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## Preface

# Argument and Social Justice and Reasoning for Change

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Feminist theorizing about argument can be traced at least back to 1983, with the publication of Janice Moulton's article "A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method." But feminist roots really take hold in argument theory with the 1990s work by Trudy Govier (1993; 1999) and Michael Gilbert (1994; 1997), and the special issue of *Argumentation and Advocacy* edited by Catherine Palczewski (1996). A range of approaches emerged in the 1990s, but then the discourse largely subsided until 2010, when *Informal Logic* published volume 30(3), *Reasoning for Change*. As editors of that volume, Phyllis Rooney and I hoped to breathe fresh life into the project and to draw in new voices to develop the "rhetorical space" (Code 1995), connecting feminist philosophy to informal logic, the philosophical study of argument.<sup>1</sup> Now, ten years later, feminist argument theory has a greater academic presence and continues to involve new perspectives. It has also become more non-ideal, more intersectional, and more interdisciplinary. This new volume provides a case in point.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, feminist philosophical scholarship about argument tends to criticize existing practices and ideals

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<sup>1</sup> I use 'argument' and 'arguing' interchangeably to address the range of practices associated with the expression of reasons.

in the discipline of philosophy that tend to be associated with dominant forms of masculinity, especially the use of metaphors of aggression and war when philosophers describe to students' argument and the related adversarial methods of reasoning (Moulton 1983) that dominate philosophers' conceptions of their own discipline. Some of the literature at this time also cites the misuse of the fallacies approach to argument evaluation to dismiss feminist philosophy (Crouch 1991; 1993), and many pieces raise concerns about bias in critical thinking education (Ayim 1988; 1991; 1995; Warren 1988; Alston 1995; Bailin 1995; Norris 1995)—an education provided mostly by philosophers and philosophy departments. Much of this early work cites Andre Nye's *Words of Power: A Feminist Reading of the History of Logic* (1990) that criticizes the historical Western idealization of abstract and formal logic, and it rejects Nye's suggestion of substituting "reading" for argument and logic. What the early writers share with Nye is a critical eye on the past and its influence on norms for argument, with a focus on the discipline of philosophy.

Into the 1990s, the initial critical responses to the discipline gave way, a shift marked by the *Informal Logic* publication of Michael Gilbert's "Feminism, Argumentation and Coalescence" (1994), a prelude to his 1997 book *Coalescent Argumentation*. Gilbert's positive model involves feminist concerns in part by recognizing the roles that emotion and other dimensions of situated reasoning play within his "multi-modal" account of argument, wherein emotional argument is one mode along with the logical, the visceral, and the kisceral (intuitive). Gilbert's central notion of coalescent argument also addresses feminist concerns about the adversariality of argument by making the value of exchanging reasons depend on the points of agreement that reasoners come to find among themselves as arguments develop. Daniel Cohen (1995) also takes up the concerns about adversariality by exploring a range of metaphors that can capture different dimensions, styles, and purposes that arguers have.

Continuing the trend in constructive responses to feminist critiques, in *The Philosophy of Argument* (1999), Trudy Govier suggests that adversarial arguing has an important value in helping reasoners negotiate controversy by drawing their attention to the

range of possible weaknesses involved in any position on a controversial issue. More generally, the book argues, in response to both feminist and non-specifically feminist critiques of critical thinking education and philosophical reasoning, for the value of continued research in informal logic. Govier's own theoretical work sets the standard for much of the subsequent feminist research by marking a distinction between the "ancillary adversariality" of "name-calling... animosity, hostility, failure to listen and attend carefully, misrepresentation" (p. 245) and the adversariality she sees as intrinsic to argument that involves simply a position opposing another person's position and which she describes as "minimal adversariality." In light of the pivotal role of Govier's 1999 book in the development of feminist argument theory, feminist scholars may find it fruitful to explore her earlier book, *Problems in Argument Analysis and Evaluation* (1988) that was out of print for many years but is now available open access through Windsor Studies in Argumentation.<sup>2</sup>

Argument theory and feminist theory are both interdisciplinary, and feminist argument research from rhetorical studies and communications studies crystallizes with Palczewski's volume on "Argumentation and Feminisms" (1996) and with the initial proposal by Sonja Foss and Cindy Griffin (1995) of the project of "invitational rhetoric" that challenges the typical assumption in rhetorical studies that persuasion provides the guiding norms for argument. Other communications scholars, such as Jennifer Bone and T. M. Linda Sholz, contribute to the program that develops a new rhetorical norm of inviting others to understand as a basis for creating relationships of interpersonal equality that recognize immanent value and provide for people's self-determination (Bone, Griffin and Scholz 2008). A steady trickle of papers developing the invitational rhetoric program emerged in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and parallel values orient the communication studies textbook by Josina M. Makau and Debian L. Marty (2001; 2013). A new collection on the subject edited by Foss and Griffin just appeared in 2020. None of this has received much uptake from feminist philosophers, although the concerns motivating invita-

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<sup>2</sup> <https://windsor.scholarsportal.info/omp/index.php/wsia/catalog/book/43>

tional rhetoric that persuasion involves imposing views on another person have certain similarities to recent philosophical interest in how the involuntary character of belief makes argument adversarial (Casey 2020; Howes and Hundleby forthcoming 2021).

*Reasoning for Change* includes five articles cultivated by a conference of the Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy (C-SWIP) held at the University of Windsor in 2008 and published alongside a 2010 issue of *Studies in Social Justice* entitled *Just Reason* containing four articles and a book review.<sup>3</sup> The pieces in *Studies in Social Justice* address questions about the role of morality and social justice in the operation of reasoning, especially regarding the inadequacy for achieving social justice of the way that scholars have employed certain terms and normative conceptions but with implications for personal action and thought. Rebecca Mason examines the concept of “civic deliberation” and argues that it demands “identity politics” because cultural identity provides a necessary epistemic resource for civic debate. What counts as “political expertise” comes into question from Shari Stone-Mediatore, who considers the routine institutionalized social violence of war and how families of combatants have understandings that reveal problems with the ideal of rationality as detachment. The manner in which reasoners distinguish the “religious” from the “secular” comes under scrutiny from Ada Jaarsma, who finds that it always involves conceptions of the “self” and of “justice.” Attention to these underlying commitments can help reasoners choose their paths forward in full mind of the contingency of their own ideals and goals. Self-transformation also occupies Clara Fischer (2010), who argues in Deweyan terms for the value of personal transformation for propelling social and political progress in a way that includes the evolution of “progress” as a concept. Much of the discussion collected in *Just Reason* deserves further attention in light of contemporary concerns about deep disagreement and public conflict, issues also addressed by Kathryn Phillips in the current volume.

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<sup>3</sup> The conference and both journal issues received grant support from the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

The 2010 *Informal Logic* issue, 30(3), attends more directly to the public expression of reasons, which goes by the name of “argument.” It commences with Phyllis Rooney’s article, “Philosophy, Adversarial Argumentation, and Embattled Reason,” a development from her presentation at the 2003 conference of the Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation (Rooney 2004) that contests Govier’s defense of minimal adversariality. In 2003, Rooney argued that the epistemological purposes for arguing reveal it to be a collaborative process from which everyone involved gains, and so adversaries need not be involved. More evidence that arguing serves purposes besides persuasion has emerged from empirical research on argument in recent years. The speech act of argument—the sharing of reasons—can serve many purposes aside from persuasion, including cognitive or heuristic aims, identity creation, relationship building, and demonstrating one’s rational capacities (Doury 2012; Goodwin and Innocenti 2019).<sup>4</sup> For Rooney in 2010, the concern was less with assuming that argument serves persuasion and more with problematizing how philosophers conceptualize rational persuasion. She points to a long history in Western philosophy of viewing reason as masculine and embattled against forces of unreason, but especially emotion and other feminine tropes.

The masculinity of the discipline of philosophy also provides the context for Sylvia Burrow’s concerns in “Verbal Sparring and Apologetic Points: Politeness in Gendered Argumentation Contexts.” Burrow argues that women face a double bind in philosophical discourse insofar as their arguments become discounted regardless of whether they engage in more adversarial or more cooperative styles of reasoning associated with femininity: “either endorsing or transgressing norms of feminine discourse can seriously diminish women’s possibility for argument success” (Burrow 2010, p. 237). Identifying the problem to lie in gendered standards of politeness, Burrow advises that women employ a

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that Mariane Doury does not challenge the idea that adversaries are implicit to arguing, only that they must always be present and provide the audience for an argument in a way that makes persuasion and adversarial interaction the purpose of expressing reasons.

selective politeness used strategically to maximize their argumentative goals.

Patrick Bondy (2010) connects the concern about how women's arguments are received with Miranda Fricker's conception of epistemic injustice and specifically testimonial injustice. His paper, "Argumentative Injustice," offers a strategy for addressing the problem that social identities may undermine the participation of some arguers. Bondy (2010) suggests that arguers remember this and adopt a practice of "metadistrust" involving scepticism regarding our judgements of whom and whose arguments to trust.

My paper, "The Authority of the Fallacies Approach to Argument Evaluation," returns to earlier themes in feminist argument scholarship, the adversarial quality of the discipline of philosophy, and the values embedded in critical thinking education. An analysis of critical thinking textbooks in philosophy finds that the presentation of fallacies exhibits a strong pattern of adversarial reasoning identified by Moulton (1983) as the Adversary Method, providing empirical evidence in favour of Moulton's claim that the method dominates philosophy like a Kuhnian paradigm.

James Lang's "Feminist Epistemologies of Situated Knowledges" caps off the volume by considering the epistemological obstacles and resources for feminist arguing, especially within philosophy. He combines Lorraine Code's and Donna Haraway's feminist epistemologies to expand on Christopher Tindale's (1996) theory of rhetorical argument so as to explain and encourage individual development of feminist thought.

Three of the five papers from 2010, those by Rooney, Burrow, and Hundleby, address adversarial dimensions often present when people argue and adversarial norms often used to evaluate specific lines of argument. These three papers from *Reasoning for Change* revived and brought new focus to the question of adversariality in developing Moulton's concerns and viewing the problem with adversarial argument as running deeper into argument practices and norms than the metaphors used to describe arguments, even the metaphor of argument-as-war. This line of scholarship is becoming known as the "adversariality debate," and an issue of the journal *Topoi* on the topic edited by John Casey and Katharina Stevens is currently in press. Related discussion about metaphors

of war and aggression is also continuing (Aikin 2011; Lloyd 2014).

During the intervening period in philosophy, the scholarship with implications for feminist accounts of argument grew in many ways, notably in the emerging field of social epistemology. Much of this relates to Fricker's influential conception of epistemic injustice and so to the questions raised by Bondy about argumentative injustice. Testimonial authority and its effects on argument practices and ideals that Rooney, Burrow, and Bondy addressed in 2010 have become discussed in terms of authority and the fallacies known as *ad hominem* (Kotzee 2010; Linker 2014; Yap 2013; 2015) and *ad verecundiam* (Al Tamimi 2013; Cieurria and Al Tamimi 2014); plus, new work on how anger operates in arguments (Howes and Hundleby 2018; Tanesini 2018) challenges whether the issues can be subsumed under discussions of the fallacy of appeal to emotion. Most of this scholarship suggests that fallacy analysis is inadequate to address challenges that social justice poses for argument standards and arguing practices, and yet some scholars suggest that new fallacy categories may help to identify and diagnose particular problems in reasoning observed by feminists (Anger and Hundleby 2016; Hundleby 2016). The fallacies approach to argument evaluation may not suffice, but it might help.

The period is also marked by the publication of several textbooks influenced by feminist argument theory: the extensive revision by Makau and Marty for the second edition of their textbook *Dialogue and Deliberation* (2013); Michael Gilbert's *Arguing with People* (2014); and Maureen Linker's watershed *Intellectual Empathy: Critical Thinking for Social Justice* (2015). However, the bulk of philosophy textbooks for critical thinking and argument education continue to evince the problems that I identified in the 2010 volume.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I discussed this further in a blog and developed a guide to critical thinking textbooks in philosophy called "Critical Thinking<sup>2</sup>" in the aim of promoting awareness of the practices and pitfalls of critical thinking education by philosophers: <https://chundleby.com/critical-thinking/>. The problems I identify adhere almost exclusively to authors with no research record related to argument or logic. "Critical Thinking<sup>2</sup>" has not been updated recently.

The papers in the current volume build on more recent scholarship in feminist epistemology, as is to be expected. Fricker's conception of epistemic injustice continues to feature regularly, but whereas the papers in *Reasoning for Change* draw heavily on Lorraine Code, Donna Haraway, Genevieve Lloyd, and Janice Moulton, all writing before 2000, the current volume significantly engages more recent feminist theory from Patricia Hill Collins, Kristie Dotson, Barret Emerick, Veronica Ivy (publishing as Rachel McKinnon), Quill R Kukla (publishing as Rebecca Kukla), and Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr., along with Moira Kloster, Chris Campolo, and other argument theorists already cited who contributed to the intervening development of the discourse.

Most importantly, the discussion has shifted substantially to become more intersectional, a direction needed for feminist progress and that Gilbert (2007) argues informal logic needs. To describe the work as intersectional means not just that it adds race and other dimensions of social injustice to the feminist discussion, although that has been badly needed. It means also that the discussions here attend to how oppression manifests in specific ways depending on how these social dimensions overlap and interlock: experiences of sexism differ according to race, age, ability, and so on; stereotypes vary, as do patterns of economic injustice, just to start. While the papers in *Reasoning for Change* acknowledge their limited scope covering certain forms of gender identity, they tend to focus on the experiences and concerns belonging especially to young adult, Western White women. The needed step forward is more diverse and fully intersectional criticism and models, which you will find here.

Previously (2018), Tempest Henning has pulled together the underlying assumptions of a certain thread in the feminist work leading up to and including *Reasoning for Change* that she identifies as the non-adversarial feminist argumentation model (NAFAM). This view treats an affiliative or community-oriented model as the ideal for arguing, and Henning draws evidence of this model's operation from a variety of authors, most especially Ayim's approach to critical thinking but also work by Rooney and by me. In the current volume, Henning begins to fulfil her previous demand for attention regarding how adversariality and aggres-

sion can be valuable aspects of argument, especially for African American women's speech communities (AAWSC). Yet, she adds fuel to the fire set by Burrow and Hundleby to argumentation theory's tendency to assume politeness as a guiding norm, and she observes fresh problems with argumentation theorists' assumptions that only direct speech functions as argument.

As Henning's concern is with the exclusion of African American women's speech practices from recognition as functional argument, so is Michael Baumtrog's concern with the models of reason used as standards to exclude youths from voting. In "Youth Voting, Rational Competency, and Epistemic Injustice," Baumtrog examines this exclusion and finds it inconsistent and unsupported by the standards of reasoning invoked. This suggests that youths—at least up till the age of 16—may suffer a form of epistemic injustice in being denied the vote.

A further challenge to what argument theorists have treated as proper parts of good reasoning practices comes from Harmony Peach's "Picturing a Thousand Unspoken Words: Visual Arguments and Controlling Force," which picks up on recent developments in the theory of visual argument but with a particular application to social justice issues. In light of how verbal modes of reasoning tend to distort social justice messages, Peach recommends that visual modes for arguing remain more in the control of the arguer and thus can be less easily distorted because they are more fully situated.

The volume continues to engage new developments in argument theory. The virtue theoretical model of argument taken up by Tracy Bowell suggests that what makes for a good argument may depend on the arguer's personal qualities, a theoretical approach that denies what have been blanket prohibitions against *ad hominem* reasoning and that falls in line with feminist discussions of this fallacy, including those mentioned above as emerging between the two *Informal Logic* volumes.<sup>6</sup> Bowell recognizes that virtue argument theory has a strength in providing room for a specific

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<sup>6</sup> An excellent earlier but hard to find feminist piece on *ad hominem* is Marianne Janack and John Adams' (1999) "Feminist Epistemologies, Rhetorical Traditions and the Ad Hominem."

type of meta-engagement that can help in addressing bigotry. This offers no simple solution, however, because virtue theories can also often demand too much of reasoners who are socially marginalized. Requirements to be tolerant and willing to trust may not apply when they entail exposing oneself or one's community to harm.

Kathryn Phillips shares Bowell's concerns that the demands of virtue theory tend to press more heavily on people who are socially marginalized. This, she suggests, makes it a non-ideal theory in which theorists develop norms with a keen eye to the real obstacles that people face. This holds too for her suggested extension of virtue-based theories of argument, presented in "Deep Disagreement as an Argumentative Virtue," to include the virtue of patience because arguments tend to take place over an extended period of time. Although, like other virtues, patience tends to be required more of people on the social margins in a way that exacerbates the social injustices they live with, the solution for Phillips lies in changing the argumentative environments.

This collection features new voices who address a broad range of current political controversies: anti-Black racism, suffrage, how to communicate injustice, the nature of public discourse, and what appear to be deepening political divisions in industrialized democracies. This engagement with the current political climate distinguishes it from the earlier collection, which was more retrospective and addressed problems in the discipline of philosophy. The scope of the non-ideal orientation that implicitly marked the earlier volume grows broader here.

These papers, being less defined by the experiences of academic philosophers or of the mostly White adults who constitute the majority of Western philosophers, engage with multiple axes of oppression. The work emerges from feminist considerations, but gender no longer operates as the exclusive or central concern of the questions or the analyses. We might call this "liberatory" argument theory in order to better describe the results presented, but insofar as the papers evolve by thinking from the perspective

of “other ‘Others’” and “doing argumentation theory as a feminist,” it remains perfectly accurate to call them “feminist” too.<sup>7</sup> In addressing the experiences of African American women, youths, and those many different people whose social identities make them subject to injustices beyond words, the papers here forge new territory for feminist argument theory, and they do so with a new interdisciplinary engagement. The empirical research taken up in this volume is so broad that it cannot be systematically characterized, except by the individual paper. It features strongly in every contribution. I invite you to explore them and begin to recognize the wide horizons opening up for the study of argument and social justice.

Like *Reasoning for Change*, the current collection developed out of conference work, this time a panel at the 2019 European Conference on Argumentation in Gröningen. That such work has become a significant part of international conferences on argument offers a further sign of the emerging robustness of the discourse, and this volume provides another landmark in the scholarship’s development.

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<sup>7</sup> Feminist standpoint epistemology demands thinking from the perspective of “other ‘Others,’” in Sandra Harding’s (1992; 2015) terms. For a feminist empiricist account of doing research as a feminist, see Alison Wylie’s (1995) “Doing Philosophy As a Feminist: Longino on the Search for a Feminist Epistemology” and the classic by Helen Longino (1987), “Can There Be a Feminist Science?”

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