

From the Editors

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Special Issue: Michael Gilbert's Multi-Modal Argumentation

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A full understanding of argumentation must consider the various modes in which it is communicated. That thesis, put forward in “Multi-modal argumentation” (Gilbert 1994), and developed within the parameters of informal logic in *Coalescent argumentation* (Gilbert 1997), announced the theory of multi-modal argumentation (with the hyphen). Since then, through many publications and conference presentations, Michael Gilbert has promoted the theory in the marketplace of ideas, exploring such modes as the visceral and the kisceral, and most forcefully, the emotional. Some scholars have obliged by examining his wares, measuring them for fit with other theories, and occasionally going so far as to try them on for size. But a widescale adoption of Gilbert’s ideas has failed to materialize. Confusion with discussions of multimodal argumentation (without the hyphen) that developed around the same time did not help. But there also seems to have been a larger hesitancy to endorse a theory that advances intuitions or gestures as reasonable support for claims.

In this context, the Summer Institute held after the Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation (OSSA) Conference in 2020 took multi-modal argumentation as its theme. The current Special Issue results from some of the ensuing discussions. Each contributor was involved in the Institute, several as instructors. And now we are pleased to present a collection of papers arising from that event.

In the issue, Michael Gilbert first considers the history and development of his theory before Leo Groarke helpfully clarifies the differences and affinities between multi-modal and multimodal argumentation. Then, each of Gilbert’s modes is explored in a separate critical study, with David Godden attending to the logical mode, Linda Carroza to the emotional, Claudio Duran the visceral, and Christopher Tindale the kisceral. A final paper by Marko Novak applies the theory (particularly the kisceral mode) to the field of law. Together, these papers offer readers an opportunity to review the range of ideas associated with Gilbert’s model, and set the grounds for continuing research on this important theory.

References

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- Gilbert, Michael A. .1997. *Coalescent argumentation*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.