method," (Harding and Hintikka 1983: 149-164). For more on the value of stories as method, see Joyce Trebilcot's "Ethics of Method: Greasing the Machine and Telling Stories" (1991: 45-51). Some stories may succeed in persuasion due to aesthetic appeal. Others may do their work, as Orson Scott Card suggests in Maps in a Mirror (1990: 273-276), because they add to our experience and form a part of our own memories of the basic dynamics of the world. They may add to what David Shachar, in his 1977 Hebrew Literature lectures, called the "experienced truth" in a story. Card's treatment suggests (to me) that one reason stories may be effective persuaders is that they may change who we are. Card suggests that the stories we encounter include stories about ourselves, and he goes so far as to write, "Our very identity is a collection of the stories we have come to believe about ourselves." (Card 1990: 273)

**14** This is a recurring theme in Elgin's works on "verbal self-defense," such as The Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense (1980) and Genderspeak: Men, Women, and the Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense (1993). It also occurs in some of her fictional works, e.g., Native Tongue (1984), and its sequels The Judas Rose (1987), and Earthsong (1994).

**15** The audience needs to share the stories. The need for such sharing may be reflected in the central theses of E.D. Hirsch, Jr.'s Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know, with an Appendix, What Literate Americans Know

(1987).

**16** See Aristotle's discussion of the use of enthymeme and its importance to rhetoric in his Rhetoric, Bk. 1: ch. 2, especially 1356b—1357b. For future work on the use of stories in persuasion, I suspect that re-examination of his Poetics will prove quite useful.

**17** We need to keep in mind the possibility that the story itself may contain useful suggestions or insights not yet present in the research. The story might even be a factor in generating later research. I hope future works on relationships between stories and reasoning consider the heuristic role of stories in the "logic of discovery."

**18** Consider, for example, the influence of Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin in the 19th century's campaign against slavery, and the role of Upton Sinclair's The Jungle in the development of meat inspection law in the early 1900's.

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