Bringing Wreck

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Abstract: This paper critically examines non-adversarial feminist argumentation model specifically within the scope of politeness norms and cultural communicative practices. Asserting women typically have a particular mode of arguing which is often seen as 'weak' or docile within male dominated fields, the model argues that the feminine mode of arguing is actually more affiliative and community orientated, which should become the standard within argumentation as opposed to the Adversary Method. I argue that the non-adversarial feminist argumentation model (NAFAM) primarily focuses on one demographic of women's communicative styles – white women. Taking an intersectional approach, I examine practices within African American women's speech communities to illustrate the ways in which the virtues and vices purported by the NAFAM fails to capture other ways of productive argumentation.

Keywords: feminist argumentation theory, intersectionality, African American Vernacular English.

The advent of the 45th United States Presidential administration has reignited a wave of literature and debate pertaining to civility within argumentation theory. Displays of aggression, adversariality, and impoliteness are often construed as impediments to '*genuine*' debate and argumentation (Hundleby 2013; Hundleby 2010; Rooney 2012; Rooney 2009; Cohen 2002; Govier 1999). Moreover such impediments can facilitate an environment where various forms of argumentative injustice can take root (Bondy 2010; Kotzee 2010; Linker 2014). While not everyone who condemns aggressive, adversarial, or impolite argumentative tactics fall under the heading of feminist, much of the critique of such tactics have come from feminist argumentation theorists. The purpose of this paper is to examine the various modes of feminist argumentation theory with an eye towards an intersectional analysis. What interests me is the notion that women are more inclined to partake in arguments in a more nurturing, affiliative, and community oriented way than their male counterparts. This strikes me as gender essentialist and white-washed. I argue that the non-adversarial/minimalist adversarial feminist model of argumentation is not suited to accomplish the aims that it seeks out to solve – neither theoretically nor practically.

In order to adequately illustrate the ways in which non-adversarial feminist models of argumentation fail to address the concerns that it purports to remedy, I first provide an exegesis of the literature. From here, I briefly touch upon the nature of debate and argumentation, because I believe that what the non-adversarial feminist argumentation model (NAFAM) is proposing is

something different from debate and/or argumentation. That is to say, what NAFAM hopes to see occurring within arguments and debates, is not actually arguments nor debates. Within the next section of the paper, I temporarily suspend my previous concern and theoretically concede that what NAFAM advocates is indeed a model of argumentation and debate. I argue that even if the model is a form of debate and argumentation, it still is ill-equipped to deal with the issues that it hopes to address (namely sexism). In order to partake within a 'barn raising' activity, members of the debate must be able to trust and understand one another, along with having the same blueprint (i.e., goal). All three are necessary in order to adequately engage within the argumentative project that NAFAM hopes will remedy the state of oppressed individuals.

I use the precarious relationship between Black women and white women to illustrate the saliency of trust, understanding, and goal orientation. Specifically, I focus on the ways in which the gendered language community of women within the NAFAM literature has been structured with white women's language practices and I contrast this with the practices within African American women's speech communities (AAWSC). Ultimately, I argue that what is asserted as inherently feminine or gendered as women's communicative and argumentative practices are not universal. While NAFAM does acknowledge 'not all women' engage in the same argumentative practices, I argue that what they purport as a common mode of argumentative style is not as common as they think – specifically, it may only be common for white women. If we adopt an NAFAM, then AAWSC practices will theoretically and in practice be perceived as hostile and combative. The logical conclusion regarding our practices under NAFAM is that AAWSC practices should be jettisoned. I adamantly reject this.

I conclude the paper with some ways in which the NAFAM can adapt to best address the concerns that I previously raise, although, ultimately and especially given the political debate climate, while NAFAM may be modified to handle debates and arguments even amongst those who share a proximity of viewpoints, the model cannot handle deeper debates and disagreements.

I

> "I'm such a fucking lady"
> -Rihanna *Wait Your Turn*

In one of the most seminal works "Language and Woman's Place," Lakoff argues for the connection between women's oppression and the language that we use – "Language uses us as much as we use language" (1973, 45). A lady should engage within the passive voice, rather than the active voice and be deferential to their audience – i.e. "'John is here?" versus "John is here, isn't he?" (Lakoff 1973, 54). Polite conversational behavior for a lady involves no swearing, rough talk, interruptions, loud volumes, assertiveness, or simultaneous speech. The majority of these features make up what Moulton deems to be "The Adversary Method" within philosophy. Moulton states

> Under the Adversary Paradigm, it is assumed that the only, or at any rate, the best, way of evaluating work in philosophy is to subject it to the strongest or most extreme opposition. And it is assumed that the best way of presenting work in philosophy is to address it to an imagined opponent and muster all the evidence one can to support it. (Moulton 1983, 153)

While this modus operandi may seem ideal to create, foster, and strengthen objective stances and systems of thought, Moulton believes that such a method severely limits the scope of philosophical projects and inquiry. Deductive reasoning becomes the reasoning of choice and problems/questions are constructed between opponents. Refutation is the name of the game – "the philosophic enterpriese [sic] is seen as an unimpassioned debate between *adversaries* who try to defend their own views against counterexamples and produce counterexamples to opposing views (Moulton 1983, 153, emphasis in original). 'The Adversary Method,' according to Moulton thrives on oppositional tactics and the strongest opposition is the stance that survives. Such a model has no interest in investigating philosophical problems for their own sake nor do we assess theories for their plausibility – what our assessment boils down to is whether or not a philosophical stance can be defended against a particular opponent. This, Moulton argues, creates and facilitates not only bad reasoning, but bad practices. Because we construct strong oppositional stances as markers of success and our interlocutors as opponents, argumentation under this method fosters aggression, which is a characteristic that presents a double-bind for women.[1]

What 'The Adversary Method' lacks is a gendered analysis of argumentation. What is assumed to be the neutral state of argumentation and what should be the goal and good practices is not neutral at all, but is more male orientated. It is men who are more inclined to be "confrontational, dominant" (Ayim 1991), "judgmental" (Rooney 2010), "aggressive" (Moulton 1983; Hundleby 2013), "hostile" (Rooney 2010), "penetrating," able to "thrust," partake in a "battle of wits," or "cut an opponent's argument to pieces" (Ayim 1988), be "war-like" (Cohen 2004). Women are often more "affiliative, nurturant, cooperative" (Ayim 1991), "indirect, empathetic," "tied to relationships and respect for the other," (Orr 1989), or "cooperative or contextual" (Rooney 2010). Burrow states "Men can take turns insulting and swearing at each other and evidence verbal sparring that is friendly, not quarrelsome" (Burrow 2010, 247). In contrast, women are more cooperative and "feminine politeness strategies aim at cooperation through connection and involvement, reflecting values of intimacy, connection, inclusion, and problem sharing" (Burrow 2010, 247).

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[1] Moulton does not advocate for women to take on a more aggressive, rather she questions the causality between success and those who display aggression stating "it is a mistake to suppose that an aggressive person is more likely to be energetic, effective, competent, powerful or successful and also a mistake to suppose that an energetic, effective, etc. person is therefore aggressive" (Moulton 1983, 150).

Women are more communal and group oriented, while men are more individualist. Ayim goes as far as to say that within argumentation men are focused on domination – "Women are concerned with affiliation in their use of language and men are concerned with control" (Ayim 1991, 82). These practices that are often attributed to men have aided in the oppression of women and any indication of hostility or what is construed as rude behavior should not be tolerated within any circumstance (Govier 1999; Miller 1995).[2]

Rude behavior for some NAFAMs merely is a product of the oppositional assumptions within argumentation (although, Govier slightly differs on this point). It is not only the language and lack of polite behavior within argumentation that is problematic, but the very way in which we conceptualize argumentation that is at issue. Ayim states "I believe it is time to stop focusing our attention exclusively on proving arguments that run counter to our own as wrong. We need to turn to the more integrating tasks of asking how these arguments mesh with other different experience sets, different belief systems, different value codes, and even different reasoning styles" (Ayim 1988, 189).[3]

Ultimately, impolite adversarial methods should be avoided within argumentation (Hundleby 2013; Hundleby 2010; Rooney 2012; Rooney 2010; Rooney 2009; Cohen 2002; Govier 1999; Ayim 1988; Burrow 2010; Moulton 1983). Ayim does not completely jettison the 'combative' model of argumentation, as she acknowledges that confrontation has a role to play in getting rid of the combative model towards a more nurturant paradigm. The confrontational paradigm does not in itself have inherent value, rather it is necessary to address confrontational modes of thinking within a pre-established combative system with tactics that the system will recognize and not immediately destroy. Ayim states "I do not want to turn our classrooms into nurseries and graduate suckling babies, for these could not survive in the world" (Ayim 1991, 80). So the preservation of any combative or confrontational modes of argumentation is merely strategic and pragmatic.

Nevertheless, communicative styles that are considered "rude" and "brusque language" are not conducive to any of Ayim's nurturant goals, along with the practice of interruption, because "while persistent interruption undermines affiliative behaviour [sic], it goes hand in hand with the maintenance of power and control as well as linguistic confrontation" (Ayim 1991, 83). The practice of interruption violates the politeness established within 'turn-taking' practices within "*our* ordinary language" (Ayim 1991, 83, emphasis my own). Here I want to flag the notion of a universal community of shared language

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[2] More will be said on this in the following section.
[3] Ayim's vision, I believe, is something more than the standard habit of 'presenting both sides' of the issue, as it is often the case that there are more than two angles to an issue or argument. For more on this, see Govier (1999), Collins (1998), and Collins (2000).

practices[4], because one of the major faults within the NAFAM I find is the assumption that what considered to be 'rude, brusque, or ordinary practices' are indexed to particular communities. That is not to say that there have been zero acknowledgements or nods to the various ways in which women can and do converse or argue. Several scholars have made the obligatory footnotes or addendums remarking that 'not all women partake in the same argumentative tactics' or moreover 'one must take an intersectional approach to formulating new argumentative models,' but I have yet to see any serious and in depth work on the subject. I will expand upon this more within the remaining sections, as I hope to remedy this problem.

II

"Get your swagger right "
-RichGirl, "Swagger Right" (2010)

The general consensus within the NAFAM is that framing arguments as taking up oppositional positions give rise to arguers asserting their viewpoints at all costs, often in a war-like combative style because the end goal is to 'defeat' the opposing side so that one's own viewpoint can prevail. Because 'war is hell,' participants engage in rude practices, such as interruption, brusque language, offensive tones, and dismissive gestures (Cohen 2004). Women tend not to communicate via this style (#notallwomen), which disadvantages women because the more masculine argumentation style is what garners praise since harsher styles is what it takes to 'win' arguments. Getting rid of the metaphor of arguments as war, along with the practice of viewing interlocuters as opponents will, according to the NAFAM, get rid of hostility within argumentation. However, there are differences to the extent that adversariality should be avoided within argumentation. While theorists such as Rooney aim to avoid adversariality at all costs, Ayim sees the method as being capable of being subverted to thwart itself, and Govier sees the necessity of a 'minimal' amount of adversariality in order to maintain that arguments are indeed arguments. Within this section, I will briefly outline Govier's stance ultimately agreeing that in order to uphold the practice of argumentation adversariality, in some sense, is necessary.

Govier distinguishes between "ancillary adversariality" and "minimal adversariality" – the former pertaining to "name-calling... animosity, hostility, failure to listen and attend carefully, misrepresentation" (Govier 1999, 245).

While these negative argumentative practices are distinct from minimal adversariality, they often accompany minimal adversariality which makes one

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[4] Although it is interesting to note that Ayim does acknowledge that men and women operate within different language paradigms, so in some sense she recognizes that there are different language communities with differing sets of norms. Ultimately, her argument is that the dominating male model is inherently destructive and confrontational, while the feminine model is supportive and affiliative.

tempted to elide the two. Minimal adversariality is just the nature of controversy, which "is a healthy thing in many contexts" (Govier 1999, 51). Controversy is beneficial in several ways: 1- it can cause us to partake in the activity of giving reasons for our beliefs, 2- we are prompted to hear beliefs that differ from our own, 3- counterpoints to our arguments can help to strengthen our viewpoint or dismiss an argument if its conclusion proves no longer viable, and 4- it provides us with a civil opportunity to non-coercively persuade others. For Govier, "argument is not *necessarily* confrontational" and what adversariality happens to exist in the nature of arguments "can be kept to a logical, and polite, minimum" (Govier 1999, 55, emphasis in original). But some level of adversariality is necessary, otherwise it seems that what is occurring is not longer arguments. Aikin states "If an argument were not adversarial, then dissent could not be argumentational" (Aikin 2011, 266). The NAFAM dissents from the adversarial model – it offers reasons against it, not reciprocal reading of it, nor a growing with or adaption of the thought (recall: many theorists of the NAFAM want to completely do away with the adversarial model). There isn't barn raising, or cross-pollination or hybridization with the adversarial model either. There is *objection*, *refutation*, and *dissent*. The NAFAM is *opposed* to the adversarial model.

It is unclear to me exactly how one is to strongly oppose a stance, engage in argumentation, and not be adversarial. What many of the NAFAM recommend to replace adversarial argumentation no longer appears to me as argumentation. Also, as Aikin correctly points out, some narrative should address when it is the appropriate time to use stronger adversarial tactics within arguments. Aikin asserts that there are some situations where "it would inappropriate to be *minimally* adversarial" (Aikin 2011, 267, emphasis in original). I would hope that those purporting a NAFAM would not be so eagerly willing to engage in brainstorming, barn raising, hybridization, or cross-pollination with those who actively distort the truth or purposely fuel hateful rhetoric. And it seems that many of these theorists would not want individuals who are highly disadvantaged within society to 'go up against' oppressive rhetoric with little to no argumentative tools.

III

> "Begin with the heart, our sisters is a living art."
> - KRS One *Womanology*

Within the previous section, I questioned to what extent the non-adversariality Feminist Argumentation model is still argumentation. The majority of NAFAM aim for non-adversariality within all forms of argumentation, sans Govier who sees argumentation has having some form of minimal adversariality, but still nonetheless seeks to remedy all ancillary adversarial practices with conceptions of politeness. I now turn to examining AAWSC to highlight the ways in which a NAFAM that is strictly non-adversarial, but even Govier's suggestion of instilling a sense of 'politeness' when engaging in arguments will be problematic and force

some communities who these theorists are attempting to liberate, to engage in oppressive practices (i.e., codeswitching). I suspend the discussion as to whether or not strict NAFAM is still argumentation, and will grant that it is, because I aim to still show that such a model is nevertheless untenable for *all* women.

As a precautionary note, while I am focusing on the AAWSC, that is not to assert that all Black women engage in all or some of these language practices. Every Black woman has her own unique experience that differs, sometimes quite vastly, from another Black woman's. Black women are not a monolithic community. But in virtue of being Black women, we do share certain "elements of community" such as "shared history of enslavement, Jim Crowism, segregation, and 'race'-ism; investment in ties that bind, including knowledge and value systems; historical connection to Africanized language forms; self-identity" (Troutman 2010, 92). From these community elements, which also includes language, we are able to ascertain particular characteristics to AAWSC practices, even though not all Black women will partake in these practices.

Some linguistic practices within AAWSC include lewd or indecorous language, signifying[5], culturally toned diminutives (i.e., girl[6], sistah, child, honey, bitch[7], simultaneous speech, and talking with attitude (TWA), while nonlinguistic practices include side-eye, cut-eye, various hand gestures, 'edge,' and suck-teeth. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but is to serve as a reference point as to what sorts of practices are common, albeit not necessary, within the AAWSC. These practices are at times meant to emphasis the content of speech, replace words directly, highlight various affective states, and can be seen as acts of resistance. However, stereotypes and media representations of AAWSC practices often render us as sassy, dismissive, copping an attitude, ghetto, or straight up hood rats.

This image of the sassy angry Black women is what Collins refers to as a "controlling image." Such images are not meant to serve as representations of reality; rather, they are a façade designed to render dismal of the hood rats/ghetto chicks/welfare queens as "natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life" (Collins 2009, 77). The deployment of these controlling images helps to justify and maintain Black women's oppression within the dominant society. Many linguistic practices within the AAWSC are perceived as unprofessional, ill educated, and hostile (Collins 2009; Troutman 2010; Koonce

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[5] Signifying is a verbal game/exercise of indirection, sometimes called sounding or snapping. See Morgan 2002.

[6] Early in my career, this term in particular caused me a great deal of grief when I once referred to a white conference presenter as 'girl,' only to be charged with belittling and demeaning the speaker because I didn't call her a woman. I don't forget where I am anymore.

[7] Typically, these culturally-toned diminutives express solidarity, even though within white U.S. and European contexts several of these words have been "rejected... as a result of inequitable and degrading treatment," but tone is incredibly important here along with other nonlinguistic communicators (Troutman 2001, 217). See xander bird "How to say B*tch in many ways" for an example of the role that tone, inflection, and facial expression plays.

2012; Fordham 1993). However, within our community, these practices do not usually carry the negative connotation that they hold within dominant culture.

Within Troutman's study on politeness within AAWSC, she conducted a survey on what talking with attitude (TWA), one particular practice within our language community, meant for a variety of Black women. Below are a few of their responses:

-Oh, it's like they use a certain tone in their words.

-It's not so much the words but it's the tone and the structure of the words to get the point across... you know what I mean?

-Inflection in voice; sass, talking back but it's not disrespectful

-It's which words are used to accent

-I think on the outside looking in for people who are not [B]lack women they may think that its attitude but among black women we just see it as a way of communicating; all in all I don't think it is really an attitude it is just how we express ourselves.

-I guess we have always TWA. It's also walking with an attitude, being with an attitude. It's not unique to language.

(Troutman 2010, 99-100).

Not all responses considered TWA as merely 'just the way we talk or express ourselves;' some of Troutman's participants explicitly contributed positive attributes to TWA. They saw it as a sign of confidence, knowledge, authority, and even as a means of resistance. Usually, it is deemed as impolite if it is incorrectly deployed, done with strangers outside of the community, or excessive for no reason. Several of the participants were well aware of the general stereotype of Black women who TWA – "Someone who doesn't know me may think it's negative... we are highly publicized of having an attitude; it's just an over-generalized stereotype" (Troutman 2010, 101). One particular respondent stated that it was inappropriate within the work place or another professional setting "where the majority of [her] colleagues were not Black women," not because TWA is inherently a negative thing to do, but because it would play into the stereotypes that already plague us and would hurt her professional standing within the workplace. That is to say it's not the practice itself that she is reluctant of, it is the high probability that the practice will be misunderstood and she will suffer negative consequences, so she engages in code-switching when the predominant audience is white. Young argues that coerced engagement of code-switching is oppressive to many Black people, especially Black women, and it does not "match the achievements in diversity" (Young 2009, 64).

My concern regarding NAFAM is that these controlling images which often portray Black women as sassy, angry, and hostile in conjunction with our misunderstood linguistic practices, if enacted within an argument will be

interpreted as engaging within The Adversary Method or perpetuating ancillary adversariality. Within the next section I expand upon this notion.

<center>IV</center>

<center>"It's funny how money change a situation/Miscommunication lead to complication/My emancipation don't fit your equation"
- Lauryn Hill *Lost Ones*</center>

Now that I have provided a sketch of what some of our practices are within the AAWSC, within this section I now juxtapose our practices with the critique of the adversarial mode of argumentation offered by the NAFAM. I argue that many (if not all) of the practices criticized and deemed impolite within NAFAM, appear in some fashion within the AAWSC.

For example interruption, for Ayim, is an exercise of power and domination, rather than just a mode of expression. When you interrupt another persons' speech, you are attempting to shut them down and shut them up. The assumption, according to Ayim, is that what the other person has to say is not worthy to be heard and your (the interrupter) viewpoint has more saliency and should interject. Not only is interruption within an argument a sign of disrespect, Ayim asserts that if everyone responds similarly while conversing, "then we would be hard-pressed indeed to keep a conversation going" (Ayim 1991, 84). Laying all of my cards on the table, I have to wonder a bit if Ayim has ever seen/heard a group of Black women conversing while engaging in TWA or other AAWSC practices, because we typically are very skilled at keeping the conversation going. Nor does the conversation have an overly hostile tone to us, since engaging in some of these practices is one way to show solidarity, affection, and equality.

One person's harmful argumentative practices is another's form of 'tough-love,' assertiveness, or act of resistance. Ayim's description of one particular male centric confrontational domination tactic is "[o]ne cuts them off, interrupts them, puts them in their place" (Ayim 1991, 84). Rooney strongly associates "hostility and combativeness in argumentation, with an aggressive atmosphere that can include name-calling, put-downs, or quips such as 'that's a ridiculous argument!'" (Rooney 2010, 209). However, both of these descriptions also fit into what Pough describes as an AAWSC practice of "bringing wreck," specifically "talking back, going off, turning it out, having a niggerbitchfit, or being a diva" (Pough 2004, 78). AAWSC linguistic practices, as previously stated, can be used as a sign of calling-in, 'gettin your peoples,' putting someone in their place, or talking that talk. A "put-down" or "quip," as Rooney refers to it, is not always meant to shut someone up or shut them down. It's not necessarily a tactic that is

meant to halt argumentation. Bringing wreck and other AAWSC practices are not inherently domineering nor antithetical to an affiliative project.[8]

Rather than being opposed to an affiliative project or practice, I argue that some of our practices should be viewed as affiliative and cooperative. Dialoging in this way is incredibly important to our assessment of knowledge claims. Collins harkens our practices today with African based oral traditions, such as the call-and-response model. This model is "[c]omposed of spontaneous verbal and nonverbal interaction between speaker and listener in which all of the speaker's statements, or 'calls,' are punctuated by expressions, or 'responses,' from the listener" (Collins 2000, 280). For example, a Black woman might be arguing with a friend about x, and while making her points the friend can 'interrupt' the speaker with expressions such as 'uhm,' 'uh-huh,' 'I hear you,' 'girl,' 'bitch,' or a plethora of other responses. This interruption is not an interruption to shut the speaker down/up. The interruption can function as affirmation that the listener is indeed listening. Being entirely silent while a speaker is speaking, within many AAWSC practices actually has the opposite effect as what the NAFAM purports. Collins states "to refuse to join in, *especially if one really disagrees* with what has been said, is see as 'cheating'" (Collins 2010, 280, emphasis my own). To not partake in this call-and-response model is seen as not partaking in the dialogue or not listening – and for us that's just rude.

As one can see, many of the practices within the AAWSC are highly contextualized and situational.[9] While such practices within AAWSC may appear to be dismissive of an interlocutor's remarks or arguments, "when you talk with an attitude, you have to know what you are talking about" (Troutman 2010, 99). In other words, in order to adequately execute TWA, TTT, or bringing wreck, one has to not only have command of the subject matter at hand, but they also have to exhibit a mastery of a multitude of linguistic and non-linguistic communicative practices. So enacting any one of these practices "represents one of the highest levels of linguistic dexterity," because it encompasses multiple communicative practices simultaneously (Troutman 2001, 2006, and 2010). Similar to the call-and-response model, TWA, TTT, or bringing wreck can be a

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[8] In an effort not to air too much dirty laundry or giving away 'trade secrets,' I hesitate to give clear concrete examples of the various ways bringing wreck, talking the talk, talking with attitude, or other AAWSC practices can be delineated from being practices of resistance, tough love or 'calling-in,' play, or just wild'n out. What I will say is that we within the community of practices know the apropos contexts, rules, etc.

[9] When asked if TWA was polite or impolite within Troutman's study, there was almost unanimous agreement that "You have to use contextual cues to know if it's positive or negative" (2010, 101). One respondent indicated that the relationship between the speaker and 'target' is also important. "[I]f I see [B]lack women acting that way no I would not view it as negative because I'm used to it, it's the norm for me... but if I seem them using that same attitude with strangers *for no reason*, then I'll be like yea that's a little excessive... you just have to know when and when not to use the attitude and how far" (Troutman 2010, 101 emphasis my own).

sign that the listener is actually listening to what is being said. These practices require not only an understanding of what the dialogue or argument is about, but also what has been said thus far, and an ability to play off of these points using linguistic and non-linguistic practices. One has to be able to play with the language, recapitulate the concepts, and articulate these with just the right emphasis on certain words with well timed and appropriate bodily/facial expressions. According to one of Troutman's respondents, "We have to respect each other's conversations before speaking. It's the way you say something, not what you say" (Troutman 2010, 101). The way one says something isn't just that there is tone, sass, or rough edge to the voice – the way you say something also has to fit the context.

Engaging in TWA, TTT, or bringing wreck also is a way in which an individual can assert themselves, particularly when these acts are being done with an interlocuter and there is a power differential. The act of TWA, for hooks, is "speaking as an equal to an authority figure... daring to disagree" (hooks 1989, 5). In this way, utilizing some of the practices within the AAWSC can be an act of resistance. ''It is that act of speech, of 'talking back,' that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of our movement from object to subject – the liberated voice" (hooks 1989, 9). To liberate women's voices appears to be what many NAFAMs are after, but hooks' (and Pough's) notion of talking back as a form of liberation appears to be contra to the means of liberation asserted by the NAFAM. While the emancipation of women's voices is the goal for both the NAFAM and Black feminists/womanists, our means of getting there are incredibly different. And I have to wonder, exactly who the NAFAM seeks to liberate.

V

> ''If I see you and I don't speak/
> That means I don't fuck with you"
> -Cardi B *Bodak Yellow*

I have made the case that many of the practices within the AAWSC do not fit the practices encouraged by the NAFAM; moreover, several of our practices seem to be precisely what the NAFAM is opposing. However, with a few modification I believe a case could be made that the NAFAM could be adapted to accommodate AAWSC practices, especially considering that whether or not AAWSC practices are impolite or polite depends a great deal on context, the majority of the time our practices are not aggressive, born out of an attempt to shut another person up, or ignorant of our interlocutor's stance. That is to say that what is happening within our language community is not necessarily the vices that are being critiqued by the NAFAM. One way to make the NAFAM more acquiescent to AAWSC is to adequately enlighten other interlocuters to the practices of AAWSC. Education regarding the various cultural practices of politeness has the potential to not render AAWSC as hostile when our speech practices are enacted (by us)

within arguments or debates. Many of our linguistic practices could be seen as nutritive, coalescent, or polite.[10] But such modifications I find to be insufficient. Several of our ideological commitments, which I believe are reflected within our linguistic practices, are too confrontational for the NAFAM.

It is not just the means by which adversariality is articulated that the NAFAM of argumentation rejects – it is also the practice of opposing viewpoints and approaching arguments as though the interlocutors are in opposition with one another. An oppositional stance is deemed to perpetuate the adversarial method, which then brings about rude, brusque, and dismissive argumentative practices. Differences in opinion and argumentative disagreements are acceptable, and will occur, but these can be resolved if we approach the argument from a more communal and understanding perspective. We should argue alongside our interlocutors, rather than against them (Cohen 2004). Similarly, Rooney interrogates the move between practices of "difference and disagreement to opposition and adversariality," in hopes of diminishing the latter, because it "construes the epistemic role of good argument as a significant tool of rational persuasion in the acquisition and communication of truths or likely truths" (Rooney 2010, 211). To be adversarial – to be oppositional – is to impede the goals of argumentation and weakens its strength as a tool. Rooney states "By 'oppositional reasoning' I mean reasoning and arguing that is largely structured in terms of opponents and opposing positions, attacks and defenses, winners and losers" (Rooney 2010, 209 fn 6). Such an embattled sense of reasoning is in "conflict with the standard philosophical norms of good reasoning and argumentation" (Rooney 2010, 211). Arguments should not be battle grounds. They should be "diplomatic negotiations," "metamorphosis," "brainstorming," or "barnraising [sic]" (Cohen 2004). But are there really no viewpoints or arguments that warrant an oppositional stance? Does the NAFAM sincerely intend to 'brainstorm' or 'raise barns' with those who seek to advance not only oppressive arguments, but oppressive practices?

As I stated within Section I, Ayim (1991) sees utility in the adversarial model, mainly that of combatting the adversariality of the world – be it racism, sexism, ableism, etc. Once these oppressive forces are gone, as communicators we should depart form an adversarial style and turn to a more nutritive mode of argumentation. Govier argues that argumentation at a minimum is adversarial, that is simply its nature, but that does not give us reason to be hostile or rude to those who differ with us. Govier states that "When argument is understood in an *oppositional* way, difference in opinion or belief is construed as disagreement, and disagreement is regarded as conflict; conflict leads to contest between opponents; and contest to battle – real or metaphoric" (Govier 1999, 54, emphasis in original). Argument can merely be a forum in which interlocutors

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[10] For example, the co-opting of culturally toned diminutives such as 'girl' and 'bitch,' by gay white men can be seen as a sign of solidarity and friendship. For a critique of this phenomena, see E. Patrick Johnson 2003; Mannie 2014.

articulate their differences. Difference, according to Govier, does not necessitate disagreements. While I agree that having differences does not demand that disagreements occur, I reject the notion that opposition is inherently bad.

Before delving into the discussion in favor of certain cases of oppositional stances, specifically Black feminism, I want to make it explicit that just because a Black woman engages in AAWSC practices does not mean that they are a Black feminist. Black feminism is not synonymous with AAWSC; however, many Black women whether or not they label themselves as Black feminists, tend to adhere to several of its central tenets. Collins states that this is because "as members of an oppressed group, U.S. Black women have generated alternative practices and knowledges that have been designed to foster U.S. Black women's group empowerment… helps U.S. Black women survive in, cope with, and resist our differential treatment" (Collins 2009, 33-35). In order to survive the U.S. terrain, we must remain oppositional to it. "For Black feminist thought, oppositionality represents less an achieved state of being than a state of becoming" (Collins 1998, 89). Black feminist thought challenges the status quo – that is the reason for its being (Collins 2016). The practices within AAWSC, given our history within the United States, is in direct opposition to the very practices of white American communication. To partake in many of these linguistic practices is to stand opposed to some systems of oppression.

All-in-all, I sympathize with the NAFAM project. Arguments do not need to always be hostile, and sometimes using particular words, bodily gestures, or facial expressions are not warranted. But warrant for adversariality is the missing element within the NAFAM, because under this model no situation warrants any hostility. I believe certain situations warrant particular argumentative styles and that includes what is perceived to be (and what flat out is in some cases) adversarial methods of argumentation. The claim that all modes of hostility are oppressive to women ignores the communicative styles of several different groups of women, particularly Black women. If the NAFAM model remains adamant on maintaining a universal conception of politeness within argumentation, I wonder which women does their work serve?

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