Introduction

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Why is it relevant to present a collection of works on a rhetorical approach to the study of argumentation? This introduction will address that question and then go on to present the contributions that constitute this book.

Aristotle taught us that rhetoric is centered around deliberation, and he emphasized that we may only deliberate about things that we can in fact undertake (*Rhetoric*, 1357a, and elsewhere, mainly in the ethical works). Rhetorical argumentation is, in its essence, the bedrock of such deliberation: It provides the reasons for and against various choices, which we exchange when, in some human collective, we are to decide on a course of action. To be sure, not all rhetoric is argumentation. But all deliberative discourse uses rhetoric, and in such discourse rhetorical argumentation is central (and should be, we might add). Hence, we have found it in place to present a collection of work that revolves around the conception of rhetorical argumentation just outlined and asserts the centrality of that notion in any theory of argumentation.

Argumentation Studies as a Discipline

Within the last few decades, argumentation theory and argumentation studies have emerged as a scholarly discipline. An increasing number of journals, scholarly books, regular conferences, institutional units, and study programs have seen the light across the world of academia, all of which declare themselves as representing that discipline. Of course, argumentation has been studied intensively since antiquity, but until the latter part of the 20th century, the study of argumentation consisted mainly of

specialized efforts within larger categories, such as philosophy, logic, dialectic, rhetoric, or jurisprudence.

Argumentation studies, this remarkable innovation in humanistic scholarship that began and grew in the second half of the 20th Century (as noted by Hauser, 2007a), was spearheaded by a few pioneering figures (among them Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958; Toulmin, 1958), who were, in turn, followed by a larger, but still countable group of bold thinkers and organizers. Among those who laid the groundwork for the institutionalization of argumentation studies it is not amiss to single out two loosely organized groups of individuals, several of whom are still alive and active today.

There is the ‘Informal Logic’ initiative in Canada, represented (more or less full-throatedly) by such figures as J. Anthony Blair, Michael Gilbert, Trudy Govier, Leo Groarke, Hans Hansen, David Hitchcock, Catherine Hundleby, Ralph Johnson, Robert Pinto, Christopher Tindale, and Douglas Walton (the order in this and the following enumerations is alphabetic); many of these are or were active at the University of Windsor and, since 2006, at the Centre for Research in Reasoning, Argumentation and Rhetoric there. And there is the ‘Amsterdam School’, propagating the theory and practice of Pragma-Dialectics, as defined and spearheaded by Frans van Eemeren, Bart Garssen, Rob Grootendorst, A. Francisca Snoeck Henkemans, and Peter Houtlosser—to mention just a few names. Both groups, sometimes in collaboration and with many overlaps, have done admirable work organizing conferences, editing, and contributing to journals, publishing impressive handbooks, and all in all producing a remarkable output of scholarship. Add to these great individual scholars working within the overlapping fields of rhetoric and argumentation. A small sample of American figures would include William Benoit, Wayne Brockriede, James Crosswhite, Douglas Ehninger, Jeanne Fahnestock, G. Thomas Goodnight, Jean Goodwin, Robert Ivie, Sally Jackson, Scott Jacobs, Henry Johnstone Jr., Fred Kauffeld, Dale Hample, James F. Klumpp, Michael Leff, Daniel O’Keefe, Joseph Wenzel, Charles Willard, David Zarefsky—one could go on. In Europe, apart from the Amsterdam school, several

outstanding scholars have helped constitute the discipline—among the names coming to mind are Jean-Claude Anscombre, Marianne Doury, Oswald Ducrot, Manfred Kienpointner, Joseph Kopperschmidt, Christoph Lumer, Christian Plantin, Harald Wolhrapp… . The argumentation community is rapidly proliferating worldwide, and argumentation studies as an academic discipline would not have been able to establish itself in the widely visible way it has if it had not been for the work of all these enthusiastic and prolific scholars, along with others—pioneers all, with two 'schools' as the primary centers of gravity.

We now present a book that aims to define and represent a third direction, if not even a separate 'school', in argumentation studies. We present a 'school' that has learned much from all the scholars who launched argumentation studies as an independent discipline. It is a school that has overlaps with many of them, but also offers a coherent perspective and emphasizes insights that may have been underrepresented.

The specific orientation and emphasis holding together the selections in the present volume can perhaps best be understood if one remembers that the scholars represented here in this collection have all worked within, and issued from, a *rhetoric* program. The distinctive *rhetoricity*[1] of the present volume is clearer when we remember that the two strong schools that we have alluded to both originate in intellectual environments that were predominantly philosophical (respectively with a logical and a dialectical tilt). Allow us to briefly elaborate.

Informal logic primarily developed, as the name suggests, as a reaction against the way reasoning and argumentation were studied and taught within a formalized logical framework that informal logicians viewed as a straitjacket, perhaps primarily because of its reliance on deductive entailment as the quintessential form of argument.[2] Pragma-dialectical argumentation studies combine

1. Our aim here is not to present a long discussion of the evolving definitions of rhetoric (see e.g., Foss 1990); for insightful discussions on the scope of rhetoric and the critique of 'Big Rhetoric', see Schiappa (2001), and, in Danish, Kock (1997).
2. For a lengthier discussion of the philosophical foundations of respectively pragma-dialectical argumentation studies and informal logic, see Kock (2009). For the rich and

normative insights from philosophical dialectics, philosophy of science and dialogue logic with pragmatic insights from speech act theory, Gricean theory, and discourse analysis. In the United States, studies and pedagogy in argumentation were taken up by scholars many of whom took a major inspiration from Stephen Toulmin—a philosopher whose thinking on argumentation informed the work of, e.g., Brockriede and Ehninger as early as 1960. There have been other important initiatives, but most of these too have taken their inspiration from branches of philosophy, or from the borderland between the philosophy of language and linguistics. Significant attempts to develop an argumentation theory rooted in rhetoric have indeed been made, but without coalescing into a well-defined school.

Rhetoric in Copenhagen

In a sense, rhetoric has a long tradition at the University of Copenhagen. We can even trace it back to as early as 1720, when the Norwegian-born scholar, playwright and poet Ludvig Holberg—sometimes called the father of Danish literature—was appointed Professor of Eloquence (essentially a chair in Latin literature and composition, of which Holberg had complete mastery). In 1730, he moved on to the chair in history, to which he had substantially contributed, and he served as the University's Chancellor for a year. In a hilarious comedy Holberg ridiculed academics' misuse of scholastic logic, but his conception of rhetoric was just as dismissive, being thoroughly Platonic, in line with the Socrates of *Gorgias*. Much like numerous Enlightenment figures such as Locke before him and Kant after him, the term 'rhetoric' to Holberg signified primarily empty bombast and flattery—a vain attire easily stripped away by the merciless North wind, as one of his eloquent epistles describes. Aside from that,

at times polemic conversation between rhetoricians and philosophers, that we may easily trace back to Aristotle and Plato (Conley, 1990), we suggest (re-)reading Campbell (1776) and diving into the annals of the journal Philosophy & Rhetoric (e.g. Verene 2007).

rhetoric had no home at the University of Copenhagen until a small rhetoric program was instituted in 1970, offering a two-year degree with emphasis on speech communication and classical rhetorical theory. From 1988, the university upgraded the program to a full master's-level degree which encompassed writing and argumentation as well. To fill the latter gap, Charlotte Jørgensen and Merete Onsberg, both of whom are represented in this volume, published the first edition of their textbook *Praktisk argumentation* in 1987. It successfully filled a need even outside the rhetoric program and went into several editions. Its main theoretical inspiration was Toulmin's theory in a form that drew on Brockriede and Ehninger's adaptation, but which also was clearly marked by the authors' schooling in classical rhetoric, emphasizing, among other aspects, stasis theory and rhetorical criteria for assessing arguments.

A next stage in the formation of what we now venture to call a Copenhagen 'school' of argumentation studies was the research project "Rhetoric that Shifts Votes"—a collaborative effort by Charlotte Jørgensen, the speech expert Lone Rørbech, and Christian Kock. He had come to the program in 1987 from a position as Associate Professor of English and a year as visiting professor of English and American literature at Indiana University, Bloomington, and his primary task was to build the writing component of the program. These three conceived the idea of doing empirical studies on persuasive rhetorical practices by exploring a data set of rare value: a series of 37 'townhall'-style debates, televised by the national broadcasting corporation. In each of these, two politicians or other public figures argued for, respectively against, a motion drawn from current political issues in front of a live, representative audience, with audience votes on the motion taken both before and after a 50-minute debate. This material was not a series of experiments but consisted of authentic debates, with voting statistics. The three scholars realized that this would make it possible to match the debaters' net results in terms of votes won or lost with their general attributes as well as with their specific rhetorical strategies and maneuvers, resulting in a statistically validated profile of typical 'winners' in debates in this

format. The immediate outcome of this project was a massive book in Danish (Jørgensen et al. 1994) and a research article in English (1998). At the same time, the three also used materials and examples from the project in their teaching.

One of the insights that emerged from the project on "Rhetoric that Shifts Votes" was the following: Both opponents in such debates (which might, for example, concern a motion like "The free access to abortion should be restricted") might have good and legitimate reasons speaking in their favor with a certain weight—except that this weight was in fact *un*certain. 'Weight' clearly appeared to be a factor that could not be objectively gauged by philosophical reasoning or any graded criteria that might be proposed by argumentation theorists. The citizens who were to vote on the motion might legitimately, as individuals, ascribe different relative weight (or 'strength') to arguments (reasons) offered by the two debaters—as people in fact do on real-life issues in the political as well as the private sphere. In other words, there is a legitimate subjective variance in citizens' assessment of the relative weight of reasons advanced in public political debates. The notion of the relevance of a given consideration invoked on a certain issue might also (without judgment of its weight) allow for graded assessment; hence, a certain subjective variance may legitimately be involved here as well.[3] On the other hand, it was also clear that debaters' reasons, and debate behavior generally, might meaningfully be assessed from a normative angle. For example, debaters might fail to offer any reasons at all, wasting

3. It is obvious that in argument assessment, the two dimensions relevance and weight do not stand alone. Before they can be applied, a dimension relating to the 'factual' dimension of reasons offered as arguments must be invoked. The informal logicians have proposed the term 'acceptability', thereby sidestepping various epistemological quandaries inherent in the notion of 'truth'. Another useful terminology is the phrase 'true and fair', used by accountants in auditing financial statements. The triad acceptability-relevance-weight closely resembles the "ARG Condition" for argument assessment stipulated in Govier's admirable textbook (1985 and many later editions), except that where she lets "G" stand for "good grounds". The corresponding term used in this book, 'weight', more clearly emphasizes that this is not a binary dimension but on that involves a graded and relative assessment—which again implies a legitimate element of subjective variance.

their own and the audience's time with irrelevant material. Or reasons might be advanced that could be accorded no relevance, or whose implied relevance could be seen to rely on assumptions that were dubious or highly controversial. Or reasons given might fail to instantiate the warrants that were advanced or implied to make them relevant. Or debaters might fail to respond to countervailing reasons or to objections to their own reasons. These types of debate behavior, and several more, could be identified that were apt to reduce the value and usefulness of the debate as seen from the audience's angle.

In short, this study of a unique empirical corpus of debates on public policy issues brought home a basic, dual insight. It could be seen as the defining position of the Copenhagen 'school'. An apt formula for it might be a key phrase from John Rawls (1989, 1993), "reasonable disagreement":

On the one hand, an objective and graded determination of the exact merit of the practical argumentation advanced by the two sides in a debate cannot, as a rule, be obtained; the fact that both relevance and weight are parameters that allow for some subjective gradation further tells us that there can be no philosophically decisive, absolute answer to substantive issues such as, for example, whether abortion should be freely accessible, restricted or even outlawed. It follows that argumentation theories are misleading if they assume—whether in a Habermasian or a pragma-dialectical framework—that a properly conducted exchange of reasons about practical decisions will generate or approach consensus.

On the other hand, it is just as clear that norms are needed to assess the merit of debates and debate behavior and perhaps regulate public political debate. The Copenhagen orientation recognizes the meaning of formulating normative rules and even 'commandments', as for example the pragma-dialecticians have done, although it advocates broader, less formalized, more rhetorical framework that goes well beyond the identification of 'fallacies'. Instead. the desirable uses and functions of debates in a democratic society are key.

In a free society, there is no absolute ‘truth’ on such vexed policy issues; no deductively valid conclusion on matters like this can be drawn, neither in specific cases nor in general, and thus reasons advanced in a debate cannot be required to build a case that is deductively valid in the traditional logical sense. Significantly, there is no such concept in Aristotle as a ‘practical syllogism’, i.e., an algorithm that, in a given situation, tells a polity categorically what to do. On the other hand, it is still meaningful to speak of good and bad reasons, and to seek, formulate and teach criteria for such reasons, and one can still seek to define what a meaningful and productive debate is, and what types of debate behavior help or harm the productivity of a debate.

We should note, in all justice, that the notion of deductive validity does not, because of this, lose its meaning. The term is traditionally (and meaningfully) used to say that the truth of an argument’s conclusion follows from the truth of its premises. Note, however, that this only holds for conclusions that are statable as *propositions* (as conclusions are usually, and tacitly, assumed to be). They may indeed be true, i.e., follow from the truth of their premises by deductive inference. In practical argumentation, such propositions serve as *premises*; however, conclusions in practical argument are not propositions, but *proposals* to enact choices—and, in a pithy formulation by Aristotle, “choice is not true or false” (*Eudemian* Ethics, 1226a). This has to do with the fact that several mutually independent warrants are relevant to the issue. For example, most people probably find it true that abortion is, in some sense, an undesirable thing; but to prohibit a specific instance of it, or to ban abortions altogether, is also, many would agree, undesirable.

This is where rhetoric enters the stage.

Two further fundamental insights that came home with great strength to the scholars involved in the “Rhetoric that Shifts Votes” project concerned 1) the importance of the *audience* in a political debate, and 2), even more fundamentally, the social *purpose* of political debates.

First, political debates should be studied and evaluated with a view to what they offer *to the audience*; that is, they should be seen

as 'trialogical', not merely as dialogical, as they have traditionally been considered since Plato's Socratic dialogues (but similarly in philosophically based theories of proper communication and argumentation, such as those of Habermas and also the pragma-dialecticians). Moreover, consensus cannot be reasonably expected, although consensus may be desirable and to be welcomed if it emerges, as will compromise (which is not the same thing); we should instead point to the other productive purposes that debates may have in a democratic society, as well as to the ways in which they can turn useless or destructive.

Secondly, consideration of the televised townhall debates made it clear that what accounts more than anything for the particular properties of argumentation as heard there was precisely the fact that these were *political* debates, understood broadly as debates about imminent proposals for action facing a polity—i.e., they were public, practical reasoning about what the polity to which the debaters and the audience belonged should *do* (or not do). Ultimately, they were *not* about what the 'truth' might be regarding some moot issue, nor were they even about what the 'true' moral assessment of something might be.

This emphatically does not mean that factual claims advanced as reasons in such debates should not be required to be true or at least probable or 'acceptable'; that they should be so is obviously one of the first requirements that any reasonable set of normative criteria for debates should posit. Also, what has just been said does not in any way mean that moral assessments and moral arguments have no place in political debates. But for one thing, several claims that may all be true may speak for opposite conclusions; that is the case in all sorts of debates. Furthermore, a distinctive feature of *practical* debates (debates about what to do) is that value judgments not only *may* be invoked, but *have* to be invoked, even if implicitly, and it is an inescapable circumstance that reasons invoking different and sometimes incompatible value claims may legitimately speak, with a weight that may be debated, for opposite courses of action. This is so because the set of relevant values, even those held by one single individual, is *multidimensional*, i.e., values are of many kinds: There is, for example, ethical value,

economic value, aesthetic value, value in regard to lawfulness as well as to justice (these are not always the same thing) … and there are more. And all the values relevant to a specific choice may not, and often do not, speak for making the same choice.

A further finding of interest emerging from the project is the following, which will probably not surprise argumentation scholars, but it might be news to some political theorists. Contrary to what an 'aggregative' understanding of democracy would predict (as defined by, e.g., Dryzek 2002, 10), 'preference transformation', i.e., citizens' change of their views on political issues under the influence of deliberative argumentation, is in fact possible and actually takes place. In the debates studied in the project, an average of nearly one fifth of the audience members changed their votes on the motion between the three positions Pro, Con and Undecided after witnessing c. 45 minutes of argumentation, and nearly a tenth switched from Pro to Con, or conversely. Thus, all citizens' 'preferences' are *not* fixed. Argumentation matters.

These insights, and others, came to inform the research work and the teaching practice in argumentation at the rhetoric program in Copenhagen. It was also clear that there is much in the rhetorical tradition from Aristotle onwards that clearly aligns with these insights and adds to them, and these impulses enriched and complemented the approach that had gradually crystallized.

A further boost to the basic orientation came from the groundbreaking work of Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca. Further impulses, as noted, came from Stephen Toulmin's theory, which emphasized that 'warrants' for good argumentation come in many forms and degrees, dependent on 'field'—rather than just as the one-size-fits-all kind of 'validity' hallowed by traditional logic.

In speaking about the 'Copenhagen School' of argumentation studies, we do not wish to over-emphasize the geographical location in this collection; we must stress that of course the tradition for studying argumentation rhetorically is not restricted to scholars connected with the rhetoric program at the University of Copenhagen. All the scholars represented in this volume studied

and/or taught there, but some only did so briefly, to retire or move on to other institutions. What connects them is not institutional affiliation, but a set of broadly conceived notions that constitute what we might call a Wittgensteinian 'family likeness'. Some share these or these features, others these and these, all weaving an irregular web of commonalities in which no one has all the features, and no feature is shared by all. Furthermore, we see that the strong international connection between schools and traditions continues to grow, and thanks to the editors at Windsor Studies in Argumentation we can present an open-access collection of contributions available to curious thinkers, rhetoricians, rhetors and deliberators across the globe.

The book spans wide, but its focus is on deliberation concerning choice of action, typically in the civic sphere, and as it happens such a view has enjoyed conditions for flourishing in Copenhagen. If we take a glance at other academic schools originating (or nurtured by thought and an invigorating intellectual environment) in that city, there is, for example, the Copenhagen Interpretation of quantum mechanics emanating from Niels Bohr and the Institute that bears his name; there is the Copenhagen School of structural linguistics ('glossematics') headed by Louis Hjelmslev; most recently there is the Copenhagen theory of international relations established by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver. But it is clear that ideas are central, not location. Yet, we emphasize contemporary Copenhagen as a place where a *rhetorical* approach to argumentation studies blossomed from the 1980s on, and where we continue to see new ideas grow in the argumentative landscape.

More on Theoretical Foundations

We might also approach the broad conception underlying this book in a wider, less geographical, less historical, more theoretical perspective. After all, we can hardly talk about a specific school of argumentation theory about without examining and unfolding its philosophical foundations—even though we are then also wandering into an epistemological minefield. Nonetheless, we

dare to do so in our attempt to lay out the key philosophical premises and be transparent about our stance.

It is well known that Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is the first attempt in the West at a tightly reasoned definition and theory of that discipline. Among his crucial statements is this, which was referenced above, but which is less frequently cited than certain others: "The duty of rhetoric is to deal with such matters as we deliberate upon without arts or systems to guide us" (1357a). Now, "such matters as we deliberate (*bouleuein*) upon" are, as several other remarks by Aristotle in the Rhetoric and the ethical writings help make clear, actions *that we may decide to undertake*—not matters on which we have no influence, such as the existence of gods, or the origin of the universe, or the nature of the good, or whether it will rain tomorrow, etc. We deliberate on what we will do—that is, we use rhetoric to talk about just that. *Bouleuein* is etymologically related to *volo*, *vouloir*, *wollen*, *will*, etc. In fact, this remarkably restrictive Aristotelian demarcation of rhetoric is not one that all rhetoricians would fully endorse today, nor is it one that has been enforced, for example, in the rhetoric program at the University of Copenhagen; but it will serve well to circumscribe the *core* domain of rhetoric—the sort of discourse for which rhetoric was originally conceptualized and used: argument about action.

The monumental work of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958) embraced the rhetorical tradition more or less in its strict Aristotelian version, equating rhetoric with argumentation, and positing a crucial distinction between argumentation and 'demonstration'. We would perhaps prefer to say that rhetoric has argumentation at its center but encompasses many other potentially persuasive resources. Because argumentation (which, to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, equals rhetoric) is mostly, if not exclusively, about what to do, not just about what is true, it does not allow for deductive validity in reaching conclusions. This completely accords with the tenets we have sketched above. Demonstration is the domain where deductive entailment and proof, or something very similar, is possible, while argumentation/ rhetoric subsumes a rich storehouse of practices and devices that

may serve to persuade, and may *have* to serve, because we cannot prove. A central subset of that domain is precisely discourse where humans debate on what to do. An emphasis on decision and action as the core subject domain of rhetorical discourse is present in numerous passages of *The New Rhetoric* and even more in Perelman's later writings (e.g., 1979 [1970]). With their combined breadth and depth, they established a modern foundation for the ontology of rhetorical argumentation theory.

As for the way Toulmin's argument theory in *The Uses of Argument* (also from 1958) shaped the Copenhagen approach, the most significant factor was perhaps not Toulmin's persuasive argument model, but rather his insistence (presumably Wittgenstein-inspired) on an ontological *pluralism* in argumentation: There are several different 'uses' of argument, and there are several argument 'fields', each with field-specific practices and argumentative norms. There is more to argumentation than deduction, and even the inclusion of deduction's old sidekick, induction, far from completes the picture. That made this philosopher's theory relevant and useful to rhetorical pedagogy, although Toulmin originally conceived his work as a contribution to the theory of science (see also his *Return to Reason*, 2001).

A last inspiration that we also want to emphasize is the insightful debate influenced by Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's article "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory" (1970), which links to Henry Johnstone's article "The Relevance of Rhetoric to Philosophy and of Philosophy to Rhetoric" (1966). Campbell underlines key insights about the nature (ontology) of rhetoric and rhetorical criticism and, indeed, also our perspective on rhetorical argumentation, namely that all humans are subject to and capable of persuasion. The key difference is whether we view human actors as rational, behavioristic, or symbol-using, and Campbell's argument supports the latter perspective. Of key importance to the rhetorical perspective on argumentation, which we present here, Campbell underlines that "…this theory (the symbol-using view, ed.) sustains the notion that choice is an

integral part of persuasion and generates an intrinsic ethic by which to judge persuasive uses of language" (1970, 105).

In sum, a rhetorical perspective on argumentation, emphasizing deliberation about choice, must also acknowledge the multiple ontologies that exist when humans interact and exchange arguments, especially involving events that are yet to happen (if at all).[4]

Decision as Key Aspect

These are points where the 'Copenhagen School' parts company with schools with which it has several *other* things in common. The reason for this is probably that they are and remain wedded to a Platonic, philosophically oriented view that focuses on interpersonal dialogue with the truth as the desired end, whereas rhetoric focuses on 'trialogue' and civic conversation aiming at decisions, made in sustainable coexistence. Although scholars in both Pragma-dialectics and Informal Logic have for several years done much to reach out to rhetoric and include rhetorical insights in their thinking (e.g., Tindale, 2004; see also Kock, 2009), the Copenhagen school, originating in a rhetoric program, insists on differences in perspective that stem from the Aristotelian, rather than the Platonic, conception of what rhetoric is about and what it is for; in Aristotle's words, the duty and function of rhetoric is not only to 'discover the persuasive facts' (as in *Rhetoric*, 1355b) on any subject whatsoever (his most quoted definition), but more specifically "to deal with such matters as we deliberate upon" (1357a)—that is, decisions facing citizens in a polity. On such matters there are no disciplinary "arts or systems to guide us" (*ibid*.), and no way to reach conclusions on those decisions with deductive validity; on the other hand there is a virtually endless

4. An attempt to identify a rhetorical perspective on argumentation, as seen by rhetoricians, and very similar to the orientation sketched in this preface, underlay a special issue of the journal Argumentation (vol. 34, issue 3, 2020), edited by Christian Kock and titled Rhetoricians on Argumentation. A hardbound edition of this special issue was published in 2022 by Springer Nature.

plurality of argument types and persuasive devices. Arguers in a political debate and other kinds of rhetorical argumentation may fail to ever reach anything resembling consensus, and so may citizens, even though they may still reach a decision with which they may acquiesce, and which allows them to move forward; rhetoric is the medium for that.

The rhetorical tradition still has many untapped insights to contribute to the understanding and teaching of argumentation, and Copenhagen happened to provide a fruitful ground for maturing such insights. One important legacy of the rhetorical tradition is its status as a pedagogy of *civic participation*—its original aim in the hands of the sophists. Contrary to a widespread misconception, rhetorical argumentation is *not* defined by the arguer's wish to prevail by any means. As we have seen, it is distinctive of the rhetorical approach to see argument and other discourse on actions and decisions of shared concern as central to its identity; the issues at the core of rhetorical argumentation are proposals, not propositions. Because of this, rhetorical argumentation is, in its nature, *multidimensional* in that a broad spectrum of warrants, means and strategies may be employed in arguing about actions and decisions of shared concern. Rhetorical argumentation cannot categorically (let alone deductively) 'prove' what it argues for, since proposals (about actions and decisions) cannot, in principle, be either true or false (unlike propositions). This is also why the rhetorical view of argumentation does not subscribe to consensus as a theoretical and normative ideal.

Nevertheless, rhetoric is, in its nature, likely to take a normative view of the discourse and artifacts it studies. The normativity of rhetoric is twofold: It concerns not only what rhetoric's critics since Socrates have emphasized, namely how well the arguer serves his or her own ends (although serving one's own ends in discourse is, as rhetoricians see it, per se legitimate); rhetoric's normativity also concerns how well public discourse, including argument, accords with societal norms and needs (e.g., the need for a sustainable public dialogue across disagreements). This is why rhetoric puts a high priority on close, observant, and critical study of authentic public discourse.

Chapters

To dive into the plethora of public and social discourse phenomena, centered around deliberative argument about choice of action, this collection presents three themed sections, offering, respectively, conceptual reflections, empirical applications, and new chapters written exclusively for this collection.

Section 1: Conceptual Foundations

The articles in this section should be read mainly as contributions to a rhetorical argumentation theory. They include one translation from Danish, two reprints of earlier publications, and one new contribution (a revised version of previously published work).

Chapter 1: Jørgensen on Debate as Central

We are delighted to have Charlotte Jørgensen open the ball. Her seminal paper "Debate for Better or Worse: Hostility in Public Debate" was originally published in Danish in 1995, which explains why its discussion of modern debate arenas makes no mention of social media but concentrates on TV. Nevertheless, it offers insights that remain relevant today. It belongs to the formative phase of the Copenhagen approach. Partly for that reason, the article contains much material that serves to clarify concepts and to define a position in relation to existing thinking, primarily the two 'schools' that were already then dominant on the scene of argumentation studies: Pragma-dialectics and Informal Logic.

The article represents a view of *debate*, not just discussion, as a fundamental venue of civic rhetoric: Rhetorical argument is not just found in speeches and other types of monologues, as a look at the great moments of oratory, from the Greeks onward, might lead us to believe. The empirical project that ensued in publications about 'rhetoric that shifts votes' was a study of authentic political debates (townhall-style debates, televised by the national

broadcasting corporation). Charlotte Jørgensen was a key participant in the project and did a major part of the painstaking analytical work it involved. The study of these debates confirmed an underlying view that has characterized rhetorical thinking and theory from its earliest days: When citizens in a polity debate their collective future actions, there will as a rule be more than one course of action that may legitimately be advocated.

'Legitimately' in this context is to be taken as suggesting that no advocate for a given course of action will in the standard case be able to mount a deductively compelling argument for it; there will always be, and remain, valid reasons speaking against it, or for alternative courses of action. 'Valid' in this context has a different meaning from the way it is used in logic and mathematics, where a 'valid' argument or chain of reasons is one from which a given conclusion follows as an inescapable entailment.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, as we have seen, defined the realm of rhetoric as the domain where such entailment, sometimes called *demonstration*, is not possible. Because there are, in the standard case, legitimate reasons speaking both for and against any proposed course of action, people involved in a decision about it may legitimately be, and remain, in disagreement. Their disagreement may be rooted in their legitimately different, but relevant reasons, and in their assignment of different priorities to them. To assess the merit of just one argument in isolation, or the arguments advanced by just one side in a disagreement, will never be sufficient to decide on action-related issues.

This is why 'debate' is the keyword, not 'dialogue' or 'discussion'. The Platonic ideal is the Socratic dialogue, in which just two participants walk hand in hand towards a shared discovery of the truth (as Socrates explains to young Polos, *Gorgias* 474a). In present-day Pragma-dialectics, a key notion is the 'critical discussion', in which the discussants, if they steer clear of fallacies by abiding by a set of rules, will 'resolve' their difference of opinion. This conception bears a clear similarity, not often noted, with the truly communicative, non-'strategic' dialogue envisaged by (early) Habermas, from which consensus is expected to ensue thanks to the proverbial "zwanglosen Zwang des besseren

Arguments" ("the unforced force of the better argument", as in, e.g., 1972, 161). By contrast, the default genre is a rhetorical argumentation theory is debate, because disagreement may legitimately persist–and probably will.

Chapters 2 & 3: Kock on Definitions, Demarcations and Distinctions

Christian Kock contributes with two theoretical chapters examining, respectively, the differences between a rhetorical and philosophical view of argument, and the unavoidability and potentially salutary nature of civic disagreement. "The Difference between the Rhetorical and the Philosophical Concepts of Argumentation", written with a philosophical audience in mind, explores the distinction we have discussed above between arguing about what is true (epistemic argument) and arguing about what to do (practical argument). From this theoretical difference he derives a series of profound dissimilarities between the elements and functioning of argumentation in the two domains. He notes, as we have done above, that the rhetorical conception of argumentation is centered around the latter domain and points out that while many philosophers who failed to understand this have based their attacks on rhetoric on a misconception of what it is, there are indeed other philosophers who have seen the differences and aided us in understanding them.

The article "For Deliberative Disagreement: Its Venues, Varieties and Values" offers a range of concepts that may help us better understand the multiple roles of rhetorical argumentation in our personal and civic lives. 'Venues' refers to the three different sites where deliberative disagreements may occur: It may be *intra*personal, i.e., take place in an individual's own mind; it may be *inter*personal, i.e., occur in person-to-person dialogue (the form on which dialectical thinkers from Plato to Habermas and the pragma-dialecticians, along with most deliberative democrats, have concentrated); and it may be *public*, taking place in front of audiences. 'Varieties' refer mainly to different purposes of deliberation, which include open-ended *inquiry* as well as 'strategically' oriented *advocacy*. Finally, 'values' are the

normative standards and criteria by which we may try to assess deliberation in any venue and variety: In all of them, there will be legitimate and responsible rhetorical practices as well as illegitimate and socially detrimental ones, with everything in between. The article presents a fuller account than space allows in this introduction of what distinguishes rhetorical and philosophical argumentation theory, and why deliberative disagreement is key to understanding the rhetorical perspective that we lay out.

Chapter 4: Pontoppidan on Where to Place One's Argument

Christina Pontoppidan's "Where do You Place Your Argument?" engages with one of the founding fathers of argumentation theory: Stephen Toulmin. She discusses the great influence of Toulmin's argument model, with its logical foundations, and points to the challenges that such a 'logical' foundation poses to our understanding and usefulness of rhetorical argumentation.

Early on, Pontoppidan asks us: "Why did Toulmin, a British logician ostracized by his peers, become an integral part of the rhetorical canon?" The chapter develops an elaborate and persuasive answer, beginning by underlining that just because Toulmin's conceptualization of practical argumentation is more useful than traditional logic (which leans toward making prescriptive models of the world, rather than depicting how actors indeed argue 'in the wild'), this still does not make the Toulmin scheme *the* most accurate and useful structural model of rhetorical argumentation. Conceptually, the chapter goes on to develop an argument model emphasizing *topics*, a model which better represents the persuasive *process* of argumentation, rather than focusing on an inferential *product* that rhetorical scholars (and others) may analyze *post-hoc*. Through a detailed reading of Toulmin and key resources within the argumentation literature, Pontoppidan unfolds how, for Toulmin, the relevance of the topics is not essentially rhetorical, but rather dialectical (in an Aristotelian sense), and it is thus a helpful methodological toolbox for formalizing actual arguments and assessing the soundness of the proposed inferences. Such an approach aids us in assessing

single existing arguments, but not in understanding the messy, dynamic nature of argumentation processes; instead, she suggests an argument model inspired by a rhetorical reading of the topics that depicts the dynamic process of argumentation, including the many choices any rhetor has at her disposal, and involving the delicate balancing act of that ancient rhetorical staple, the theory of *stasis* (of which a usable modern plural form might be *stases*). Such an approach may better help the practicing rhetor identify common ground(s) with the intended audience(s) and draw on various 'proofs' to concretize justifications for the standpoint taken.

Section 2: Empirical Applications: Prostitution, Roars, and (Other) Persuasive Figures

The second section illustrates the analytical breadth of a rhetorical approach to argumentation studies and presents three translated articles, one recently published and one original contribution (an updated version of an earlier work).

Chapter 5: Onsberg on an Unimpressive Debate

Onsberg in "The Danish Debate about Prostitution: Some Characteristics" (published in Danish in 2011) samples and assesses the debate in Denmark about an issue of serious public concern. It is like a snapshot of what this particular debate was like at a specific juncture, namely when a proposal to criminalize prostitution clients was advanced in 2009—at a time when an upcoming election for the European Parliament motivated many candidates to make themselves heard. The article is also an example of a kind of scholarship that a rhetorical approach to argumentation studies considers democratically useful but in too short supply. It performs a service to scholars and citizens alike by presenting an overview of which types of arguments are being advanced in relation to a topical issue, and, even more importantly, it offers motivated quality assessments of arguments and argument

types actually used in the debate—without taking a stand on the issue itself. The need to look critically at both sides in a debate, without assuming that such critical scrutiny will necessarily entail the adoption of one standpoint rather than the other, follows from the underlying tenet in rhetorical argumentation theory that in the domain of civic issues there are good and bad arguments on both sides (or all sides), but no compelling (deductive) entailment from a set of arguments to specific decisions.

In the public sphere, not much stringent evaluation of arguments on moot issues is available, and what little there is tends to be of a partisan nature, where debaters representing one of the sides attempt to show that arguments coming from their opponents are as ludicrous as their own are unassailable. Generally speaking, news journalism and political commentary, also when it comes from academics, tends to be weak on argument evaluation and correspondingly strong on prophecies and guesswork, typically about politicians' hidden motives for what they do and say. What evaluation there is in political journalism and commentary tends mainly to be assessments of political agents' strategic wisdom (or lack of it). In so far as this is the case, citizens who wish to see themselves as participants in democracy are let down by media and pundits alike. A rhetorical approach to argumentation assumes that citizens need all the help they can get in surveying arguments on current issues (those that are in fact advanced as well as those that are conspicuous by their absence), and in discerning which ones have merit and which lack it. Balancing those pro and con arguments that do have merit, and forming a standpoint on that basis, is then the individual citizen's own task. In these respects, Onsberg's article is a rhetorical argumentation scholar's helping hand to citizens on an issue that is fraught with misinformation, misunderstanding, prejudice, and irrelevancy. It might also serve the purpose of saying to political agents: "Give citizens arguments. Give them ones that have merit. Respond to arguments from your opponents that have merit. We are watching you."

Chapter 6: Rønlev on Polyphony and Agency in Online Debate

Continuing the rhetorical examination of the arguments that citizens, politicians, pundits, and journalists encounter, exchange, and sometimes enlarge, Rønlev, in his “The Roar in the Comment Section: How Journalists Mediate Public Opinion on the Danish Online Newspaper politiken.dk” (published in Danish in 2018), zooms in on online political debate and asks how journalists may provide rhetorical agency to citizens. Using as a case the public debate about a young university student’s op-ed piece about her tight economy, Rønlev employs a classic rhetorical critique, i.e., a close reading of texts and the intertextual reactions they trigger. His analysis (including 1,971 reader comments!) unveils a polyphonic choir of arguments of the interplay between digital media and the function, format, and forms of public debate. Although we might expect Rønlev’s analysis to confirm that online newspapers contribute to the democratization of public opinion formation and thus make journalists superfluous as moderators of public political communication, he elegantly unpacks how, in the case of the university student who ‘dared’ to see herself as poor, journalists’ traditionally privileged position as interpreters and mediators of debate among citizens is amplified online.

Rønlev continues the tradition shaped by what we now refer to as the ‘Copenhagen school’ approach to argumentation studies by combining argument analysis of public debate with constructive criticism of news media and journalists. Building a typology of arguments, he highlights the *craft* of doing critical argument analysis and provides us with nine categories (3 topics x 3 attitudes) based on his close reading of the comments to the original op-ed that form the empirical basis of his inquiry. Theoretically, the chapter builds on Gerard Hauser’s understandings of public opinion formation as taking place in society’s ongoing *multilogue* (1999, 2007b) and on work in media and journalism studies showing that journalists continue to enjoy rhetorical privileges in public debate, despite the rise of digital networked media.

Overall, Rønlev helps advance our understanding of rhetorical *agency* (understood as a dialectic interplay between citizens' individually conditioned abilities and structurally conditioned opportunities to act rhetorically and achieve influence) by underlining that 'public opinion' is anything but a homogenous construct, and by showing how important journalists' agency is in this sense, which in turn underlines how they may provide agency—or fail to do so—to citizens who participate in public opinion formation online. In the case of the student, it becomes clear that the media grossly simplified and distorted her views and the ensuing multilogue of debating citizens—thus failing in their task as facilitators of public conversation. Also, the chapter reminds us that we, both as scholars and citizens who also happen to be media users, should allow ourselves to make rhetorical deep dives into the messy pluralities of public debates before jumping to the (easily digestible) conclusions provided by, at least some, journalists.

Chapter 7: Lantz on Temporality and Emotion in Argument

The next chapter in this section deals with the deliberative genre and examines the arguments used by political leaders in situations of national crisis. Lantz, in his article "Affecting Argumentative Action: The Temporality of Decisive Emotion" (original publication 2021), combines the concepts of time and emotion and illustrates how political leaders argue for action in a now well-known example of a rhetorical situation, namely the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020, in which decisive action turned out to be crucial, yet not warranted by much existing evidence because it was a novel disease.

Lantz tackles two dimensions that are inherent in political rhetoric *and* in rhetorical argumentation theory (with its emphasis on arguments about doing, as we stress in this volume): *when* to act and *how* to act. Specifically, these dimensions concern time and emotion. While the concept of time (in a very simple sense) is fundamental to the three classic rhetorical genres of legal rhetoric (past), epideictic (present), and political rhetoric (future), Lantz

engages with a neo-classic text by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca on the temporality of argumentation (originally published in 1958, the same year as *La Nouvelle Rhetoric*, but not translated into English until 2010). Emotion, on the other hand, has played a key role (mostly cast as the villain) throughout the history of practical debate, and especially because of what neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, now famously, chose to label "Descartes' error" (2004): the disjoining of reason and emotion.

Drawing on recent emotion research (combining psychological, sociological, and philosophical insights) and paying close attention to debates within rhetorical and argumentation studies, the chapter conceptualizes a model and shows its applicability in an analysis of Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen's now-historic "closing down society" speech on March 11, 2020. Thus, the chapter illustrates the willingness of the Copenhagen school to combine what we may call standard accounts of practical argumentation (in this case two interacting practical inferences) with state-of-the-art research in rhetorical studies and neighboring research arenas, and the chapter likewise contributes to the long-standing debate within argumentation studies on how to approach, understand, and analyze the rhetorical reasonableness of emotional appeals.

Chapter 8: Just and Gabrielsen Resuscitate *Stasis* Theory

Staying with public debates, but taking a broader perspective, Sine Just and Jonas Gabrielsen in their "Persuasive Figures: Harnessing Stasis Theory for Rhetorical Criticism" (an updated version of an article published in Danish in 2008) show how transformations and adaptations of the classical stasis theory can make it an apt tool for rhetorical criticism of public meaning formation as it occurs in contemporary contexts. Just and Gabrielsen have updated their original article from 2008 (focusing on the financial crisis) to also include Covid-19, and they combine these two empirical lenses by underlining that what the pandemic is to global health now, the financial crisis was to the health of the global economy then.

The chapter demonstrates the critical potential of the stases and engages with three theoretical issues that continue to be relevant to rhetorical argumentation theory: the number of stases, the breadth of application of stasis theory, and the relationship recognized between the four stases. They advocate a conception involving four levels and argue that the fourth stasis must be reinterpreted as a change of scenes in the metaphorical sense (instead of a literal relocation to a different court), thereby conceptualizing the fourth stasis as a matter of 'framing' an argument anew. Secondly, they argue for a broad understanding of stasis that embraces both identifying the point of contestation within a dispute and designating possible rhetorical responses to a contested issue. While the determination of the level used within an utterance is imperative, the chapter argues that it is equally important to situate different responses at the various stasis levels. Just and Gabrielsen ask whether the relationship between the stases is a linear progression from stasis to stasis—or can rhetors combine the stases as a case evolves? Here, they argue for a dynamic view of stasis theory: Rhetors do have the chance to combine and activate all the stases in many different ways—at any one moment in time and across the course of an exchange.

Just and Gabrielsen's arguments advance our understanding of how rhetorical theory (in this sense, the classic concept of stases) can engage with analyses of explicit arguments in the public sphere about highly politicized subjects (e.g., the financial and pandemic crises). Hereby, the chapter illustrates the depth and breadth of the Copenhagen School's approach to argumentation theory, underlining that a distinctly rhetorical take on argumentation theory also invites the tradition of rhetorical criticism (as distinct from classic rhetorical theory) into the argumentative spaces. In a more general way, their article also demonstrates how rhetorical argumentation has at its disposal an almost inexhaustible storehouse of argumentative maneuvers and devices.

Chapter 9: Bengtsson on Political Commentary without Arguments

Mette Bengtsson's article "The Second Persona in Political Commentary", which appeared in Danish in 2016, is characteristic of the Copenhagen approach in that, like Rønlev's article, it moves beyond the study of argumentation proper, focusing instead on the role of argumentation in civic life, in this case in an emergent genre of journalism. Or rather, Bengtsson highlights the conspicuous *absence* of argumentation in a journalistic genre where one might have expected it to play a leading role: political commentary—a type of journalism whose importance in the media system rapidly grew in the 1990's. In Denmark, political commentaries are not quite like the texts coming from the 'commentariat' in, for example, the US. There, political pundits primarily turn out opinion pieces that aim to be sharply argued and elegantly written; Danish pundits instead cast themselves as objective observers of the political scene who write purely analytical commentaries, aiming to help citizens understand what *really* goes on in national politics.

Bengtsson uses the rhetorician Edwin Black's notion of the 'second persona' in a text (1970), a term which designates the reader or addressee implicitly defined by what the text says and by the stylistic features of how it says it. Her main finding from a close reading of a broad sample of political commentaries is that these texts seem to be addressing readers who will implicitly accept the commentators' expertise regarding the political scene and who will therefore expect no supporting argumentation for the claims made; instead, what readers are given is to a large extent interpretations, assessments and predictions referring to politicians' assumed strategic considerations, revolving around powerplay. Accordingly, *arguments* on issues, and for or against policies, hardly get any mention at all—as if readers, i.e., citizens, had no interest in them and did not need them, since their preferences on political issues are assumed to be fixed beforehand. Instead, citizen-readers are cast as passive onlookers to the unfolding political game. Bengtsson not only takes a critical attitude to the conception of democracy thus implied, she also cites

two qualitative studies of her own, done with an innovative variant of protocol analysis, in which readers vent their dissatisfaction with being cast in such a role. This article, while offering little in the way of argumentation theory or analysis, still stands squarely in the Copenhagen tradition with its concern for deliberative argument and reflection on public issues—a function that the commentary genre, according to the article, conspicuously fails to serve.

Section 3: Novel Contributions: From Arguing Against Argumentation to Scientist-Citizens

In this section, we are delighted to present four freshly minted articles on rhetorical argumentation spanning very diverse concepts and empirical fields.

Chapter 10: Appel Olsen on Arguing against Argumentation in Science

Frederik Appel Olsen's "Arguing Against Argumentation in Science" dives into a detailed critical reading of Paul Feyerabend's now famously polemical *Against Method* (1975), applying Erin Rand's insights about "queer polemics" as a rhetorical form to understand how, in general, polemics and provocations can have value for political debate, not only in the public sphere but also as part of specialized communities in the technical sphere such as the 'sciences'.

Appel Olsen not only proposes this as a general claim, he also adduces considerable evidence, not so far considered, to support it—in the form of pronouncements from many of the book's original reviewers, who declared it to have done the rhetoric of science field great services by itself being a stirring and thought-provoking event—even if the reviewers were unwilling to adopt Feyerabend's own radical stance. Olsen's point is not to defend Feyerabend's epistemological anarchism, and his claim is not that a rhetorically informed theory of argumentation in science is identical with Feyerabend's 'anything goes' position. Rather, the

point is to argue that polemical rhetoric may be a productive practice not only in civic and practical argumentation (which, in the Copenhagen conception, is the core of rhetorical argumentation), but also in technical spheres, including the sciences. In other words, the paper's main concern is Feyerabend's rhetorical practice, not his epistemological radicalism. In an enlightening parallel, Appel Olsen points to the function performed in the political sphere by 'trickster' figures, as seen as by the rhetorician Robert Ivie.

One might wonder what Appel Olsen's argument implies for the deep distinction, urged by many of the contributors to the present book, between practical and epistemic argumentation, where science would presumably belong in the latter category. After all, if science is a quest for epistemic truth, then the properties that the Copenhagen interpretation sees as distinctive of practical argumentation—multidimensionality, lack of deductive inference, the space for subjectivity, etc.—should not apply to it. But science is never *only* an epistemic quest for truth; in any science, there are also, as in politics, many components of *choice*—which, as Aristotle insisted, is neither true nor false. Scientists and scholars in all fields *choose* to *do* this or that in many respects, often unwittingly—not just in their basic assumptions, but also regarding the very purposes, questions, perspectives, allegiances, 'methods', and the discursive practices that inform their work from top to bottom. Hence, a disrespectful, out-and-out polemical trickster-type intervention like Feyerabend's may not only cause disruption, but also new self-awareness, new reflections, new practices.

Chapter 11: Gruber on Bullshit-Sniffing

In his chapter on bullshit (!), Gruber argues that even though rhetoricians will probably agree to consider bullshit nothing but a gross and smelly substance, we might do well to take such rhetorical substances seriously in political argumentation. Sure, all that glitters is not gold, but bullshit glitters in some people's eyes, and it might be valuable to understand why. Gruber holds

that bullshit, initially defined as speech with (an) indifference to how things truly are, deserves careful consideration as a rhetorical concept—not only because of the substantial piles of bullshit arguments in political rhetoric but, equally important, because we might in fact view bullshit as helpful (think 'vernacular' or 'rowdy' rhetoric, as theorized and defended by rhetoricians Gerard Hauser and Robert Ivie, respectively). To just see it as harmful because it hinders good faith deliberation between two reasonable parties trying to find a solution for the common good might be unduly limiting.

Gruber first outlines the standard 'Platonic' view of bullshit as a pernicious cancellation of truth, but goes on to ask how citizens (and rhetorical scholars, for that matter) should engage with bullshit, accepting the fact that it abounds in numerous argumentative contexts—if the presumption is that bullshit is something merely offensive in the midst of a rhetor's blatantly 'fake' claims. We might view bullshitting as worth attending to for other reasons. Invoking Krista Ratcliffe's notion of 'rhetorical listening' (2005), he asks us to listen for what we, with our dominant logic, might otherwise fail to hear—something that we are 'exiling', but which makes the bullshit sound like delicious dessert to its intended audience, all the while it sounds like metaphorical poo to us.

This is unfolded in an analysis of a variety of bullshit statements about the Covid-19 pandemic delivered by the Governor of the state of Florida, Ron DeSantis, and in Gruber's interpretation of how various rhetorical tactics, including those some regard as mere bullshitting, need greater attention in rhetorical criticism because bullshit is an inherent part of everyday argumentation and often geared precisely to make a claim glitter more seductively to some. The chapter underlines that listening and reflecting suggest one viable path for productive engagement in which we may respond to, and counteract, bullshit with curiosity.

Gruber's chapter aligns with Olsen's in the sense that they both plead for a more tolerant and inquisitive attitude to specific types of rhetorical behavior—enjoining us to see provocative polemic and bullshit, respectively, as acts that may prod us to think, see

and hear differently. Underlying both chapters is the concern for a sustained and sustainable conversation on matters of shared concern between stakeholders—scientists, bullshitters or just citizens.

Chapter 12: Møllebæk on Rhetorical Argumentation in the Clinic

Mathias Møllebæk's "Paper Tigers in the Clinic? Rhetorical Argumentation and Evidence-Based Medical Practice" unpacks how a rhetorical approach to argumentation is also valuable in elucidating the functioning of arguments in more technical and scientific spheres, such as the use of emergent evidence to potentially change physicians' clinical practices. Using in-depth ethnographic data, the chapter details how arguments that claim epistemic authority through appeals to 'evidence' and 'data' often disregard crucial insights that rhetorical argumentation brings forth: Data and evidence function in arguments that are oriented towards an audience, those arguments are about possible courses of action (in this case, physicians' practice), and they may involve values, considerations and preferences that are incommensurable with general, evidence-based guidelines, or even make them irrelevant.

The chapter opens with a discussion of the empirical research field of policy analysis, underlining that this field itself has experienced an 'argumentative turn'. Møllebæk then makes the interesting choice of examining how Toulmin's concept of argument fields can illuminate a very specific area of policy analysis by focusing on the arguments involved in the somewhat messy policy implementation phase. At the same time, he contributes to argumentation studies by paying close attention to the argumentative field shifts of *justifications* and *evaluations* within the empirical field (here, the clinical practice of general practitioners), and specifically in noting how these argumentative transitions in themselves impact evaluations. In the argument field of the family doctor's practice, a diverse plurality of relevant but incommensurable arguments conditions the doctor's decisions, which belong in a field different from the one in which

policymakers and official regulators argue. We may perhaps say that in the latter of these fields, there seems to be a way to calculate what the one 'true' action is, but in the former field there is not. To revert to Aristotle's dictum: "choice is not true or false".

Also, Møllebæk's work represents an empirical, qualitative approach to rhetorical studies, as also found, for example, in the work of Jens Kjeldsen and others on audience reception (2017), but—equally important to stress here—it calls for an empirical sensitivity drawing inspiration from the ethnographic disciplines, a sensitivity that has grown at the Section of Rhetoric at the University of Copenhagen during the last decade. The chapter further strengthens the link between in-depth ethnographic work and rhetorical argumentation.

Chapter 13: Pietrucci on Scientist-citizenship

Pamela Pietrucci's article "Muzzling Science? Cultivating Scientists' Rhetorical Awareness in the Public Communication of Expertise in an Era of Pandemic Fatigue", written for this collection, engages a broader issue that is (or should be) central to any theory of argumentation: What relation should there be between, on the one hand, what scientists and other experts have to say on matters within their epistemic fields, and on the other hand their participation in debates about public policy, for example in times of crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic?

This question may in fact be seen, in the optic of a rhetorical argumentation theory, as instantiating the relation between epistemic and practical issues. Pietrucci, drawing on a native observer's immersion in the Italian context, highlights the issue by initially discussing a proposal by a member of Italy's Parliament (who was also a doctor) to restrict scientists' access to public media during the pandemic: They were, he proposed, to obtain prior approval from their institutions for what they wanted to say in the public sphere. That idea, Pietrucci argues, was in a sense well-intended, as it sought to address a real problem: Too many scientists were communicating to the Italian public in ways far too marked by contradiction, factionalism and polarization. The

result of this was a documented, rapid growth in ordinary people's confusion, in their distrust in science and authorities and in their belief in crackpot ideas and conspiracy theories.

The proposal was roundly condemned as an attempt to muzzle scientists, but that didn't solve the exigence. Pietrucci finds that although the diagnosis was correct, the proposed cure was wide of the mark. Rather than restricting scientists' freedom of speech, she argues, a way forward would be to help them to a better rhetorical awareness of the contexts into which they were drawn: They would need to cultivate public rhetorical identities as *scientist-citizens*. They needed a sharper sense of when they were speaking (as *scientists*) on matters of scientific fact, and when they were commenting (as *citizens*) on issues of public policy. Far too often were these two roles confused and intermingled by scientists in the public sphere, and the media didn't help, but made matters worse. Pietrucci recycles the ancient rhetorical notion of *stasis* to highlight this difference.

We may say that this is where the epistemic-practical distinction resurfaces. Rhetorical argumentation inhabits, and is centered around, the policy domain. This does not mean that rhetorical argumentation theory, because it has this focus, will want to downplay epistemic truth; on the contrary, the best of scientists' professional knowledge and theories is crucially necessary in a society trying to manage, e.g., a pandemic. But all this knowledge has the status of arguments, premises, *reasons* for or against policies, and scientists play a vital role in finding these reasons and promulgating them; however, for those who make *decisions* on policies (and for citizens), many kinds of credible reasons from other fields too must be available and taken into account, including, e.g., economics, ethics, law, social psychology, and more. That is why, in the case of Covid-19, virologists discussing policies must emphasize the citizen part of their dual identities.

The rhetorical awareness that Pietrucci believes scientists who communicate publicly should cultivate is a crucial element in a rhetorical argumentation theory as sketched in the present volume. Her paper might help us think straight about the role played by the epistemic dimension in argument and decisions about action.

Pietrucci's paper, by highlighting the role of scientists, places a needed emphasis on the epistemic. But she also demonstrates that there is no need for a tension or rivalry between, on the one hand, the emphasis on epistemic truth—an emphasis made by argumentation theorists working on a philosophical basis such as the informal logicians—and on the other hand the emphasis on action and decisions, as emphasized by a rhetorical argumentation theory like ours. Pietrucci makes it clear that epistemic truth—or the closest we can get to it, such as probabilities and scientific consensus—is indeed a *sine qua non* in argument about action, just as it is in epistemic argument. But it is never enough in action-oriented argument to have ever so many premises that are true (or consensually 'acceptable', or whatever term we prefer).

The reason for his is that in action-oriented argument we discuss not only what the world *is* like, but also what we *want* it to be like. To do that, we need premises regarding values. And the values held by humans are multiple; they are often not compatible and not objectively commensurable, i.e., not reducible to a common denominator recognized by all. For example, in a pandemic, some people will ascribe a very high value to the personal freedom they may exercise by choosing or not choosing to keep their shops open or take a vaccine. To many others, such a value is relatively small and expendable compared to the value of saving lives and preventing serious disease. Argumentation theorists must recognize that these values, while not fully compatible or objectively commensurable, are equally real; hence argumentation theorists, philosophers or other experts cannot authoritatively determine for all which of them should, on balance, be prioritized. However, saying that in no way implies a low regard for truth or a license to deny or neglect scientists' epistemic insights.

Rhetorical Argumentation Theory: The Core

With this book's fourteen chapters now presented and introduced to the reader, we hope to have made good on our promise to circumscribe and make plausible the existence of an identifiable,

while loosely connected, Copenhagen 'school' in argumentation studies.

A very brief summary of the tenets that, in various ways, permeate these chapters might be in place. Three simple statements might do the job.

First, in action-oriented argument (which is the central domain of rhetorical argumentation theory and indeed of humans' use of arguments) no stand-alone argument can conclusively decide any issue. There is no deductive entailment from any argument to a conclusion on how to act; old-school logical 'validity' and 'soundness' are alien in this domain. An argument may be ever so relevant, yet there will also be other arguments and considerations—other *frames*, other *topoi*, if one prefers—that may legitimately be invoked.

Secondly, assessing the merit of an argument in action-oriented debate should not be considered a dichotomous decision in which its conclusion is found to 'follow', or else it has no merit at all. Some arguments really have no merit at all, but on the other hand no argument ever conclusively decides a practical issue, even when accompanied by a whole array of others. This, in a sense, follows from the first statement. All we can say is that any argument with any merit at all has a *certain* merit (or 'weight')—which, ironically, means that it has an uncertain merit. Some individuals might, *legitimately*, think it tips the scale to one side, others that it does not. It also follows that efforts to reach an exhaustive appraisal of a single argument or argument type become less meaningful.

This has to do with the third statement, which is this: There are legitimate subjective factors in the appraisal of argument merit. In we assume a three-dimensional argument appraisal model with the dimensions 1) acceptability/truth, 2) relevance, and 3) weight (related to the 'acceptability—relevance—sufficiency' triad first proposed by Johnson and Blair in 1977 and to the 'ARG conditions' taught in Govier's classic textbook from 1985 on)—then there is a legitimate element of subjectivity (i.e., individual variance) on all these dimensions, especially on the 'weight' dimension: Even if two individuals agree that certain

considerations are indeed acceptable and relevant to an issue, they may legitimately disagree on their relative weight when held together with other relevant considerations. This is a fact of human life that neither argumentation theory nor philosophy itself can cancel. Rather than trying to disregard it, we should explore it more.

Let us add to these tenets on argumentation theory that argumentation is only one domain within rhetoric. Humans' attitudes and actions may be impacted by messages, and impulses of many other kinds, coming from other humans or elsewhere; not only argumentation, in the strict sense of messages that are intended to move us by giving reasons, may do this. Argumentation is a subset of the influences that impact us. Some of the articles in this collection bear witness to that. And messages, actions and objects may also affect us in other ways than by influencing our attitudes and actions (for example, aesthetically). Aristotle's emphasis on *ethos* and *pathos* is an attempt to include other means of persuasion than explicit reason-giving; his remarks on *katharsis* in the *Poetics* and the *Politics* suggest some of the influences that may strongly impact humans in ways not necessarily affecting their attitudes and actions.

Nevertheless, we hold that action-oriented argumentation in human encounters is central to human life and that it has many intriguing and special properties that ought to receive even more attention than they have so far in scholarship, education, and the media. Rhetorical argumentation can, in its best form as reasonable disagreement, be a factor in building and consolidating a sustainable society. For these reasons, the study of action-oriented argumentation in social settings ought to be a central domain in any argumentation theory. In rhetorical argumentation theory it constitutes the core.

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