

Editorial

Remembering Stephen Edelston Toulmin

Our field of study has suffered a great loss. On Friday the 4th of December, 2009, Stephen Edelston Toulmin died in Los Angeles, California, at the age of 87. The cause of his death was pneumonia. His fourth wife, four children and thirteen grandchildren were part of his most intimate circle.

In an obituary for the *Los Angeles Times* (December 13, 2009), Elaine Woo quoted Toulmin as having said: “It is time for philosophers to come out of their self-imposed isolation and reenter the collective world of practical life and shared human problems”.¹ Toulmin’s statement and his “way of life” overlapped beautifully as is evidenced by the fact that he and his last wife Donna, a lawyer-training director at the USC’s School of Social Work Center on Child Welfare, Los Angeles, were living in a campus dormitory at the University of Southern California with 550 other students for almost a decade until 2003; and they used to welcome students in their room to share pizza, coffee, and cookies every Wednesday until 2 a.m.

These facts about his life cohere with his approach to ethics, argumentation, reasoning, logic, and the philosophy of science, to select just some areas of study he covered for almost 50 years of uninterrupted intellectual production. This approach could be characterized, although this is quite a generalization, by his constant appeal to the practitioners and the contexts of ethics, argumentation and reasoning. In another obituary William Grimes (*The New York Times*, December 11, 2009), remembers Toulmin’s reception by colleagues and students: “He was an intellectual giant, a true Renaissance man,” said Uffe Juul Jensen, professor of philosophy at Aarhus University, Denmark. “Like Wittgenstein, he believed that philosophy should not be a

¹ The quotation comes from the interview that Toulmin gave to Al Seib, *Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 1997.

scholastic discipline, with philosophers just analyzing the works and arguments of other philosophers.”

Nevertheless, all this only partially describes his impact and legacy. At a technical level, discussing the structure of reasoning and the philosophy of argument, he was genuinely one of the driving forces, if not the main one, behind argumentation theory and informal logic in the 20th century. Of course, none of these subjects was precisely named or defined at that time. He is one of the bedrocks of the fields that *Cogency* covers. His work will be read and re-read over time. No doubt about it.

There are always surprising similarities between Toulmin’s writings and the works of contemporary argumentation scholars. All their inclinations, approaches or philosophies of argument, such as the informal logic account, rhetorical angles, pragma-dialectics, deliberative perspectives, pragmatic readers, or discursive accents, coincide with one or more aspects of his work, some better framed than others. Others point out that, indeed, all these approaches in one way or another just re-write Toulminian terms. This discussion will continue; that is exactly Toulmin’s effect.

Just as *Blade Runner* or *Pulp Fiction* are classics in their genres of cinema, *The Uses of Argument* is a classic in the field. It is an obligatory reference in Bachelor, Master or Ph.D. programs in the field of argumentation and informal logic. For specific topics and interests we, as researchers, may perhaps be able to avoid it, but Toulmin’s other publications can also help to discuss and clarify part of our concepts and perspectives. For example, *Reason in Ethics* elucidates Toulmin’s early philosophy on ethics and reasoning of which, in a sense, *The Uses of Argument* is a continuation; *Human Understanding* helps studying early evolutionary explanations of epistemology; *Introduction to Reasoning* (co-authored with Richard Rieke and Allan Janik) shows second thoughts on *The Uses of Argument*; *The Return to Cosmology* confronts us with the postmodernist discussion in which the notion of reasonableness takes form; certainly *Cosmopolis* and *Return to Reason*, his historical and philosophical view on modernity, respectively, may help integrate dialectics, rhetoric and pragmatics; nonetheless, other books of his do not have much in common with our topics in argumentation and informal logic, for instance the book with co-author June Goodfield *The Discovery of Time*, although well informed and entertaining.

I truly believe that Stephen Toulmin deserves an explicit major place in our field, especially considering his commitment to his students, his intellectual legacy, and personality, evidenced especially by the obituaries from the USA.

Although not a special issue on this British author, the current volume is nevertheless a tribute to the memory of Stephen Edelston Toulmin. The opening paper of this volume comes from Johan van Benthem who explicitly challenges the traditional view on logic and argumentation theory, which divides them as different subject-matter fields, by means of commenting upon Toulmin's criticism of a mathematics-centered logic angle and his perspective on practical reasoning. Just as Toulmin suggested a long time ago, van Benthem today clarifies, with a very rich and balanced account, the role of argument schemata and the features of the procedural aspects of reasoning, considering the links between its practical and formal dimensions. For van Benthem, theory of practical reasoning and formal logic are not rivals, they are allies.

In the second paper of this issue, Lilian Bermejo treats the relation between logic, dialectics and rhetoric and proposes an interesting reading of Aristotle with regard to argumentation theory. Bermejo traces the contemporary origin of argumentation theory to Chaïm Perelman, Charles Hamblin and, once again, Toulmin. The main question Bermejo's paper addresses is whether Aristotle's work should be considered as an origin or an obstacle for argumentation theory. She points out that Aristotle's work is more the origin than an obstacle; among other reasons, because, for Bermejo, the normative study of syllogism in Aristotle should not be taken as a dimension of formal logic, and the dialectical sphere should be taken as a procedure to establish critics and a method of investigation, rather than a model to test proofs. Logic and dialectic, in Aristotle, are the basis of argumentation, this is to say: the activity to demonstrate and evaluate judgments and justifications.

In the third paper of this issue, Daniel Cohen reflects and advises us on the need of a bridge between virtue-based approaches to epistemology and argumentation theory. According to Cohen, by using the results of the debate regarding Virtue Epistemology, new and more urgent questions for argumentation theory could be posed. For example, the question that arose from the idea that virtue epistemology is not about the process or procedure

of justification but rather about agents, conveys benefits to argumentation theory which should also ask *when*, *why* and *with whom* to argue, questions that “often get lost in the shadow of the primary question, *how* we should argue”. For Cohen, these should be considered as defining parameters of argumentation theory, open-mindedness and sense of proportion being two main qualities of a Virtue Argumentation theory.

In their paper *Cultural Keywords in Arguments. The Case of Interactivity*, Andrea Rocci and Marcio Wariss Monteiro investigate the role and place (*endoxa* and *termini medi* respectively) of cultural keywords in chains of reasoning. They also offer an account of how they intend to go one step further in balancing the logical and communicative function of keywords in argumentative processes. For them, keyword interactivity is a case in which this balance is more difficult to achieve, because it is a vague and polysemous term. The advantage of using the keyword *interactivity*, Rocci and Monteiro suggest, is its persisting positive connotation which gives a sort of *ad hoc* dialectical (perhaps also rhetorical) power.

In *Non-cogency misjudged: Reconstructing a three-stage mistaken argumentation-process*, José Miguel Sagüillo points out that good intentions are not enough for cogent argumentation. Cogency is inherently epistemic and it is sustained in some prior conditions. First, it is necessary to establish the universe, or subject-matter. Second, statements that convey information of that subject-matter must be coherent, they should *say* something. Third, chains of reasoning leading from one statement to another must be correct. These three conditions feature cogency as it is realized in argumentative practice. This article tracks misjudged non-cogency and uncovers the mistakes involved by means of a two-vector analysis. The first arrow exhibits the *unfortunate* genealogy of a three-step sequence of errors. The converse arrow regains cogency by reconstructing the previous vitiated process. It exhibits a way out of the paradox so obtained by reclassifying it as a fallacy due to the prior commission of a category mistake.

In the book review section, Adelino Cattani reviews the 2008 edition of the Italian title *Logica e argomentazione. Un prontuario*; according to Cattani this handbook “is an excellent didactic survey and a collection of rules and formulae for free reasoning, with clear examples and useful exercises, a course book that an Italian student of logical argumentation and ‘argu-

mentative logic' needs to have, also in order to skim it when necessary." In the second review, Anca Gata evaluates M. Agnès van Rees's *Dissociation in Argumentative Discussions. A Pragma-Dialectical Perspective* (2009) as a pleasant and useful reading, well informed by the literature and innovative in terms of the view taken on the topic. In her opinion, it is the only systematic account of dissociation so far, and the abundance of examples sometimes discussed from different perspectives in various chapters of the book provides the researcher with a "panoramic" view of this long neglected argumentative technique. In the third book review, Niki Pfeifer reviews Lorne Szabolcsi's *Numerical Term Logic* (2008). In his opinion, the major strength of this book is its clear and unified logical treatment of a broad variety of interpretations for natural language quantifying expressions. According to Pfeifer, the author notably shows how logical validity can be determined by relatively simple algebraic manipulations.

This second issue of the first volume of *Cogency* is also the second step of an *endurance run*. The metaphor "ACADEMIC PROJECTS ARE COMPETITIONS" conveys that behind the names of the journal's board members there is a chain of wills without which this project wouldn't be possible, just like running competitions would not be possible if there were not different people helping at each stage of the competition. Putting the right correlation of the *competition* metaphor onto the academic activity, we would like to repeat our expression of gratitude to those who support us in each phase of the preparation and distribution of *Cogency*: Cristóbal Marin, academic vice-rector of Diego Portales University; Adriana Kaulino, Dean of the Faculty of Psychology, where we pleasantly work; and Ana Vergara, Director of the Department of Psychology. We would also like to acknowledge Margarita Bravo (Secretary of the Dean of the Faculty), Antonia González (student of Psychology), and Miguel Ángel Fernández (IT manager of the Faculty); all of them a part of this chain of wills. The team of *Cogency* as well as CEAR will stay on track to improve this initiative.

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