Warrants are the “good reasons” that explain connections between data and a claim.

Data = data (loud noises, flashes of light)

Warrant = implication (indicate thunder and lightning)

Claim = argument (there is a thunderstorm in progress)

Reasoning (thoughts we can wrap into a conclusion through data, warrants, and claims) and values (thing we think are important) are part of evaluating arguments

Forms of rhetoric which make an argument: persuasive essay/speech, informative essay/speech, comedy routine (value being expressed through humor), stories (morals and themes), picture, piece of architecture (war memorials)

Narrative – theory of symbolic actions (words or deeds) that have sequence and meaning

Premise: narratives compete with each other for acceptance

Rational World Paradigm:

Humans are essentially rational beings

Their mode of decision-making and communication is argument

The conduct of argument is ruled by more formal logic, such as legal, scientific, legislative etc.

Rationality is determined by subject matter expertise, argumentative ability, and skill in advocacy

The world is a set of logical puzzles which can be resolved through appropriate analysis and application of reason

Narrative Paradigm has more free-form/informal logic because of its nature as a story:

Humans are essentially storytellers

The paradigmatic mode of human decision-making and communication is “good reasons” which vary in form among communication situations, genres (categories of communication: funeral orations religious vs medical), and media (images, videos, vs purely written or verbal communication)

The production and practice of good reason is ruled by matters of history, biography, culture, and character

Rationality is determined by the nature of persons as narrative beings – their awareness of narrative probability and narrative fidelity

The world is a set of stories which must be chosen among to live the good life

We evaluate things based on how well the story holds together and resonates with us. Fisher thinks the world is a set of stories that much be chosen among

Narrative probability – what constitutes a coherent story

Narrative fidelity – do stories ring true with the stores we know to be true

Alternate view (more scientific/rational way)

Internal consistency – free of contradictions within the argument

External consistency – free of contradiction with other accepted data

Both narrative probability/fidelity and alternate view get at the same purpose of evaluating

Stories include characters, location, plot (chronology), conflict, resolution, theme, literary devices (rhetorical flourish)

Rowland Critiques:

Narrative paradigm is too expansive.

Tests of probability and fidelity aren’t that distinctive from traditional tools of technical resoning

There is not an “elitist” problem in how we evaluate arguments

If Rowland is right, then is there any utility in thinking about narratives?