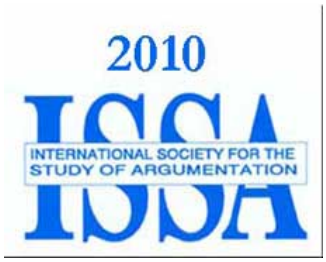
ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Gendering The Rhetoric Of Emotions In Interviews: Argumentation And Counter-Argumentation



1. Introduction

Media interviews carried out during election campaigns provide an important resource for documenting the communication styles and strategies of political candidates. These interviews are important communication tools consisting of a question-answer based dialogue in which the interviewer is acting as a mediator between the interviewee and the audience. Political journalists and reporters are assuming an increasingly influential role through the impact their rhetorical strategies have on both the politicians' careers and on the choices made by electors. In interviews they often resort to rhetorically manipulative tactics that exert decisive influence on the politicians' performance and image, as well as on the audience's perception and emotions.

As more women are entering the political arena, a number of gender-related aspects are becoming apparent in the rhetorical style and argumentative strategies used in both mixed-gender and same-gender interviews. According to common stereotypes, women tend to express their emotions more often, experience their emotions more intensely and show greater emotional awareness. As visual prompts (pictures, ads, streaming video) are increasingly used in framing an interviewee's personality and roles, mainstream media coverage of women politicians still emphasises their traditional roles as wives and mothers and focuses on their appearance, dressing styles, and personal lives. The depth and quality of media coverage of women is still inadequate in that it exhibits pervasive stereotypical thinking that leads to gender-specific expectations and evaluations. Thus, while rationality and assertive attitude are highlighted as positively-valued masculine traits, soft emotions are most frequently associated with socially desirable traits in women. Women's emotional manifestations are

often assumed to involve the expression of tender feelings and empathy for the feelings of others. Gender biases disseminated by the media are significant because they can have electoral consequences. At a time when politics is thoroughly mediatised, voters respond to candidates largely in accordance with information (and entertainment) received from mass media.

2. Aim and method

In principle, the interviewer's role is to ask questions that trigger the interviewee's beliefs and opinions for the sake of the intended audience. In political interviews politicians are expected to answer the interviewer's questions and at the same time use the opportunity to promote their own agenda for the benefit of the overhearing audience. But usually interviewers too have their own agenda and this is why their questions are rhetorically framed in a manipulative way so as to elicit particular answers and responses, since their end-goal is to trigger emotional reactions in the overhearing audience. In order to reach this goal, interviewers often confront their interviewees with questions that become argumentative in that they probe into the emotions of the interviewees, while appealing to the emotions of the audience.

Women politicians often face a 'double bind' when running for office: if they enact the masculine qualities needed to convey strength and decisiveness, they appear "unfeminine"; yet if they do not display such qualities, they are considered to be too weak and unsuited for the tough job of politics. Maurizia Boscagli (1992/3: 75) pointed out: "While a man who cries is a human being, a woman who cries is a woman."

The present analysis concerns one particular interview conducted by a female CBS journalist, Katie Couric, with Hillary Clinton, the first female contender for the White House in 2008. The focus is on the biased ways in which the interviewee's emotions are perceived, evaluated, and exploited by the interviewer to trigger a particular image of the interviewee, and consequently particular audience reactions. By mapping the recurring appeals to emotions used by Couric, the analysis shows that her questions acquire varying degrees of fallacious argumentativeness.

The aim is to show how the argumentative and rhetorical framing of interview questions and responses contributes to reinforcing, as well as refuting, gender roles and stereotypes. The analysis draws on an integrated pragma-rhetorical

approach (Ilie 2006, 2009a) used in a gender perspective. This approach makes use of the analytical tools of rhetoric and argumentation theory that integrate complementary perspectives on both reasoning and emotional processes involved in gendered patterns of discourse and behaviour in dialogic interaction.

3. Gendering emotions in political campaign interviews

Extensive research data (Gal 1991, Case 1994, Tannen 1994) provides evidence that men's communication styles are institutionalised as acknowledged ways of acting with authority and that most institutions enforce the legitimacy of behaviour and interaction strategies used by men. The institution of the presidency is by tradition male-driven and male-run, and it thus reinforces and creates expectations for conventional masculine attributes of strength, determination, and decisiveness. Hillary Clinton was the leading candidate competing for the Democratic nomination in opinion polls for the election throughout the first half of 2007. By the end of the year the race tightened considerably, and Clinton started losing her lead in some polls by December. In early January 2008 Obama gained ground in national polling, with all polls predicting a victory for him in the New Hampshire primary. However, Clinton surprisingly won there on January 8, defeating Obama by a narrow margin.

Speculations about her New Hampshire comeback varied but centered mostly on the sympathy she received, especially from women, after her eyes welled with tears and her voice broke at a coffee shop in Portsmouth, N.H., where Hillary Clinton became emotional the day before the election while responding to a woman voter's question: "How did you get out the door every day? I mean, as a woman, I know how hard it is to get out of the house and get ready." Clinton said: "I just don't want to see us fall backward as a nation. I mean, this is very personal for me. Not just political. I see what's happening. We have to reverse it." This may well have been the only moment in that campaign when Clinton publicly displayed vulnerability and frustration, but it triggered endless discussions in the media. As a female presidential candidate, Clinton was subject to the predicament of the double-bind. The same people who had been complaining that she is cold and unemotional were now seizing the occasion to treat her unique emotional moment as a sign of weakness and vulnerability.

4. Disagreement about a female presidential candidate's emotions

The focus of the present analysis is on the interview aired on the CBS Evening

News on the 9th of January 2008 after Hillary Clinton's victory over Barack Obama in the New Hampshire primary. The interviewer, Katie Couric, is a well-known American journalist, who led CBS News' coverage of the 2008 Presidential election. Couric was already known as a tough interviewer, violating certain gender stereotypes about women being cooperative and consensus-seeking. The interviewee, Hillary Clinton, is an equally determined and strong-minded woman, well-known as the former First Lady of the United States (married to former U.S. President Bill Clinton), and United States Senator from New York.

4.1 Rhetorical emotion elicitation

Couric starts the interview by asking Clinton, who was lagging behind in the opinion polls at the beginning of January 2008, to explain why the polls were not able to anticipate her victory in the New Hampshire primary. The first question is illustrated in extract 1 below.

Extract 1

K. Couric: How though, how could so many polls get it so wrong?
H. Clinton: I know that New Hampshire is fiercely independent. I came in there with a very, you know, big problem, as we know. And I just determined that I was gonna dig down deep and reach out and listen and talk and do what I have always done, which is what makes me get up in the morning. That is to figure out how I could tell people what I want to do to serve them. Because I always believe it's, you know, it's about service for other people. So when I began to talk about what I wanted to do and answer people's questions. I took hundreds of questions from Friday until late on Monday, it really began to connect and I could see that people were really going to give me a fair hearing.

Taking into consideration Clinton's unexpected victory, Couric's question may seem fully justified at first sight. However, on closer examination, it becomes apparent that the question is not a straightforward information-eliciting question (Ilie 1994, 1999) in the sense that the questioner does not ask the interviewee to provide any particular piece of information, but rather expresses a strong feeling of surprise with the intention to elicit an emotional response. The statement underlying this question could be paraphrased as: 'I cannot see any reasonable explanation as to why the polls were so wrong. And I want to hear your opinion'. Obviously, one of Couric's purposes in this interview is to challenge the interviewee, Hillary Clinton, to reveal emotional reactions and personal

comments.

What appears less justified is that, in spite of the Hillary Clinton's newly recorded victory in the New Hampshire primary, Couric's first question does not insist on the importance of this achievement, but on its unpredictability. In other words, Couric chooses to ignore what was 'positive' about Clinton's victory against all odds and to focus on what was 'negative' about the polls.

Rhetorically, an important distinction was made by Quintilian (1943) between two main interrogative strategies: (i) *to ask*, i.e. to require information by means of a straightforward question, and (ii) *to enquire*, i.e. to emphasise a point in order to prove something by means of a rhetorical figure, such as a rhetorical question. Pragmatically, the distinction can only be made in context, since there are no specific linguistic indicators that can differentiate the two types of questions (Ilie 1994). A relevant illustration of this distinction is provided in Couric's question in (1): taken out of context, the question can lend itself to either interpretation, but in the present context it can only be interpreted as a rhetorical question. And this is how Hillary Clinton, the addressed interviewee, has interpreted it. Her response reveals personal details at the interface of her public sphere identity [*"And I just determined that I was gonna dig down deep and reach out and listen and talk and do what I have always done"*], and her private sphere identity [*"which is what makes me get up in the morning."*]. Unlike Couric, who simply sees Clinton's victory as contradicting the opinion polls, the latter knows that it is the result of a constant and determined political struggle: *"I took hundreds of questions from Friday until late on Monday, it really began to connect and I could see that people were really going to give me a fair hearing."*

4.2 Rhetorical emotion attribution

With the exception of the first question in Extract 1, Couric uses the interview to focus on one topic only, namely the interpretations, re-interpretations, implications and potential consequences of the Clinton's emotions revealed during the episode in Portsmouth prior to the New Hampshire primary. Although initially the alleged goal of the interview was to question and scrutinise a presidential candidate about topical issues relevant to the election campaign in general and to the New Hampshire primary in particular, Clinton is faced with emotion-eliciting questions that are being asked of her simply because she is a woman:

Extract 2

K. Couric: Some observers believe that moment when you got emotional on Monday, when your voice cracked and your eyes welled up, that that humanized you and made you much more attractive to women voters.

H. Clinton: You know, I'm someone who is pretty much other-directed. I want to know what is happening with you and what we can do to help you, and that moment, which obviously I've heard a lot about since, gave people maybe some insight into the fact that I don't see politics as a game. You know, I don't see it as some kind of a travelling entertainment show where, you know, you get up and you perform and then you go on to the next venue. You know, for me it is a way of figuring out what we stand for, what our values are, and getting in a position to actually help people and I take it really seriously and I think people kind of got that for the first time, because I know that there are a lot of questions and I'm trying more to get over sort of my natural reserve which is sort of who I am and where I come from, to give people a little better understanding of why I do this.

Whereas in the preceding Extract 1, Couric's question was rhetorical and not a straightforward question, in Extract 2 she does not even ask a question. What she does instead is to provide a reported description of Clinton's emotional behaviour: "*that moment… that humanized you*". The statement, which may seem positively intended, is in fact implicitly confirming a stereotypical image of Clinton as cold and unemotional. By means of the reported statement, Couric uses emotion attribution in a manipulative way. Emotion attribution can be problematic, especially when it concerns individuals who are acting at the interface of the private and the public sphere, as in Clinton's case. Moreover, Couric is undoubtedly aware that emotion attribution makes it possible to trigger particular mental states and emotions in the audience, which in its turn contributes to rhetorical changes in people's perceptions and attitudes. In her response, Clinton gives her personal account of what happened during those emotional moments, trying to provide a more nuanced image of herself: on the one hand, she is "*someone who is pretty much other-directed*", on the other, someone who is trying "*to get over sort of my natural reserve*". An important point made by Clinton in this response is that interpersonal engagement with others, as well as responses to others, is what produces emotion. While Couric persists in highlighting the irrational side of emotions, Clinton emphasises their rational side.

4.3 'Slippery slope' fallacy

As the interview progresses, Couric insists on confronting Clinton with further challenges on the same topic as in extract 2 – the emotional moment on the day before the New Hampshire primary – , as illustrated below:

Extract 3

K. Couric: Where did that come from, though, that moment? There was a sense that perhaps you were feeling so discouraged and frustrated and exhausted, and perhaps even seeing this thing that you worked so hard for, slipping away.

H. Clinton: That's not how it felt to me, you know, I go out and I meet on a campaign day hundreds, if not thousands of people. And I'm always asking them: How are you, what are you doing, what do you need or what do you think, and when I was asked that it felt like there was this real connection, it was so touching to me, it was about how we are all in this together, you know. We have to start understanding that the problems we have as a country are eminently solvable, number one, but number two, we've got to be more sympathetic, we've got to be more empathetic.

The question in extract 3 is obviously not information-eliciting, but rather confession-eliciting in the sense that it is meant to prompt Clinton's further disclosures and personal reactions. With regard to the elicitation process, a parallel could be drawn between Couric's interviewing strategy and the 'talking out' practice of A'ara speakers of the Santa Isabel island, as reported by White (1990). The practice is known as *graurutha*, or 'disentangling', by means of which family members or village mates meet together to talk about interpersonal conflicts and 'bad feelings'. The purpose of this talk is to make bad feelings public so as to defuse their destructive potential. Disentangling is an institutionalised event in which people are encouraged to talk about conflicts and resentments that need to be sorted out. With regard to the 'talking out' ritual, a comparison was made in Ilie (2001) between a *therapy session* and a *talk show*, since "a major purpose of talk shows is to get people to speak out and to create public awareness about current problems" (p. 217), while the show host can often be seen to act as a therapist. However, there is an essential difference between the disentangling practice and the talk show media event: whereas disentangling is purposefully carried out primarily for the benefit of the persons 'talking out' and thereby for their community, the 'pseudo-therapeutical' interaction in talk shows is a mediatised event organised for the entertainment of an onlooking audience.

Unlike genuine therapy sessions, which are confidential, one-to-one conversations between a patient and a therapist, talk shows are not actually concerned with individual therapeutic counselling and consist instead of audience-oriented talk.

In certain respects, this interview with a female presidential candidate is different from other election campaign interviews with male candidates in that it appears to share several features with therapeutically oriented talk shows: the focus is on the interviewee's private rather than public roles; the purpose is mainly to trigger personal confessions or revelations from the interviewee; the emphasis is on examining and discussing the interviewee's emotional experiences; the interviewer uses manipulative strategies to rhetorically appeal to the emotions of the audience. A significant difference consists in the fact that Couric is not a listening interlocutor, she is far too eager to offer her interpretation of the interviewee's mental and emotional states: "*There was a sense that perhaps you were feeling so discouraged and frustrated and exhausted …*". Refuting the extreme picture of doom and gloom painted by Couric, Clinton proposes her own interpretation, which is radically opposed to Couric's. Whereas Couric sees desperation in a female candidate who shows emotion, Clinton sees new opportunities for experiencing and sharing more sympathy and empathy together with others.

In trying to impose her own interpretation of Clinton's emotions, Couric's opening statement becomes argumentative. She resorts to a *slippery slope* argument (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992) when she makes negative predictions about Clinton's failure as a presidential candidate based only on insufficient and impressionistic evidence. In this case, the slippery slope argument is fallacious because no valid reason is given in favour of the presumed conclusion. Actually, Clinton explicitly refutes Couric's fallacious reasoning and provides counter-arguments regarding her newly found connection with voters: "*it felt like there was this real connection, … we've got to be more sympathetic, we've got to be more empathetic*."

4.4 Talking out about you vs. talking out about us

Clinton's confident and self-assertive message in Extract 3 above does not succeed in stopping Couric from pursuing her line of questioning about the same topic – Clinton's emotions.

Extract 4

K. Couric: Did you feel that coming from that question, because she was saying to you: 'How do you do it?' And suddenly you had to talk about yourself…
H. Clinton: I did, I did, but, you know, a lot of people who asked me that are asking me because they are trying to figure out how to do it themselves. So it's not about me and it's not just about you, it's about us. It's about who we are together, because it's easy to get a kind of isolation when you are in the public eye. And the people that you are with you are talking at and the people who are responding, you know, almost the backdrop and I keep trying to bring people out about what they need, and this woman reached out and I just felt this real connection.

Couric exerts her authority as interviewer and keeps asking practically the same question, which reinforces the stereotypical image of Clinton as an emotional female candidate. By using appeals to pathos, she is determined to trigger further personal confessions from Clinton: "*And suddenly you had to talk about yourself*." As in Extract 3 above, Couric's strategy is not so much to ask straightforward questions, but to encourage a dialogue about the interviewee's emotions. Her manipulative strategy consists in providing her own interpretation and thereby appealing to the emotions of the interviewee, as well as of the audience. However, Clinton refuses to be cornered by Couric's emotional stereotypes and insists on providing her own version of the event. In so doing, she is determined to turn the apparent weakness of her tearing moment into a display of personal strength: "… *but, you know, a lot of people who asked me that are asking me because they are trying to figure out how to do it themselves*." According to her own interpretation, that moment of alleged weakness provided her with a new and special bond with other women who were looking for a role model: "*this woman reached out and I just felt this real connection*." What she actually claims is that a special kind of strength emerged from that moment of apparent weakness. There is obviously an underlying disagreement between interviewer and interviewee as to their respective interpretations of Clinton's emotional behaviour: Couric's point is that Clinton's talking out was about herself ('yourself'), whereas Clinton insists that it was about 'us' and connecting with other people.

4.5 Gendering presidential prerequisites
While Couric's questions discussed above focus on emotions associated with a past event, her subsequent questions focus on emotions projected into the future. The emphasis is still on Clinton's emotional profile, as illustrated in Extract 5

below:

Extract 5
K. Couric: Will you be willing now to reveal more of yourself and be less reserved?
H. Clinton: Well, you know, one of my young friends said well, that was like Hillary unplugged. I thought, "OK, I can't sing, I can't play an instrument. But, you know, I will try to let people know enough about me to know that, you know, I don't need to go back and live in the White House. That's not why I'm doing this. I certainly don't need anymore name recognition. And, I mean, I just want to try to convey that we're going to have to make some big decisions in this country." This is the toughest job in the world. I was laughing because you know in that debate, obviously Sen. Edwards and Sen. Obama were kind of in the buddy system on the stage. And I was thinking whoever's up against the Republican nominee in the election debates come the fall is not gonna have a buddy to fall back on. You know, you're all by yourself. When you're president, you're there all by yourself.

Couric starts from the assumption that being reserved is not desirable for a presidential candidate and according to her the right thing for Clinton to do is to "*to reveal more of yourself and be less reserved*". Interestingly, the message in Couric's question in Extract 5 – "*Will you be willing now to reveal more of yourself and be less reserved?*" – sounds like as a follow-up to the declarative question in Extract 2. This question is redundant, since Clinton already answered Couric's previous question by saying: "*I'm trying more to get over sort of my natural reserve*" (see Extract 2). Evidently, Couric is not simply asking a question, she is actually calling into question the suitability of Clinton's personal profile for a future president. Nevertheless, two aspects of this assumption are indirectly contested by Clinton, who provides two counter-arguments in her answer. First, she specifically points out what is important for a president to be able to do, i.e. to make big decisions: "*I just want to try to convey that we're going to have to make some big decisions in this country.*" Second, she indicates that one of her own strengths is being able to act on her own: "*When you're president, you're there all by yourself.*" So Clinton does actually answer Couric's question by revealing more about herself, namely her capacity to make decisions and to act independently. Rhetorically, an important distinction can be noticed between them: while Couric makes use of appeals to pathos (arousing the emotional involvement of the audience and affecting the emotional response of the audience), Clinton provides answers involving appeals to ethos (invoking her own reliability, trustworthiness

and commitment to ethical values).

4.6 Loaded questions: male confidence vs. female humility

To round off the examination of interactional moves and rhetorical appeals in this interview, I am going to discuss gender-related argumentative strategies in one last extract from the interview.

Extract 6

K. Couric: When we last spoke you said with certitude, "I will be the Democratic nominee." Unwavering certitude. Are you sorry you said that with such confidence? Do you think that perhaps turned some people off?

H. Clinton: Well it might have. I was laughing about it afterwards because I can remember when I first met Jimmy Carter in 1975 and I introduced myself to him and he said, "I'm Jimmy Carter and I'm going to be president." I said, "well, you know, Gov. Carter, well, maybe you shouldn't say that." And so I was laughing because I thought well, if you really believe you'd be the best president, you can't get up everyday and do this job that we're doing running for president – which is really a full time job – unless you really believe you are the person that can best serve our country at this time.

K. Couric: Can't you just say I hope so though? Isn't it a little humility appealing though?

H. Clinton: I'm humble everyday in the face of what I'm facing. I am absolutely aware of how difficult this is and how hard the job that I'm seeking will be but I also know that you've got to really believe that you can do it. But ultimately you have to be humble because it's up to the voters. Voters get to decide.

Harking back to the same topic of emotions, Couric proposes to focus in Extract 6 on a further aspect of Clinton's emotions. This time she deals with the "*unwavering certitude*" with which Clinton is perceived to have declared in an earlier interview that she would be the Democratic nominee in the presidential campaign. But what Couric proposes to concentrate on is not Clinton's certitude and confidence as positive emotions, and the way in which she acquired them, but rather the sense that it was 'wrong' to show too much confidence. A male presidential candidate would never be confronted with such a challenging question, since it is usually taken for granted that one of the prerequisites of a politician, and in particular of a president, is precisely a strong feeling of self-confidence. And as a matter of fact, this question never arises in any of the interviews made by Couric with Barack Obama.

The rhetorical force of Couric's first couple of questions is highly manipulative in that they do not only report Clinton's statements, but they also call into question the appropriateness of Clinton's behaviour: "*Are you sorry you said that with such confidence? Do you think that perhaps turned some people off?*" Such argumentative questions are known as *loaded or complex questions*. A loaded or complex question is a question that is deliberately used to limit a respondent's options in answering it (Walton 1981). A loaded question is often fallacious in the sense that it combines several presuppositions, which eventually amounts to combining several questions into one. This is why a loaded question often becomes what is called a *fallacy of many questions*. The classic example is "*Have you stopped abusing your spouse?*" No matter which of the two short answers the respondent gives, s/he concedes engaging in spousal abuse at some time or other. In our case, the loaded question is framed in such a way that no matter which answer Clinton chooses to give – Yes, I am / No, I am not (sorry) –, she inevitably ends up incriminating herself. And this is simply because being or not being sorry presupposes that one has done or said something one ought to be sorry about: the implication is that not only did Clinton boast about becoming the Democratic nominee, but she also did so confidently. The fallacy originates in Couric's evaluative qualifier "*with such confidence*". A similar argumentative mechanism occurs in the immediately following question: no matter what answer Clinton might give – Yes, I do / No, I don't (think) –, she is trapped into admitting that her attitude might have turned some people off.

Clinton retorts by ironically reporting her dialogue with Jimmy Carter as an *example by analogy*, which actually serves as a counter-argument to Couric's argumentative and face-threatening questions. Like herself and all other (male) presidential candidates, Carter openly displayed an attitude of self-confidence about his future political role. However, there are two significant differences between the two of them. First, Carter aimed higher when he said "*I'm going to be president*", whereas Clinton's declaration was slightly more cautious "*I will be the Democratic nominee*." Second, since Carter is a man and all American presidents have so far been exclusively men, Carter's declaration, unlike Hillary Clinton's, did not cause any debate in the media or among the members of the general public. Clinton rounds off her response by pointing out the fundamental similarity between the two cases, namely that without self-confidence "*you can't get up everyday and do this job that we're doing running for president – which is really a full time job*".

Couric is obviously not satisfied with Clinton's answer and proceeds to ask two more questions. This time her questions are even more face-threatening as she also explicitly suggests that Clinton may need to show some "*humility*": "*Can't you just say I hope so though? Isn't it a little humility appealing though?*" Couric is clearly reinforcing the stereotypical emotion gendering: *confidence* is a strong, male-specific emotion, so Clinton should show less confidence; *humility* is a soft, female-specific emotion, so Clinton should show more humility. These questions are not information-eliciting since they do not elicit information, nor loaded questions like the preceding two, since they do not imply several presuppositions or questions. They are *leading questions*, i.e. questions which are designed to invite a particular answer that is easily inferable by the addressee (Ilie 2009b). Typical leading questions occur in courtroom questioning by means of which defendants and witnesses are induced to provide particular answers. In this particular case, the implied and expected answers are "Yes, I can" and "Yes, it is", respectively. But Clinton refuses to acknowledge the validity of the implied answers arguing that "*I'm humble everyday in the face of what I'm facing*", and explaining that she knows "*how hard the job that I'm seeking will be*". Her two closing sentences contain a powerfully argumentative message about voters as the eventual and decisive evaluators of the presidential candidates: "*But ultimately you have to be humble because it's up to the voters. Voters get to decide*."

5. Concluding remarks

This article is devoted to a close examination of an interview conducted by a female CBS journalist, Katie Couric, with Hillary Clinton, the first female contender for the White House in 2008. The aim was to identify and analyse the ways in which the rhetoric of emotions and the argumentative framing of interview questions and responses contribute to reinforcing or refuting gender roles and stereotypes. The analysis has particularly focused on the different roles, behaviours and positionings enacted by the two women in the public institutional setting of a TV-interview.

The question-response interaction during the interview is heavily impacted by two much debated events: Hillary Clinton's public display of emotion during a meeting with voters and her unexpected victory in the New Hampshire primary. While election campaign interviews normally are normally devoted to discussing a wide range of key issues, Couric's interview focuses almost exclusively on Clinton's

emotions, which she interprets in a stereotypical way. Couric is less keen on questioning as she is on calling into question Clinton's behaviour, feelings and statements. Rather than eliciting information, Couric is mainly interested in eliciting Clinton's confessions and emotional responses.

A close examination of Couric's line of questioning reveals her frequent use of fallacious arguments (conveyed by rhetorical questions, loaded questions, slippery slope fallacy), to which Clinton responds by means of refutations and counter-arguments. Particularly biased are her gender-specific emotion attributions: speaking with *certitude* and showing *confidence* are not suitable emotions for a female presidential candidate, although the same emotions are normally expected and appreciated in a male ditto. Instead, she recommends that Clinton show 'a little *humility*' as a more appealing, soft emotion. Not unexpectedly, Clinton is not willing to play the emotion game and she vigorously refutes Couric's repeated attempts to trigger displays of emotion and/or weakness. While Couric's discourse is informed by repeated appeals to pathos, she tries to elicit emotional responses from her interviewee for the sake of the audience, Clinton's discourse exhibits appeals to ethos as she tries to consolidate her image as a trustworthy and reliable presidential candidate.

There are two significant aspects that play a decisive role in the ongoing performance and negotiation of their respective gender roles during the interview. Both female interlocutors are tenacious, self-confident and strong-minded. However, whereas women interviewers may be expected to also ask interviewee-friendly and face-saving questions, Couric confronts Clinton with very challenging or face-threatening questions (although this hardly happens in her interviews with Barack Obama, for example). As interviewer, Couric is not simply asking questions, she is practically calling into question the suitability of Clinton's personality type for the position of president. As interviewee, Clinton can be seen to overtly comply with her role by providing skillfully framed responses. At the same time, she uses her responses to provide counter-arguments and thereby firmly refute being stereotyped and to dismiss being accused of over-emotionality.

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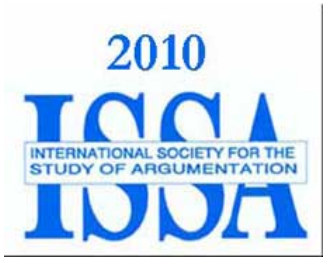
ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Analyzing Repetition In Argumentation



1. Introduction

I submit that repetition is a strategy that skilled arguers may use to openly incur responsibility for the veracity of their claims and propriety of their argumentative conduct; and that a normative pragmatic perspective accounts for how it does so. To support this claim, I explain how a normative pragmatic perspective approaches analysis of repetition in argumentation, and illustrate claims about what aims repetition in argumentation may be designed to achieve and why it may be reasonably expected to achieve them using Abraham Lincoln's 1860 *"Cooper Union"* speech as a case study. By doing so I add to scholarship discussing repetition in argumentation that makes claims about what repetition is designed to do but does not provide a rationale for why arguers may reasonably expect it to work for a situated audience.

2. Repetition from a normative pragmatic perspective

Normative pragmatic theories of argumentation aim to account for strategies arguers actually use – to explain why strategies may be expected to do what they are apparently designed to do (e.g., Goodwin 2001, Innocenti 2006, Jacobs 2000, Kauffeld 1998). Normative pragmatic theories approach repetition differently from other theoretical perspectives in three main ways.

First, from a normative pragmatic perspective, repetition does not fall outside the scope of analysis but is considered to be a design feature that argumentation theory ought to be able to account for. This is in contrast to an analytical method that involves standardizing an argument in premise-conclusion form and therefore deleting repetition (e.g., Govier 2005, pp. 31, 34; Johnson and Blair 2006, p. 264) in order to evaluate the acceptability, relevance, and sufficiency of the premises. This is also in contrast to an analytical method that involves reconstructing argumentation as a critical discussion in order to measure it against that normative ideal. That analytical method calls for deleting material that is

redundant (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, p. 108), although it may not always be clear when repetition of, say, a standpoint in different ways becomes a different standpoint (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992, p. 24).

Second, from a normative pragmatic perspective, the purposes of repetition are not predetermined by critics and inherent in its analytical methods. Identification of purposes is based on what speakers say and do and on the situation. This is in contrast to informal logic which, broadly speaking, focuses on justified belief; and on pragma-dialectics which focuses on resolving differences of opinion and arguers getting their own way (van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2000).

Third, normative pragmatic theories provide accounts of repetition that incorporate the full dynamic of the communication transaction: speech, speaker, audience. A brief survey of some of the scholarship on repetition indicates that other accounts cover only part of the transaction. For example, a claim that repetition expresses emotion (Fogle 1986) may begin to explain the speaker-speech side of the transaction but does not incorporate the audience. Likewise, claims that repetition may unify ideas, divide a narrative into segments, or emphasize (Fogle 1986), or that some figures relating to repetition may associate (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, p. 504) while others "really aim at suggesting distinctions" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, p. 175; see also p. 478) may describe the speech itself but not how it is designed by a speaker to work for a situated audience. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca orient their account of repetition toward how a text may affect an audience when they include repetition among "figures relating to presence" which "make the object of discourse present to the mind" (1969, p. 174; see also p. 144) but do not incorporate the speaker. A normative pragmatic perspective, in contrast, aims to account for strategies by explaining how speakers use them to openly undertake commitments for themselves and to generate obligations for auditors; put differently, speakers design strategies that involve manifestly undertaking risks for themselves and creating risks for auditors.

3. Case study

One exemplar of civic argumentation, Abraham Lincoln's 1860 "Cooper Union Address," features repetition. There are many kinds of repetition – repetition of parts of words, of entire words, of phrases, sentences, ideas (Quinn 1993, pp. 73-95). For now I focus on Lincoln's repetition of the standpoint that in the understanding of the founding fathers, there is nothing that properly forbids the

federal government from controlling slavery in federal territories. Why does Lincoln, an astute reasoner and consummate stylist, choose to repeat this conclusion more than a dozen times? What is it designed to do, and why may he reasonably expect it to do just that?

To answer this question, first consider the context in order to understand Lincoln's purposes. The speech is part of a campaign to secure the Republican nomination for President of the United States. It was reprinted in newspapers and as a political pamphlet. Lincoln wanted to feature his attractiveness as a candidate to run against the Democrat Stephen Douglas (Leff and Mohrmann 1974, p. 347). In particular, he aimed to be a voice of moderation amidst partisan rancor and the voice of Republican party principles (Leff and Mohrmann 1974, p. 347-48; White 2009, p. 314). One obstacle he faced was that he was a relative unknown to New Yorkers and, as one planner of the Cooper Union speaking event put it, "[t]he first impression of the man from the West did nothing to contradict the expectation of something weird, rough, and uncultivated" (White 2009, p. 311). In short, Lincoln wants to induce serious attention to his potential as a Republican presidential candidate.

The speech may be divided into three sections: a discussion of Douglas' claim to be on the side of the framers of the United States Constitution regarding whether the federal government can control slavery in federal territories, an address to the South, and an address to members of the Republican party. For now I focus on the first section and its refutation of Douglas' claim to be on the side of the framers. Focusing on Lincoln's repetition of the point that in the understanding of the founding fathers, there is nothing that properly forbids the federal government from controlling slavery in federal territory is justified by its strategic intensity. A recent analysis of the speech describes that line as a phrase that "will echo like mortar fire, repeatedly and relentlessly, throughout the Cooper Union address" (Holzer 2004, p. 120) and as "[t]he rhetorical spine around which Lincoln will hang his proof – and the oration's rhetorical delight as well" (Holzer 2004, p. 121).

Critics of the speech have proffered claims about what repetition does. Here I focus on those of Holzer, recent author of a book-length study of Lincoln at Cooper Union, and Leff and Mohrmann, rhetorical critics who have given the closest attention to the rhetorical dynamics of the speech. Holzer points to the sheer entertainment value of repetition as well as its properly argumentative

functions when he speculates about how “the audience breathlessly awaits the next iteration” and is “eager to hear how Lincoln next pronounces it, and how he uses it to punctuate an argument, puncture a Democratic viewpoint, or implicitly pillory Douglas” (2004, p. 122). In addition, Holzer points to its capacity to associate when he notes that Lincoln “associates slavery with the founders by repetition of their names and votes on slavery-related issues” (2004, p. 122). He also points to its capacity to dissociate when he notes that “through similar thrusts of repetition, he mocks Stephen A. Douglas’s contrary assertion that the Constitution bars congressionally imposed limits on slavery” (2004, p. 122). Holzer summarizes Lincoln’s case in the first section of the speech: Lincoln “has shown himself a master of history, a self-confident logician, and a merciless debater, using repetition to crush and ridicule his absent opponents” (2004, p. 131). Likewise, Leff and Mohrmann point to the role of repetition in association when they note that Lincoln associates himself and the founding fathers with Republicans (1974, p. 348; Leff 2001, p. 234). They also note that repetition can be used for emphasizing arguments when they remark that repetitions “accentuate the single line of argument” and that Lincoln “weaves [repetitions] into the fabric of the inductive process. Furthermore, the repetitions concomitantly reinforce and control the emotional association with the fathers and their understanding of the Constitution” (1974, p. 351). Leff notes that at the close of that section Lincoln could assert that the Republicans were on the side of the founding fathers “with considerable logical force” (2001, 237).

A normative pragmatic perspective builds on the insights that repetition may associate and dissociate, emphasize, augment logical force, orchestrate emotion, invite attitudes, and more by explaining why Lincoln’s use of repetition pressured addressees to give his candidacy serious consideration. In this case repetition intensifies how Lincoln openly incurs responsibility for the veracity of his claims and propriety of his conduct.

First, consider how Lincoln designs the initial iteration of the point: “In his speech last autumn, at Columbus, Ohio, as reported in ‘The New-York Times,’ Senator Douglas said: ‘*Our fathers, when they framed the Government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now*’” (Holzer 2004, p. 252). He describes this text as “a precise and an agreed starting point for a discussion between Republicans and that wing of the Democracy headed by Senator Douglas” (Holzer 2004, p. 252). After defining key terms

including “the frame of government under which we live” and “our fathers that framed the Constitution,” Lincoln states “the question which, according to the text, those fathers understood ‘just as well, and even better than we do now’”: “Does the proper division of local from federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbid *our Federal Government* to control as to slavery in *our Federal Territories*” (Holzer 2004, p. 253). About this question Lincoln asserts: “Upon this, Senator Douglas holds the affirmative, and Republicans the negative. This affirmation and denial form an issue; and this issue – this question – is precisely what the text declares our fathers understood ‘better than we’” (Holzer 2004, p. 253).

This initial iteration holds Douglas accountable for the position and manifests the propriety of Lincoln’s argumentative conduct. It holds Douglas accountable because the words are Douglas’. At the same time, using Douglas’ words brings to bear on the situation and manifests Lincoln’s adherence to two norms of argumentation: willingness to find common ground with opponents and openness to discussing issues with them. Lincoln openly incurs responsibility for his argumentative conduct not only by what he does but by saying what he is doing: using Douglas’ words as “an agreed starting point for discussion.” Thus Lincoln enacts the kind of campaign he would run if nominated. He chooses to engage Douglas rather than, say, opponents for the Republican nomination, and he engages him in a manifestly appropriate way. Other things being equal, addressees who do not tentatively consider a responsibly-made case risk criticism for irresponsible argumentative conduct. In Lincoln’s situation the risk is particularly serious given that partisan rancor was splitting the union. Addressees can avoid the risk by giving his potential for candidacy serious consideration.

In the first point of the proof that follows, Lincoln discusses six occasions on which one or more of the original framers of the U.S. Constitution acted on the question. He repeatedly concludes that of the framers who voted on relevant issues, almost all indicated that “in their understanding, no line dividing local from federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, properly forbade Congress to prohibit slavery in the federal territory” (Holzer 2004, p. 258; see also pp. 254-55, 257, 259. 260). Certainly repetition emphasizes the point, but why emphasize at all and by repeating it? The strategy pressures addressees to seriously consider his candidacy for Republican nominee for President. By repeating the standpoint, Lincoln incurs and intensifies responsibility for the

veracity of the claim, because repeating it creates argumentative conditions in which it becomes increasingly difficult for him to deny a commitment to its veracity. Addressees can reason that Lincoln would not open himself to criticism for poor judgment or inappropriate argumentative conduct unless he had made a responsible effort to ascertain the facts. Thus repetition of the standpoint creates a reason for addressees to take his candidacy seriously. At the same time, repetition creates risks for addressees if they do not take his candidacy seriously. Because the repetition comprises Douglas' words, each iteration manifests Lincoln's adherence to norms of finding common ground and discussing issues with opponents. Again, other things being equal, addressees who do not tentatively consider a responsibly-made position risk criticism for acting irresponsibly.

When Lincoln concludes this subsection, he makes manifest the alignment of norms of argumentation with norms of political action, namely responsibility for the veracity of standpoints and propriety of conduct. He remarks that of the twenty-three framers "who have, upon their official responsibility and their corporal oaths, acted upon the very question which the text affirms they 'understood just as well, and even better than we do now,'" twenty-one of them "so act[ed] upon it as to make them guilty of gross political impropriety and willful perjury, if, in their understanding, any proper division between local and federal authority, or anything in the Constitution they had made themselves, and sworn to support, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the federal territories" (Holzer 2004, p. 261). Lincoln also asserts that "as actions speak louder than words, so actions, under such responsibility, speak still louder" (Holzer 2004, p. 261). Thus Lincoln holds addressees accountable for norms of veracity and propriety in arguing and political action; other things being equal, failing to recognize them is a fallible sign that they were not attending to Lincoln's speech or that they do not understand appropriate political action. In either case they risk criticism for poor citizenship if they do not recognize that his case and therefore his candidacy deserve serious consideration. Moreover, at this point in the speech Lincoln does not openly and explicitly accuse Douglas of willful perjury or gross political impropriety. Instead he openly and explicitly considers norms of argumentation and political action adhered to by the framers of the U.S. Constitution. In this way Lincoln manifests restrained partisanship instead of partisan rancor, thereby creating an additional reason for addressees to seriously consider his candidacy.

Lincoln's next two points cover the topic of the understanding of those framers who "left no record of their understanding upon the direct question of federal control of slavery in the federal territories" (Holzer 2004, p. 262) and the understanding of those in the first Congress. Predictably, Lincoln concludes by repeating that "a clear majority of the whole – certainly understood that no proper division of local from federal authority, nor any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control slavery in the federal territories; while all the rest probably had the same understanding. Such, unquestionably, was the understanding of our fathers who framed the original Constitution; and the text affirms that they understood the question 'better than we'" (Holzer 2004, p. 263). It is recorded that this line was followed by laughter and cheers from the audience (Holzer 2004, pp. 263, 250-51).

Certainly this iteration contributes to what Leff describes as logical force and the entertainment value of the speech. It also creates reasons for addressees to give his position and therefore his candidacy serious consideration. First, continuing to repeat Douglas's words continues to manifest his adherence to the norms of finding common ground with opponents and openness to discussing differences of opinion. Further, by repeating his standpoint Lincoln intensifies his commitment to it and thus creates conditions for addressees to reason that he would not continue to risk criticism for getting the facts wrong unless he were confident about the veracity of the standpoint.

Second, repeatedly examining Douglas' words with respect to a variety of evidence, and concluding that the evidence supports Lincoln's standpoint rather than Douglas', makes manifest the quality of Lincoln's reasoning skills and discredits both Douglas' argument and method of arguing. This strategy pressures addressees to seriously consider Lincoln for the Republican nomination for U.S. President, because not doing so would be a fallible sign that they do not recognize appropriate argumentation. Consequently, the strategy puts them at risk of criticism for poor citizenship. They can avoid the risk by giving Lincoln's candidacy serious consideration. Moreover, the strategy increases the risk Lincoln undertakes because it becomes increasingly apparent that Lincoln is impugning Douglas' conduct. Addressees may reason that Lincoln would not risk Douglas' wrath for impugning his character and conduct unless he were confident in the veracity of his claim and the propriety of his conduct.

The final point Lincoln makes in this section of the speech is that opponents are

on shaky ground when, based on amendments to the U.S. Constitution, they argue that federal control of slavery in federal territories is unconstitutional. Lincoln notes that the amendments were framed by the first Congress that sat under the Constitution, and that this Congress passed the act that enforced the prohibition of slavery in the Northwest Territory (Holzer 2004, p. 264). Lincoln concludes the point with another iteration:

I defy any man to show that any one of them ever, in his whole life, declared that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the federal territories. I go a step further. I defy any one to show that any living man in the whole world ever did, prior to the beginning of the present century, (and I might almost say prior to the beginning of the last half of the present century,) declare that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the federal territories. To those who now so declare, I give, not only 'our fathers who framed the Government under which we live,' but with them all other living men within the century in which it was framed, among whom to search, and they shall not be able to find the evidence of a single man agreeing with them. (Holzer 2004, pp. 265-66)

Using repetition, Lincoln continues to incur responsibility for the veracity of his claims and the propriety of his conduct. In this iteration Lincoln increases the emotional intensity and the intensity with which he impugns Douglas' conduct. But because he does not attack Douglas by name, he continues to enact restrained partisanship, thus manifesting his merits as a political candidate.

This strategy is more apparent in the paragraph that concludes this section of the speech. In that paragraph he twice repeats the lines about the proper division of federal and local authority or anything in the Constitution forbidding the federal government from controlling slavery in federal territories and does so in the course of impugning opponents' conduct. He states that if anybody "sincerely believes" that the federal government may not prohibit slavery in federal territories, "he is right to say so, and to enforce his position by all truthful evidence and fair argument which he can. But he has not right to mislead others, who have less access to history, and less leisure to study it, into the false belief," thereby "substituting falsehood and deception for truthful evidence and fair argument" (Holzer 2004, p. 266). He repeats that if anyone believes this "he is

right to say so. But he should, at the same time, brave the responsibility of declaring that, in his opinion, he understands their principles better than they did themselves; and especially should not shirk that responsibility by asserting that they 'understood the question just as well, and even better, than we do now'" (Holzer 2004, p. 266). Again, then, Lincoln uses repetition to openly incur responsibility for the veracity of his claims and the propriety of his conduct, and thereby to pressure addressees – even those who view him as "weird, rough, and uncultivated" – to give his potential candidacy serious attention or risk criticism for poor citizenship. Moreover, by openly impugning Douglas' conduct, he creates conditions for addressees to reason that he would not risk Douglas' wrath unless he had made a responsible effort to assess Douglas' claims and conduct.

4. Conclusions

In short, in the *"Cooper Union"* speech Lincoln uses repetition to openly incur responsibility for the veracity of his claims and the propriety of his conduct, and to put addressees at risk of criticism for not seriously attending to his candidacy for the Republican nomination for the office of U.S. President. A normative pragmatic perspective explains how repetition may be designed to work in argumentation by considering both sides of the rhetorical transaction – speaker and audience – and helps to explain why repetition pressures even reluctant addressees to manifest serious consideration of Lincoln's merits as candidate for the Republican nomination for U.S. President.

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 – The Argumentum Ad Hominem In A Romanian Parliamentary Debate

1. Preliminary remarks

This paper **[i]** is an attempt to apply the extended pragma-dialectical theory of strategic maneuvering in argumentative discourse (van Eemeren 2010) to the particular case of the *argumentum ad hominem*, using the

data provided by a debate in the Romanian Parliament (April 19, 2007). The debate had on its agenda the proposal of President Trajan Băsescu's suspension from office, a proposal initiated by the Social Democratic Party, the main opposition party at that time.

Taking as a starting point the idea of the context-dependency of different communicative practices (van Eemeren 2010, p. 129), we shall focus on those aspects of the debate under consideration which have an impact on the evolution of the argumentative processes. The next step will be the reconstruction of the debate as a critical discussion, keeping in mind the relationship between the four stages of a critical discussion as an ideal model: the confrontation stage, the opening stage, the argumentation stage and the concluding stage, and their empirical counterparts: the initial situation, the starting points, the argumentative means and the outcome of the argumentative discourse (van Van Eemeren 2010, p. 146).

In defining the fallacies in general, we shall make reference to the basic concept of strategic maneuvering; the violation of one (or more) critical discussion rule will be the criterion used to distinguish the main types of fallacious moves. The analytical part proper will discuss and comment the way the three basic variants of the *ad hominem* arguments are actualized in the considered debate.

2. Argumentative processes in the considered parliamentary debate

The considered debate is a concrete speech event representing the communicative activity type of the parliamentary debate, which belongs to the domain of political communication. Its specific goal is to scrutinize the President's performance (consisting of his policies and actions) and accordingly to evaluate it as being up to constitutional standards or not. Given the quite uncommon topic of this debate, beside the general conventions for conducting a certain form of parliamentary activity, a number of distinctive conventions can also be noticed. They design a special format of this debate.

Debating the proposal of suspending the President from office was the unique point on the agenda of a joint session of the two Chambers of the Romanian Parliament. Even if parliament is typically a confrontational setting, the case under consideration illustrates a particularly hostile form of parliamentary argument, engaging two polar groups: the President's supporters (his former party fellows**[ii]**) and his opponents (the members of all the other parliamentary

parties). The representatives of these two groups were given approximately the same amount of time for their interventions, the Chairman of the session keeping a strict record of the timing.

Participants' positions are completely predictable, as predetermined by their party membership. The speeches were written (or at least sketched) in advance (usually, by specialized teams). Consequently, they appear as basically monological in nature, even if they could make reference to certain definite adversaries or anticipate their position.

The attempt to reconstruct this debate as a critical discussion brings forward some particular aspects determined by the above described specific features of the context where argumentation takes place. The standpoint at issue could be phrased as "the President should be suspended from office because he infringed the Constitution". The confrontation stage is mostly implicit, as involved in the definition of the activity type represented by the considered speech event. The difference of opinion is already included on the agenda of the parliamentary session.

Practically, the discussion starts with the expression of the commitments of the two parties, that serve continuously as a frame of reference for the arguers in the rest of the discussion. This can be seen as the opening stage.
The participants' roles are preassigned by the procedural institutional rules. The protagonist's role is played by the President's opponents (as authors of the suspension proposal), starting with the leader of the Social Democratic Party. The President's supporters play the antagonist's role; they attack the protagonist's standpoint concerning the President's status and performance, and express a negative standpoint with regard to his suspension from office.

In the argumentation stage, the members of each group successively present their pros and contras. One can notice a certain uniformity of the arguments advanced by the representatives of the same group. Most of the arguments are connected with the fact that the President explicitly defined himself as a "president-player". The protagonists consider this definition as contravening with the constitutional requirements. In the antagonists' opinion, the President's involvement in solving a large diversity of problems is a positive feature of his performance. Mutual concessions lack completely.
Accordingly, the concluding stage does not bring a change in the initial position of

the two groups. The dispute is not resolved by the parties involved, but settled by the final vote of the MPs, whose decision is mandatory for everybody.

The genre of communicative activity implemented by the considered speech event is mainly the deliberation. Still, there are some special aspects that should be mentioned. As usual in a public debate, it is not each other that parties try to convince, but the audience that determines the final outcome. This feature brings the case dealt with close to the adjudication genre (see also Ieţcu-Fairclough 2009, p.136). Moreover in this case, when the speakers' main target was not represented by the insiders (the MPs who did not take the floor), as their voting decision was predictable, depending on their party affiliation. Given the institutional regulations, if the final vote is in favor of the President's suspension – as it happened – after 30 days a national referendum should decide on whether he should come back into office or not. The speakers had in view a multilayered audience of outsiders whose future voting decision should be influenced.

3. Strategic maneuvering and fallacies

As van Eemeren and P. Houtlosser (2002, p.132, footnote 4) have put it, reasonable argumentation can occur in all spheres of life, including those where value judgments may play a major part, such as political discourse. This type of discourse has an important persuasive component, and a good rhetorical move becomes effective if justified by the political/ institutional goals (Ieţcu-Fairclough 2009, p. 133).

The concept of strategic maneuvering (see van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2002, and especially van Eemeren 2010) proves to be a very useful analytical instrument. It defines a discourse management form aiming at diminishing the potential tension between the dialectical and the rhetorical goals, simultaneously pursued by the speakers within a critical discussion.

Strategic maneuvering is affected by institutional primary and secondary preconditions, that may impose some constraints on the topical choices of the parties, on the adaptation to audience demand, as well as on the use of presentational devices (van Eemeren 2010, p. 152). Each form of strategic maneuvering has its own continuum of sound and fallacious acting (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2002, p. 142). One cannot draw the boundaries between sound and fallacious strategic maneuvering in different macro-contexts in exactly the same way (van Eemeren 2010, p. 199).

Fallacies involve a derailment from the sound strategic maneuvering, by the violation of a pragma-dialectical rule in a certain stage of a critical discussion (van Eemeren, Garssen & Meuffels 2009, p. 28). The interpretation of an argumentative move as sound or fallacious always depends on the communicative context, as these moves are instances of „situated argumentative acting" (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2002, p. 142). Fallacies are considered prejudicial for the realization of the general goal of a critical discussion to resolve the difference of opinion on a certain issue (van Eemeren 2010, p. 192). Understood as part of a normative theory of argumentation, they are treated as "faux pas" (van Eemeren 2010, p. 193). Usually, the strategic maneuvering gets derailed when arguers' commitment to reasonableness is neglected in favor of their eagerness to achieve effectiveness (van Eemeren 2010, p. 198).

Within the political discourse it is particularly difficult to distinguish between sound and fallacious strategic maneuvering (Zarefsky 2009, p. 120). This happens because, in this case, the balance between the arguers' dialectical and rhetorical goals is quite unsteady, given the fact that for most arguers winning a heterogeneous audience and gaining image is more important than committing to the critical ideal of a discussion.

4. The ad hominem arguments in the considered parliamentary debate

Ad hominem arguments belong to the class of emotional arguments (along with *ad misericordiam* and *ad baculum*). They involve a derailment of strategic maneuvering and accordingly are characterized as fallacies.

Van Eemeren, Garssen & Meuffels (2009, p. 6) define *ad hominem* as the fallacy of attacking the opponent personally instead of responding to the actual arguments put forward by the opponent in support of a standpoint. It involves a violation of the Freedom Rule, the first rule for the resolution of differences of opinion, "by hindering the expression of a standpoint or doubt in the confrontation stage through a personal attack that prevents the other party from fulfilling his role in a critical discussion" (van Eemeren 2010, p.201, footnote 18). In other words, parties should not prevent each other from presenting standpoints, putting forward arguments or expressing doubts or other forms of criticism. Affecting the personal liberty of the other party involves also discrediting his expertise, impartiality, integrity or credibility (van Eemeren 2010, p. 196).

Defining the *argumentum ad hominem* in connection with the violation of the first rule of the critical discussion, pragma-dialectics diverges from the traditional definition of this class of arguments, restricting it "to the fallacious cases of strategic maneuvering" (van Eemeren 2010, p. 201).
It should be added that when analyzing the fallaciousness of the *ad hominem* arguments the primary as well as the secondary preconditions of a certain communicative event type must be taken into account. In the considered case, they are represented by the general formal and procedural preconditions of a plenary debate in a Parliament, well known and accepted by the participants, and the informal and substantial preconditions (as, for example, serving the interests of a certain political party). These preconditions could explain, for example, why the antagonists use more *ad hominem* arguments than the protagonists or why their attacks are directed mainly not towards a certain opponent, but towards the whole group supporting a different standpoint. Being a numerically inferior group, their defeat in the final vote is foreseeable. As they could remain in power provided that the President comes back into office after the national referendum, they are interested in discrediting their adversaries, undermining their credibility.

There are three variants of the *argumentum ad hominem*: (a) the abusive, (b) the circumstantial and (c) the *tu, quoque* variants. The first variant involves a direct personal attack where one party casts doubts on the individual or moral quality of the other party, trying to undermine his credibility. The second variant involves an indirect attack, based on references to special circumstances bringing forward the suggestion that the standpoint or the arguments of the other party are not motivated by rational criteria, but by certain personal interests. The third variant involves a conflict in the positions expressed by the other party on different occasions: either he lacks consequence or his acts contradict his affirmations.

Most of the *ad hominem* arguments in the considered debate illustrate the circumstantial variant. They are used by the antagonists:
(1) It is in fact some people who have been disturbed from their business, taking revenge over the one who had systematically jeopardized their games.
(2) The initiators of the suspension process don't care too much for the Constitution or for the country and the people. What motivates them is their own interest, unfortunately one that is mean and dirty.
(3) At a certain moment, it seemed that these so-called knights of the justice from different parties put on their shining armor, mounted on white horses and started

brandishing the arms of the democracy. Eventually, it turned out that the glorious cortège was a masquerade concocted by a bunch of barons who have been constantly harassed by this Trajan.

The President's supporters deny the legitimacy of the President's adversaries to criticize his performance, discrediting their impartiality. The adversaries are not animated by the ideal of serving the national interest, but have personal reasons for demanding President's suspension: in his direct and objective manner, the President brought to light their onerous combinations, their corruption or unmasked some of them as crypto-communists. This is an attempt to stop the discussion in the confrontation stage, eliminating the political adversaries as credible discussion partners. The presentational devices vary from the simple definition of the attacked group (ex. 1) to rude evaluative expressions: *mean*, *dirty* (ex. 2) or even the use of a complicated ironic allegory (ex. 3)

There are not too many examples of the *ad hominem* abusive variant. They appear in the speeches of President's opponents:
(4) From the viewpoint of the President's supporters there was nothing good before, all starts with Mr. Băsescu's mandate and I cannot accept that and I believe that no mentally sound person over two and a half years can accept that.
(5) I am sick and tired to accept labels like "the Mafiosi's revenge", "pack", "hyenas" and so on from the part of some good-for-nothing, who don't understand that I respect their right to vote against the suspension and I don't insult them, and I don't criticize them; it is their right and I have the same right; and it should be normal that they respect my right to express my opinion.
(6) And because I don't like to owe anything to anybody, honorable Mr. Vasile Blaga, no, our parties did not gather against the President, but around the Constitution. It is a change of stress. Of course, you have the freedom of expression, we are living in a democratic state.

In example (4), the target of the attack is the credibility of the adversaries' viewpoint. The sharp irony is the presentational device exploited by the speaker. In example (5), a negative label is applied to the adversaries: *good-for-nothing*. One can notice also that the speaker uses some formal aspects of the adversaries' discourse: its stereotypic character, the vulgarity of its language, to anchor his attacks. The final part includes a metacommunicative comment on the issue of the freedom of expression. The parallel between the attitude of the two groups regarding this matter serves also as a means of criticizing the rigidity of the

adversaries' views. In example (5), the attack is directed towards a definite member of the adversarial group. It has the form of a correction act, strategically presented in the following metacommunicative comment as non-impositive.

The only example of the *tu, quoque* variant of *ad hominem* includes an attack directed towards Mircea Geoană, the president of the Social Democratic Party, who presented the suspending proposal:
(7) Yesterday, the president of the same SDP, tried to destabilize and compromise four institutions of the state. Applying the same logic that is applied to the President, Mircea Geoană should also suspend himself from office.

The speaker tries to cast doubt on the honesty and impartiality of an important adversary, revealing the fact that the accusations he stated against the President are equally valid in his case.

5. Final remarks
Writing this paper was to us an opportunity to reflect on the general problem of the relationship between an ideal model: the standard pragma-dialectical model (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004) and its actualization in a specific situation and context, that is on the relationship between a theoretical construct and the reality modeled by it. At the same time, the analysis of a concrete speech event created a good opportunity to determine and evaluate the impact of the institutional primary and secondary preconditions on the possibilities of strategic maneuvering and to explain the presence of fallacious argumentative moves. We realized the importance of the concept of strategic maneuvering in integrating the theoretical and practical aspects of argumentation. At the same time, relating the fallacies to the standards expressed in the rules for critical discussion appeared as an appropriate way to avoid subjectivity in distinguishing between sound and fallacious moves.

NOTES
[i] This work was supported by the CNCSIS-UEFISCU (Romania), project number PN II − IDEI, code 2136/2008.
[ii] In Romania, the President is obliged to resign from his political party after he had been elected.

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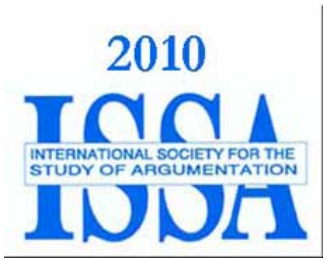
ISSA Proceedings 2010 – 'If That Were True, I Would Never Have …': The Counterfactual Presentation of Arguments that Appeal to Human Behaviour



1. Introduction

In 2008, the Dutch Parliament held a debate on embryo selection. In this debate, the Christian political parties adopted a negative stance towards embryo selection. The newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* reported the debate citing a few reactions from a 23-year old girl who had watched it from the gallery. The girl countered the claim, made by the Christian Union, that more attention should be paid to the medical treatment of cancer, by saying:

(1) *"If my disease were treatable, I would not have had my breasts amputated."* (*NRC Handelsblad*, 5/6/08)

The standpoint in this argument is that the hereditary form of aggressive breast cancer from which this girl is suffering is not treatable. This standpoint is supported by assuming that the opposite standpoint is hypothetically true for the moment, and then deducing an implication from it that is falsified by reality. The implication is that the girl would not have had her breasts amputated. This implication is falsified in the implicit argument – that states the implicature of the counterfactual statement – that the girl has had her breasts amputated.**[i]** In a schematic reconstruction of this argument based on the pragma-dialectical method, the standpoint has number 1, the explicit argumentation 1.1 and the element that remains implicit 1.1':

(1. My disease is not treatable)		
1.1 _____ &If my disease were treatable, I would not have had my breasts amputated	1.1'I have had my breasts amputated	

The reason this girl gives as a support for her standpoint is remarkable for several reasons, but I'm interested in the fact that it is formulated with a counterfactual *If…then*-sentence. I have been studying this way of formulating an argument – or, in other words, this *presentation mode* of an argument – for some time. Over the years I have gathered a wide collection of arguments presented in the counterfactual mode, examples that I have found in newspapers and sometimes heard on radio or television and examples that my students have found

for me. A large part of my collection consists of examples in which an appeal is made to human behaviour, as in the above argument displaying the girl's opinion about whether breast cancer is a treatable disease.

In this paper I will discuss some reasons why it is strategic to present an argument with a counterfactual *If…then*-sentence. It has often struck me that arguments in which an appeal to behaviour is made, are frequently presented in this way. From the perspective of the theory of strategic manoeuvring (van Eemeren 2010; van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2002) this presentation mode of an argument can be considered to be a strategic choice for formulating an argument. This would mean that this presentation mode was chosen for these arguments for good reason, namely to make it easier for them to be accepted in the evaluation procedure. To answer my question I will first give a more precise description of the arguments in which an appeal to behaviour is made and discuss their evaluation criteria. Then I will address the issue of their presentation mode.

2. Arguments that appeal to human behaviour

In my collection of arguments in which an appeal to human behaviour is made, an appeal such as this is made to argue the truth or falsity of a descriptive standpoint.[ii] I have divided the examples in my collection into two categories based on the criterion of whose behaviour is being referred to.

In the first category the protagonist him/herself refers to his/her own behaviour. An example of this is the girl's argument about the medical treatment for cancer, in which the proposition of the standpoint describes a current state of affairs. Besides this more general type of standpoint, the proposition can also contain a more particular description of a state of affairs. An appeal to behaviour is often used to argue that the person or group that has displayed the behaviour has certain intentions or emotions. An example of an argument with a standpoint such as this can be seen in an interview which was conducted with an organizer of music parties called 'Technootjes':

(2) "I don't do this for commercial reasons. You can see this from my bookings, because *otherwise [if I did this for commercial reasons] I would have booked bigger names*." (http://3voor12.vpro.nl/artikelen/artikel//40769443)

The second category of arguments in which an appeal to behaviour is made deals with the behaviour of a person other than the arguer. This other person is often the antagonist, but (s)he may also be someone who is the topic of discussion. In

this category the same distinction can be made between standpoints in which the proposition expresses the existence or absence of a general state of affairs, and standpoints in which the proposition is about the intentions or emotions of the person whose behaviour is referred to. An example of the first was put forward by Thomas Dekker, a former member of the Rabo cyclist team, who was accused of using dope. Although Dekker is currently suspended for using dope, when he put forward the argument, in an interview in 2005, only an uncorroborated accusation had been made. Dekker denied the accusation in the following way:

(3) "If there really was a problem, Rabo would not have put me [in the Sachsen Tour], but would have fired me immediately." (*NRC Handelsblad*, 23/9/08)

An example of such an argumentation supporting the standpoint how likely or unlikely someone's intentions or emotions are was put forward by someone who responded to a complaint made by the so-called Party for Freedom – the political party of Geert Wilders. The complaint was that the other political parties in the Dutch city Almere had debarred them from forming a coalition. The arguer questions whether the PVV really intended taking a leading role in the city council of Almere, saying:
(4) "*If you really had wanted this, you would have made an effort to negotiate a lot more* (…). If everyone were to keep the position they held in the campaign, a council will never be formed." (*Het Parool*, 19/03/10)

In this argument, the arguer questions the veracity of the intentions or emotions that the one whose behaviour is referred to claims to have. The argument put forward by Robert Dekker shows that an arguer can also attribute intentions or emotions to the person whose behaviour is referred to.

3. The counterfactual presentation mode
The arguments that I have discussed so far were presented with a counterfactual *If…then*-sentence. They could also have been presented without one. Formulated without a counterfactual *If…then*-sentence, the above arguments would then read:
(5) My disease is not treatable, because I have amputated my breasts.
(6) I don't have commercial aims, because I don't book big names.
(7) There is no problem [I am not guilty of using dope], because Rabo put me on the team.
(8) The PVV doesn't really want to take a leading role in the city council of

Almere, because they have not made an effort to negotiate more.

In a pragma-dialectical reconstruction, their implicit inference licenses read something like this:
(9) If a person has her breasts amputated as a precaution against a certain disease, this indicates that the disease is not treatable.
(10) If organizers of events have commercial aims, they will book big names.
(11) If the management of a cyclist team gives a team member a place on a tour, this indicates that this cyclist has not been using dope.
(12) If political parties do not make an effort to negotiate more, this indicates that they are not really interested in taking part in the city council.

These arguments all have the schematic structure of *X*, because *Y*, with an implicit inference license that connects the argumentation with the standpoint, reading *If Y, then X*. See, for example, the pragma-dialectical reconstruction of the PVV-argument:

1.The PVV does not really want to take a leading role in the city council of Almere *(–X)*		
.1.1_____ They have not made an effort to negotiate more*(-Y)*	1.1' If political parties do not make an effort to negotiate more, they do not really want to take a leading role in the city council*(If –Y, then –X)*	

If we compare this with the presentation mode using a counterfactual *If…then*-sentence, then the latter obviously has a different structure:

1. The PVV does not really want to take a leading role in the city council of Almere *(–X)*

1.1_____ If they had really wanted this, they would have made an effort to negotiate a lot more(*If X, then Y*)	& 1.1'They have not made an effort to negotiate more *(-Y)*

The elements that both arguments consist of are more or less the same, although there is a difference with regard to the issue as to whether the *If…then*-sentence – the inference license – contains negations. The argument with the counterfactual *If…then*-sentence has an inference license that reads *If* [not standpoint], *then* [not argumentation]. Or, in other words, in the *if*-part of the inference license the standpoint is denied and in the *then*-part the implicit element is denied. In the inference license of the presentation mode without a counterfactual *If…then*-sentence, the antecedent of the inference license repeats what is stated in the argumentation and the consequent repeats what is stated in the standpoint.**[iii]**

In Jansen (2007b; 2007c; 2008; 2009a; 2009b) and Jansen, Dingemanse & Persoon (2009), for each of the three pragma-dialectical types of argument (symptomatic, causal and analogical) it is hypothesized whether the presentation mode with a counterfactual *If…then*-sentence is a more advantageous way of formulating an argument than a presentation mode without one. Using the theory of strategic manoeuvring as my theoretical framework, I propose that, along with all the other reasons that determine which of these two presentation modes is chosen, rhetorical motives have a role to play. That is: arguers will presumably choose to formulate their arguments in the most convincing way. I start with the assumption that the arguments that I have discussed so far were formulated with a counterfactual *If…then*-sentence to easily pass through the evaluation procedure. The question then is: what would put this presentation mode before the other one? To answer this question, I first want to examine what arguments that appeal to human behaviour actually try to argue and how we should evaluate them. I will then turn to the issue of their presentation mode from the perspective of the evaluation criteria and address the question as to whether the counterfactual presentation mode hinders the critical testing of such arguments.

3.1. Evaluation criteria for arguments that appeal to human behaviour

Arguments in which an appeal to human behaviour is made, seem to fit

descriptions of the antique argument from plausibility, known in classical rhetoric as the *eikos* argument. These arguments allude to generally held views on how people act under certain circumstances or as a result of their state of mind (Aristotle, a.o. 1357a35-157b; *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, 1428 a 25 ff.). And because of these shared views on what is likely behaviour, we can argue about the (un)likelihood of someone's state of mind (intentions or emotions) or of a certain (general) state of affairs. In the examples that were discussed above, an appeal is made to three ideas: that women will usually try anything to avoid having their breasts amputated, that if you really want something, you do your best to get there (the party organizer; the PVV), and that no cyclist team management would like bad publicity because of dope users in their team (Rabo cyclist team). As it is acknowledged by the authors of the classical handbooks, there are, of course, exceptions to these general principles about how people usually behave, but the arguments that are based on them appeal to the most likely patterns of behaviour exhibited under normal circumstances.[iv]

Braet (2004; 2007, p. 73) and Walton (2002, a.o. pp. 107; 119; 326) have characterized the classical argument from plausibility as a plausible causal or symptomatic generalization about human behaviour. This means that an evaluation of such argumentation would either depend on the issue of whether it is likely or not that certain behaviour is a sign of a certain state of affairs or a certain state of mind. Or it depends on whether or not it is likely that a certain state of affairs or state of mind could have caused certain behaviour. But if we are going to examine these arguments critically, it becomes clear that the evaluation of arguments in which an appeal to behaviour is made, should involve more. For one thing, rather than the generalized principle about human behaviour itself, it is the applicability of this principle to the person whose behaviour is referred to, that plays a role in the evaluation. After all, a critic can always say that the character traits of this person or the circumstances that this person is in, make it unlikely that (s)he has acted in the way that people generally do. The PVV may be a political party which behaves differently from other parties because they are rather inexperienced. And the organizer of the music parties called Technootjes may behave differently because he lacks the skills necessary to persuade big names to come to his party. So, arguments in which the standpoint expresses the intentions or emotions of the person whose behaviour is referred to, should be evaluated by taking this person's character into account. Rather than querying the likelihood of how people in general would behave in a certain situation, the

question must be asked as to whether this particular person would be likely to behave in this way in such a situation.

Another factor also plays a role in the evaluation of arguments in which an appeal to behaviour is made. This factor is especially applicable to arguments that have a standpoint in which a state of affairs is expressed and concerns the fact that this state of affairs is always an *estimation* of the state of affairs by the one whose behaviour is referred to. The argument used by the Rabo cyclist Thomas Dekker claims that because Rabo did not fire Dekker, this indicates that Dekker had not been using dope. The appeal to behaviour consists of the assumption that if a cyclist team management knows about dope usage, they would fire the cyclist in question. But this assumption would never support the standpoint. After all, if Rabo thinks that Dekker has not been using dope, this is certainly no guarantee that he has indeed not been doing so. This conclusion seems to reveal the weak spot of all the arguments that have a standpoint in which a state of affairs is expressed. After all, the state of affairs expressed in a standpoint is always an *estimation* of the state of affairs by the one whose behaviour is referred to.

What this means is that in order to evaluate arguments in which the standpoint expresses a general state of affairs, the relevant question is whether the person whose behaviour is referred to can be considered to be a competent or knowledgeable source. We have to consider whether this person has the capacity to make a sound judgment of the state of affairs expressed in the standpoint. The argument of the girl who had her breasts amputated shows that such an evaluation does not have to result in a negative judgement per se. The state of affairs expressed in the standpoint of the girl's argument – that there is no medical treatment for hereditary aggressive breast cancer – is actually the estimation of this state of affairs by this individual girl. So why should we believe her? Well, we have pretty strong reasons to believe her. In fact, we would probably believe any person who had had her breasts amputated. It is very unlikely that women would misjudge whether an amputation was necessary, because they would do all they could to get the relevant information. And we also know that doctors will only amputate if there is no other way possible. We can therefore conclude that it is quite likely that the girl is a knowledgeable source.

3.2. Presentation mode and critical examination

Having dealt with the evaluation criteria for arguments in which an appeal to behaviour is made, it is time to discuss the issue of their presentation mode. Many

factors may influence the choice of the counterfactual presentation mode (see Jansen 2007b; 2007c; 2008; 2009a; 2009b), but for now I will only address the reasons that seem particularly applicable to arguments in which an appeal to behaviour is made. These reasons are related to the evaluation criteria, according to which the arguer's character or competence have to be judged. They will become clear by discussing two examples of arguments in which an appeal to the arguer's *own* behaviour is made. The first example is an argument from the website Marktplaats (the Dutch eBay):
(13) "These clothes are in good condition; otherwise [if they were not in good condition] I would not be selling them."

The other is put forward by a minister who had sexually abused his daughter. His argument was:
(14) "God approves of what I do. Otherwise [if he did not approve of it] I would not do it." (*Algemeen Dagblad*, 13/03/10)

These arguments, pretty bizarre already, are even more bizarre when they are formulated without a counterfactual *If…then*-sentence:
(15) "These clothes are in good condition, because I am selling them."
(16) "God approves of what I do, because I am doing it."

Now the question is: What makes these arguments more bizarre in the presentation mode without the counterfactual *If…then*-sentence? It seems to me that the latter presentation mode shows very clearly that these are cases of non-argumentation, because they rely completely on an appeal to ethos. The inference license of the first argument is: 'If I am selling these clothes, they are in a good condition'. This statement raises all kinds of questions. First, we don't know anything about this person's character: we don't now what this person's general judgement of the condition of clothes is and we don't know whether we can trust him/her about these specific clothes. Second, the reason that is put forward looks circular because the fact that this person is selling these clothes on the internet specifically raises the question as to whether they are in good condition or not. After all, this is precisely what a potential buyer would wonder about. These problems mean that this argument cannot be evaluated. In contrast, the counterfactual argument brings the appeal to ethos and its circularity less to the fore. Its inference license camouflages the circularity because it suggests new information by calling up a new situation, namely the hypothetical situation in which the clothes are *not* sold. Therefore the argument distracts attention from

three facts: these clothes are indeed actually being sold, this situation is being put forward as a reason for their good condition, and this reason cannot be evaluated because, to do so, we have to rely on the ethos of a person whom we do not know. Although the counterfactual argument is a gratuitous argument as well, it conveys the impression that a reason is actually put forward.

The same holds for argument (16), with the inference license 'If I am doing it, God approves of it'. In this non-counterfactual presentation mode, it is very clear that the argument is based on the assumption that this minister knows exactly which actions are approved of by God and which are not. That the minister is a knowledgeable source about God's intentions is supposed to be apparent from the circular reasoning in which an appeal is made to behaviour which both father and daughter know is not right. It seems to be the case that, in the presentation mode with a counterfactual *If…then*-sentence, this dubious assumption is less obvious. In this mode a hypothetical situation is created in which the dubious behaviour is transformed into hypothetical behaviour that the minister would *not* do. As a result, the counterfactual presentation may blur the fact that the minister's argument is also completely based on ethos.

4. Conclusion

Many arguments in which an appeal to behaviour is made are presented in the counterfactual presentation mode. My question was to ask why this mode was used for these arguments. In order to answer this question, I have provided a description of these kinds of arguments and addressed the question as to how they should be evaluated. An evaluation of such arguments cannot consist in judging the plausibility of a generalization about human behaviour alone, but has to take into account the character of the person whose behaviour is appealed to or his/her capacity to make a sound judgment about the topic under discussion. These evaluation criteria may have provided one of the reasons that explain the choice of the counterfactual presentation mode. Arguments that appeal to the arguer's own behaviour may derail in such a way that they completely rely on the arguer's ethos. It is my impression that this derailment comes less to the fore in the counterfactual presentation mode.

NOTES

[i] How this implicature can be derived from a counterfactual statement is analysed by Ducrot (1973, p. 255-256). His analysis starts with the presupposition of the falsity of the antecedent. He combines this with the idea that what is stated

in the antecedent is a necessary condition for what is stated the consequent (on the basis of the Gricean Economy Maxim). This combination results in the implicature of the denial of what is stated in the consequent.

[ii] As we will see from the examples, the appeal to human behaviour can only provide evidence for the likelihood or unlikelihood of the state of affairs described in the standpoint. Nevertheless, most arguers who put forward such an argument formulate their standpoints in a much stronger way than their argumentation can account for.

[iii] That both reconstructions still contain the same elements is because they are based on structures that are each other's logical counterpart. The structure of the argument without the counterfactual *If…then*-sentence is comparable to the structure of a *modus ponens* argument. The structure of the presentation mode with the counterfactual *If…then*-sentence is comparable to the structure of a *modus tollens* argument (for more see Jansen 2007a).

[iv] See Aristotle (1975, 1357a35-157b): 'For that which is probable is that which generally happens, not however unreservedly.'

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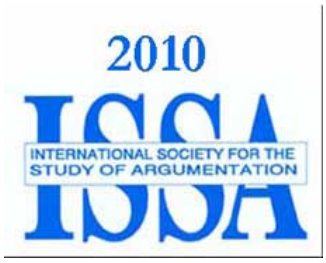
ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Interpretation And Evaluation Of Satirical Arguments



Satire and argument are a dangerous mix. What makes satire pleasurable is often how it differs from more rational argument. Satirical texts exaggerate and distort for comic effect resulting in sometimes little more than an ad hominem attack. Satire asks us to laugh first and think second. Further, some critics warn, satire can backfire if presented to audiences who are unable to recognize the author's "real" message. These concerns about satirical arguments arise, in part, due to the prevalence of satire in U.S. political discourse. Programs such as the *Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and the *Colbert Report* employ irony, sarcasm, parody, and satire while serving as a major source of information for many people in the U.S (Baym, 2005; Boler, 2006; Hariman, 2007; Reinsheld, 2006). Some programs best categorized as entertainment offer political arguments in the form of satire, such as Comedy Central's persistently popular and controversial *South Park*.

These concerns about satire come largely from studies of satirical texts rather than audiences who view satirical texts (Gring-Pemble and Watson, 2003; Kaufer, 1977; Olson and Olson, 2004; Tindale and Gough, 1987; Wilder, 2005; Wright, 2001). Yet we know that the construction of meaning comes not from a text alone, but from an interaction between an audience and a text (Hall 1980, 1993; Jensen, 1990; Lewis, 1991). Our research approaches the matter of satirical arguments by starting with audiences interpretations instead of textual features. We wish to build a model of satirical arguments unrestrained by the vocabulary and focus of textual research. In this essay, we present preliminary findings from a study of audience interpretations of arguments and an example from a recent study (Johnson, del Rio, and Kemmitt 2010) of audience evaluations of arguments. Our findings suggest that 1) audiences can interpret serious arguments as satire if the arguments are bad enough, 2) under certain conditions, satire can be missed by

audience members, 3) a failed satire does not necessarily "backfire," and 4) satirical arguments may be polysemic, but like other polysemic texts, they produce a fixed number of interpretations and evaluations.

1. What is a satirical argument?

The traditional approach defines satire as those texts with multiple, contradictory meanings. This approaches to satire sometimes incorporate the author's intentions into the definition, but some (particularly in literary studies) consider any example of polysemy as a type of satire. A satirical text be polysemic, resulting in what Ceccarelli (1998) identified as resistive reading, a type of polysemy in which different audiences focus on different aspect of the text, resulting in different, perhaps contradictory interpretations and evaluations. Satire has the potential for this type of polysemy because it offers at least two potential readings (serious and satirical).

Paying attention to author's intentions is not popular among critics these days, but author's intentions are still important to audiences. If a speaker or author makes a purposefully bad argument meant to illustrate the folly of someone or something, but that argument is interpreted by audiences in a serious way, then is the argument satirical or serious? What about an argument that just happens to be so bad that audiences believe it must be a joke? To the audience, they are experiencing a satirical text regardless of the author's intentions. Our approach was to employ a variety of texts that we felt *might be taken* as satire by audiences. Some of the texts we chose were identified by authors and critics as satire (such as the Half-Hour News Hour on Fox television or the film Starship Troopers), but others were ambiguous (such as the music video Gonzaga Love) or were not intended by the author as satire (such as the religious video "Banana").

2. Interpretations of satirical arguments

The first study, conducted in 2007, employed 11 videos taken from film, television, and the internet. Each video was less than 2 minutes long and participants viewed the videos with few clues as to its origin. While this may seem an artificial way to encounter a text, it actually replicates aspects of the modern viewing environment characterized by fragmentation and decontextualization. Further, we wanted to explore what types of readings would be produced when audiences missed the satire, so we created conditions to facilitate that. Thus, we make no claims about the likelihood of a particular satirical text being misread. We only note that under the conditions we used, it happened frequently.

We recruited 26 participants from 3 different colleges to view and respond to the videos. We did not want to draw attention to any particular aspect of the text, such as its genre, medium, or message, so we simply asked respondents to "describe what they just saw as though describing it to a friend who hadn't seen it." This allowed us to see what the participants considered to be the relevant elements of the texts.

Our analysis of the interviews employed a bottom-up, qualitative method to identify the various interpretations of each individual text. Both authors interpreted the interviews separately, grouping together similar audience interpretations of each text into our basic categories. We then merged our analysis, resolving any discrepancies through discussion and modification of categories.

Participants' responses did not fit neatly into discrete categories. Some answered by identifying what they considered to be the source of the video (i.e. "it was from YouTube"), some described the action of the video ("it showed people talking"), and others talked about what they felt the producers were trying to convey ("it was selling something"). Some participants gave multiple, sometimes contradictory interpretations of a single text. Thus, our categories of interpretation were not discrete or mutually exclusive.

All of the texts we used resulted in multiple readings that were either *shared readings* (expressed by at least two people) or *idiosyncratic readings* (expressed by only one person). Our most "open" text was a video featuring the song "California Love" with different lyrics performed by white college students. This text produced nine shared readings and five idiosyncratic readings. However, most of the texts resulted in three or four shared readings and one or two idiosyncratic readings.

For this essay, we will focus on one example from the study. Participants' reaction to the video we titled "Banana" illustrates how one argument can produce a range of interpretations, some predictable and some not. The video opens with two men seated on stools in front of a nature backdrop. One of the men holds a banana and, in an Australian accent, states:
Behold the atheist's nightmare. Now if you study a well made banana, you'll find on the far side there are three ridges, on the close side, two ridges. If you get your hand ready to grip a banana, you'll find on the far side there are three

grooves, on the close side, two grooves.

The speaker then makes a circle with his thumb and forefinger and inserts the banana into that circle. He continues:
The banana and the hand are perfectly made one for the other. You'll find the maker of the banana, all mighty God, has made it with a non-slip surface. It has outward indicators of inward contents: green too early, yellow just right, black too late. Now if you go to the top of the banana, you'll find wrapper, which is biodegradable, has perforations. Notice how gracefully it sits over the human hand. As the soda can makers have placed a tab at the top, so God has placed a tab at the top. When you pull the tab, the contents don't squirt in your face.

By this time, the speaker has peeled the banana and he holds it up next to his face. The man next to him smiles as the man continues his argument:
Notice it has a point at the top for ease of entry. It's just the right shape for the human mouth. It's chewy, easy to digest. And it's even curved toward the face to make the whole process so much easier. Seriously, Kirk, the whole of creation testifies to the genius of God's creative beauty.

As he states "ease of entry" and "curved toward the face" he makes a circle with his mouth to show how the banana would fit perfectly inside.

From the 26 participants who viewed this clip, we identified three shared readings, three idiosyncratic readings, and three "non-readings" in which the participant stated they couldn't understand the text enough to say anything about it.

The first and most common reading was that the video was religious in nature. 15 participants described the video as "a religious video," "religious program," or "infomercial promoting the existence of God." In fact, this is correct. We found the video on YouTube, where it had been excerpted from a DVD series titled *The Way of the Master* featuring Australian preacher Ray Comfort and 1980s sitcom star and outspoken Christian activist Kirk Cameron.

The second most common reading, appearing four times, was that the video was a "joke" or "parody" from a comedy show, such as *Saturday Night Live* or *MadTV*. Here is an example:
Well, the guy next to him was laughing, so it obviously would not be a Christian channel because it was kind of mocking how people believe everything was

created by God. I am really not sure. Maybe something like MadTV or some kind of program that likes to make parodies about issues and politics.

These four participants found evidence for this reading in a number of places. One thought it was a joke because no one would seriously speak about a banana in that much detail. The mismatch of topic and tone was evidence to another participant: “It was a satirical clip because the guy had a serious topic then kind of satirizing it and made it laughable with the banana.” Finally, two participants mentioned that the speaker’s accent was evidence of humorous intent, because, as one participant stated, “I think people our age kind of accept the Australian accent as some kind of comedy tone.”

The final shared reading, expressed by three participants, was that the video was a commercial, infomercial, or documentary promoting bananas. This participant found the style of the program matched that of an infomercial:
At first I thought it was pay programming when you watch it and they are trying to sell you something. Well, he is trying to sell us to something and that is just, I guess, bananas are great and you should have them.

None of the participants expressing this interpretation appeared confident in their answer. While the style and tone seemed commercial, the product, a banana, is not typically advertised or promoted in any way. Despite this disconnect, three participants felt this was the most plausible interpretation, with one stating “I don’t think it could be anything else.”

We also found three idiosyncratic readings. One participant interpreted the video as part of a game show where contestants are asked to improvise humorous comments around objects they are given, in this case, the banana. Another participant labeled it “women’s programming.” Finally, one participant thought that it was the first part of a debate and that the second man in the video was about to offer a rebuttal.

Finally, we found some “non-readings” that shed light on the process of argument reception. One participant had limited English language comprehension and couldn’t understand enough of the text to offer a coherent interpretation beyond “it was about a banana.” One participant asked that the clip be stopped midway through, stating that the video was “ridiculous” and that he had nothing else to say about it. But our most intriguing non-reading came from a participant who

had the most knowledge about the text. Here is her interpretation:
Participant: A really weird video. I like the guy's accent, because that's always pleasant to listen to. But then I believe he started with a banana saying that this is an atheist's nightmare, he starts to describe a banana. Kirk Cameron was in it, and even though he didn't say anything, we all know he was a Christian. So, um, it was Kirk Cameron, I don't know what they were doing because it was this totally sexual thing with the banana and you know, the way your hand gripped it. Were they going for a sex scene? But then Kirk Cameron was in it, and I was like "where did that come from?" I don't know where they were going with it or what they were talking about. It gripped in your hand perfectly!
Interviewer: So could you take a guess what kind of video or whatever you think that is?
Participant: No.
Interviewer: No guess at all?
Participant: No, because it talks about atheists and Kirk Cameron is a Christian, and talking about a banana and gripping. I don't know.

This participant recognized Kirk Cameron and knew that he was an outspoken Christian. She also interpreted parts of the video as sexual in nature. Because she recognized Kirk Cameron, and knew that he was a Christian, her interpretation could have been that it was a religious program of some kind. But when she also found sexual content in the text, this contradicted the religious interpretation, resulting in confusion and an inability to speak about the meaning of the text. The contrast between the religious message and humorous/sexual means of conveying the message led four viewers to conclude that it was a joke and not a serious religious argument. But for this participant, the result was confusion.

The "Banana" video produced a high number of readings, but every video argument used in this study produced multiple interpretations. Separating the shared readings from idiosyncratic readings is an important step towards sorting out the mess that polysemy makes of understanding arguments. Idiosyncratic interpretations are evidence that it is often audiences, not arguments or their authors, who control the process of making meaning. But beyond that observation, these readings cannot tell us much. Shared readings point to a more stable and potentially predictable process of meaning making. Researchers should be able to identify, either through audience research or thoughtful textual analysis, the potential interpretations of an argument.

3. Evaluations of satirical arguments

In the first study discussed here, we examined only how audiences interpreted arguments. In a second study (Johnson, del Rio, and Kemmitt, 2010), we examined how audiences evaluated satirical arguments. We located short, satirical arguments from films (*Safe*, *Starship Troopers*, and *Bob Roberts*) and a television program (Fox's short-lived comedy show *Half-Hour News Hour*). These arguments were chosen because they were labeled by writers, producers, and reviewers as satirical. Also, we selected examples that we believed conveyed a clear argument that an audience member could potentially take away. Our purpose was to examine the extent to which audiences might interpret the arguments in non-satirical ways. Thus, we removed the arguments from their context and gave the audience few clues for decoding the text. We then were able to examine how audiences evaluated arguments when they took them at face value.

Our method resulted in many instances of missed satire. Some participants saw images from the science fiction film *Starship Troopers* as real recruitment ads for the U.S. military. Participants saw the fictional debate between Senatorial candidates in *Bob Roberts* as the words of real politicians. However, just as in the previous study, these texts produced a limited range of readings.

The main finding of this second study is that missing the satire does not necessarily mean missing the message intended by the author. This can be illustrated by audience evaluations of the *Half-Hour News Hour*. We showed participants a segment of the program designed to resemble a commercial for the American Civil Liberties Union. In the clip, a white man in a suit walks down a sidewalk towards the camera while delivering these lines:

There was a time in America when white supremacists and other hate groups had to operate in the shadows, afraid to walk the streets in the daylight, afraid to show their faces. But in 1977, a group of neo-Nazis sued for their right to march through Skokie, Illinois, a town where thousands of Holocaust survivors lived. People like me helped those neo-Nazis take their case all the way to the United States Supreme court. And guess what? They won. We won. I'm the ACLU.

After viewing the video, each participant answered the same question used in the first study, "Please describe what you just saw as though describing it to a friend who hadn't seen in." Participants then answered questions about their evaluation of the message, such as "What do you think the producers were trying to say?" and "What do you think about what the producers were trying to say?"

Of the nine participants who viewed this clip, eight thought it was produced by the ACLU to promote their organization. None of the eight, however, found the argument compelling, as illustrated in these responses:
I think they could have done something better. I didn't really like it. . . I think they need more evidence to support them.

I think it was largely based on feelings in that video because they were showing pictures of stuff that a lot of people may be offended by or even proud of depending on where you side.

I don't think it should be allowed because if every person is made equal, I just definitely don't agree with that the producers are trying to put out there.

I don't believe in the thing the producers are trying to support.

While these participants may not have recognized the satire, they still engaged critically with the text. They were not impressed by the fact that the ACLU defended neo-Nazis and spoke out against what they perceived to be the author's message. The producers' intended message – the ACLU defends extremists – is still conveyed even to audiences who "missed the joke." In fact, a non-satirical reading includes a second argument that a satirical interpretation would not, that the ACLU is foolish enough to think their defense of neo-Nazis would impress people.

4. Implications for the study of argument
Our work suggests that theories of reception have much to offer the study of argument. Toulmin, Perelman, and others urged scholars of argument to look at real-world, ordinary arguments rather than theorize about the properties of imagined arguments or abstract arguments. Similarly, scholars of argument can learn much from real-world, ordinary interpretations of arguments. Before an audience member can evaluate or accept an argument, he or she must interpret the argument.

We believe that dealing with the implications of polysemic arguments is not a particularly daunting task. While our research, along with the research of many others, demonstrates that texts hold multiple meanings for audiences, this research also suggests that some texts produce only a few, fairly predictable readings. As our understanding of audiences develops, researchers can better predict potential readings from textual features, thus bringing the real and the

imagined audiences closer together.

Previous studies of textual openness have identified features that supposedly "open" a text to multiple meanings. Chief among these is satire. The logic is that satire operates by presenting two contradictory meanings at the same time (serious and satirical), thus revealing the possibility of multiple interpretations to audiences and empowering them to create their own interpretations (Fiske, 1986, 1987). Our research, in contrast, suggests that an ironic or parody text may have more than one possible reading, but that shared readings are few and often predictable. This suggests that such texts do not necessarily differ from other polysemic texts where multiple meanings are possible but limited (Ceccarelli, 1998).

In contrast, we found non-ironic texts which produced greater numbers shared and idiosyncratic readings. The "Banana" video, which produced six distinct readings, was not intended by the producers as satire, irony, or parody. Audiences could potentially have a similar reaction to other arguments. When audiences perceive an argument to be ridiculous (by whatever standard they employ), they could potentially classify that argument as part of a satire, parody, or other ironic text. The second study discussed here suggests that when audiences classify an argument as part of a satire, they may then refrain from evaluation of the argument. Participants described what they perceived to be satirical arguments as "just for fun" or "just entertainment" and offered little commentary on the substance of the argument.

When audiences encounter arguments in the real world, the circumstances do not always favor the arguer. The audience can be distracted or bored. The audience may not encounter the arguments as part of a larger case being made, experiencing only fragments as they flip through the channels, view online videos and advertisements, or selectively remember ideas days later. Complex and nuanced arguments fair poorly in such an environment. But despite the distraction and fragmentation, audiences still assemble good reasons for their beliefs and actions and researchers can begin to understand that process.

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Wittgenstein’s Influence On Hamblin’s Concept Of ‘Dialectical’

1. Introduction **[i]**

While working on the question of what influence Wittgenstein had on the development of informal logic, I faced the question of whether Wittgenstein had any influence on Hamblin. I checked the references to Wittgenstein in *Fallacies*, and found that there were four, two to the *Tractatus* and two to works of the later Wittgenstein, one identified by Hamblin as the *Preliminary Studies*, known to us as the *Blue Book* and the *Brown Book,* the other to the *Philosophical Investigations*. I was particularly struck by the reference on p. 285:

If we want to lay bare the foundations of Dialectic, we should give the dialectical rules themselves a chance to determine what is a statement, what is a question. This general idea is familiar enough from Wittgenstein.

The footnote states that “The best examples of dialectical analysis are in the ‘Brown Book’*:* Wittgenstein*, Preliminary Studies for the ‘Philosophical Investigations*.’”

This text strongly supports the idea that Hamblin was influenced by his reading of Wittgenstein. That came as something of a surprise to me, and I found myself puzzling over the above reference to ‘examples of dialectical analysis.’ I also found myself puzzling over Hamblin’s notion of ‘dialectical’, for it seemed to me that the use of ‘dialectical’ here was quite different from the way it had been used in Chapter 7.**[ii]** I hope to out these puzzles to rest in this paper.

In the sections that follow, I proceed to examine Hamblin's use of the term 'dialectical' in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 of *Fallacies*.**[iii]** In each case, I start by setting up the context in which his use of the term arises. I then state what I take to be the meaning of 'dialectical' in that context. I then take up any issues that occurred to me about that use. In Section 5, I gather together the assorted meanings together and ask: What is the relationship among them? Can we fashion a coherent account of Hamblin's use of 'dialectical' in these three chapters? Then, in Section 6, I discuss, rather more briefly, the matter of Wittgenstein's influence on Hamblin. Section 7 is my conclusion.

2. The meaning of 'dialectical' in Chapter 7

The context. Chapter 7 is about the concept of argument. Hamblin starts by making some comments about the concept of argument that seem primarily directed at logicians. At p.232, Hamblin sets aside the question of what an argument is, and instead pursues the questions of how we evaluate argument: by what criteria, he asks, should we evaluate an argument? He begins by examining alethic criteria – criteria based on truth – the sort of criteria that occur in Formal Logic. He argues that they will not work and then turns to a discussion of epistemic criteria – criteria based on knowledge – with which he also finds problems. That is the context in which we first encounter 'dialectical' in Chapter 7.

The meaning. The term 'dialectical' is introduced in Chapter 7 on page 241, at a point where Hamblin has already discussed both alethic and epistemic criteria. The ramp into the passage is found at the bottom of page 240 where he says:

In practice, we often proceed on less than knowledge. Namely on more or less strong belief or acceptance. An argument that proceeds from *accepted* premises on the basis of an *accepted* inference process may or may not be a good one in the full alethic sense but is certainly a good one in some other sense which is much more germane to the practical application of logical principles. (240-41)

Hamblin provides a name for this other sense of goodness that an argument may have – he calls it 'dialectical'. Why? The answer occurs on page 241, where Hamblin deals with an objection he anticipates will be raised by "puristic logicians" who will accuse him of selling out, of lowering his sights by being satisfied with arguments that persuade as distinct from arguments which are valid (but may not persuade). In response, Hamblin says that we must distinguish different purposes an argument may have. One of these is to convince**[iv]**; here

Hamblin's point is that we have to get the person whom we want to convince to accept the premises; otherwise even if the argument is valid, we will not succeed. So we must aim at securing acceptance of the premises if we seek to convince. Logicians can hardly complain that an argument is not an argument because it proceeds *ex concesso* (meaning, by gaining acceptance of the other) or that such arguments have no rational criteria of worth. We are, he says, in fact talking about the class of arguments Aristotle called "dialectical" (241) which he glosses as "that class of argument that work on the basis of acceptance." Hamblin admits that the dialectical merits of an argument may differ from it merits judged alethically, "but we would still do well to set down a set of criteria for them"(241). Hamblin calls these dialectical criteria; they are based on acceptance rather than truth or knowledge.**[v]**

Issues. There are at least two questions concerning his use of 'dialectical. First, exactly what is meant by acceptance? And how does it relate to belief, acceptability etc. This issue has been much discussed by others and myself, and I do not propose to take it up here.

A second issue is its relationship to the Aristotelian account. One standard account of Aristotle's concept of 'dialectical' as it applies to reasoning/argument is that it is the kind of reasoning that proceeds on the basis of premises that are widely believed (generally accepted) or endorsed by the learned (*Topics,* 100a 30, b 21). If Hamblin now uses that term to refer to a premise that is accepted by one's interlocutor [which may be neither widely believed, nor endorsed by the learned], it does seem like at least a significant extension, if not an outright change, from its Aristotelian meaning. And Hamblin seems to be taking just such a path, for he states. "Aristotle is not satisfied to leave it at this, but his actual definition of dialectical arguments is less than satisfactory" (60). And now he quotes the above definition from *Topics* and writes: "This marks them off from didactic arguments, and, as defined above, contentious arguments but does not give any clue to their supposed exceptional merit" (60). Now Hamblin says: "In fact, Aristotle is in transition from a pure Platonic view to a more measured one that treats Dialectic as mere technique unessential to the pursuit of truth" (60). It seems fairly clear that Hamblin's view of Dialectic is closer to Plato's view (as understood by Hamblin) than to Aristotle's (as understood by Hamblin); thus his apparent departure from the strict Aristotelian sense seems intentional.

In Chapter 7, then, the term 'dialectical' refers to a type of criterion for the

evaluation of argument, which Hamblin distinguishes from alethic criteria (based on truth) or epistemic criteria (based on knowledge). There are four criteria in his set of dialectical criteria, the first of which is: "(D1) The premises must be accepted." The other criteria all invoke this notion of acceptance.

3. The meaning of 'dialectical' in Chapter 8

The story about 'dialectical' in Chapter 8 is relatively straightforward.

The context: In Chapter 8, Hamblin seeks to develop what he calls "a dialectical system" which, he says is "no more nor less than a regulated dialogue or family of dialogues. We suppose that we have a number of participants – in the simplest case just two – to debate, discussion or conversation and that they speak in turn in accordance with a set of rules or conventions"(255). In Hamblin's view, Formal Dialectic is the study of such systems, the pursuit of which he now briefly justifies:

There is a case to be argued, even in modern times, on behalf of studies like Dialectic and Rhetoric against a Logic which is pursued in disregard of the context of its use. Logic is an abstraction of features of flesh and blood reasoning; and it is entirely natural that a formal theory of fallacies should be seen as simply abstracting features of fallacies …. (69)

The meaning: In Chapter 8, then, 'dialectical' is used chiefly as the adjectival form of the term 'dialectic' where here 'Dialectic' refers to Hamblin's system of Formal Dialectic. Thus here it means: 'pertaining to a system of Formal Dialectic.'

Issues: First, one wonders why Hamblin here chose 'dialectical' and rather than 'dialogical'. Dialogue logics had been in existence for some time when he wrote Fallacies.**[vi]** I believe there is a good answer to this question that will emerge later. Second, what is the relationship between the meaning of 'dialectical' here and its meaning in Chapter 7? Clearly here it has a different sense than had in the previous chapter where it referred to a type of criterion for evaluating arguments. I return to this question in Section 5, turning next to the meaning of 'dialectical' in Chapter 9.

4. The meaning of 'dialectical' in Chapter 9

The context: Having set forth his system of Formal Dialectic in Chapter 8, Hamblin turns in Chapter 9 to the issue of the authority for these dialectical rules that he has been discussing in Chapter 8. He begins: "Where do dialectical rules derive their authority, and who enforces them?" He writes:

If we want to lay bare the foundations of Dialectic, we should give the dialectical rules themselves a chance to determine what is a statement, what is a question and so on. This general idea is familiar enough from Wittgenstein [the footnote refers to Preliminary Studies…] I do not think, however, that it has ever been worked out in any detail. The programme is too large a one to be undertaken but certain features of it are of fundamental importance for us. (p. 285)

Just what is meant here by 'the programme' is not clear, but I will later refer to the views of two scholars (David Hitchcock and J.D. Mackenzie) who have offered their views about it.

In any event, the context here is that of providing justification for the rules of the system of Formal Dialectic. That justification will be dialectical.
The meaning: The meaning of the term 'dialectical' in this context is made clear when Hamblin goes on to say: "The thesis that I shall adopt is that all properties of linguistic entities are dialectical in the sense of being determinable from the broad pattern of their use" (285). Here we have the basis for Hamblin's understanding of 'dialectical' in Chapter 9. He takes 'dialectical' to mean the broad pattern of use of linguistic entities which, he holds, is to be appealed to determine their properties.
Issues: What are we to make of this text? Here is how J.D. Mackenzie (a student of Hamblin's) construes it:
I would approach the passage on p. 285 of *Fallacies* in this way. As logicians, we have an understanding of terms like "statement" built up from familiarity with axiomatic and natural deduction systems, and we use that understanding in describing dialogue. But strictly speaking, we should study dialogue on its own terms, and only later come to that very specialist sort of dialogue in which axiomatic systems are developed. And we should develop an understanding of the word "statement" from dialogue, and then modify its meaning for use in axiomatic systems, rather than the other way round. [Private correspondence with the author, used with permission.]

According to Mackenzie, Hamblin is arguing against the view that there is a pre-established meaning of what a statement is:
Wittgenstein (in the *Brown Book*) was also interested in dealing with dialogue by beginning with what people say (how expressions are used), rather than by beginning with some pre-established semantics (their "meaning"). In Formal Dialectic, we will study dialogue and how expressions are used, and from that we

will develop an account of ‘statement.’ [Private correspondence with the author, used with permission.]

This exposition seems to me to be accurate. Hamblin wants us to generate our idea of what a statement is by looking at how that expression is used, and says that to do this is to proceed in a dialectical way. Confirming texts appear later on in the chapter:
Both accounts (Quine, and Grice and Strawson) are ‘dialectical’, in that they refer their respective explications of analyticity or incorrigibility to patterns of verbal behavior. (290)

Meanings of words are…always relative to a language-user or a group G of language users. … There is a reverse side to this doctrine…: Since the language behavior of some person or group may by unsystematic or incoherent, it is not necessarily the case that questions of meaning are resoluble… It is only in so far as regular pattern of use can be determined that it is possible to make suitable judgements about meaning. (291)

By ‘dialectical’ in this chapter, then, Hamblin means a way of proceeding to assign meaning to fundamental terms in the system of Formal Dialectic. This is to be done by examining how they are used, “the broad pattern of their use.” This is the connection with Wittgenstein.**[vii]**

5. Summary and Synthesis: Hamblin’s conception of ‘dialectical’
Let me summarize the findings thus far. In Chapter 7, the term ‘dialectical’ refers to a type of criterion for the evaluation of argument. It is a criterion of premise adequacy based on acceptance rather than knowledge (epistemic) or truth (alethic). In Chapter 8, the term ‘dialectical’ has a different meaning. It is now used as the adjectival form of ‘Dialectic’ by which Hamblin means “the study of regulated dialogue or family of dialogue.” In Chapter 9, the term is assigned yet another meaning. The term is here used to denote a method by which the rules for Formal Dialectic are to be justified. These rules are said to be determinable by the broad pattern of their use, and here Hamblin has invoked what he takes to be Wittgenstein’s views. So ‘dialectical’ as it is used in Chapter 9 refers us to neither acceptance, nor to a study called Dialectic, but rather to a method or procedure for adopting rules that govern meaning of terms that are found in Formal Dialectic – that basis being the broad pattern of use.

There appears to be a marked difference between these three meanings. Is Hamblin equivocating? Or, is there an acceptable account that brings them into some proper relationship?

I believe there is a way in which these disparate uses can be brought together and unified. The key is to focus on Hamblin's concept of Dialectic. When we understand exactly what he has in mind by Dialectic and how he understands the project he calls Formal Dialectic, we will clearly understand 'dialectical' as it is used in Chapter 8. From there is it easy enough to explain 'dialectical' as used in Chapter 9. That leaves 'dialectical' as used in Chapter 7, but I think that it can readily be seen to be a part of this family.

I noted above that Hamblin's concept of Dialectic appears to be closer to Plato's concept than to Aristotle's (or, I should say, closer to how Hamblin understands Plato's and Aristotle's concepts). I believe we should view Hamblin as attempting to revive Dialectic, as an inquiry distinct from Logic (he is well aware of the conflation that took place**[viii]**) and indeed as more important than Formal Logic for the study of argument. We have already met that concept in Chapter 8 where Dialectic is conceived of as the study of regulated dialogue, or family of dialogues. So Hamblin's concept of dialectical is dialogical. Yet he does not go the route of Dialogue Logic. Why not? It may have something to do with how Hamblin thinks of Formal Logic. He writes:

There is a case to be argued even in modern times on behalf of studies like Dialectic and Rhetoric against a Logic which is pursued in disregard of the context of its use. Logic is an abstraction of features of flesh and blood reasoning; and it is entirely natural that a formal theory of fallacies should be seen as simply abstracting features of fallacies. (69)

Hamblin wants his study to be a study of argument as situated, as engaged in by participants in the practice, thereby avoiding the on-looker status, the "God's-eye view of things" (242) that he associates with Formal Logic. This may be the opportune moment to point out that Hamblin is not opposed to Formal Logic, but is opposed to the view that it should be employed as the exclusive tool in analyzing and evaluating arguments. Indeed, one of his aims in *Fallacies* is to show that something like what he calls Formal Dialectic is a much better tool for handling the fallacies.

Now in Chapter 9: If we ask how the rules for Formal Dialectic are to be justified,

the only answer can be that these rules are to be justified by reference to the practices of those engaged in the dialogue, and that refers us inevitably to the use made by the interlocutors: the broad pattern of use referred to above.

That leaves the use in Chapter 7 where it refers to a type of criterion for premise adequacy. For Hamblin, that criterion is "acceptance by the party the argument is aimed at"(242). When we understand that the context Hamblin has imagined is two people engaged in a dialogue, then what determines whether a statement is functioning properly is whether it is accepted by the other party, accepted by one's interlocutor. Thus it makes sense to see acceptance as a 'dialectical' (in the broad sense) criterion for the evaluation of argument.

My conclusion is that Hamblin is neither inconsistent nor equivocating in the way he makes of use 'dialectical' in these chapters. There is a coherent relationship among the different meanings.

6. Wittgenstein's Influence on Hamblin

While Hamblin thought of himself as Wittgensteinian (there is both internal and external evidence for this), the two explicit references to the views of the later Wittgenstein in *Fallacies* that I have discussed provide some basis for thinking that he may have been overestimating that influence. For it seems that in one case (p. 242, referring to what has come to be known as the "pain and private language argument"), he seems to me to have misread Wittgenstein. He writes:

In the limiting case in which one person constructs an argument for his own edification – though we might follow Wittgenstein in finding something peculiar about this case – his own acceptance of premises and inference is all that can matter *to him.*

In the footnote, Hamblin refers to the "well-known private language argument in *Philosophical Investigations*, #258, which can be adapted here." Since Hamblin wrote, the so-called "private language argument" has been much discussed. #258 is one of the elements of that argument but that argument itself is generally thought to commence at #243 continuing on up to #321. [Kripke (1982) thinks it starts earlier, at #198.] The following points occur to me. First, #258 is not about argument at all. It is about whether or not a person can keep track of a supposedly private sensation, 'S'. The drift of this thought experiment is to allow the reasoner to discover the enormous problems associated with this task. The inference that Wittgenstein himself draws is that there can be no criterion of

correctness here. Second, I do not see anything in the #258, or in the so-called private-language argument, or in his general position that would rule out for Wittgenstein that a person might construct an argument for his own edification, in order to see where a certain line of thinking leads – which could take place in any number of language-games: speculating, for example.

In the other case (the passage on p. 285 connecting 'dialectical' with the Wittgensteinian idea of meaning as use), Hamblin has taken Wittgenstein in a direction he might not have followed. I think that when we look to the issues Hamblin is addressing and how he is addressing them and ask: Is Hamblin operating here in a Wittgensteinian manner? It is far from clear that he is. Indeed Hamblin here offers a positive doctrine or theory (Formal Dialectic), whereas Wittgenstein seems not to be engaged in any such effort and indeed is often seen as encouraging us to avoid such efforts in philosophy. However, the most important glaring indicator is that Wittgenstein called his type of investigation "a grammatical one" (PI, #90), whereas Hamblin thinks of the work as dialectical. There is a significant difference between Wittgenstein's concept of *grammatical* and Hamblin's conception of *dialectical*, but that is a subject for another occasion.

In no way are these comments meant to detract from Hamblin's ideas which have been so enormously important in the development of Informal Logic and Argumentation Theory. It is just to say that his own understanding of what Wittgenstein meant may not have been altogether warranted.

7. Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to set forth as clearly as I can Hamblin's conception of "dialectical" particularly as it occurs in Chapters 7, 8, and 9 of Fallacies. I think I have been able to provide an account of its meaning in those three chapters and a way of understanding them as flowing from a coherent conception of Dialectic which, I believe, lies at the very core of what he is up to in *Fallacies*. Hamblin thought that at least one of these uses (that in Chapter 9) was inspired by the sort of analysis Wittgenstein engaged in in the *Brown Book*, though I have expressed doubts about whether that is so.

NOTES

[i] Thanks are due to David Hitchcock who provided the impetus and important comments; and to Jim Mackenzie for his helpful comments. Thanks as well my colleagues Tony Blair, Hans V. Hansen, Christopher Tindale, and Douglas Walton

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[ii] For my discussion of this chapter, see my (2000), pp. 182-189.

[iii] For my take on the complex story surrounding the term 'dialectical', see my OSSA 2009 paper: "Revisiting the Logical/Dialectical/Rhetorical Triumvirate."

[iv] Hamblin seems to use 'convince' and 'persuade' interchangeably.

[v] On p. 245, Hamblin sets forth five criteria (D1-D5) he calls "dialectical, ones formulated without the use of the words 'true' and 'valid.' " The literature has tended to focus on D1: "The premises must be accepted."

[vi] See Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory, Chapter 9, 246-274 for a history.

[vii] David Hitchcock has offered the following account of what Hamblin was up to: "The idea that all properties of linguistic entities are determinable from the broad pattern of their use (Hamblin, bottom of p. 285) is clearly Wittgensteinian, but with a dialectical/dialogical twist. It is not a matter of depth grammar, but of defining what it is to be a statement, to be a question, to have the same meaning at one occurrence as at another, and so forth, in terms of how words and strings of words are used in dialogues, in particular, what are the standard (expected, required) sequences of locutions in a conversation. It's a radical agenda, not yet fully appreciated. It is comparable in its reformism to the attempt of Sellars and Brandom to replace representational semantics with inferential semantics. Hamblin wants to replace both of them with dialogical semantics." Hitchcock suggests that the thesis above is the cornerstone of what he calls Hamblin's dialogical semantics. That seems to me a credible interpretation of the passage that would explain the programme to which Hamblin made reference, though clearly a departure from what Wittgenstein himself did. [Private correspondence, used with permission.]

[viii] On p. 92, Hamblin notes that 'dialectic' has come to mean 'logic'; it has dropped its old meaning and simply become the standard word for 'logic 'It seems clear that he does not approve of this development.

7 If one were inclined to press the case for Hamblin as Wittgensteinian, one could say that the term 'dialectical' is a family-resemblance concept. See *PI* (# 67).

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