

**Bakó, Bernáth, Biróné Kaszás, Györgyjakab
and Horváth (eds): Argumentor, Proceedings
of the Second International Conference
on Argumentation and Rhetoric**

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This book contains the proceedings of the Second International Argumentor Conference, held in Oradea, Romania, on the 21st and 22nd of September 2012. The conference was organised by the Argumentor Initiative Group, which is “a community of scholars interested in teaching argumentation, rhetoric and debate skills for university-level audiences.”¹ The overall goal of the conference was, as the introduction to the proceedings tells us, to facilitate “the exchange of ideas between academics and debate practitioners from Romania and abroad, in order to enrich both the theory and the practice of argumentation and debate.” (p. 8)

Apart from a number of plenary keynote presentations, the conference presentations were divided into four thematic panels: argumentation, political rhetoric, educational debate, and online rhetoric and aesthetics. These themes are not explicitly indicated in the proceedings, but the 14 included papers cover contributions from all of them. Two keynote speeches, by Frans van Eemeren and Thomas Szlezák are also included. Most of the contributions originate from Romania and Hungary, but Germany, Poland, South-Africa and The Netherlands are also represented. All but two of the papers are in English: the papers by Szlezák and Valastyán are in German.

Within the four aforementioned themes a variety of topics is addressed; from cosmology to politics, and from theoretical reflections on normativity to rhetorical aspects of visuals on the internet. This thematic spread is also evident in the subjects of the two included keynote presentations. Szlezák focusses on Plato’s *Phaedrus* in his contribution. He gives a (commendatory) characterisation of Plato’s work and describes the relation between Plato’s rhetoric and the contemporary alternative

¹ According to the Argumentor website at <http://argumentor.wordpress.com/>.

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viewpoints to be comparable to that of Plato's political ideas and his ethics: a strong deviation from commonly accepted ideas and practices. On the other hand, van Eemeren, in his invited paper, provides an overview of one of the modern theories of argumentation. He leads the reader through the developments of the pragma-dialectical theory; from the normative ideal model of a critical discussion to the incorporation of rhetorical aspects of argumentative practice by means of strategic manoeuvring and institutionally conventionalised contexts.

The proceedings of the second Argumentor conference are of primary interest as an indication of the current work on rhetoric, argumentation and debating in Romania and Hungary. Which is not to say that the included papers cannot spur along progress on the topics they relate to.