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0521853273 - Arguments about Arguments: Systematic, Critical, and Historical Essays in Logical Theory

Maurice A. Finocchiaro

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Arguments about Arguments

Systematic, Critical, and Historical Essays in Logical Theory

This book brings together a selection of essays by one of the pre-eminent scholars of informal logic. Following an approach that is empirical but not psychological, dialectical but not dialogical, and focused on interpretation without neglecting evaluation, Maurice Finocchiaro defines concepts such as reasoning, argument, argument analysis, critical reasoning, methodological reflection, judgment, critical thinking, and informal logic. He defends theses about the rarity of fallacies but the frequency of fallacious reasoning; the asymmetry of positive and negative in argumentation, interpretation, and evaluation; and the role of critical thinking in science, among other topics. And he presents extended critiques of the views of many contemporary scholars, while also integrating into the discussion Arnauld's *Port-Royal Logic*, Gramsci's theory of intellectuals, and case studies from the history of science, particularly the work of Galileo, Newton, Huygens, and Lavoisier.

Maurice A. Finocchiaro is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The author of eight other books, including *Galileo and the Art of Reasoning* and *Gramsci and the History of Dialectical Thought*, he has received major grants and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Council of Learned Societies. He is currently president of the Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking.

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MAURICE A. FINOCCHIARO

University of Nevada, Las Vegas



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Preface and Acknowledgments

This book is a collection of selected articles published during the past three decades in various journals, anthologies, and conference proceedings. No substantive alterations have been made in the original text, but many editorial changes have been introduced. For example, not only have typographical errors been corrected, but for the sake of uniformity spelling has been standardized; all bibliographical references are now in the APA style of author, date, and page number(s); and all chapters have been subdivided into sections with numbers and headings. Moreover, to avoid duplication, the individual bibliographies have been combined into one for the whole book; to update the publication information, works that were originally listed as “in press” have been provided with the subsequent actual publication date; and entries by the same author for the same year have been appropriately redesignated.

With regard to the titles of the chapters, I have followed something of a middle course. The original article titles have been left unchanged, except for two things. The first is that the year of original publication has been added in parentheses at the end of each title. The second is that in some cases, in part II, subtitles have been added in order to reflect the two-fold aspect (critical and thematic) of that group of chapters. The original titles and the added dates ensure the unambiguous and easy identification of the original articles from the bibliography, where they had to be listed because of cross-referencing. Thus there is no need to indicate here or in a separate section of this book the places of original publication of the various chapters; readers can simply consult the bibliography.

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I considered including summaries of the chapters in the introduction or in another special section of this book, but this would have been superfluous because almost every chapter contains a summary, usually in the last section, headed as summary, conclusion, epilogue, recapitulation, or the like. Thus readers can read such summaries by turning to those concluding sections of chapters.

As the table of contents indicates, the chapters have been grouped into four “parts” of this volume. This grouping is meant to be reflected in the book’s subtitle: Part I (“Theorizing about Reasoning and Argument”) and part II (“Fallacies and Asymmetries”) contain the mostly systematic chapters; part III obviously includes the mostly critical chapters; and part IV includes the mostly historical ones. Such a classification also has a thematic motivation: In part I, the main topics are theories of reasoning and argument; in part II, fallacies and asymmetries; in part III, accounts of philosophical reasoning and argument and dialectical approaches to the study of argument and reasoning; and in part IV, critical thinking in science. However, such a grouping is neither exact nor exclusive, and in fact the introduction explains in more detail the many other themes and approaches that criss-cross the various chapters. At any rate, it should be noted that within each part, the chapters are printed in chronological order.

Finally, some acknowledgments are in order. My appreciation goes to the many scholars who have provided valuable encouragement, support, and suggestions over the past three decades, although the number is so large that I cannot name them all here. I am also grateful to the (three anonymous) Press referees for their enthusiasm, and especially to the one who made the brilliant suggestion to entitle the book *Arguments about Arguments*, instead of using the pedestrian and prosaic title that I had originally proposed. More specifically, Michael Scriven has provided the initial (1967) inspiration and a constant model to emulate, as the introduction makes clear. The late Henry Johnstone became a catalyst for many of my ideas ever since the original publication of chapter 18 (1974) triggered our acquaintance and made us aware of the overlap in our work. Else Barth has been gracious and generous ever since my oral presentation of chapter 2 in 1986 revealed that I had independently arrived at and was pursuing in my own way her program in empirical logic. Alec Fisher, James Freeman, Ralph Johnson, and Harvey Siegel have provided not only the original stimulus for some of the essays collected here, but also friendly encouragement and feedback regarding the

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compilation and viability of this volume. The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, has continued to provide institutional support even after I decided to retire from formal teaching in order to work full-time on research, scholarship, and writing. Finally, acknowledgments go to the original publishers of the essays, in regard to which the reader can look up the information in the bibliography, under my name, the year, and the title of each chapter.