



Meta-Argumentation. an Approach to Logic and Argumentation Theory (Studies in Logic)

Maurice A. Finocchiaro

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Meta-arguments are arguments about one or more arguments, or argumentation in general. They contrast to ground-level arguments, which are about natural phenomena, historical events, human actions, abstract entities, etc. Although meta-arguments are common in all areas of human cognitive practice, and although implicit studies of them are found in many works, and although a few explicit scholarly contributions exist, meta-argumentation has never been examined explicitly, directly, and systematically in book-length treatment. This lacuna is especially unfortunate because such treatment can offer not only an understanding of a special class of arguments, but also a promising way of doing logic and argumentation theory. This is the first book that attempts a systematic treatment of meta-arguments, providing both an illustration of the meta-argumentational approach to logical theory, and an analysis of an especially rich collection of meta-arguments. First, it elaborates an empirical methodology derived partly from a critical appreciation of Stephen Toulmin's applied-logic approach, and partly from a novel application of the author's historical-textual approach. Then it examines theoretical meta-arguments, by such scholars as Tony Blair, Robert Fogelin, Alvin Goldman, Trudy Govier, David Hitchcock, Ralph Johnson, Henry Johnstone, Erik Krabbe, Frans van Eemeren, Carl Wellman, and John Woods, on such topics as defining argument, methods of criticism, deep disagreements, and conductive or pro-and-con arguments. Thirdly, it studies famous meta-arguments by such classics as John Stuart Mill, David Hume, and Galileo Galilei, on such topics as freedom of discussion, women's liberation, the existence of God and intelligent design, and the motion of the earth.

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