



Introduction: The Practice(s) of Giving Reasons

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The theme for this special issue was conceived in the fall of 2013 following the 10th Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation Conference, “Virtues of Argumentation,” held at the University of Windsor, in Ontario, Canada.

At the time, we, the guest editors, were motivated by the observation that the re-discovery, in the late 1970s, of the perspectives on argument as process and practice (added to that of product) occasioned a dramatic re-visioning of the object of study in argumentation. Viewed as a practice of transacting reasons, argumentation is seen as a situated activity, or *doing*, requiring know-how, rather than a collection of reasons—a thing containing a collection of knowledge-that. The guiding idea for the special issue is that this change in perspective on the nature of argumentation has important normative consequences that had yet to be fully explored in the theoretical literature. Specifically the practice(s) of transacting reasons is central to the projects of explaining what a reason is, how reasons work, the normativity of reasons, as well as their prescriptivity and our accountability to them.

Reasons, good ones anyway, are usefully understood as conveyors of truth—they can make truth apparent in ways that, at times, merely understanding a claim and directly inquiring into its truth does not. This standard picture of the operation, normative force, and utility of reasons in theoretical and practical reasoning and argument cannot be properly theorized unless it is recognized as inset within a larger picture of reasons-giving as an established practice wherein reasons are routinely transacted. That is, the standard picture of the operation of reasons presupposes a functional

system for their valuation and a well-regulated market for their exchange.

With the special issue, we seek to open a space to explore and interrogate the idea that argumentation, whether examined holistically or under analysis, can be adequately understood apart from an account of what it is to *give* reasons, with all the complexity and fluidity that attends our engagement in any kind of know-how. Understanding reason-giving as a practice involves understanding its place in the network of other, interconnected practices in which we are engaged; our doings, argumentative and non-argumentative, are woven together inextricably.

This perspective reveals a broad array of questions that stand in need of investigation. What is the relationship between the practice of giving reasons and these other practices? How does the network of practices in which we are always engaged reinforce or erode the effectiveness with which we give and receive reasons? How do the many goals and pitfalls of the practice(s) of giving reasons relate to those of our other significant activities? How does our engagement in these other practices and pursuits influence our decisions about engaging in acts of reasons-giving and the design of those acts? This collection explores questions like these, focused on what we are doing in arguing, and on the doings in which our acts of arguing are naturally situated.

Of the nearly twenty submissions, ten were ultimately published. In assembling the special issue, we made a point to invite and include the work of promising new scholars as well as that of established and preeminent figures in the field. We additionally sought to include a variety of disciplinary and methodological perspectives so as to offer a glimpse of the diversity of scholarly approaches to these questions taken within argumentation studies. What follows is a brief, thematic introduction to each paper.

The special issue begins with Sally Jackson’s paper “Reason-giving and the natural normativity of argumentation,” a revised version of her keynote to the second, 2017, European Conference on Argumentation. Jackson argues that successful acts of reasons-giving recognizably supply an affirmative answer to their audience’s implicit critical question: should

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I be convinced by this argument? Yet, Jackson reminds us, framing the standard of argumentative success in these terms changes the focus of argument evaluation from the narrow question of whether the cited premises sufficiently support the proffered conclusion to the much broader question of whether the performance of the argumentation lives up to its audience's expectations as to what a compelling argument is. An important insight offered by this perspective, Jackson argues, is that "Argumentation as it occurs naturally is organized around managing disagreement as it arises, depending entirely on the ability of its participants to embrace and enforce standards on one another's conduct." Argumentation is a self-regulating activity; the force of its norms is not merely that they are instantiated in either the practice or the product of reasons-giving, but that they are *enacted*. That is, the establishing, justification, activating, recognition, enforcement, and alteration of argumentative norms are always subject to, and the result of, "participant administration," which itself constitutes a form of rational interaction.

Marcin Lewiński considers argumentation as a form of rational interaction in his paper "Argumentative discussion: The rationality of what?," distinguishing different approaches to this subject matter according to the emphasis they place on its two aspects: RATIONAL_{interaction} versus rational INTERACTION. Approaches emphasizing the *rational* in rational interaction tend to focus on idealized analytical and evaluative models which are then superimposed over a range of enacted activities. By contrast, those stressing the *interactional* elements in rational interaction, demand that our theories be fitted to the phenomena they seek to model. Lewiński argues that fitting the argumentative phenomena into the framework of the ideal model can have distorting effects on the argumentative realities we hope to represent and theorize. As an example, he considers how ordinary argumentation involving multiple parties is contorted when fitted into a dialectical framework which allows for only two interactional roles (proponent and opponent) arguing that our understanding of these pluralistic argumentative activities is thereby distorted. As an alternative, Lewiński offers the perspective of argumentative polylogues, and explores how the recognition that there can be a plurality of proponents and respondents in any given argumentative exchange affects the way its regulative discursive norms should be framed and articulated in order to be effective.

Lilian Bermejo-Luque's paper "Giving reasons does not always amount to arguing," also starts from the idea that our activities of rational interaction are not adequately modeled in our existing theories. Specifically she contends that standard evaluative models of argument do not sufficiently reflect the fact that our reasons-giving activities extend well beyond our argumentative efforts aimed at persuasion. As such our theories require a clarification of the relationship

between reasons-giving and arguing proper. To clarify this relationship, Bermejo-Luque introduces her linguistic normative model of argumentation (LMNA), which conceives of argumentation as communication aimed at justifying—i.e., showing a target claim to be correct. In justifying our claims, Bermejo-Luque contends, we aim to place an audience under some rational compulsion to accept what we say on the basis of the reasons we adduce, such that it is not "up to them," as a matter of intellectual or discursive liberty, whether they may accept or reject, agree or disagree with, what we justifiably claim. On her LMNA, this warrantedness of concluding on the basis of the reasons adduced, which occurs when the epistemic modality with which our conclusion is drawn corresponds to the ontological modality of the argument's warranting conditional, explains the rational force of reasons and the ends of reasons-giving in argumentation.

In "The pragmatic force of making an argument," Jean Goodwin and Beth Innocenti develop the idea that focusing on the interactive aspects of rational interaction can change our idea of the ends of that activity and the force of reasons. Working within a normative pragmatic approach to argumentation theory, they offer an enhanced understanding of the force of our acts of reason-giving that extends beyond the narrow view of the ends of argumentation envisioned by functionalist accounts. According to the latter, presenting reasons is undertaken for the end of influencing an audience's attitude towards a specific claim in the argument itself—namely, its conclusion. Starting from the idea that arguing is essentially the activity of making reasons apparent, Goodwin and Innocenti consider some of the ways that making an argument₁, *p*:*c*, can have normative, pragmatic force upon an audience even though it leaves their attitude towards *c* unchanged—indeed even though the arguer never expected to alter their audience's views about *c*. In making this case, they consider argumentative strategies employed by women in the mid-nineteenth century during the suffrage movement in America. Practical force, which they distinguish from intellectual and social (or conventional) force, consists in changing the discursive context and its normative landscape as a result of the act of reason-giving itself, rather than any effect of the reasons given. "Making argument_{1s}," they argue, "generates pragmatic force by changing the context such that new reasons for influence—reasons beyond those given in argument_{1s}—are created by making argument_{1s}." The idea here is that, rather than change an audience's attitude towards some conclusion for which reasons have been adduced during the course of arguing, arguers might, by arguing, instead seek to change the normative features of the discursive space in other ways. For example, having been presented with an argument against their view, a respondent is thereby denied the discursive option of claiming "Well, I never had any reason for thinking otherwise,"

when someone reprimands them for their mistaken view. That is, having been presented with a counter-argument to their view, a discussant's place in the game of giving and asking for reasons, understood as the set of moves available to them, has changed, even if the position they hold in that game (i.e., their standpoint) has not.

In line with the idea that the force of reasons-giving is at least partly a function of an arguer's relationship not only to their audience but to other discursive actors, Brett Bricker's paper "Scientific counterpublics: In defense of the environmental scientist as public intellectual" explores the idea that, when publicizing their research, climate scientists are usefully seen as members of a counterpublic. Traditionally, counterpublics have been conceived as consisting of marginalized, disempowered, and even oppressed discussants whose voices are drowned out, silenced, or ignored by a dominant public. Bricker notes that, while climate scientists do not fit the typical picture of an oppressed, disenfranchised counterpublic, their standing in the public and political discourse about climate and environmental policy is usefully understood through this lens as a way of recognizing the power imbalances presently characteristic of that discursive sphere. Recognizing that counterpublicity is a local, rather than a global or even regional, discursive position invites us to consider more seriously the different kinds of roles that arguers take on, or that are put upon them, in arguing, by incorporating them into our theories of argumentation as rational interaction.

A counterpublic is not only a marginalized position in a network of standpoints, it is a discursive role that we, as arguers, sometimes inhabit and perform. In her paper "The roles we make others take: Thoughts on the ethics of arguing," Katherina Stevens introduces the theoretical perspective of role ethics to argumentation theory. Recognizing that arguing is typically enacted as an adversarial activity, Stevens pursues a feminist line of criticism which recognizes that this adversariality applies a-symmetrically to arguers depending on their extra-argumentative roles. For example, if the role of feminine-gendered persons is conceived to include their being cooperative and agreeable, then, when arguing, they are significantly disadvantaged by the conciliatory expectations attached to that extra-argumentative role. Yet, Stevens argues, this cannot be corrected for by eliminating argumentative roles like proponent and opponent, such that any arguer may take on any task associated with any argumentative role, as this risks detaching arguers from the role-specific stakes attached to (the argumentative uptake of) their standpoints. Rather, as a remedy to this role-based inequity, Stevens suggests that arguers may take on roles that advance their own (extra-)argumentative ends, so long as their doing so does not disadvantage another discussant by requiring them to inhabit or enact an argumentative role that they cannot perform.

Daniel Cohen, in his paper "Argumentative virtues as conduits for reason's causal efficacy: Why the practice of giving reasons requires that we practice hearing reasons," draws our attention to the fact that our cognitive foibles towards post hoc rationalizations of our views, together with the adversarial elements of our argumentative practices as they are presently enacted, lead us to perform at least one rational, argumentative role conspicuously poorly—namely, hearing reasons. While, Cohen claims, we are quite adept at giving reasons for our views (often regardless of whether they are our *actual* reasons), whether to the end of declining to change our views or in an effort to get others to change theirs, our focus on reasons-giving shows us to be less reasons-responsive than we take ourselves, and would have others take us, to be. To remedy this dysfunction in our social and cognitive practices, Cohen advises that we change our view of the ends, norms, and goods of argumentation. Rather than aiming for success in our individual argumentative projects of persuasion (like critical assault or rational defense), Cohen recommends that we should aim instead at improving our rational and argumentative character, such that we aspire to exemplary reasons-responsiveness rather than being persuasive arguers.

In "On staying in character: Virtue and the possibility of deep disagreement," Chris Campolo uses the notion of "deep disagreement" to explore the relationship between intersubjectivity and the efficacy of exchanging reasons. He surveys the limits of the skills and resources that make reasons effective tools for resolving disputes, interruptions, and disagreements. He then argues that attempts to ignore or bypass them, of the sort often advocated in the name of rationality, risk important practical, theoretical, and moral problems.

In "On the rational resolvability of deep disagreement through meta-argumentation: A resource audit," David Godden argues against the claim that meta-argumentation supplies new, previously inaccessible resolution resources capable of rationally resolving depth in disagreement. Depth in disagreement is characterized by an absence of normalcy, understood as a background of tacit agreement in the discourse underlying disagreement—an agreement in practice (or method) and shared judgments of fact and value. According to Godden, the view that meta-argumentation can remedy depth in disagreement mischaracterizes the relationship between the activities of meta-argumentation, argumentation simpliciter, and proto-argumentation. Meta-argumentation is not an activity independent from argumentation simpliciter—it is not a free-standing regulative system over and above our ordinary practices of reasons-giving. Rather, meta-argumentation is a codification of the norms implicit in our ground-level argumentative practices, allowing us to, e.g., refer to and cite those norms. Moreover, our normal practices of transacting reasons have meta-argumentative

elements, such as valuing reasons, woven into them at the ground level. As such, the resolution resources capable of contributing to the resolution of depth in disagreement are to be found in the common ground of our argumentative practices, not in some higher-order discourse. On a proper understanding of the relationships between the activities of argumentation and meta-argumentation, Godden contends, the only way to resolve deep disagreements is to first (re-)normalize them.

In the final paper in the special issue, “Reasons,” Larry Wright explores the connection between that which causes (change in) belief and that which justifies, or warrants, belief (change). The temptation to categorically distinguish these, he notes, neglects the fact that rational persuasion is a kind of persuasion. “In the practice within which the normative notion of reason derives its significance,” Wright argues, “an argument is always a particular kind of causal explanation.” Put differently, my actual reasons for acquiring or holding a belief are those with which my belief covaries, such that the existence of the reasons explains the changes in my beliefs. Recognition of this point occasions a normative question at the heart of any account of reasoned change in view: “how does a cause manage to be a justification?” In answering this question, Wright argues:

The practice of giving reasons exercises our ability to distinguish *good and bad ways* to be affected. So when I offer ... [my reasons] as *what made me think* [what I do], I am alleging not only that they caused me to think

this, but that this is a *good* way for me to have arrived at this thought.

In doing so, Wright alludes to an account of reasoned change in view on which it consists in an alignment, or attunement, between some of the causal occurrences of our cognitive lives and the norms that guide our intellectual lives and to which we hold ourselves, and each other, to account. This picture of the nature and operation of reasons thus offers some insight into the nature of rational agency, as reasoning, and reasoning together, is seen to provide the basis for the normative self-regulation of a cognitive, causal system.

Although the papers collected in this special issue neither compose nor recommend a single, concerted research program for the study of argumentation, we suggest that, taken together, they make a compelling case for the claim that our understanding and theorizing of argumentation, together with our argumentative practices themselves, would benefit from our taking more seriously the idea that the nature and operation of reasons is elucidated by the careful and serious examination of our practice(s) of transacting reasons.

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