

Rhetoric and interdisciplinarity: a conversation with Christopher Tindale*

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In this interview, we dive into Professor Christopher Tindale's career, starting from his years as a doctoral student, passing through his work at the University of Trent until his invitation to join the Centre for Research in Reasoning, Argumentation and Rhetoric (CRRAR) at the University of Windsor, where he presently works. We talk about his experience in CRRAR and his interaction with other important argumentation scholars, as well as the role the Centre plays nowadays in training argumentation scholars. Our focus, however, is on Professor Tindale's work on argumentation theory. We discuss the history and the conception of some of his books, together with some of the most important ideas developed therein. In this process, readers will learn about Tindale's perspective on Rhetoric, audiences, fallaciousness, critical thinking, and the anthropology of arguments. In doing so, we hope they will have a better grasp of the importance of Professor Tindale's work in the argumentation field.

Keywords: Rhetoric; Interdisciplinarity; Argumentation; Audience; Reasoning.

Retórica e interdisciplinaridade: uma conversa com Christopher Tindale

Nesta entrevista, mergulhamos na carreira do Professor Christopher Tindale, desde os seus anos de doutorado, passando pelo seu trabalho na Universidade de Trent, até seu convite para se juntar ao Centre for Research in Reasoning, Argumentation and Rhetoric (CRRAR) da Universidade de Windsor, onde trabalha atualmente. Falamos sobre sua experiência no CRRAR e da sua interação com outros importantes estudiosos da argumentação, bem como sobre o papel que o Centro desempenha atualmente na formação de pesquisadores em argumentação. O nosso foco, no entanto, é o trabalho do Professor Tindale sobre a teoria da argumentação. Discutimos a história e a concepção de alguns de seus livros, assim como algumas das ideias mais importantes desenvolvidas neles. Nesse processo, os leitores conhecerão a perspectiva de Tindale sobre Retórica, auditório, falácia, pensamento crítico e antropologia da argumentação. Assim, esperamos proporcionar uma melhor compreensão da importância de seu trabalho no campo da argumentação.

Palavras-chave: Retórica; Interdisciplinaridade; Argumentação; Auditório; Raciocínio.

Retórica e interdisciplinarietà: una conversación con Christopher Tindale

En esta entrevista, nos sumergimos en la carrera del profesor Christopher Tindale, empezando por sus años como estudiante de doctorado, pasando por su trabajo en la Universidad de Trent, hasta su invitación a unirse al Centre for Research in Reasoning, Argumentation and Rhetoric (Centro de Investigación en Razonamiento, Argumentación y Retórica, CRRAR) de la Universidad de Windsor, donde trabaja actualmente. Hablamos de su experiencia en el CRRAR y de su interacción con otros importantes especialistas en argumentación, así como del rol que el Centro desempeña hoy en la formación de investigadores en argumentación. Sin embargo, nuestro énfasis recae en el trabajo del profesor Tindale sobre la teoría de la argumentación. Discutimos la historia y la concepción de algunos de sus libros, junto con algunas de las ideas más importantes desarrolladas en ellos. En este proceso, los lectores conocerán la perspectiva de Tindale sobre la retórica, las audiencias, la falacia, el pensamiento crítico y la antropología de los argumentos. Al hacer este recorrido, esperamos que puedan comprender mejor la importancia de la obra del profesor Tindale para el campo de la argumentación.

Palabras clave: Retórica; Interdisciplinarietà; Argumentación; Audiencia; Razonamiento.

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In this issue, EID&A has the honor of interviewing Professor Christopher Tindale, the current director of the *Centre for Research in Reasoning, Argumentation and Rhetoric* (CRRAR) at the University of Windsor and co-editor of the journal *Informal Logic*. By advancing a perspective which “embeds the logical and the dialectical in the rhetorical” and by facing the challenge of interdisciplinarity for a comprehensive understanding of argumentation, Professor Tindale has approached many relevant topics on the field of argumentation studies with different lenses, providing new theoretical insights and analytical tools, some of which we will be discussing below. His vast scientific production and its impact in the community of argumentation scholars is a sign of his capacity of raising new questions and providing thought-provoking answers.

In this interview, we dive into his career, starting from his PhD years, passing through his work at the University of Trent until his invitation to join *Centre for Research in Reasoning, Argumentation and Rhetoric* (CRRAR) at the University of Windsor, where he presently works. We talk about his experience in CRARR and his interaction with other important argumentation scholars, as well as the role the Centre plays nowadays in training argumentation scholars. Our focus, however, is on Professor Tindale’s work on argumentation theory. We discuss the history and the conception of some of his books, together with some of the most important ideas developed therein. In this process, readers will learn about Tindale’s perspective on Rhetoric, audiences, fallaciousness, critical thinking, and the anthropology of arguments. In doing so, we hope they will have a better grasp of the importance of Professor Tindale’s work in the argumentation field.

We invite you to join us in this amazing conversation! Happy reading!

EID&A: Before we start, we would like to thank you, Professor Christopher Tindale, for granting us this interview. We are honored to be able to discuss with you some important issues on the field of argumentation and to present to the readers, especially to the South American community of argumentation researchers, some of your positions on the theme, built over decades of serious and innovative research on Rhetoric and Argumentation Theory.

Professor Tindale, your PhD thesis at the University of Waterloo discussed important issues in the field of Philosophy of Language concerning phenomenology and speech acts. Over time, your work shifted towards an interdisciplinary approach to argumentation. How did this process take place? What were the motivations for this change?

Christopher Tindale: First, thank you for this invitation to discuss my work and some of the ideas involved. I appreciate it. We “in the north” have been aware for a while of the growth of interest in argumentation throughout South America, so this is a welcome opportunity to communicate with this community of scholars.

There is not such a shift in focus from the work I did on my PhD to the area in which I eventually “settled.” In the thesis, I partly explored ways in which J.L. Austin’s model of speech acts differs from the Searlean model that became in many ways the standard way of looking at the theory after Austin’s early death. I still think Austin would have taken the theory in a different direction, looking further at what he called “the total speech act in the total speech situation” (1962, p. 148), and anyone who has followed my work will appreciate the influence of that idea, right through to the 2021 book. It is a short step from exploring the total speech situation to exploring the total argumentative situation.

The study of phenomenology (principally, Merleau-Ponty’s work) was also not so disconnected, since a little-known conference in 1958 that sought to bring together philosophers from the UK and continental Europe (not a success, it seems) included both Chaim Perelman and Merleau-Ponty. They had very similar ideas about the nature of communication, and I have often speculated on what conversations might have passed between them. Again, the impact of Perelman’s theory of argumentation on my work will be evident to my readers.

So, when I had the opportunity to begin teaching undergraduate courses in reasoning (what became courses in argumentation), I first saw this work as falling under the general category of the philosophy of language. The connections remain, although, as you observe, the field is far more interdisciplinary now.

EID&A: You worked for more than twenty years at the University of Trent, before joining Windsor, in 2006, where you have worked since then, developing research and advising students at the *Centre for Research in Reasoning, Argumentation and Rhetoric* (CRRAR). During these years at Trent, your production on argumentation becomes quite significant. We highlight two books: *Acts of Arguing: A Rhetorical Model of Argument* (1999) and *Good Reasoning Matters! A Constructive Approach to Critical Thinking* (2004), co-authored with Professor Leo Groarke. We would like to delve deeper into these books:

A. In *Acts of Arguing*, you, on the one hand, adhere to the tradition of conceiving argumentation in terms of its logical, rhetorical, and dialectical dimensions, a position that harks back primarily to Aristotle and is echoed in contemporary works, such as those of Wenzel and, more recently, Bermejo-Luque. On the other hand, you advocate the centrality of the rhetorical dimension, thus distinguishing yourself from both the informal logic school, which tends to consider the logical dimension as nuclear, and from the pragma-dialectical school, which assumes the dialectical dimension to be pivotal. What reasons led you and still lead you to regard the rhetorical dimension as central? What, in your opinion, are the theoretical and analytical gains resulting from this position?

Christopher Tindale: To respond to the second question first, I think approaching argumentation from a rhetorical direction allows for a far more comprehensive grasp of what is involved. I had been taught about arguments in a logic classroom, where they were essentially presented as discourses disconnected from any dynamic exchanges. Informal logic (which I also was taught) aimed to, as I like to say, bring argument back to its human roots. But it was only partially successful, at least in its early iterations. And this was because it lacked an appreciation of rhetoric and the role of audience (there was an important recognition of context, but that was an undeveloped concept). So, to address the first question, I think that we have to begin with an argumentative situation that draws much of its insights from the rhetorical situation that conditions argumentative exchanges. That situation involves a number of factors, including the arguer, the audience, and the argument that emerges between them. We cannot fully understand the latter without a deep appreciation of the former. Of course, the logical and the dialectical are also important perspectives and any piece of argumentation can be approached from those perspectives. But, as I say, a comprehensive understanding of the argumentation embeds the logical and dialectical in the rhetorical.

B. *Good Reasoning Matters!* is a book that results from a partnership with Leo Groarke, another important researcher in the field of argumentation, especially multimodal argumentation. In this book, the relationship between argumentation theory and the critical thinking movement, derived from the works of John Dewey, is evident. How do you see the relationship between argumentation and critical thinking? To what extent has this movement impacted your thinking on argumentation?

Christopher Tindale: This book has a long history, which is relevant to my answer here. Its first edition was in 1989 and published by the Canadian publisher McClelland & Stewart (who later auctioned the book to Oxford after dropping most of their academic publishing). It also had another author in J. Frederick Little. Fred had been my undergraduate teacher of logic and he had authored a book called *Critical Thinking and Decision Making*. When he later had the chance to publish an updated version with McClelland & Stewart, he approached me as a former student to be a co-author. I suggested that Leo join us, since he and I had begun working together. So, *Good Reasoning Matters!* had its origins in a pure Critical Thinking (CT) text. Fred subsequently retired, and the rest is history. As the field of argumentation developed, so GRM went through modifications to keep up. Next year (2023) will see Oxford publish a heavily revised 6th edition.

Nowadays, almost everyone working in the field will note strict lines dividing critical thinking from argumentation. CT, for example, tends to focus on the development of particular skills that help students handle a range of materials in all disciplines and all walks of life. It is for that reason a largely pedagogic enterprise. Argumentation, as we see, is a far more interdisciplinary concern with a deep theoretical core. It strives to understand humans as arguers and the ways in which argumentation has impacted the world in which we live and continues to modify the environments in which we think and act. Such concerns seem beyond those of CT. So, while their respective concerns continue to overlap in important ways, they have quite independent domains of interest and expertise.

EID&A: It is known that *The Uses of Argument*, by Stephen Toulmin, and *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, by Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, were the works responsible for the rebirth of the argumentation studies in the 20th century. Both made clear statements against the hegemony of formal logic in the study of argumentation and proposed alternative perspectives on the subject. However, it was up to your generation to consolidate the field and to build spaces of legitimacy for such studies in universities. In order to do so, it was certainly necessary to build partnerships and associations, to carry out exchange programs, to found and edit journals, and to seek funding. Could you tell us a little bit about how this process unfolded?

Christopher Tindale: Yes, the books by Toulmin and Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca were pivotal to the development of the field as it is today, and they remain seminal texts. It is one of the great coincidences of academic history that these two books,

arriving essentially at the same place but coming from such different directions, should have been published in the same year (1958). And equally amazing that these scholars were then unaware of each other. But that's a different story.

I think you have asked (and begun to answer) the question: what is a discipline, how is it formed? And, indeed, it comes about through meetings between like-minded thinkers who recognize something in each other's work; through the organization of conferences at the continental and international levels; the emergence of journals once there is a sufficient core of subject matter to warrant them; and then the pedagogical and theoretical literature to give the field scope and ballast.

This all began to happen for us in the 1970s and early 1980s. I was a junior scholar in those days, but I have been fortunate to discuss those times with principal figures like Tony Blair, Frans van Eemeren, and Stephen Toulmin. Tony and Frans met in bars after conferences for other subjects, recognized common interests and laid plans for the *International Society for the Study of Argumentation*, which met for the first time in 1986. Before that, Windsor had hosted conferences on Informal Logic (there would be three in total), and those conferences evolved into the *Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation*. Our conferences were often modest in size, but they attracted attention, especially from scholars in cognate fields. They recognized that we were all often doing the same things but using different vocabularies and methodologies. In the early OSSA conferences, for example, organized eventually by Hans V. Hansen with my help, we made deliberate efforts to reach out to other communities, reflecting those efforts in our titles. So, we had conferences on Argumentation and Education, Argumentation and Rhetoric, and so forth. These attracted established and junior scholars, some of whom came and looked around then left; but others stayed, coming back conference after conference. And so an interdisciplinary community began to grow. Something similar happened with the ISSA conferences in Amsterdam. And, of course, in time the field grew so that it could sustain even more conferences throughout the world.

The journals and scholarly monographs followed. *Informal Logic* grew out of the early meetings in Windsor, addressing a need for serious studies on the nature of everyday reasoning. It actually began as a Newsletter in 1978, but became a full-fledged refereed journal in 1984, eventually securing government funding which continues to sustain it today and allows it to be published in an open-access format. Our sister journal, *Argumentation*, grew out of the same initiative that founded ISSA, and saw its first issue appear in 1987. Since then, as with the conferences, subject-focused journals have appeared on a number of continents as the interest continues to grow.

With the conferences and journals in place, the growth in literature followed naturally. Perhaps the earlier literature had more of a pedagogical focus, as people became interested in teaching argument in non-traditional (that is, non-formal) ways. But the need for research into various aspects of argumentation, and across disciplines, soon became apparent. And that continues to be the case. In so many disciplines, most of the important research questions have already been addressed, over and over again; but in our field, there are new questions emerging all the time. This is important for young scholars who can see ways to make an impact in the field by exploring aspects that have been under- or unexplored.

EID&A: The University of Windsor, where you work since 2006, is considered today one of the great centers for the study of argumentation in the world and, certainly, the core of the informal logic movement, whose origins can be traced back to the work of Anthony Blair and Ralph Johnson in the late 1970s. The *Centre for Research in Reasoning, Argumentation and Rhetoric* (CRRAR), which you currently direct, brings together researchers and students from around the world to develop innovative studies on argumentation.

Although the informal logic movement is not fully cohesive from a theoretical-methodological standpoint – as there are those who defend the centrality of the logical dimension, such as Blair, and others who would attribute this centrality to the dialectical dimension, such as Walton and, perhaps, Johnson –, we could say that the rhetorical is the most backgrounded dimension in the discussions developed by the Canadian school. As one of the researchers who has focused, contemporaneously, on the development of concepts related to Rhetoric, we assume that you have engaged in prolific discussions and debates with peers and students regarding the nature of arguing, argumentation and argument.

A. How was your integration into the *Centre for Research in Reasoning, Argumentation and Rhetoric* (CRRAR)?

Christopher Tindale: As you point out, I moved to Windsor in 2006, which was the year that CRRAR was formed, with Blair and Johnson as co-directors. It's my understanding that as they pondered the name the centre would have, they added the 'R' for Rhetoric to accommodate my involvement and the particular perspective they expected me to bring to the group. It is the case, that the reactions to rhetoric from my colleagues varied, from enthusiasm (Blair, and to some degree Hansen and

Pinto), to skepticism (Johnson) and benign indifference (from Walton, after he joined us in 2008). But we have always worked well together, collectively forming a kind of argumentation mosaic, rather than a single, focused position (like the Dutch pragma-dialecticians, for example). It did hinder Tony Blair's attempt to develop a "Windsor Approach" to which everyone could commit (and which never happened), but other than that I think we have worked together quite well, and the rhetorical perspective became a natural part of our discussions.

B. To what extent have the different positions of the researchers at the centre contributed to your view of argumentation?

Christopher Tindale: It is impossible to work in such a vibrant and productive environment without being deeply influenced by what goes on around you. And I have been influenced in two important ways (among others, I am sure). First, my colleagues and their views have served as a critical sounding board for my own ideas. They have often been the first audience for whom I wrote, because they forced me to be clearer and more careful in what I said, always providing constructive critical feedback. I have often given a paper at our weekly Friday seminar series and then, in addition to the usual discussion period that followed, received written comments over the weekend suggesting changes and offering other work I might consult. Secondly, their own work has led me to take some directions that I might not otherwise have taken. (I am not sure I would have looked so closely at scheme theory, for example, and tried to integrate it into the rhetorical perspective.) They have introduced me to literature from which I've benefited, and shown the importance of ideas from cognate disciplines that can be fruitfully drawn into my own work. So, when I find myself thanking colleagues in the Acknowledgements section of a book it's because I am deeply conscious of the debts I have to them for so many of the ideas and discussions in the book.

C. Conversely, how do you see the influence of your work on the body of knowledge developed within CRRAR?

Christopher Tindale: There has been a greater appreciation of the importance of rhetoric in argumentation (and informal logic). The early informal logicians (like Blair and Johnson) had little acquaintance with rhetoric, so they tended to adopt the traditional pejorative view. That perspective modified as they started to interact with members of the speech and communication community in the US. In addition to this,

I think my work has helped some people see how important rhetorical considerations are to much of what we do. For example, I think a cursory reading of people like Perelman has gradually been replaced by a deeper appreciation for his ideas and more serious reading of a text like *The New Rhetoric*. As I say, I don't think I am solely responsible for this change. If there hadn't been an openness to rhetorical argumentation, I probably would not have been invited in.

EID&A: Interdisciplinarity is a hallmark of your academic career, a stance that becomes plainly visible in *Retórica y teoría de la argumentación contemporáneas: Ensayos escogidos de Christopher Tindale* [*Contemporary Rhetoric and Argumentation Theory: Selected Essays by Christopher Tindale*, free translation], a collection of papers edited by Cristián Santibáñez and translated into Spanish. Each chapter shows different aspects of this interdisciplinary endeavor. There are dialogues with Language and Discourse Studies, especially with the work of the Bakhtin Circle; with Cognitive Studies, particularly with Relevance Theory; with Anthropology; among other perspectives. In the next questions, we would like to discuss some concepts, dear to argumentation theory, that have become objects of investigation in your most recent books:

A. Perelman's work plays a significant role in your approach to argumentation. In a recent book, *The Philosophy of argument and audience reception* (2015), you consolidate a decade-long development of a perspective on audience and its place in a theory of argumentation. How would you define the relevance of audience for an argumentative study? How does your position on the concept differ from the Perelmanian view?

Christopher Tindale: Adopting a rhetorical perspective on argumentation necessarily brings audience into the forefront of considerations. In giving audience the kind of attention he does, Perelman is following in the tradition of Aristotle, who argued that there are three genres of rhetoric *because* there are three audiences. The role of audience influences both the construction of argumentation—as we consider “What is this audience around which argumentation is centered?” (PERELMAN, 1982, p. 13); to what beliefs does that audience already adhere and what strategies might best address the audience?—and the evaluation of argumentation, as we consider whether an argument is strong in the specific circumstances of the situation in which it arises. In particular, we cannot judge the value of an argument without looking closely at aspects of audience, including the objections that an audience might raise against an argument.

Perelman (and Olbrechts-Tyteca) judged the ability to resist refutation to be the key criterion of a strong argument in *The New Rhetoric* (1969, p. 461).

These considerations have been fundamental for the approach I take. Of course, just as Perelman was able to expand the conception of audience beyond what Aristotle could imagine, so we can expand it beyond Perelman's concerns to include virtual audiences, inter-cultural audiences, and historical audiences. Each of these brings out new questions and requires different foci of attention.

The audiences that Perelman addresses, especially in his discussion of strong arguments, reflect the different communities or fields (similar to what Toulmin identified) in which argumentation occurs, with the different accounts of knowledge relevant to those communities (1969, p. 464). But as we know, the largest and most controversial conception of audience in Perelman's work is the universal audience. There is no space here for the kind of detailed, balanced discussion that this concept always warrants. Suffice it to say that I have moved away from using the concept in my own work, preferring to speak of "cognitive environments" when discussing the common ground or environment that gives any audience access to the beliefs and values that are held to be reasonable in their community. Ultimately, this is the only sense of objectivity that can work in a pluralistic framework, and as the cognitive environments that we share expand, this concept is sufficient to resist the tendencies of extreme relativism and provide all the criteria for judging what is reasonable in a given case.

B. In *Fallacies and argument appraisal* (2007), you not only define and exemplify types of fallacies, but also provide a relevant discussion on the nature of fallaciousness. The question of evaluating arguments has always been a controversial topic in the field of argumentation studies, since the criteria for doing so depend on a number of factors. Primarily, we could say that evaluation depends, to a large extent, on the principles that guide the theory being deployed and on the objectives of the analysis. Besides that, for many researchers, it involves sensitivity to the context, the audience, the argumentative practice itself, among other factors, not being reducible to the study of reasoning alone. What is your view on fallacy and the problem of fallaciousness? Considering contemporary digital discursive practices, the sociopolitical relevance of *fake news* and the strength of manipulation machines, is there a fertile space for new reflections on fallacies, whether in theoretical or methodological terms?

Christopher Tindale: While the study of fallacies is one of the oldest parts of our field and formed the focus of early accounts of informal logic, it never loses its importance and topicality and needs to be constantly rethought in light of research in cognate fields. Today, we need to supplement it with the wealth of material emerging from studies in Philosophy and Cognitive Psychology on the nature of false belief and the explanations of apparently irrational behaviour. Yes, some people are vulnerable to fallacious arguments, and others exploit them. And that continues to be a subject of interest. Why do people fail to see the fallaciousness of their own and others' reasoning? But this question needs to be considered in the context of what we have learned about cognitive biases and the ways people assert false beliefs based on their cultural identity (KAHAN; BRAMAN 2006), their epistemic environment (LEVY, 2021), or even because, for various reasons, they do not in fact believe what they claim to believe (MERCIER, 2020). Such suggestions take us into the psychology of reasoning, which is somewhere informal logicians, at least, have been reluctant to go. But better understandings of things like “fake news” and “alternative facts” will necessitate informing argumentation theory with this material.

EID&A: In your latest book, *The Anthropology of Argument: Cultural Foundations of Rhetoric and Reason*, you question the western tradition of studying argumentation in terms of propositions and relations between propositions and put forward a rediscussion on the nature of argumentation itself based on a perspective that foregrounds culturally and historically situated human experience. One of the consequences of such a perspective is an appreciation of the role of multimodality in argumentative practices. To what extent does an anthropological perspective impact the view on argument and argumentation that circulates academically today and that is reflected in school practices?

Christopher Tindale: The unfortunate answer is “to a very limited extent.” But I hope this will change. It is the case that the major theories of argumentation that we have learned in schools and that we now teach may be products of cultural isolation. Yes, argumentation is a universal phenomenon. We are an argumentative species just as we are a rhetorical species. And these things tell us something important about ourselves and how we interact. But what I mean is, can the specific details of a theory that operates well in North America or Europe be simply transferred to a different cultural environment without any of its assumptions being questioned or any of its details rethought? The Anthropology of Argument needs to look at not just how people came to use argumentation in the past, but how we argue today in very

different environments (that's another reason why the concept of the Universal Audience may have outlived its usefulness). Michael Gilbert (the promoter of multimodality) has observed, for example, how much more apparent the emotional mode is in the argumentation he finds in Central and South America.

Informal logic, to take this point further, arose as a response to how argument was being taught in a particular part of the world, and its initial success had a lot to do with how it met the place-specific challenges it identified. Pragma-dialectics likewise developed in a distinct cultural setting (Dutch thought) and has since explored its place as a global theory. But are, for example, the argumentation schemes that work so well for informal logicians studying political argumentation in Canada appropriate for the same or similar studies elsewhere? I suspect not. And are there other schemes that describe the reasoning employed elsewhere but that would have scant use in Canada? I think there are. Some cultures make much more use of narrative arguments than we do, for example, and I suspect there are some useful narrative argumentation schemes that can be developed to model and evaluate how people argue elsewhere.

So, this is an important question and one that needs to be part of the future research agenda of our field. In many ways, in the Anthropology book I was just raising questions that I hope others will be interested in exploring.

EID&A: Moving towards the end of the interview, we would like to point out to our readers that you are now the director of CRRAR and co-editor of the journal *Informal Logic*. Considering your position in both, we would like to ask you the following:

A. What role do you see for argumentation in days of political turmoil and polarization? What is the social role of the argumentation researcher in times when many talk about a “crisis of democracy”?

Christopher Tindale: Argumentation has a central role in the intellectual health of societies at all times but particularly when political divisions create more disagreement than usual. On the pedagogical side, there continues to be improvements in the way argumentation and its related skills (and dispositions) are taught. One goal here is improving the abilities of people generally to resist bad reasoning and reason better for themselves. On the theoretical side, scholars are producing new tools (and refining those we have) for understanding argumentation and shedding light on how it operates across different fields. By new tools, I am

thinking of the work on argumentative style being done by pragma-dialecticians. And by refining tools we have, I am thinking of the constant developments of scheme theory.

We need to make this kind of material available to people in all walks of life, but especially those who can influence opinions or work in policy development. This will happen as people become more aware of this interdisciplinary field as a viable area of academic accomplishments and practical ideas. This makes the applications of argumentation theory very important. We need, for example, to explore how the cognitive environments in which we operate become polluted with fake news and beliefs.

B. What are, in your view, the new frontiers for the studies of argumentation? What topics are worthy of the attention of our young researchers?

Christopher Tindale: I have already talked about new topics of importance in some of my earlier answers. Rethinking the assumptions of some of the current theoretical schools in light of their suitability for other cultures is one such frontier for development, and exploring how schemes can arise from the ways people argue outside of traditional European and North American contexts is related to this.

Multi-modal argumentation is an area that deserves more attention than it has received, so I see promise for new research there. And the recent emergence of virtue argumentation is something that is starting to attract the attention of young researchers. Generally, as I suggested above, the field would benefit from more experimental (that is, empirical) work. We need to be able to show that the theoretical conclusions being drawn about argumentation actually reflect the ways that people experience it, and this involves empirical studies. The pragma-dialecticians have had some success in conducting such work, arguing that the rules for a critical discussion reflect the ways people reason in such situations. Informal logicians have yet to really meet the challenge of empirical confirmation (of how schemes are understood and used, for example), and that's partly because such studies require a different kind of researcher trained in social science methodologies. If interdisciplinary graduate programs can attract students with such backgrounds, then this would be a way in which that could make a positive impact on the field. And I'll repeat what I said above: In so many disciplines, most of the important research questions have already been addressed, but that's not the case for us; we are a growing field. This is exciting for young researchers who can expect to make an impact, if they find the right project.

C. What assessment do you make of CRRAR in terms of training researchers in argumentation? To what extent has the Centre been permeable to the exchange of students and researchers from both the Global South and North and to human diversity?

Christopher Tindale: Over the 16 years of its existence, CRRAR has been quite successful in attracting visiting researchers, both established scholars, post-doctoral researchers and PhD students. We usually have at least two staying with us each academic term, and others may come for a few days and give a talk. These researchers derive primarily from Europe, China, and elsewhere in North America, but we were fortunate to have a post-doctoral student from Brazil last year. This visitor program creates a vibrant intellectual environment from which all participants benefit. Visitors have learned from us, but we also have learned a lot from outside scholars, especially those who have had longer stays. I don't know how long this can continue, because we have lost some of our senior members who were important for attracting people from elsewhere. But we have a good foundation from which to evolve.

In the last few years these activities have been supplemented by the introduction of our interdisciplinary PhD program in Argumentation Studies. Now there is the constant presence of young researchers (currently, there are 15 active students). They bring a very important perspective to our weekly research talks because they are asking different kinds of questions as well as taking ideas back into their own projects. And they certainly bring more diversity to our group. So, in terms of a promising future for Argumentation, we see it every day.

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