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**Bioethics, Public Moral Argument, and Social Responsibility ed.
by Nancy M. P. King, Michael J. Hyde (review)**

Stuart J. Murray

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tional critique of capitalism by examining the nexus of gender and class oppression. Keohane reveals that Millard made use of a transnational narrative to critique the chauvinism of supposedly “progressive” men. Sara L. McKinnon’s essay offers a methodology for analyzing the power an audience has in validating the rights of a speaker, thus determining a speaker’s access. Analyzing legal cases of asylum through a transnational lens, McKinnon explores how a speaker’s essentialized identities are interpreted by the audience. This judgment is then used to deny or grant recognition of her claims. The last section of McKinnon’s essay provides a conclusion not only for her own study but also for the book as a whole. Harkening back to the introduction, she reminds us that radical intersectional scholarship *must* attend to the historicity, fluidity, and contradictions inherent in the ways subjects recognize both others and themselves while remaining vigilant to recognize “that which exists outside commonly recognized borders” (204). Together, the essays in this collection demonstrate innovative ways by which rhetorical and feminist scholars may better understand the complexities of identity, audience, and discourse.

VALERIE N. WIESKAMP, *Indiana University*

Bioethics, Public Moral Argument, and Social Responsibility. Edited by Nancy M. P. King and Michael J. Hyde. New York: Routledge, 2012; pp. xv + 179. \$130.00 cloth.

This collection was conceived as a “call to conversation” on the ways that medicine, science, and biotechnologies affect—and should affect—our lives. The book’s title itself suggests that public moral argument is what links or rhetorically mediates between bioethics and social responsibility, “interfacing” the work of scholars in bioethics, law, health, and communication ethics. As such, the collection is a call to language, where, according to the editors, language is figured as “a tool, an instrument, a means to an end” (x). In this context, the desired end is democratically oriented argument, which has the power to constitute a critical,

reflexive public, even as that public is itself increasingly understood in and through the language of late modern biomedicine, risk, and responsibility.

The extent to which the various essays successfully reflect on the power of their own mediating language—their own rhetoricity—is somewhat uneven. But this is perhaps unavoidable with an interdisciplinary collection; it might even be desirable, if we accept the editors' claim that interdisciplinarity is a necessary (but insufficient) condition of public moral argument. In their Afterword, the editors ask, "can discourse from two complementary but disparate fields provide a picture of important public issues that is both coherent and meaningful?" (165). This, they acknowledge, is the "elephantine" challenge of an interdisciplinary collection such as this, even as their Introduction had cautiously hoped for "a collective wisdom" and "a collective voice" (x). Certainly, the collection can be meaningful without necessarily being coherent or "collective." Arguably, its disparate voices are crucial to debate and to meaning, and it would be wrong to demand a coherent philosophical orientation across individual contributions. This would impede genuine conversation.

The essays are divided into three parts. The first, "Public Moral Argument and Social Responsibility," rather straightforwardly explores the role of language and the importance of public argument for ethical decision making. The essays raise, rather than resolve, particular difficulties for ethical debate. How, for instance, should we arrive at a consensus when public moral arguments are necessarily inconclusive (Zarefsky) and human agents are by definition fallible (Moreno)? What are some pedagogical strategies for teaching university students how to deliberate and argue effectively while respecting the nuances and sociocultural dimensions of a particular case (Coughlin et al.)?

Part two, "Moral Relationships and Responsibilities," explores the role of moral language within concrete contexts. How, for example, are the concepts of "dignity" (Dresser) and "human nature" (Juengst) applied across public and popular discourse, and how might these make sense of human experience and shed light on bioethical analysis? In what ways has the mapping of the human genome influenced how we think and argue about ethical freedom as this intersects with genetic determinism and a subject's spiritual understanding of "fate" or "destiny" (Churchill)? In what sense can we be "blamed" for our genetic (pre)conditions of disease and forced to "manage" these risks as well as assume the actuarial costs of potential

“genetic” illness (Parrott)? The essays in this section each address some of the ethical challenges of so-called informed decision making, along with the ethical implications of decision making as a communicative practice.

The essays in part three—“The Media, the Public, and the Person”—are more explicitly self-reflexive because they theorize media and mediation *per se*, examining the ways that texts of all kinds constitute particular publics and persons. In the context of public health and obesity, for example, Giles and Krcmar argue for a link between obesity and mass mediated fast food advertisements. In what ways are advertisers morally accountable for the behaviors they encourage? The chapter written by Condit reflects on the ways that metaphors for genes circulate in popular discourse and inform how we feel about ourselves as ethical subjects. Condit argues for the differential effects of these metaphors between members of the general public and experts, suggesting that emotions—and not just rational facts—must be taken seriously in public moral argument. Elliott’s essay is by far the most critical of mainstream bioethics, arguing that the rise of institutional bioethics is coupled with the decline of “investigative” work that would publicly expose ethical violations and hold wrongdoers accountable. This is all the more urgent, Elliott argues, as the digital revolution poses a threat to print journalism and investigative reporting. Elliott raises some provocative questions about the public role of bioethics as the field (or industry) becomes ever more closely aligned with the medical–industrial complex. The final chapter by Lundberg and Smith returns us to the interdisciplinary stakes of the collection “to cultivate in publics a capacity for engaging the controversies surrounding the biosciences” (158). The authors summarize the volume’s disparate voices and stage these differences as a means of productive tension and an impetus for responsible deliberative exchange. At stake here is the constitution of a public—or publics—defined “as something not made in advance, but rather constituted in the process of argument” (154).

In general terms, the essays gathered here are not “philosophy” or “bioethics” in a strict disciplinary sense. The book will appeal to argumentation theorists and communication scholars, whereas scholars of rhetorical theory may find the analysis thin in all but a few of the essays. And while its theoretical scope is limited, the paramount strength of the collection is nevertheless its interdisciplinary effort to move beyond the bioethics discourse of mainstream (analytic) philosophy and law, to offer alternative

terms in which to frame public debate, and to argue for the exigency to do so. Communication scholars are well-placed to reflect on the principle of autonomy, which is so prevalent in mainstream bioethics, and to explore the ways that autonomy itself is a rhetorical production.

For communication scholars, such an interdisciplinary project might justify an edited collection like this, in which the whole is, in theory, greater than the sum of its parts, each of which might have been published independently. Given the importance of interdisciplinarity for public moral argument, as a whole the collection may encourage its readers to “step beyond their respective disciplinary boundaries and assume the ethical responsibility of translating their expertise into forms that help promote public conversation” (x). But knowledge translation is notoriously difficult, and the individual essays here do this with more and often less aplomb: it is difficult to imagine a coherent audience emerging from across these disparate public spheres. I wonder, then, about the publics, counter-publics, and persons this book is meant to constitute, because the book should not simply be *about*—but should also *perform*—the public moral argument it thematizes (as Elliott’s “manifesto” surely does). Who will purchase and read this book? At \$130, it is difficult to argue that it is intended for a general public; as Lundberg and Smith remind us, citing McLuhan, “the medium is the message” (157). As a medium, the book will contribute to a properly public conversation only if it succeeds in its injunction to other scholars to carry the torch and to make public argument public.

STUART J. MURRAY, *Carleton University*

Rhetorical Style: The Uses of Language in Persuasion. By Jeanne Fahnestock. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011; pp. 464. \$99.00 cloth; \$39.95 paper.

Jeanne Fahnestock’s *Rhetorical Style: The Uses of Language in Persuasion* should be on your shelf. Tackling what is assumed to be at the heart of rhetoric, Fahnestock gives rhetoricians—and those who do not understand what rhetoricians can see in texts—a welcome resource for ex-