ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Re-Presenting Argumentation In The Traditional Romanian Parliamentary Debate

1. Introduction

This paper **[i]** is tackling two of the four meta-theoretical principles of pragma-dialectics, that is, *socialization* and *externalization*, in the context of a specific activity type – the parliamentary debate. The paper focuses on some mechanisms used in the traditional Romanian parliamentary debate for *refutation* (section 2). An overview of the parliamentary debate as an activity type will be given in the first section of the paper, as well as some general historical information about the XIXth century Romanian political world.

Following the pragma-dialectical model of van Eemeren & Grootendorst (2004), van Eemeren et *al*. (2008), socialization is achieved by identifying which members of Parliament (henceforth MPs) take on the roles of protagonist and antagonist in the context of an argumentative discourse. Throughout the interactions, MPs place themselves on different positions which they support with arguments; as far as externalization is concerned, our approach focuses on disagreement, as a discursive activity – a dispreferred marked response to an arguable act.

In the parliamentary debate, the MPs often externalise the implicit discussion; as a result, they position themselves in explicit contrast with other MPs, protagonists of a counter-standpoint, and manoeuvre strategically, in order to obtain the most favourable presentation of the disagreement (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2002).

1.1. The parliamentary debate as an activity type

Van Eemeren & Houtlosser (2007) consider the communicative *activity types* as an analytic tool for substantiating the "*constraints* of the institutional context" parameter. There are many culturally established variants, some with a more clearly articulated format than others: "The institutional constraints of the

argumentative discourse can account for the conventional preconditions, the actual state of affairs in the discourse, the mutual commitment sets, all influencing the strategic maneuvering in a certain type of discourse" (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2007, p. 376). A political debate is considered one of the varieties with an articulated format. Van Eemeren & Houtlosser (2009, p. 8) speak about some prominent clusters of activity types, "adjudication", "mediation", "negotiation", and "public debate"; for those clusters "the strategic maneuvering will be affected in different ways depending on the constraints and opportunities going with the argumentative activity type in which it takes place" (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2009, p. 8). We cannot say in absolute certainty what kind of cluster the parliamentary debate is, as the communicative reality can vary, from adjudication to public debate or negotiation.

1.2. Political argumentation

In some views, the political discourse (the parliamentary debate included), is unregulated and often a free-form. Although this is true, political argumentation is neither random, nor unpredictable (Zarefsky 2009, p. 115).

For Zarefsky (2009, pp. 116-120) the characteristics of political argumentation are: a) the *lack of time limits* (the arguments are sometimes lengthy and indeterminate, the arguers often repeat the same standpoints regardless of the fact that other arguers have already tackled those standpoints); b) the *lack of clear terminus* (it could be very difficult to realize when an argument is closed or to pinpoint the stage the critical discussion has reached, as the arguers might be at different stages); c) the *heterogeneous audience* (the arguers are not in the position to easily attribute commitments to the audience); d) the *open access* ("extensive reconstruction of an argument may be needed before the parties all understand exactly what is at issue or before the argument can be appraised" – Zarefsky 2009, p. 120). We agree with Zarefsky's valuable synthesis, but we would like to add Ieţcu-Fairclough's opinion (Ieţcu-Fairclough 2009, p. 148), pointing out that the need for 'closure' in the decision-making political process imposes ways (nevertheless legitimate) of ending the debates "which have little to do with agreement" (for instance, voting). This observation would add to the second characteristic presented by Zarefsky for the political argumentation the idea of a partial/temporary terminus. Considering these characteristics of the political argumentation, we shall use these theoretical observations as a starting point for the analysis of the parliamentary debates, a subgenre of the political discourse.

1.3. The Romanian world and Parliament at the end of the XIXth century

In order to have a general picture concerning the background of the parliamentary activity, some general historical information should be provided. After the Crimean War, Russia's domination over the Romanian Principalities (Moldavia and Walachia) came to an end; the Principalities were placed under the collective tutelage of the western Powers. The political groupings formed two major political parties after 1859 (when the Union was accomplished) and 1866 (which marked the beginning of the reign of Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen), the Liberal and the Conservative parties. The two parties dominated the political life until World War I: the important landowners, not many, exercised important political and economic power through the agency of the Conservative Party; in the cities, a middle class of industrialists, high finance, and professionals grew in political and economic status and challenged the great landowners for power, through the agency of the Liberal Party (Hitchins 1996).

The main features of the Romanian parliamentary system were defined during Charles's reign: the king himself was a prominent figure in both domestic and foreign policy, the Parliament had two chambers, elected by means of a suffrage on the basis of income. The mass of the population was excluded from direct participation within the political life. The legislative power was shared by the king and the Parliament, the MPs had the right to question the members of the government, but there was no stipulation concerning the ministers' obligation to answer in Parliament or a sanction if the response wouldn't come.

In the Parliament, the political polarization was evident; thus disagreement in the debates was frequent, and standpoints and counter-standpoints were (more often than not explicitly) formulated and modulated by the political ideology (that seems to have had a great importance at that time). Another characteristic of the XIXth century Parliament was the MPs'tendency to involve themselves in direct disagreement, the interventions and interruptions from the part of the audience were frequent and not overlooked by the speakers or sanctioned by a third party intervention (the Chairman of the Chamber). There was no parliamentary tradition in Romania before 1859 and no modern constitution until 1866. The Romanian Parliament in the late XIXth century created its own tradition and was constantly attentive to other European Parliaments (mostly French)

2. Refutation

Our approach focuses on the *refutatio*, which requires from the arguers "critical

thinking skills, strong purposefulness and genuine personal commitment" (Ilie 2007, p. 668), and which can be achieved by resorting to *logos, ethos* and *pathos*. Nevertheless, *refutatio* can sometimes be a fallacious maneuvre (see below), diverting the audience's and the antagonist's attention from the main topic, a maneuvre which is not based on experience (or authority), testimony, or on the reference to the *doxa*.

We will focus on certain types of *refutatio* mechanisms, namely: the strategical use of definitions/ dissociation (2.1), the comparative arguments (including some ludic devices) (2.2), and anticipating or responding to counter-arguments (2.3). These mechanisms were chosen as they are frequent and prominent in our corpus of debates. The fallacious use of some other types of arguments (*ad hominem, straw man*) is also frequent, but it will not be the focus of this paper. The data are selected from several parliamentary speeches, ranging from 1869 to 1905, belonging both to conservative (Al. Lahovari, N. Filipescu) and to liberal (I.C. Brătianu) prominent leaders.

2.1. Definitions/ dissociation
Definitions are some of the most frequently used means to refute arguments. As already stated by Ilie, "In political disputes the act of defining contributes to further polarisation between adversarial positions and can therefore become rhetorically persuasive or dissuasive" (2007, p. 667).

In the Romanian parliamentary debates of the late XIXth century, many definitions concern the parties, their public roles, and their ideology. Thus, the keywords are often the names of the parties and the ideology represented by that party ("In the process of argumentation, skilful speakers do not necessarily use commonly more or less acknowledged definitions, but they generate instead new context-related and ideologically based definitions" – Ilie 2007, p. 668), sometimes with paraphrases containing the metaphorical surnames (the reds/ the whites).

In the first example, Lahovari, a conservative MP, reacts to some previous liberal speeches, with a refutational two-sided message:
(1) Lahovari: And *no one is allowed to say that democrat and liberal represent one and the same thing. Not after 12 years of Brătianu's regime* (my emphasis).
Yet, *Marat* (my emphasis), who asked for the heads of two million Frenchmen, on account of those heads thinking differently from his own, heads of which he

eventually got to a large extent, was he a Liberal? And what about *Robespierre* (my emphasis) (...)? Was he a Liberal?

All these pretended they were democrats, too (my emphasis)*.* You might as well call them like that, although, *in my opinion, they are the people's worst enemies* (my emphasis)*.* Such democrats have stained with blood the French revolution, which partly made one forget about its benefits, and darkened the memory of this movement throughout the history (applause).

Yet, to call *liberals* the people who used to punish by death, not only the spoken or written manifestations, but also the innermost thoughts of the human being, this means either not knowing the value of the words, or distorting their meaning. (Lahovari, 2.12.1888, pp. 28-29, my translation)

Al. Lahovari is an important MP, an excellent and highly educated speaker, a good organiser for the Conservative Party. His speech from December 1888 illustrates an agitated period in the Romanian political life. In 1888 the Liberals lose their power (I.C. Brătianu's mandate as Prime Minister ended after 12 years of office), in accusations of dictatorship and corruption. Al. Lahovari speaks as a member of the majority and supporter of the new government, while the antagonist is, after 12 years of majority, in the opposition's minority.

Lahovari mentions another MP's equivalence of *liberal* and *democrat,* refuting this idea by means of some counterexamples from the French Revolution (Marat and Robespierre), but he also attacks the liberal MPs with an *ad hominem* fallacy: after 12 years of liberal government, with Brătianu as a prime-minister, no liberal MP can say that the Liberals are also democrats (the MP tried to assign some general commitments to the audience). Is this a derailment or not? Is it a fallacious move from the part of Lahovari?

According to Kienpointner (2009, p. 61), "there is a continuum ranging from cases of strategic maneuvering which are rationally acceptable or at least plausible to a certain degree to other cases where strategic maneuvering is at least dubious or even clearly fallacious"; see also his final remarks: "Strategic maneuvering consisting in attempts to silence an opponent can be justified in exceptional cases, especially when limits to the freedom of speech are not (merely) established by legal sanctions, but (also) justified with reasonable arguments or with arguments which are at least plausible to a certain degree in a specific context" (Kienpointner 2009, p. 73); some attempts to silence the opponent are justifiable to differing degrees in the following contexts: (1) in highly exceptional cases,

"restrictions of the freedom of speech can be rationally justified" (Kienpointner 2009, p. 63); (2) dubious strategies, but plausible to a certain degree; (3) highly dubious strategies, exceeding rational techniques of argumentation; (4) clearly fallacious strategies, when the restrictions of the right of freedom of speech are not used only in exceptional cases (Kienpointner 2009, pp. 63-64).

Should a party be restrained from the freedom of speech because its past is considered undemocratic? It could be an ambiguous situation (between cases 2 and 3 from Kienpointner's illustrations), but we tend to label it as a derailment. The phrase: "And no one is allowed to say that democrat and liberal represent one and the same thing. Not after 12 years of Brătianu's regime", implies that the former liberal regime was not a democratic one.

Lahovari's reaction blends the appeal to logos with an ethical approach: there is historical evidence in support of his standpoint, and he presents himself, simultaneously, as a rational (*phronésis*) and moral (*arété*) human being: at the beginning of his intervention, he presents himself from the perspective of his political role as an MP, whilst, towards the end of the passage, he adopts a more general view, as a person who pays great attention to the metalinguistic use.

The most interesting thing is the way definitions are used: "All these [Marat, Robespierre] pretended they were democrats, too". In Lahovari's view, the Liberals were not democrats; this is the idea that the audience should accommodate, as the use of the presupposition-trigger, the non factive verb *to pretend*, shows. The speaker contests the attribution of the word *liberal* to the revolutionaries, in a metacommunicative approach: "this means either not knowing the value of the words, or distorting their meaning". We should note that the accusations of a non-democratic liberal regime were not new in the Romanian Parliamentary debates; this topic had been frequently used since 1876 (when Brătianu became Prime Minister), illustrating the lack of time limits and the lack of clear terminus in the political debate (as Zarefsky 2009 has rightly argued).

The two examples that follow are definitions used to differentiate the Conservatives from the Liberals, but in a less ideological and more rhetorical manner:
(2) Filipescu: Gentlemen, here are some diverging points between you and us, as they reveal themselves within the discourses of your orators. Yet, *we also differ from each other by our whole conception with regard to what a conservative party*

should be like (my emphasis). As far as we are concerned, *a conservative party is supposed to govern with the worthiest, to administrate with the most capable, to legislate with the most independent and the most objective people. This elite is the very warrant of the success for a conservative party, since it is only through the agency of this elite that it can set as the basis of its politics the brightness of the real actions, rather than the instability of the artificial/ factious popularity* (my emphasis).

Certainly, Lascăr Catargiu wasn't a theorist of the conservative doctrine. Yet, he had the instinct of his duties as a conservative. He knew he had the double duty, *to provide the country and his party with great governments, and to keep under control the unhealthy trends within the public opinion* (my emphasis).

It is in this simple formula that lays the core of the conservative doctrine, with all its enriching/ uplifting side, which is a basic feature of the conservatism. Whereas the liberalism may have a broader basis, the conservatism embodies higher peaks (my emphasis). (Filipescu, 7.03.1905, p. 324, my translation)

(3) Filipescu: As I said, *the political parties are not mere fictions, but the result of the work of time; they are like those geological layers, created throughout centuries of accumulations* (my emphasis).
(…) because, in my opinion, *the conservatism reaches the climax into the national idea. A conservative party is the one which is faithful to the past, wishing that progress be introduced according to a country's tradition, one which is an obstacle only for those innovations meant to borrow elements that run counter to our national genius* (my emphasis) (applause). (Filipescu, 20.06.1899, p. 331, my translation)

Both definitions belong to N. Filipescu, (2) being uttered 6 years after (3), but shaped in a similar way. Both definitions are uttered while the Conservatives have the governmental power and the parliamentary majority. N. Filipescu is an important figure in the Conservative Party, descendent of two aristocratic families, a highly educated and skilful speaker. The MP creates a metaphorical construction, based on hyperbole (see the rhetoric of superlatives: "to govern with the worthiest, to administrate with the most capable, to legislate with the most independent and the most objective people", and "the brightness of the real actions"; "to provide the country and his party with great governments"; "all its uplifting side, which is a basic feature of the conservatism"; "the conservatism

reaches the climax into the national idea") or the organic metaphor ("the political parties are not mere fictions, but the result of the work of time; they are like those geological layers, created throughout centuries of accumulations"). The metaphorical definition is inadequate, taking into account that Romania was a country with only 40 years of pluralistic regime; furthermore, the political groupings coalesced into parties years after the Union – the Liberals have the official status of a party from 1875, while the Conservatives organised their party in 1880. At the same time, there is ambiguity, vagueness in the expressions used for defining the conservative doctrine. We believe that this definition is used to enhance the party's *arété* (the MP's in-group is associated only with [positive] political values), but the MP is showing *eunoia* (trying to please the audience) and a tendency towards *pathos* (all the values attributed to the Conservatives have to be admired, adhered to, while the Liberals' characteristics are to be blamed and disregarded).

There is also a refutational two-sided message here, as the Liberal views are briefly mentioned: "it is only through the agency of this elite that it can set as the basis of its politics the brightness of the real actions (referring to the Conservatives), rather than the instability of the artificial/ factious popularity (referring to the Liberals)", or "A conservative party is the one which is faithful to the past, wishing that progress be introduced according to a country's tradition, one which is an obstacle (introducing the Liberal Party) only for those innovations meant to borrow elements that run counter to our national genius". The ideological difference is placed in a comparison with different domains of reference: the political supporters vs. "the political ideal": "Whereas the liberalism may have a broader basis, the conservatism embodies higher peaks". But there might be also a reference to the political supporters, those who have this political view, who embrace it, are/ represent an "elite", a smaller group. The Conservatives are the representatives of the great landowners, an elite, while the Liberals have as supporter mostly the middle class. Some characteristics of the parliamentary debate (as part of the political (discourse and) argumentation) are evident: for long periods of time the same speaker can repeat his standpoint (lack of time limits); it is not clear what stage of the critical discussion the Conservatives and the Liberal MPs have reached in giving an ideological identity to their parties (lack of clear terminus), and also the extensive reconstruction needed (open access) (characteristics (a), (b) and (d) from Zarefsky 2009, pp. 116-120).

C. Ilie (2007, p. 669) states that three processes (*identification*, *categorisation* and *particularization*) are involved in the act of defining the topic that become important for dissociation/persuasion. Considering the examples given from the debates of the late XIXth century Romanian Parliament, we tend to say that in these cases the act of defining only implies the communicative act of "making something clear and tangible" or determining "the outline and boundaries of the entity or phenomenon to be defined" (Ilie 2007, p. 669). As we have seen, there are rhetorical devices that are sometimes used in order to give the impression of outlining, clarifying, or rendering tangible a certain topic, and nothing more. As they are "instrumental in the process of social construction of identities and ideological polarization" (Ilie 2007, p. 669), definitions are used to maneuver strategically.

As a dialogic and argumentative technique (van Rees 2005), we think that dissociation (see Gâţă 2007) is being used in these examples in a *reactive* way, making explicit the conceptual basis of an argument that has been externalized.

2.2. Comparative arguments
We agree with Doury (2007) that Perelman's distinction between *comparison arguments* (defined as a subtype of quasi-logic arguments) and *arguments by analogy* (a subtype of arguments establishing the structure of reality), intuitively acceptable, is in practice hard to operate. We shall use M. Doury's proposal to consider this distinction as gradual, from arguments of comparison (bringing together two cases from overlapping domains of reference), to intermediate cases (a comparison involving two situations within the same cultural area, but temporally distant from one another), and to arguments of comparison implying cases issued from maximally distant areas (Doury 2007, p. 344).

We shall now consider only the negative function of comparison arguments – rebutting the adversary's argument. For Doury (2007, p. 344), the refutation by logical analogy could be seen as a subtype of the *ad absurdum* argument.
Although vulnerable to refutation, as the comparative arguments "involve some kind of shift" (Doury 2007: 346) and the degree of factual similarity between the compared elements is sometimes low, we have seen in our corpus that there is not a rejection of this type of polemic arguments, especially if they were transmitted in a humorous way. The *eunoia* aspects of the *ethos*, often observed in the Romanian Parliamentary debates, is frequently achieved by means of wit (jokes, irony, sarcasm, and puns).

The comparative argument in a narrative form may consist of a parable or a fable. In example 4 we have a short fable aimed at political opponents:

(4) I.C. Brătianu: And here *they come to tell us today that, once the mantle is on the people's shoulders, no one can take it away? They ask us: "Who would dare again? Who is still against the liberties and the nation? Who?"* (my emphasis). Well, gentlemen, listen to them come and say, in order to prove the freedom and

the Constitution are not being jeopardized, that the very event of May the 2nd has consolidated our liberties. Such words remind me of a fable: *having noticed that mice are avoiding it, a cat put on a cassock and went to the mice saying that it had repented and stopped eating meat* (my emphasis). (applause, hilarity) Yet, this is just a popular saying, which I don't believe M. Grădişteanu knows, as he has hardly lived among the people: *"Who has eaten (once), will eat again…"* (my emphasis)/ [fr. "Qui a bu, boira"] (applause) (Brătianu, February 1869, p. 106, my translation)

I.C. Brătianu is the leader of the Liberals, and one of the artisans of installing Prince Charles as ruler of Romania in 1866. The Conservatives are presented as a group with ambiguous political interests, only three years after the political change (the overthrow of Alexandru Ioan Cuza as prince of Romania and his replacement with Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen). The Conservatives' attitude in 1869 is compared to that of the cat – as the cat is always supposed to eat mice, the Conservatives could jeopardize the liberties and the Constitution. This is an attack to their credibility (trustworthiness), highly dubious (to quote Kienpointner), implicating a comparison from maximally distant areas and evading the burden of proof by the endoxal justification: "Who has eaten (once), will eat again".

The following intervention also uses arguments of comparison, bringing together two cases from the same domain of reference (the economic crisis and the need for an external loan), with temporal proximity:

(5) N. Filipescu: (…) Mr. Panu's proposal reminds me of another solution, with the same simplicity, brought to our attention last year. While we were sighing for the loan, while we were waiting for the telegram, announcing that the loan has been settled, to arrive at any minute, some delegates of a commercial institution came to the Minister of Finance to suggest a solution.

The gentlemen were received by general Manu in his cabinet, and they shared the

following thoughts with the minister:

–	Hon. Minister, we have found the solution to the crisis.

–	And what would that be?

–	To get a loan!! (Hilarity).

You may be tempted to answer these solutions as the French do: « Comment? Vous avez trouvé ça tout seul ? »

Gentlemen, if we put aside this only proof of M. Panu's friendly generosity, I have to state that … (Filipescu, 30.11.1900, p. 425, my translation)

The speech is from November 1900, referring also to the previous year. 1899 and 1900 are illustrating a complicated political and economical situation in Romania. After a governmental crisis in the spring of 1899, the Conservative Party forms a new government facing one of the worst crises of that time, due to a severe drought (Romania's economy depended heavily on agriculture). Both Filipescu and Panu are conservatives, members of the majority, but Filipescu is an aristocrat, an important figure of the party, while Panu, after some former liberal views, is a MP with a delicate position in the party (the king rejected his nomination as a minister in the conservative government. One year later, in 1901, Panu appears as an independent MP in the Parliament).

The short conversational narratives represent one of the main strategies of creating solidarity within a group, and simultaneously ratifying the *self* of the teller (the *eunoia* aspect of the speaker). Connected by analogy, Panu's proposal and the suggestion from the short story are both a rejected anti-model. This time, the analogy brings together two aspects closely connected. Portraying the characters from the joke as stupid and making the analogy with the antagonist's proposal could be an indirect *ad hominem* attack (a surprising attitude among members of the same party; on the other hand, in the Conservative Party there are rivalries, the conservative MPs being less "disciplined" than the Liberals).

The appreciation of the humorous insertions (hilarity, applause) indicates the fact that this was a common practice in the XIXth century Romanian parliamentary debate (and it still is), and that they signal a certain intergroup and interpersonal relation. The funny insertions create the anti-models to be refuted, illustrating the polemic use. The argumentative role could be either to enhance the value of the arguer's own standpoint/argument (*probatio*), or to stress the previously used moves that refuted a counter-argument (*refutatio*).

2.3.Anticipating and responding to counter-arguments
The argumentative move assumed by the arguer in order to anticipate or respond to counter-arguments would be a two-faceted reality, having a justificatory and a refutatory potential. According to van Eemeren & Grootendorst (2004), the arguer succeeds to place himself in a situation in which he has the opportunity to demonstrate the strength of his argumentation (and the acceptability of his standpoint) by anticipating and refuting a countermove attributed to the opponent.

The last example is rather long, so we have decided to divide it into two relevant exchanges between the protagonist (N. Filipescu, a Conservative), the mayor of Bucharest at that time, and his antagonist (Delavrancea, a Liberal). The debate took place after a students' demonstration at the statue of an important historical figure (Michael the Brave), despite the official interdiction and the presence of the police at the scene:
(6)
(a). N. Filipescu: (…) You will not contest that, at the Liberal club, one/ people applauded as the students passed by, either while they were going to or coming back from the railway station. But you keep saying: Show us a person, an agent. Mr. Delavrancea, I think I'm not wrong when I say that Mr. Cezar Ionescu, who was arrested and brought in front of justice, was a student and a journalist, at the same time.
B. Ştefănescu Delavrancea: You are wrong.
N. Filipescu: I was just asking, not stating that. Nevertheless, it seems to me that that gentleman is a sub-editor at "The Romanian".
B. Ştefănescu Delavrancea: And is 'The Romanian' a national-liberal publication?
N. Filipescu: So far, I thought it was.
B. Ştefănescu Delavrancea: Liberal-democrat, yes, but not national-liberal.
General Gh. Manu: 'The Romanian' is no longer a national-liberal newspaper? I can't wait to see what the oldest liberal publication, that is 'The Romanian', has to say about it (…) (Filipescu, 10.02.1894, p. 140, my translation)

In order to analyse the exchange, we have to clarify the chronology of the political discussion: the local power (represented here by Filipescu) had accused the opposition of being behind the students' manifestation. The opposition has reacted and asked for a proof, that is to name a member of the Liberal Party involved in the events. Filipescu gives the example of a well-known figure, who

was both a student and a journalist. As Delavrancea is firm in contradicting him ("You are wrong"), but without any piece of evidence (evading the burden of proof), Filipescu feigns to agree with him, but then he insists on saying that the gentleman he named, Cezar Ionescu, was a journalist for a publication, "The Romanian", with liberal affiliation. Filipescu presents his argument with an attenuated degree of certitude ("I think I'm not wrong when I say that...", "I was just asking, not stating that.", "it seems to me that..."). After Filipescu's affirmation that the young man is a journalist at "The Romanian", Delavrancea contests the newspaper's liberal affiliation (denying an unexpressed premise); although both Filipescu and Manu state the real newspaper's liberal affiliation, Delavrancea contests that affiliation introducing political connotations: "Liberal-democrat, yes, but not national-liberal", which does not stand against the fact that the newspaper was, after all, a paper of the opposition.

Delavrancea is, throughout the debate, an antagonist unwilling to respect the rules, unwilling to accept evidence and to admit that the protagonist has conclusively defended his standpoint (a situation that seems to be repeating in the Romanian political debate), as in (b). In order to conclusively refute counter-arguments, Filipescu chooses to anticipate different attacks by presenting the event through the viewpoint of liberal newspapers. The speaker quotes at length the development of the events, in order to prove that the police was not to blame, and that those producing damages in the centre were the students:

(b). N. Filipescu: Here is what "The Romanian" says, by the voice of its editor, who was an eyewitness to the events: „I was in the first lines; when we approached the statue, we came across a sergeants' cordon, lead by inspector Dristorian.

–   Walk on, gentlemen, walk on, the inspector tells us."
"Yet, his notification was useless and badly timed, as the first lines, pushed by those in the back, could not resist the people's movement and, after having broken through the sergeants' cordons, conquered the statue, from where speeches began to be delivered." Where did the provocation come from, Mr. Delavrancea?

B. Ştefănescu Delavrancea: The Police.

N. Filipescu: If you keep saying that the Police made the provocation, after all these pieces of evidence, then any discussion becomes useless.

B. Ştefănescu Delavrancea: Who put out the lamps? And who made the train break down?

N. Filipescu: You've been provided with all these explanations; now I want to prove how the things happened at the Statue of Michael the Brave, as they are presented in the opposition's newspapers. (…) (Filipescu, 10.02.1894, pp. 143-144, my translation)

After quoting from the newspaper, arriving at a key scene, when the advertisement of the police is transgressed and the students reach the statue, Filipescu asks Delavrancea to admit that the provocation came from the students (it is a strategy used to approach the concluding stage). Instead, Delavrancea considers that the police provoked the students; in his turn, Filipescu claims that the discussion could not continue (the critical discussion can no longer go on since the antagonist does not obey the rules): "If you keep saying that it was the Police who made the provocation, after all these proofs, then any discussion becomes useless". Delavrancea's questions aim at taking the discussion back to the confrontation stage, but Filipescu states that the response has already been given and he can return to the facts presented in the opposition's papers (argumentation stage); despite Delavrancea's non cooperative attitude, Filipescu goes on quoting from the opposition's papers, as the quotations are not rejected by the opponent. This is Filipescu's anticipating strategy to Delavrancea's countermoves aimed at maintaining a deep disagreement.

3. Conclusion
It has been argued in this paper that the mechanisms used to convey *refutatio* in the parliamentary practice reflect: the prominence of the ideological definitions (derived from the lack of political tradition and the need to create one); the use of wit; the (implicit) denial of the protagonist's successful defence of the standpoint. We assume that the way refutation is used in the XIXth century Romanian Parliament, as reflected in our corpus, is culturally influenced and is a result of the weak institutional constraints at that time.

The analysis of the corpus revealed that the discussion with the antagonist is only an "argumentative/communicative trope", as the real target is beyond the MP that has taken the role of antagonist, and beyond this one to one confrontation (protagonist/ antagonist). This situation involves interpersonal affiliation/ delimitation (in-group affiliation and out-group delimitation) and the need to persuade the public, usually, though not always, a silent and neutral arbiter. This "argumentative/communicative trope" might be taken into account as one of the characteristics of the political argumentation, too.

The pragma-dialectical model of a critical discussion, as well as the strategic manoeuvring are important instruments in the analysis of the political discourse, in general, and of the parliamentary discourse, in particular. Considering the parliamentary debate as a critical discussion offers a coherent model of interpretation. Observing, on the one hand, the stages the critical discussion has reached, and, on the other hand, the way MPs manoeuvre strategically in order to illustrate an explicit disagreement and to attain the most favourable presentation of this disagreement, helps to understand the way this activity type works, and what are its basic characteristics.

NOTES

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Arguments About 'Rhetoric' In The 2008 US Presidential Election Campaign

Barack Obama's prowess in the art of rhetoric, for which he had gained a national reputation with a stirring keynote speech to the 2004 Democratic National Convention, was much commented upon during the 2008 US presidential election campaign and became a stimulus for public debate on the necessity, value, and danger of rhetoric as a political-communicative practice. Extending work by Craig (1996, 1999, 2008; Craig & Tracy 2005) on normative concepts and arguments in ordinary metadiscourse (practically-oriented discourse about discourse), this paper presents an initial survey of arguments about rhetoric that appeared in public metadiscourse of the 2008 campaign. Issues that emerged in this debate engaged classic lines of argument between rhetorical and critical traditions of thought concerning the legitimacy of rhetoric, thus showing the continuing relevance of those traditions and their capacity to illuminate essential tensions in democratic public discourse.

1. "Rhetoric" in the 2008 campaign
US presidential election campaigns follow an extended course in which candidacies for major party nominations are usually announced more than a year in advance of the national election. Candidates campaign to raise money and compete in a long series of intra-party state contests (primary elections and caucuses) that stretch through the early months of the election year and

determine the selection of delegates to national party nominating conventions held in the summer. Party candidates are formally designated at those conventions and then campaign as standard bearers of their parties until the early November presidential election. The national discourse that surrounds the campaign is punctuated by the rhythms and contingencies of this long process. Thus, the debate about *"rhetoric",* both leading up to and following the 2008 election, ebbed and flowed through a series of key news events, which it will be useful to chronicle briefly as background to the following analysis.

February 2007 – the John Howard flap. Shortly after Barack Obama formally announced his candidacy on February 10, 2007, the conservative Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, was quoted as saying that terrorists would rejoice if Obama (who had opposed the 2003 US invasion of Iraq) were to win the presidency. Although his remarks were almost universally condemned, Howard stood by them. Ironically, it was Obama himself who raised the question of rhetoric in this situation:
(1) "We have close to 140,000 troops in Iraq, Mr Howard has deployed 1400. I would suggest he calls up another 20,000 Australians and sends them to Iraq, otherwise it's just a bunch of empty rhetoric." (quoted by Packham & Balogh 2007)

February 2008 – Obama accused of plagiarism. In a February 16, 2008 speech in Wisconsin, Obama was defending himself against persistent charges by the Hillary Clinton campaign that Obama spouted "empty rhetoric." Arguing that words have inspirational power, he quoted famous American examples:
(2) "'I have a dream' – just words? 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal' – just words? 'We have nothing to fear but fear itself' – just words? Just speeches?" (quoted by Spillius 2008)

The passage closely resembled one in a speech given two years before by Obama's friend, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick. Framing the incident as a serious case of plagiarism, a Clinton campaign spokesman was reported to have said:
(3) "Senator Obama's campaign is largely premised on the strength of his rhetoric and his promises, because he doesn't have a long record in public life. When the origin of his oratory is called into question, it raises questions about his overall candidacy." (quoted by Spillius 2008)

In response, while Obama admitted he should have attributed his words to Patrick, Obama and Patrick both made light of the incident, and Obama defended his rhetoric's essential authenticity:

(4) "It's fair to say that everything that we've been doing and generating excitement and the interest that people have had in the elections is based on the core belief in me that we need change in America," he said. "And that's been heartfelt and that's why I think it's been so effective" (quoted by DeFrank & Saul 2008).

February-March 2008 – "NAFTA-gate." Although the name, "NAFTA-gate," didn't stick, Obama's campaign was briefly on the defensive after allegations that an Obama advisor had privately assured Canadian officials that Obama's criticism of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was merely campaign rhetoric directed at labor union voters in Ohio.

(5) … [S]enior Clinton campaign officials repeatedly stressed the importance of the contradiction between Mr. Obama's anti-NAFTA rhetoric and the private assurances of one of his advisers … "Because it's just flat-out wrong to tell the people of Ohio one thing in public about NAFTA and say something quite different to the government of Canada behind closed doors."

Ms. Clinton said yesterday that she believed the Obama campaign had given the Canadian government "the old wink-wink."

"I think that's the kind of difference between talk and action that I've been talking about," she went on. "It raises questions about Senator Obama coming to Ohio and giving speeches against NAFTA." (Ibbitson 2008)

March 2008 – the "race speech." On March 18, 2008 Obama delivered a major speech in Philadelphia on the subject of race in America. The speech responded to a crescendo of criticism concerning a long history of racially inflammatory sermons by the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, pastor of the Chicago church Obama had attended for 20 years. Obama's speech disavowed Wright's most extreme statements while acknowledging the complexity of race as an issue in American society, the reality of racial injustice, and the anger felt by whites as well as blacks. Reactions to the speech ranged from predictable charges of empty rhetoric to effusive praise for its eloquence and unprecedented candor, which was said to have cleared the air for a more open national discourse on race (Alexovich 2008). Journalists Amanda Paulson and Alexandra Marx summarized some of the extensive commentary on the speech that offered reasons for its importance:

(6) … "I appreciate that he's taking the platform he's on to say things no politician has said before," says Keith Gilmore, a black man who works at the University of Chicago's business school. "Now politicians know to speak to people directly and honestly. We're looking at race in a different way now."

In Manhattan, Doug Mohrmann, an older white man, was less certain. "I think he adequately divorced himself from some of the more controversial statements," he says. "But I think 20 years of being with that pastor and 20 years of being with that church, and totally committing to that guy and to not have addressed that kind of rhetoric before…. It's just unacceptable."
[…]
On the rhetoric itself, writers lauded the speech's direct, conversational language as well as its nuance and complexity. "It was a sophisticated and honest analysis of the problem," says Terry Edmonds, former director of speechwriting for President Clinton, who called it "one of the best speeches on race in the last 20 years."

Whether American voters agree is still an open question. Even those who believe the address is destined for the annals of great American oratory are unsure.

"As a speech, it was bold, clear, well organized, eloquent in its description of history and current issues and future dreams and ideals that people of good will all share," says Sorensen. "Whether the political strategy was brilliant we'll find out later." (Paulson & Marx 2008)

Example 6 illustrates contrasting modes of commentary on oratory, one emphasizing how the candor and sheer eloquence of the speech can serve as precedents for subsequent discourse, the other emphasizing that rhetorical statements establish political alignments that can be assessed apart from the speech's rhetorical qualities but can also be heightened, for better or worse, by the rhetorical power of the speech.

June 2008 – Father's Day speech. Another speech on racially sensitive matters that elicited commentary was one Obama delivered in a Chicago church on the occasion of Father's Day (June 15, 2008), in which he criticized African American men who abandon responsibility for their children. Illustrative of one line of commentary on the speech is the following example (7), in which a newspaper commentator and fatherhood activist acknowledges the power of words and,

while drawing a contrast between words and actions, emphasizes in this case that Obama's personal behavior as a committed father increases the power of his oratory.

(7) This is not the first time Mr. Obama has spoken about the fatherhood crisis in our nation, but these were probably some of his strongest and most direct remarks. No doubt, I am delighted when someone of his stature and influence speaks out about this important issue in such a forceful way. I have been in Washington long enough to know the power of words and the importance of rhetoric.
However, I tend to be more impressed by reality than rhetoric. In this case, the real story – the underemphasized one – is not Mr. Obama's rhetoric, but rather the reality of his example. Unlike most black fathers, Mr. Obama is married to the mother of his children. No "baby mama" for Mr. Obama. His real "Obama girl" is his wife. (Warren 2008)

July 2008 – Berlin speech. On July 24, Obama delivered a speech before a huge crowd at the Victory Column in Berlin, Germany. The enthusiastic reception was cited either as evidence for Obama's potential to transform international relations or for the emptiness of his rhetoric and his vacuous "rock star" celebrity status.

August 2008 – nomination acceptance speech. Another event that stimulated a flurry of commentaries about rhetoric was Obama's August 28, 2008 speech accepting the nomination of the Democratic Party, which he delivered in a large stadium in Denver, Colorado before a live crowd of more than 70,000 as well as a national television audience. Somewhat contrary to expectations based on Obama's reputation for soaring eloquence, commentators noted, the speech was relatively straightforward and consisted largely of specific policy positions; as one British observer put it, the speech was:
(8) … short on the high falutin' rhetoric and long on specifics. (Harnden 2008)

2009 – health care debate & election results. Public comments about Obama's rhetoric did not, of course, come to an end with the 2008 election campaign but continued after his election. His inauguration as president on January 20, 2009 was a major event, and the speech he delivered on that occasion was widely praised. Increasingly common, however, as the year went on were commentaries that contrasted Obama's successful campaign rhetoric with qualities of his speech that evolved as he faced the realities of governing. While economic problems

mounted during 2009, CNN noted:

(9) … with the economy in a recession and people afraid for their financial future, Obama's soaring campaign rhetoric has given way to grim reality. (Acosta 2009)

Moreover, the political difficulties he faced, for example, in persuading the nation to support his health care reform plan, led some to conclude that Obama's rhetoric was becoming less effective. As illustrated by the following excerpts from an analysis by Peter Baker in *The New York Times*, a variety of reasons were advanced to argue that the normal conditions of governing reduce the capacity for even a great orator like Obama consistently to produce great or effective rhetoric.

(10) But the limits of rhetoric were on display last week when the president could not rescue two foundering candidates in governor's races in New Jersey and Virginia. Has Mr. Obama lost his oratorical touch? Is the magic finally beginning to fade? Does the White House rely too heavily on his skills on the stump to advance his priorities?

It may be too soon to reach such conclusions. The Democrats who lost last week, after all, had fatal flaws all their own. But the results do suggest that Mr. Obama's addresses these days may not resonate quite the way they did. Speeches that once set pulses racing now feel more familiar. And if that remains the case heading into next year, it could make it more difficult for the Democrats' own Great Communicator to promote his program and carry along allies in crucial midterm elections. (Baker 2009).

2. Analysis
Data for this study consisted of 89 short texts selected from search results obtained by searching the Internet via Google and the Lexis-Nexis database of major newspapers, using the keyword combination of "Obama" and "rhetoric." Searches focused primarily on the election year of 2008 but with some attention to 2007 and 2009 (3 texts were selected from 2007, 80 from 2008, and 6 from 2009). Texts that presented arguments about Obama's rhetoric or about rhetoric in general with reference to Obama were selected so as to represent a range of themes that were prominent in the discourse of the period.**[i]**

The analysis found that arguments about Obama's rhetoric in the 2008 campaign clustered around three broad issues having to do with the relation of rhetoric and

reality, grounds for judging a speaker's sincerity or authenticity, and the danger to democracy posed by a cult of celebrity. These issues are examined in detail in the following sections.

2.1. Rhetoric and reality

Commonplace denunciations of "empty rhetoric" or "mere rhetoric" were, of course, frequently used to dismiss the value of Obama's speech. Detractors claimed that "words are cheap," and that they aren't as credible as actions or experience. Flowery words cannot be trusted. "Solutions" require "reality," "policy," and "pragmatism," all positioned as rhetoric's opposites. Even Obama himself used this line of argument and did not hesitate to denounce the "empty rhetoric" of his opponents, as his criticism of John Howard illustrates (example 1). Yet, counter-themes also emerged in public discourse that asserted the necessity of rhetoric for inspiring collective visions of the future and for mobilizing people to action: rhetoric as an indispensible element of leadership and a producer of public reality, not merely as fine words divorced from reality.

Several examples introduced above present arguments unfavorably contrasting words to experience or actions (see examples 1, 3, 5, 7). A common assumption of these arguments is that words may be (or are, in a given case) inconsistent with actions and, therefore, should not be trusted. In example 7, however, the fact that Obama's words are backed up by actions (he practices what he preaches) lends credibility to his words.

Example 11, an editorial published in *USA Today* early in the campaign, represents a relatively mild questioning of what Obama's rhetoric meant for the type of president he would become.

(11) Most of what voters do know about Obama involves style more than substance. He's a charismatic speaker who promises to change the nation's divisive and often dysfunctional politics … But the presidency is obviously about more than inspiration … [V]oters would do well to look beyond the unmistakable appeal of Obama's rhetoric and examine his record for clues as to what kind of president he would be. (Obama's Rhetoric 2008, excerpts)

Many judgments of Obama's rhetoric were considerably harsher. In a piece for the *Weekly Standard*, for example, David Barnett asserted:
(12) There's a hollowness to Obama's rhetoric. When Obama delivered his famous

(and effective) "just words" rejoinder to Hillary Clinton's barbs, the speech inadvertently revealed the emptiness of Obama's rhetoric. (Barnett 2008)

They were just words, Barnett argued, because Obama wasn't planning on acting at all.

In a critique of a major speech Obama had given in Berlin, Germany, *New York Times* columnist David Brooks argued that rhetoric is more powerful when grounded in reality. Using an interesting (and not uncommon) distinction between rhetoric and argument, Brooks unfavorably compared Obama's to previous speeches in Berlin by two American presidents:

(13) When John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan went to Berlin, their rhetoric soared, but their optimism was grounded in the reality of politics, conflict and hard choices ... In Berlin, Obama made exactly one point with which it was possible to disagree. In the best paragraph of the speech, Obama called on Germans to send more troops to Afghanistan.

The argument will probably fall on deaf ears ... But at least Obama made an argument. Much of the rest of the speech fed the illusion that we could solve our problems if only people mystically come together ... But he has grown accustomed to putting on this sort of saccharine show for the rock concert masses ... His words drift far from reality ... Obama has benefited from a week of good images. But substantively, optimism without reality isn't eloquence. It's just Disney. (Brooks 2008, excerpts; see also Fields 2008)

While claiming like Barnett and Brooks that Obama's rhetoric was too often hollow rather than genuinely inspiring, *Financial Times* blogger Gideon Rachman drew an opposite conclusion for Obama's presidential prospects. Obama, he argued, was actually quite capable of engaging with substantive policy issues, and his vacuous rhetoric was merely a smart political strategy, not indicative of how he would act as president. Here the disconnection between words and actions, rhetoric and reality, works in Obama's favor:

(14) And while Mr Obama's most "inspirational" phrases are vague to the point of vacuity, he has shown in a series of television debates that he is more than capable of serious discussion. You do not get to be president of the Harvard Law Review if you cannot cope with detail.

So Mr Obama is not relying on empty exhortation because that is all he is capable

of. It is a deliberate political strategy. And it makes sense. The more a candidate gets stuck into the detail, the more likely he is to bore or antagonise voters. Appealing to people's emotions is less dangerous and more effective.

Bill Clinton has said sniffily of Mr Obama that "I think action counts more than rhetoric". The argument of Hillary Clinton's campaign is that just because Mr Obama gives great speeches, it does not mean that he will be a great president.

I would reverse that. Just because Mr Obama gives lousy, empty speeches, it does not mean that he will be a lousy, empty president. (Rachman 2008)

In contrast to assessments that Obama's rhetoric was vacuous even though strategically effective, others maintained that his speeches were genuinely inspiring and argued that the ability to inspire and give a great speech is part of the job description: How can action be taken unless leaders mobilize the masses with rhetoric? This was the point Obama (and Deval Patrick) had implied by mentioning the inspiring words of past leaders such as Martin Luther King (example 2). King's "I have a dream" speech was more than just words; it crafted an inspiring vision that energized a great social movement and changed the world. Citing similar examples in a *Washington Post* commentary, Michael Gerson argued that artful rhetoric (contrasted to "thoughtless spontaneity") is an indispensible element of leadership:

(15) The construction of serious speeches forces candidates (or presidents) to grapple with their own beliefs, even when they don't write every word themselves. If those convictions cannot be marshaled in the orderly battalions of formal rhetoric, they are probably incoherent.

The triumph of shoddy, thoughtless spontaneity is the death of rhetorical ambition. A memorable, well-crafted speech includes historical references that cultivate national memory and unity – "Four score and seven years ago." It makes use of rhythm and repetition to build enthusiasm and commitment – "I have a dream." And a great speech finds some way to rephrase the American creed, describing an absolute human equality not always evident to the human eye.

Civil rights leaders possessed few weapons but eloquence – and their words hardly came cheap. Every president eventually needs the tools of rhetoric, to stiffen national resolve in difficult times or to honor the dead unfairly taken.

It is not a failure for Obama to understand and exercise this element of

leadership; it is an advantage. (Gerson 2008)

Some writers pointed out the inherent hypocrisy in Hillary Clinton's attacks on Obama's rhetoric, which, of course, employed rhetoric. Obama's defenders argued that the hope he embodied and the excitement he generated were both real and much needed by the millions who wanted political change. Moreover, some argued, the dichotomy between rhetoric and reality is false; there is no contradiction between soaring rhetoric and policy detail:

(16) The fact is that while Obama's rhetoric has garnered a great deal of attention – as it should – he has always had detailed policy proposals as well, both on his Web site and in many of his speeches, some of which have been richer in policy detail than in soaring rhetoric.

Just because Obama knows how to make a spellbinding speech does not mean that he is incapable of framing a policy. (Pajerek 2008)

Other lines of argument about the power of rhetoric to produce reality are suggested by quoted remarks of Keith Gilmore and Doug Morhmann in example 6 (above): Rhetoric generates models for ways of speaking that enable more or less productive discourse, and rhetoric commits speakers in ways that can create or dissolve political alignments.

Ironically, in light of Obama's reputation for poetic speech, he was criticized a year after the election for being too enmeshed in technocratic policy details and failing to craft a compelling narrative to build public support for his policies. "More poetry, please" was the plea voiced by columnist Thomas L. Friedman in *The New York Times*:

(17) He has not tied all his programs into a single narrative that shows the links between his health care, banking, economic, climate, energy, education and foreign policies. Such a narrative would enable each issue and each constituency to reinforce the other and evoke the kind of popular excitement that got him elected.

Without it, though, the president's eloquence, his unique ability to inspire people to get out of their seats and work for him, has been muted or lost in a thicket of technocratic details. His daring but discrete policies are starting to feel like a work plan that we have to slog through, and endlessly compromise over, just to finish for finishing's sake – not because they are all building blocks of a great national project. (Friedman 2009)

Also interesting in this connection is a story that appeared a few months earlier in *The Onion*, a satirical fake newspaper, under the title "Nation Descends into Chaos as Throat Infection Throws off Obama's Cadence." When "a mild throat infection threw off President Barack Obama's normally reassuring and confident speech cadence," according to this fictional story, "[w]ithout the president's fluid, almost poetic tone to reassure them, the American people have abandoned all semblance of law and order and descended into a nationwide panic" (Nation Descends 2009). The assumption satirized in this piece was that the nation was literally held together by Obama's rhetoric.

To summarize, the public debate on Obama's rhetoric reveals complexities in the discourse of rhetoric and reality. If words are not always consistent with actions, if rhetoric can deceive audiences or lose touch with reality, it is also the case that rhetoric has an indispensible role in producing the real conditions of discourse, political solidarity, collective action, and social change. Rhetoric not only reflects reality or fails to do so; it also constitutes reality.

2.2. Eloquence and authenticity
The problematic relation between rhetoric and reality is due in part to the equally problematic matter of a speaker's sincerity. Obama's "smoothness" with words was taken by some as a sign of inauthenticity; he was merely a clever salesman, a huckster. Yet the sometimes bumbling speech of Obama's opponent in the general election, John McCain, was taken by others as a sign that McCain was inauthentically pandering to voters rather than addressing the issues he really cared about. Given the power of eloquence to create false impressions of sincerity, how can audiences assess the authenticity of words they are hearing? Does the very question rely on a false dichotomy?

Obama and his opponents agreed that the effectiveness of his rhetoric depended on the impression of his sincere belief in what he was saying but disagreed about the reliability of that impression (compare examples 3, 4, 5, and 13 above). A contradiction between words and actions was frequently cited as a sign to argue that the words were insincere. But artfully crafted eloquence is inherently suspect for its capacity to hide character flaws, as the following assessment of Obama's rhetoric suggests, citing the authority of John Milton:
(18) Mr. Obama's rhetoric is refreshing after George W. Bush's tangled syntax and mangled sentences. His word comfort contrasts favorably with Mr. McCain's bluntness in the awkward cadences of an old soldier. But speeches are not

spontaneous; they are carefully crafted and can hide a multitude of sins. The poet John Milton, the most educated man of his time, intentionally wrote dull speeches unenlivened with simile and metaphor when delivered by the character of God in "Paradise Lost." He gave Satan the florid eloquence to persuade and beguile, expecting his readers to see how words can deceive. (Fields 2008)

If by one logic authentic speech is dull and plainspoken while eloquence is not to be trusted, a different logic warrants exactly opposite inferences. In this alternative view, genuine passion for what one is saying inspires eloquence, while inauthentic speech tends to be inarticulate and lackluster. Democrats used this logic to criticize McCain for his "obvious inauthenticity," claiming that all his bumbling came from the fact that he wasn't talking about issues he cared about, only pandering to voters:

(19) John McCain's inauthenticity could not be masked. McCain had no choice but to change his stripes to appeal to the right wing of the Republican base, embracing ultra-conservative religious views and tax-cutting that he had previously opposed. The true believers on the right didn't buy it and neither did McCain, and it showed. He found himself having to talk about things he didn't care about. Last night, in his concession speech, the real John McCain was free of those constraints, and it was stunning. His authentic personality came shining through. If THAT John McCain had been running for President, he would have given Obama a much closer fight. (Greer 2008)

Obama's March 18, 2008 speech on race occasioned much commentary about his authenticity or lack thereof (see example 6, above; see also Alexovich 2008). Supporters described the speech as open, frank, and very eloquent. They championed Obama's effort to talk about an issue that no politicians ever do. His nuanced position and his sympathetic acknowledgment of controversial views with which he did not necessarily agree were taken as signs of his courageous honesty. On the other side, some critics (mostly conservative bloggers; few in the mainstream media) found the speech itself offensive, racist, and contrived, and some accused Obama of outright lying to obscure his relationship to his African American pastor, Jeremiah Wright, whose inflammatory sermons had occasioned the public outcry to which Obama was responding. One of the most common arguments was that Obama claimed to be able to transcend race, and this was a reminder that that was not really the case. The situation that caused Obama to deliver the speech was another sign of its inauthenticity, because he only made

the speech to protect himself from criticism, not of his own volition. Since it was made under duress, it could not be believed.

An entirely different line of argument about eloquence and authenticity rejected the underlying dichotomy between artifice and sincerity and argued instead for the higher authenticity of rhetorical art. Gerson (2008) reflected something of this reasoning in his defense of "formal rhetoric" as opposed to "shoddy, thoughtless spontaneity" (example 15). An editorial in *The Irish Times* was more explicit in its preference for unabashed political drama over illusory attempts to convey sincerity:
(20) [Obama] has replaced the 20th-century politics of sincerity (however fake) and intimacy (however illusory) with older, more linguistic and dramatic, forms of political communication.

The leap is so large that it may not succeed at one go. But it seems part of a larger cultural shift, echoing, for example the relative decline of recorded music and the resurgence of live concerts. Maybe, in a post-modern era when culture is ubiquitous, we want our political leaders to be artists again. Maybe we may yet live to see a parliament swayed by the force of oratory rather than a party whip. (Refining of Rhythmic Rhetoric 2008)

2.3. Cult of celebrity
Finally, there was debate on the "cult of celebrity" that developed around Obama and the danger (or not) to democracy that might result. Two sorts of arguments were made about Obama as demagogue. The first wrote him off as silly, using words like "celebrity" and "rockstar." It made him appear insignificant, like a teen idol. McCain's campaign attempted to exploit this theme with a series of ads mocking Obama as "The One." The other argument made him seem more calculating, power hungry, and malevolent. "Emperor Obama," for example, or the common implication that his followers were blind minions like Hitler's or Stalin's:
(21) The Great One's performance tonight harkens back to Hitler's autocratic speeches in front of the throngs of adoring (mindless) followers.

Humility is certainly not a word that one should ever use to describe this ego-maniac. (durtyharry 2008)

In these arguments the emptiness of Obama's rhetoric, its lack of substance, is

not criticized for being divorced from actions or truth but instead is taken as a sign that Obama's followers were not listening to what he actually said and were following him blindly, in the manner of a cult. A conservative blogger had the following to say:

(22) A cult of Celebrity has followed Obama around since his elevation to the higher echelons of the Democrat Party. His parade appears dripped in rhetoric with nothing of substance and this election has turned more into a grass roots social movement than a political race.

The danger is people are simply not listening to what Obama is saying, they have been swept away in the moment of this cult of Obama, his words don't actually matter just the fact he is talking is good enough for them (Rt. Hon. E.B. 2008)

Even some commentators who were generally favorable to Obama offered friendly warnings about the danger to democracy of allowing a cult following to develop. Comparisons to fascism seemed unavoidable, as in the following excerpt from an article by Dominic Lawson for *The Independent*, in which Obama's religious imagery was traced, and he was cautioned to steer clear of this strategy before it was too late and his supporters became uncontrollable:

(23) Obama, of course, is a democrat as well as a Democrat; but there is something in this form of rhetoric that has echoes of fascism, with its idea that the squabbling of mere politicians should be overthrown in favour of one man's uniquely wise interpretation of the National Will. Phrases such as "everything must be changed" were also the stock-in-trade of fascist orators, raising hopes which ended in the most dreadful disillusionment – and worse. (Lawson, 2008)

These arguments do not appeal to premises about rhetoric's relation to truth or signs of Obama's authenticity or lack of it; instead, they appeal to premises about the undemocratic, and therefore wrong, character of rhetoric that becomes too powerful regardless of its truth or the speaker's sincerity. Arguments in response invested the audience with greater agency. In those counter-arguments, people were inspired by Obama not blindly but because they understood that his rhetoric addressed an urgent need for change, producing not a cult following but a genuine social movement.

3. Concluding reflections
In conclusion, I offer three reflective comments on this study of arguments about rhetoric in the 2008 US presidential campaign.

First, the campaign stimulated some interesting journalistic discussions of rhetoric, of course along with much that was nothing more than cliché. In addition to several thoughtful commentaries cited earlier (Brooks 2008; Friedman 2009; Gerson 2008; Lawson 2008; Refining of Rhythmic Rhetoric 2008), also worthy of mention are a *Washington Post* article by Alex MacGillis (2008) that overviewed Obama's complex relationship with rhetoric, a piece by Charlotte Higgins (2008) in *The Guardian* that discussed the affinities of Obama's style to principles of classical Roman rhetoric, and a *New Yorker* commentary (Victory Speech 2008) that analyzed the style of Obama's election night victory speech and described it as "a good night for the English language" (p. 42). Several of these articles made reference to the history of rhetoric as a context for understanding Obama and political rhetoric generally.

Second, as a result of the public interest in rhetoric that arose from Obama's campaign, academic discourse on rhetoric entered the public sphere (e.g., through blogs and journalistic quotation in articles such as those just cited). Academic rhetoricians were quoted in several articles. Sinclair's (2008) "Obama's Simulacra" blog post is interesting, because the author made the claim that Obama was inauthentic using Baudrillard's theory of simulacra. Academic rhetorical critics participated directly in the public debate through blogs (e.g. jose 2009) and other publications (e.g. Frentz 2008). In such ways, the public argumentation about rhetoric that surrounded the 2008 campaign became a site of interaction between theoretical and practical metadiscourse as envisioned by Craig (1996, 1999).

Third, arguments about rhetoric in the presidential campaign discourse of 2008 echoed classic philosophical critiques of rhetoric going back to Plato (rhetoric as mere appearances versus truth) as well as critiques from contemporary critical theory. My thematic analysis of the arguments revealed three broad issues that interestingly correspond to the three validity claims of truth, sincerity and rightness posited by Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative action. According to Habermas, genuine communicative action seeks unforced mutual understanding and rational consensus rather than strategic advantage. As such, genuine communication requires the possibility of freely questioning the truth, truthfulness (sincerity) and rightness (normative acceptability) of any communicative act. In my analysis, arguments about rhetoric in the 2008 campaign clustered around questions of the relation of rhetoric to reality (truth),

the relation of eloquence to authenticity (truthfulness or sincerity), and the threat to democracy arising from a cult of celebrity (rightness or normative acceptability). The fundamental question about rhetoric from the point of view of critical communication theory is whether rhetoric is, or under what conditions rhetoric can be, genuine communication. Insofar as rhetoric is a form of strategic action oriented to instrumental success it is inherently suspect in the critical tradition.**[ii]**

In the campaign discourse that I examined, popular arguments resembling these classic critiques of rhetoric were answered by popular versions of equally classic defenses from the tradition of rhetorical theory. Rhetoric is not only logos but also ethos and pathos. It not only represents reality but also produces reality in forms such as commitments, values, motivating passions, and inspiring visions of a collective future. It is a necessary dimension of democratic political discourse in a world marked by conflict and practical contingency – the only real world we will ever know. Rhetoric *is* genuine communication in this perspective. And yet, defenders of rhetoric must acknowledge that the potential of rhetoric to produce reality can be abused in ways that mislead, deceive, and manipulate audiences. Rhetoric is both productive and dangerous, and in any case, unavoidable. The tensions involving rhetoric in the dimensions of truth, sincerity and rightness are essential tensions of democratic political life.

What we finally gain by examining the 2008 discourse about rhetoric in a theoretical frame is the insight that the arguments were, in a sense, no accident. Rather, they reflected ambiguities and dilemmas inherent to a political practice that inescapably relies on rhetoric and yet also aspires, in principle at least, to the legitimacy of genuine communication.

Notes
i Katherine Cruger's assistance in research and analysis is gratefully acknowledged.
ii Compare the legitimate but carefully limited role allowed for "strategic manoeuvering" in the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 1999).

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Are Motivational Thoughts Persuasive And Valid?

1. Introduction
In this paper, I would like to examine the rhetorical status of the *1948 Human Rights declaration*.
In order to do this, I first go back to Perelman's theory of argumentation by shedding a light on its juridical thought.

This approach will question the status of *"natural law"* from a rhetorical point of view, as it is expressed in the *1948 Human Rights Declaration*, considered as an expression of natural law today.

Second, I describe four levels of belief expression, and their discursive and rhetorical functions, as they appear in the Human Rights charter:
– a literal level
– a conventional level
– a fictional level
– a motivational level

It will be argued that such a complex construction is possible thanks to rhetorical skills that are shared by every speaker and hearer.
Finally, I analyze the human rights charter's first article in the light of four levels of representation.

2. Perelman and Natural Law
Let us go back to Perelman and Natural Law. As it is argued by Francis J. Mootz (2009), there are no explicit links between Perelman's theory of argumentation and his legal thought. But it is nevertheless possible to build this link. Mootz develops such a point of view in an article entitled: «Perelman's Theory of Argumentation and Natural Law». Indeed, we can claim that the Perelmanian theory of argumentation is for a large part grounded in his judicial culture. As Mootz wrote:
"The New Rhetoric is a rich resource for describing the ontological space in which laws operates, and also for providing normative guidance to those engage in legal practice." (Mootz 2009, p. 2).

As I will argue, such an "ontological space" may be described in the Human Rights charter thanks to a rhetorical approach that surmises various parts and also different levels for representation, i.e. the literal, conventional, fictional and motivational. Such a description will lead me to argue that a charter is a kind of rhetorical *genre.* Actually, an important question about the validity and the efficiency of a charter is grounded in the question of the "backing" (in a Toulminian sense) of human rights principles. Are they natural or transcendental? Of course, such a question has to deal with the philosophical and judicial question of natural law.

As it is well known, the theory of natural law claims that laws have natural foundations, either religious or human. This is the case in classical thought, in Christian thought, but also in Enlightenment philosophy that inspired the first Declaration of Human Rights in France (1789). It is also the case for Independence Declaration of American (1776).

And this was finally the case in the so-called "logicist" conception of rationality as it was thought in Europe in the 20th Century. In such a conception, "logicism" has to be seen as an optimistic trust toward logic in order to ground rationality.

Let us be reminded that Perelman firmly opposed such a conception of rationality. It is the reason why he proposed to establish a difference between, on the one hand, validity for empirical facts and, on the other hand, reasonableness for social facts. This is of course an important starting point for a possible link between his argumentative theory and his judicial thought.

Mootz examines the possibility to build a link between Perelman's theory of argumentation and his judicial thought through the status of the Universal Audience. Indeed, in his critique of a "logicist" conception of argumentation, Perelman claims that the concept of Universal Audience relies on the idea that a speaker's rationality is grounded neither in validity nor in truth, like it seems to be the case in all theories of natural law. But, at the same time, the critique of such a positivist point of view often leads to a relativistic vision where it is argued that truth or validity are completely relative, since they have no stable ground.

Finally, the whole history of rhetoric is trapped in a tension between relativism and positivism.

In order to overcome this tension, Mootz proposes to introduce the concept of *"naturalizing rhetoric"*, a concept which I consider to be very fruitful. He claims that we have to keep in mind a naturalistic criterion when we are analyzing rhetorical exchanges, but that it has to be found in our very "rhetorical nature":

"We "naturalize" rhetoric when we regard human "nature" as rhetorical. Simply put, it is our fixed human condition to be recreating ourselves and our society through continuous rhetorical exchanges with others. A naturalized rhetoric embraces the paradox that non-essentialism is essential to our being, that we can find a foundation for reflection in anti-foundationalism." (Mootz 2009, p.10).

Now, one may argue that such a definition of our "rhetorical nature" leads to a *petitio principii*, i.e.: "Our nature is to be rhetorical beings, so rhetoric is natural".

But Mootz promptly adds an important precision:

"Perelman is less vigorous in his critique of Cartesian rationalism than Vico, who argued against the incipient rationalism of the Western tradition by defending the priority of rhetoric and its connections to our imaginative capacities and the metaphoric structure of human understanding. By naturalizing rhetoric in the humanist tradition exemplified by Vico we can elaborate the ontological claims that subtend Perelman's theory of argumentation." (Mootz 2009, p. 10).

In the following, I will develop Mootz's concept of rhetorical nature by examining the case of the Human Rights charter. Indeed, such a concept perfectly fits with the naturalist conception of rationality that I have been trying to develop (Danblon, 2002). Moreover, I will argue that imagination, as an expression of our rhetorical nature, i.e. as an expression of our rationality is necessary to both the efficacy and the validity of a charter. This point will be demonstrated by describing the various levels of thought in the Human Rights charter.

3. The Human Rights charter as an expression of rhetorical rationality
Let us now describe the Human Rights charter from a rhetorical point of view (see Danblon & de Jonge 2010).
As most of the charters, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is divided into three parts. First, there is a preamble where one generally finds the recent story of people who are concerned with the charter. Such a storytelling aims at justifying the proclamation of the charter. Second, there is a proclamation that is always expressed by a performative speech act. In the 1948 Declaration, one finds the following expression:
"Now, therefore, the General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement (…)."

Such a performative speech act aims at creating a new common world.

Third, there are articles that describe the way in which every human being is supposed to behave in the new common world. Articles have thus a regulative function, which is expressed by assertive or directive speech acts.

Consequently, these three parts (preamble, proclamation and articles) have each a precise discursive status (respectively: storytelling, performative speech act, assertive/directive speech acts) in which each fulfils a rhetorical function (respectively: justifying the creation of a new common world, creating the new

common world, regulating the behaviour of actors of the new common world).

These discursive status and rhetorical functions are represented under this figure:

Part of a charter	Discursive status	Rhetorical function
Preamble	Storytelling	Justifying the creation of a common world
Proclamation	Performative speech act	Creating a common world
Articles	Assertive and directive speech acts	Regulating the behaviour of actors belonging to the common world

Such a description allows us to claim that a charter is a rhetorical genre since it presents stable discursive parts and rhetorical functions, that are associated with institutional roles.

4. Discussion about the "ontological" status of a charter

Now, the current philosophical question about such a document is: on what is it grounded? And as a consequence, at which conditions is it either efficient or valid (or both)?

Here comes back the "natural law" question from a rhetorical point of view. Indeed, one often hears that such a charter has no reason to pretend to universal validity since it was thought and wrote in a precise historical and geographical context. Nevertheless, it is well known that such a text was written with the explicit intention to address to the whole humanity. In Perelman's terms, the Human Rights charter addresses to the Universal Audience (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; see also Crosswhite 1989; Christie 2000; Danblon 2004).

At this stage, we should face the question of the natural grounds of such particulars principles and values. In the following, I will go back to Mootz's idea of naturalizing rhetoric in order to try to go beyond such a difficulty.

5. Four levels for representation

In order to argue in this sense, I will first show that the Human Rights charter does not aim at describing the reality. Consequently, it has to be understood as a convention and not as a description. In order to describe the different levels of representation, let us consider the first part of article 1. from the human rights charter, in order to determine more precisely the kind of *ontological space* (cf. Mootz) that is relevant here:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Let us first try to interpret such a sentence as a description, at a literal level. Obviously, as a factual description, it is false. Keeping in mind such an interpretation would be irrational, precisely because of the fact that the description is obviously false.

Let us now assume that such a sentence is a convention. Such a convention would have no real efficiency if it is not linked at all with reality, like it is often the case with arbitrary conventions in games.

Third, lets us try to interpret the sentence on a fictional level. In this case, one has to act "as if" *all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights*. I think that here, more than in the literal and conventional interpretations, the fictional interpretation is offending from an ethical and political viewpoint. Indeed, such a fiction would appear as a sinister farce: life is not a game where social rules may be totally invented.

At this stage, no satisfying "ontological space" was described in order to interpret such an article in a way that it is valid and efficient.

As I argued elsewhere (Danblon 2010), the best way to interpret such a sentence is at a "motivational" level. I borrow the concept of "motivational belief" from (Clément 2005) who tries to describe the cognitive functions of what he calls "credulity", i.e. a cognitive and rhetorical function using our "natural" ability of imagination. A motivational thought is a representation that is both possible and desirable. I think that this is exactly the case for the sentence: *"all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights"*: it is not true but it is both desirable and possible. In such an interpretation, the sentence perfectly fulfils its rhetorical

regulative function, expressed by an assertive speech act, even if this assertion is neither a description of reality, nor an arbitrary convention, nor a metaphorical fiction.

Now, following this description, we have to admit that human ability of imagination is one of the conditions for its rationality, which is very useful in all domains where we need to exert rhetorical skills: politics, law, ethic, education, etc (see also Schaeffer 2002).

But to be honest, a motivational thought becomes both valid and efficient if and only if we are able to meet our rhetorical nature that allows us to use multiple levels of conventions and especially imagination. And, as it was underlined by (Vico 1986) and also by (Mootz 2008), such an ability has to be practiced (see also Girard 2009):

"Exercising the imagination through topical argumentation is necessary because there is no substitute for the accumulation of experience. One cannot become prudent by deducing answers to practical problems; one becomes prudent through the exercise of judgment based on insight, which actually is a way of apprehending the world by cultivating a rhetorical engagement with it. Vico stresses that education in rhetoric can develop this capacity. " (Mootz 2008, p.18).

6. Conclusion

Motivational thoughts are persuasive and valid if they are exercised. Such a practice is one of the most important functions in rhetoric. It is the only way to build a common world thanks to imagination and representation of possible worlds. Indeed, imagination is neither a fallacy nor a masquerade, but we have to exercise it regularly in order to understand the cognitive importance of this rhetorical function. In this perspective, charters illustrate a genre, which fulfils essential political and regulative functions in society. Old Europe is faced with a problem: it no longer believes in Utopia and therefore refrains from exercising imagination.

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Argumentative Structure In

Octavius Of Minucius Felix: The Role Of The Thesis And The "Status Quaestionis" In The Development Of The Structure

1. Work and Author

Minucius Felix, the author of *"Octavius"*, is among the clearest and most original voices of Christian literature. A lawyer by profession, he was of African origins and lived and worked in Rome at the end of the second century. He was a contemporary of Tertullianus, but, unlike him, he is not in favour of an abrupt break with the classical tradition and prefers the ground of philosophical dispute. His literary work is the only one of the apologetical Latin literature in dialogue form. The dialogue takes place on the beach of Ostia and it involves three characters: the pagan Caecilius, the Christian Octavius and Minucius himself. Octavius reproaches Caecilius for worshipping a statue of the god *Serapis* and Caecilius suggests explaining their own reasons in support of their religious models, naming Minucius judge of the controversy. After the two speeches, however, the one made by Caecilius against Christianity and the other by Octavius in favour of Christianity, there is no need to come to a final judgment because Caecilius admits defeat. Minucius, with his dialogue, shows he is firmly convinced he is able to interact with his interlocutor, provided that they are both guided by reason and honesty. Minucius shows his argumentative intelligence not only in the tones he uses but also in the interweaving of the literary and philosophical references proposed by Octavius in his confutation of the pagan positions and consequent demonstration of the rationality of Christianity.

Since his work's addressees are the learned pagans, the literary and philosophical sources he considers belong to the classical tradition, in particular to Cicero and Seneca, thus avoiding taking the Bible as the direct source of reference and authority. Minucius prefers emphasizing the differences in the continuity: *"Octavius"*, in fact, doesn't mark the end of the classical world and the passage to Christianity on the line of an abrupt break with it, as proposed by Tertullianus,

but on the acceptance, as common ground to share with the other, of the noblest principles of the Greek-Latin philosophical culture. In the cultural project of Minucius, there is no space for extreme radical positions; instead, features such as the search of coherence, the pursuit of knowledge and the fulfillment of the universal values of the *"virtus"* are central.

2. Methodology

The aim of this analysis is to investigate the relationship between the thesis, the structure and the nature of the arguments, trying to see how the thesis can produce and direct the structure and the phase of *inventio*. The disposition of the macrosequences of the arguments in support of the theses has been read and represented with the modalities of subordinative or coordinative argumentation (Eemeren, F.H. van, Grootendorst, R., & Snoeck Henkemans, A. F. 2002), while the evaluation of the arguments has been conducted through the classical topic. The two theses have been considered as the main generators of the monologues and they have been analyzed inside the hermeneutic categories of *status qualitatis* (*Inst. Or. III, 6, 41-42; VII, 4, 2-3*) and *kairós.*

To study a thesis inside the *status qualitatis* means considering the thesis according to *vis, natura, genus*. With *vis* I have intended to point out the direction imposed by the thesis in the: a) generation of arguments, b) generation of structure, c) generation of linguistic modalities pertinent to the proposed cultural model.

With the term *natura* inside the *status qualitatis* I have intended to point out the conceptual models of Right and Useful, that inform the thesis.

With the Greek concept of *kairós* we can philosophically understand the situational context, the balance between two opposing forces. I have intended *kairós*, in this proposal of analysis, as the relationship model between the speaker's Weltanschauung and the expectation horizon of the audience.

3. Structure of Caecilius's discourse

Since this work is constituted by two monologues, two diagrams have been worked out, one for each. First, the diagram related to the *sermo* of Caecilius will be analyzed. The reconstruction of Caecilius's discourse in defense of his own standpoint (covering chapters V-XIII) has been conducted: a) identifying in each chapter of the work the functional unities which bring sense, b) grouping the chapters into wider sections (or blocks) each aimed at carrying out one of the

communicative subprojects, according to which the general project of the text is articulated. This, in Caecilius's discourse, is shown in three moments, following a three phase organization.

The two polar moments of defense and accusation are followed by the moment of the composition in the attenuated conclusion (*quamquam*). Every phase is aimed at embodying a subproject: in phase A (*pars construens*) Caecilius claims it is advisable to continue accepting the doctrine received by the ancestors, which is proposed as the best theological paradigm, in phase B (*pars destruens*) the orator attacks pagan rites and beliefs in an attempt to demolish their credibility as a valid alternative to his own proposal, in phase C (*peroratio*) conclusion, the arguments put forward in the Premise and Thesis are proposed again, though attenuated (*quamquam*). The second section B is divided internally into B', where the Christian behaviours are considered cruel and irrational and B", where the cosmological and metaphysical aspects of the Christian doctrine are considered groundless. In summary follows the content of the functional blocks: a) in chapters VI-VII Caecilius underlines the advisability of preserving the traditional *religio*, as the institution of the sacred rites has a motivated fundament and the traditional polytheistic religion has social utility, b) in chapters VIII-XII, in a derisive tone, accusations are made first to the Christians, defined as audacious, disrespectful and vulgar (VIII), then to their rites (IX), their God (X), their beliefs around conflagration, resurrection, final judgment (XI) and eternal life (XII), c) in chapter XIII, epilogue of Caecilius's speech, the adoption of the system of doubt is proposed as the only reasonable attitude to deal with metaphysical problems. Once again, the image of the Christians as audacious and rash is presented and, in the conclusion, the arguments are drawn *ex auctoritate* from the academic philosophical tradition.

The general disposition of the proofs follows the Nestorian order with the strongest arguments in the first and last sections, distributing the weaker ones and gathering them together in the middle. In fact, in the chapters included in group B, the arguments against the Christians are often introduced by terms like *fama, audio, alii dicunt, fabula, obscuritas*: arguments of this species taken one by one, have a low persuasive potential. In the initial chapters of block A and in the conclusion, the proofs drawn from the authority of the ancient texts and from the Socratic philosophical tradition represent, in the beliefs of the orator, the arguments with the greatest weight.

The central structure of the discourse in two blocks (A and B) and the coordination between them spring, in the first instance, from the nature of the thesis, presented by the orator according to the comparative *status qualitatis*, that requires the comparison of the two philosophical models. The functional blocks A and B work together in order to support the thesis, every section responds to the thesis requirement: section A aims at proving how venerable and advantageous/useful (*venerabilius ac melius*) the traditional model is, section B proves that choosing Christianity as an alternative to the traditional *religio* is an unreasonable choice. From a dialogical point of view, section B adds complementary arguments supporting the thesis and it tries to prevent attacks on the arguments of *pars construens* (section A).

Structure of Caecilius's discourse.

Structure of Caecilius's discourse.
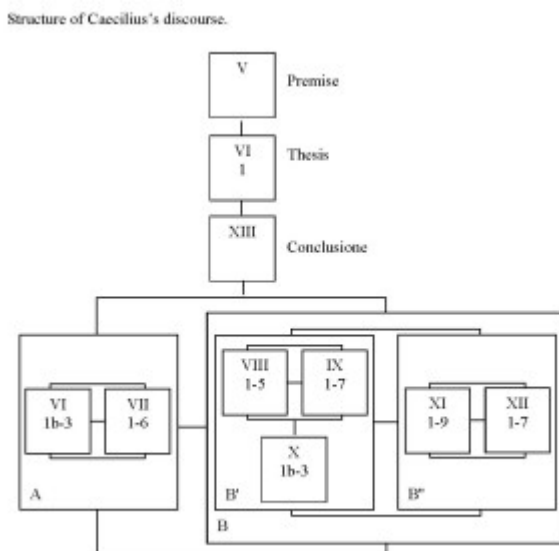
4. Difference of opinion.
The difference of opinion springs from the different points of view of the two debaters around the more correct and useful philosophical/religious model. It is mixed because different standpoints are adopted by the respective orators, who alternately in their discourses, play the roles of protagonist of their own thesis and antagonist of the other's thesis (Eemeren, F.H. van, Grootendorst, R., & Snoeck Henkemans, A. F. 2002).
Question: what kind of life is better? (V, 1)
Caecilius Premise: everything in human matters is doubtful and uncertain. (V, 13)
Thesis: to receive the teachings of the ancestors is much more venerable and useful. (VI, 1)
Octavius Premise: I will convince you and I will show how false your opinions are

through the confirmed and approved truth. (XVI, 4)
Thesis: accepting Christianity is more reasonable.

5. Analysis of the thesis
The thesis present in VI, 1 springs from the semantic content expressed in V, 13, of which it represents a *res adiuncta (de diff. topicis 1200B, 1200C)*. In syllogistic terms, the thesis represents the unnecessary conclusion of a hypothetical enthymema having as premise V, 13b.

HOW MUCH MORE VENERABLE AND BETTER IT IS, TO RECEIVE THE TEACHING OF ANCESTORS. (VI, 1)
Before proceeding with the analysis, the thesis will be reduced and simplified in order to make the work easier. The textual segments which contain the leading thought of the orator can be identified in the sentence *quanto venerabilius ac melius antistetem veritatis maiorum excipere disciplinam,* which results in a thesis made up of two coordinate elements. The other eliminated indications can semantically be brought back into the two isolated statements.

This thesis, according to the Ciceronian model (*Top. § 81*), belongs to the *genus cognitionis* subpartition *qualitas comparativa de maiore ad minus.* Including the thesis in the *genus cognitionis* corresponds to the orator's wish to consider the action of choosing the theological model as a result of a cognitive process. The protagonist intends to involve the addressees in a work leading to investigate the philosophical fields of physics and ethics.

The comparative *status qualitatis* inside which the thesis has been interpreted is linguistically determined both by a morphological level, through the comparative forms *venerabilius ac melius* which let us understand how to contrast two philosophical models, and by the semantic values of the two terms that place them in the word fields of *honestum/honest, iustum/right* and *usefulness,* belonging to the field of interest of the *status qualitatis.*

The *genus causae,* at which such a strategy of defense of the standpoint aims, is comparable to the *genus deliberativum,* concerning the matters related to *dignitas, honestum, utile* and characterized by the comparison and search for the greatest advantage. If we consider that in the concept of *honestum* there is the idea of *pietas* and that persuasion requires arousing emotion, we will understand how also the use of *indignatio* and of the *genus dicendi turpe,* in the following

chapters (VIII, IX), is the fulfillment of the implications of the depth structure of thesis. The development of the discourse inside the model of the *genus deliberativum* also includes "the mind of those who have to decide must be touched not only by the nature of honesty, but by glory, by public opinion, and, if this vanity achieves poor results, by the demonstration of the advantages that they take from such things, or, on the other hand, of the possible risks, if they act in a different way" *(Quint. Inst. Or. III, 8, 39).*

The thesis presents a comparative elliptic form, containing implicitly the second term of comparison introduced by *quam.* Such a structured thesis gives instructions to the text, requiring from it the fulfillment of the two requests present in a comparative thesis: the acceptance of the validity of the traditional religious model and the demonstration of the inadvisability of accepting Christianity as an alternative to it. The features of the language of the presence, the defense of the tradition and its greatness, recall the *genus dicendi grave* as conceptual model, although the comparative forms amplified by *how much more* and the presence of the adjective *melius/*better in ascending position in comparison to *venerabilius* evoke the concept of *prépon* and the neutral *genus dicendi (mesótes),* which includes in itself the whole sentence. The *genus mesótes* will be the distinctive stylistic and philosophical mark of Caecilius's *sermo.*

Therefore, the thesis *morphé* of the theological model will give information to the text also in relation to the *genus dicendi*: a weak theological model that does not imply a deep investigation into the religious dimension, characterized by the adherence to the tradition, the consideration of the advantages of such adherence and the social functions of *religio.*
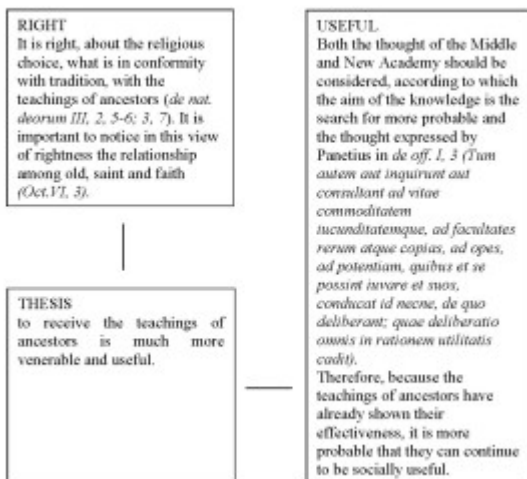
Now a synoptical table of the analysis of the thesis is provided. The analysis is based on the categories of *status* and *kairós*:

Short definition of *disciplina maiorum*	The set of teachings, customs, lifestyle of the ancestors. The respect of this was part of the pietas, and was felt as a guarantee of greatness, stability, as a pleasant thing to the gods.

Natura	Inside the comparative *qualitas*, the thesis implies that the discipline of the ancestors has been regarded ethically more honest, fairer and more useful than Christianity.The thesis springs from:– a model of the world founded upon a probabilistic concept of truth, on the respect for the ancestors, the country, the gods as guarantee of social unity.– Theological-epistemological, relativistic weak model, based on the religion and social utility connection.– An hermeneutic criterion, for the evaluation of history, based on the idea of the advantage achieved.
Kairós	– The thought expressed by the thesis is judged as endowed with a greater degree of probability in that communicative context.– The thesis conforms to common sense, to tradition; it is endowed with strong initial credibility for the social classes of academic, philosophical culture.– It demands of the addressee an immediate response to the proposed arguments.

Vis	The thesis implies:– the advisability of continuing to live according to the customs of the ancestors. Generation of matters founded upon the philosophical pragmatic model.– A model of *elocutio* founded upon the *genus dicendi mesótes.– Genus tenue, indignatio* for forms of thought contrary to the tradition.– The choice of the locus of comparison as a result of the comparative thesis.– A polar structure where two visions of the world are contrasted.

Concepts of Right and Useful in Caecilius

RIGHT
It is right, about the religious choice, what is in conformity with tradition, with the teachings of ancestors (*de nat. deorum III, 2, 5-6; 3, 7*). It is important to notice in this view of rightness the relationship among old, saint and faith (*Oct.VI, 3*).

THESIS
to receive the teachings of ancestors is much more venerable and useful.

USEFUL
Both the thought of the Middle and New Academy should be considered, according to which the aim of the knowledge is the search for more probable and the thought expressed by Panetius in *de off. I, 3 (Tum autem aut inquirunt aut consultant ad vitae commoditatem iucunditatemque, ad facultates rerum atque copias, ad opes, ad potentiam, quibus et se possint iuvare et suos, conducat id necne, de quo deliberant; quae deliberatio omnis in rationem utilitatis cadit).*
Therefore, because the teachings of ancestors have already shown their effectiveness, it is more probable that they can continue to be socially useful.

6. Overview of arguments

While carrying out a work of analysis and synthesis on the whole discourse of Caecilius, it can be noticed that in order to defend the thesis in the *construens* section, the pagan orator puts forward three arguments: *potestas meruerunt, vetustas, utile.* Every argument is supported by the others with the aim of strengthening its idea. The three arguments are introduced as inferred from reality, from observation, therefore endowed with incontestable evidence.

In *potestas meruerunt,* the reflections on the fortune of Rome, on the historical events that have characterized its development and brought it to its current greatness are blended. The adoption of the traditional religious model and the fidelity to it is at the basis of the extension of Rome's authority all over the world.
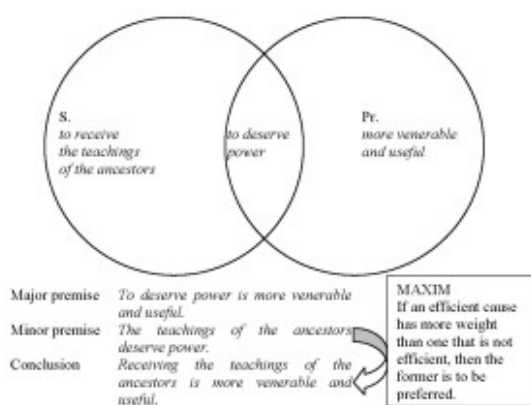
In *vetustas,* it is underlined how the religious tradition had been handed down without interruption for so many centuries and in the ancient world it was the custom to attribute the cults the same degree of holiness as their ancientness.

In *utile* there are observations related to the social function of the prophets, to their ability to predict the future, to give hope to the afflicted, to heal the sick. The arguments put forward by the two orators will be analyzed and valued with the tools offered by Cicero in the *Topica* and by Boethius. The theoretical starting points are the definitions of *argumentum* provided by Cicero as *ratio quae rei dubiae facit fidem* (Top. 2, 8) and by Boethius as *medietatis inventio (In Cic. Top. 1051A).*

The process of finding an argument, according to Boethius, consists essentially of finding an intermediate or middle term by means of which two terms whose connection is in doubt may be connected affirmatively. So, in our case, if in the definition of *to receive the teachings of ancestors* there is a semantic aspect that can be considered venerable and useful, then we can say that S. and Pr. can be connected. The middle term represents in a syllogism the substance or points out an aspect in relationship with the substance (Arist. *An. Post. II, 11, 94a 20*). *To deserve power* may be considered as a consequence of *to receive the teachings of ancestors.*

The *res dubia* is represented by the thesis *quanto venerabilius ac melius disciplinam maiorum excipere*, the argument (*argumentum*) object of the analysis is *excipere disciplinam maiorum meruit potestatem.*

Separating the thesis in Subject and Predicate we obtain the following syllogism:

Major premise	*To deserve power is more venerable and useful.*
Minor premise	*The teachings of the ancestors deserve power.*
Conclusion	*Receiving the teachings of the ancestors is more venerable and useful.*

MAXIM
If an efficient cause has more weight than one that is not efficient, then the former is to be preferred.

Separating the thesis in Subject and Predicate

The major premise represents the *endoxon* and finds its justification in the traditional hermeneutic model that considers both the greatness of Rome a gift of the gods, whose only compliance has made it possible to have the power, and all those excellent things worthy of veneration (Cic. *de nat.deorum I, 17, 45* and *III, 2, 5-6; 3, 7*).

The passage from the minor premise to the conclusion is guaranteed by the maxim inferred from the locus of comparison *per vim (Cic. Top. §70).*

Example of synoptical table of argument analysis:

Argument	*the teachings of the ancestors deserve power*
Degree of credibility	Sentence in keeping with the mental context of the Roman learned classes, endowed with a high degree of initial credibility towards the addressees. It is founded upon the model of evaluation of Roman history, spread in wide strata of society. The dialogue with the addressees is based on the statement underlining the connection politics politics-favour of the gods.
Locus	In the comparative locus *per vim* two realities are compared from the perspective of the ability to produce advantages. Caecilius invites the addressees to consider the advantages enjoyed by the Romans in comparison to the Christians; it is implied that they are the consequence of *excipere disciplinam maiorum.*

Example of synoptical table of argument analysis

7. Macrostructure of the discourse of Octavius

The *sermo* of Octavius, to the level of *dispositio, is* realized in three following moments conforming itself to the *dispositio* of the accusation. In each section the arguments presented by the adversary in the correspondent functional blocks are analyzed and confuted. Chapters XVI-XIX represent the premise and attack the premises of Caecilius in chap. V. Chapters XX-XXVII confute the positions of Caecilius sustained in VI,VII. Chapters XXVIII-XXXVIII, 4 disprove the contained accusations in block B. Chapter XXXVIII, from 5 to 7 act as a conclusion. In his premise Octavius responds to the premise of probabilistic nature of Caecilius with the sentence of methodological nature "... *convincam et redarguam,..., quae dicta sunt, a veritate confirmata probataque" (XVI, 4*), and he continues attacking and disproving Caecilius's arguments to support his general premise. The aim of the section consists of making the addressees acquire the idea that the harmony of the universe is the fruit of a rational mind and that instead of chance there is providence.

In block A he disproves the *pars construens* of Caecilius attacking and showing

the rational appeals of paganism unfounded, alleging as proofs the easiness in believing in the *fabulae*, the irrationality, the violence and the obscenity of the cults, the sacrilegious attitude towards the divinities.

In block B he disproves the accusations of Caecilius about the customs and the theological beliefs of the Christians. This action is developed into three different points:

a) denying the accusation (*status coniecturae*), turning this against the adversary showing the pagan irrationality (*translatio criminis*) and maintaining the difference and superiority of the Christians (XXIX).

Through the *percontatio,* rephrasing the accusations addressed in the form of questions, followed by immediate answers that show the absurdity of the accusations (XXII,1).>

c) With motivation of the beliefs through the authority of the philosophical and historical tradition which, well investigated, confirms the Christian affirmations (XIX).

Chapter XXXVIII from paragraph 5 acts as *peroratio* introduced by a conjunction as *proinde*. It is not presented with an attenuation in the tone like the pagan one; it introduces a hard judgment on the sceptic and academic philosophical school claiming for the Christians the true wisdom (XXXVIII, 6), the true attainment of virtue.

The disposition of the *res* in two blocks responds both to the choice of Octavius to disprove the affirmations of Caecilius in a punctual way, section by section, and to the nature of the thesis structured on the comparative *status qualitatis*. Implicitly this demands that the reasons for which something is better than another are explained (useful for reflection on the concept of comparison, even though it is treated inside the *qualitas iuridicialis*, is the analysis of Cicero in *de inv. 2, 74-78*).

Therefore, to a constructive phase a side by side destructive phase is followed. In the case of the discourse of Octavius, initially we meet the destructive phase of the reasons alleged by Caecilius to motivate the choice of the tradition, then we find the constructive phase where he suggests the reasons for the choice of the alternative. To satisfy the thesis requirements the two blocks must be considered coordinated: each one of these has a task. In A Octavius attacks the *pars construens* of Caecilius, in B, disproving the accusations of Caecilius, he suggests for contrast the only rational choice. Section B is to be considered coordinated in an additive way to the preceding one. It adds further proofs against paganism

affirming Christianity through the *correctio* (XXIX).
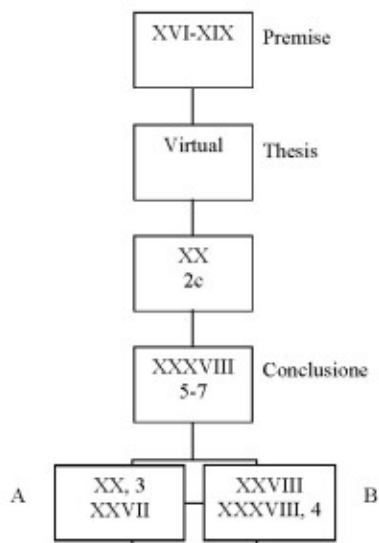
Structure of Octavius's discourse

8. Analysis of the thesis
The formulation of the standpoint is reconstructed at a conceptual level starting from: a) the rational concept of unique God as principle guide on the earth and in the heaven (XVIII, 6), b) word fields having as matrix terms rationality (XXXV, 5, XXXVIII, 6) and reasoned choice (XXXII, 2; XXXIV, 5; XXXII, 3), c) ethical values alleged in the phase of *correctio* (*est vobis licitum... non nobis*), d) inter-textual reasons i.e. from the thesis expressed by other former apologists (see Justin I, 2, 1).
The comparative nature of the thesis can be deduced by XXXV, 5 and XXXVIII, 6 (nos... sed.). As criterion of choice the concepts of venerability and usefulness are contrasted, in the Christian thesis, with the concept of reason.

TO ACCEPT CHRISTIANITY IS MORE REASONABLE
Proposing the semantic analysis of the thesis within *status* and *kairós* we will have:

Short definition of Christianity	Monotheistic religion founded on the person and on the preaching of Jesus Christ. It implies a new vision of God, a new relationship between God and men, a deep faith in Christ's teachings.
Natura	The semantic direction imposed by the *status* implies that the thesis must be interpreted on an ethical basis, according to the categories of honesty, justice and utility.The thesis springs from:– a strong, pervasive concept of knowledge.– a strong theological model founded upon the certainty of the existence of the truth.– A world governed by a rational mind.
Kairós	– Thesis which is estranged from the common sense of the Roman learned classes, has the taste of the intellectual challenge.– It (*kairós*) is founded upon the trust that the addressees are prepared to interact and to activate a cognitive process together with the proponent.– It points at a new criterion of harmony not considered on the basis of a greater degree of probability of a thought in that precise moment, but founded upon the search for a single provable truth.

Vis	The thesis implies:– *Genus dicendi grave*, to express the conviction of the existence of the truth.– Word fields of rationality, of order, of decency.– An absence of dichotomy between knowledge and practice.– The locus for comparison as a result of the comparative thesis. – A structure built on the comparison of two antithetical philosophical models. – A high degree of commitment for the orator in showing the validity of his own thesis.

Concepts of Right and Useful in Octavius

9. Overview of arguments

Octavius, in order to support his standpoint in block A, puts forward three arguments against the *pars construens* of Caecilius: *improvidi* (20, 5*), ridiculi* (22, 8 and 23, 2), *sacrilegi* (25, 7).
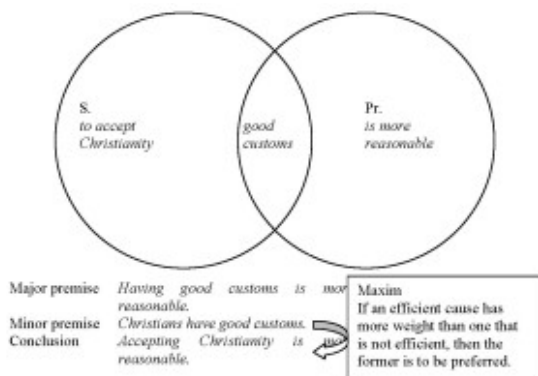
To *improvidi* are related the following ideas: excessive and rough simplicity in believing fanciful narrations, the non perfect knowledge of the nature of the divinity, the abandonment to other people's mistake rather than conducting personal searches to authentically know and to have experience of the divine. The Christian aspires to a religiousness that is a result of personal choice and conviction and the intimate knowledge of God, through a direct relationship with him; human essence and divine essence in communication without mediations of idols and complex rites.
In *ridiculus,* the reflections on pagan rites converge: many and often in contrast among themselves, violent, deprived of rationality, honesty and decorum (23, 4).

In *sacrilegus,* there are considerations on the sacrilegious nature of enslaving the divinities of the subjugated people and then adoring them. In reality this means insulting and mocking the divinities. The observations on the real use of the

temples as places to deal with rapists and adulterers confirm the use of the term *sacrilegus* for the pagans.

In phase B, where the ethical superiority of the Christians is affirmed and the consequent reasonableness of accepting Christianity, he brings forward as proofs the correctness (being correct) (XXXII, 3), God's knowledge, honesty, modesty, reservation (XXXVII, 11). We are able to summarize all these values in the *iunctura boni mores (good customs)*

Major premise	*Having good customs is more reasonable.*	Maxim
Minor premise	*Christians have good customs.*	If an efficient cause has more weight than one that is not efficient, then the former is to be preferred.
Conclusion	*Accepting Christianity is reasonable.*	

iunctura boni mores (good customs)

In the definition of Christianity, we find sober, longing for the truth, ethically correct. The *endoxon* is tied up to the classical concept of order, decency, measure in behaviour as an aspect of the reasonable quality of human nature (*Cic. de off. I, 4; 5; 6*).

Argument	*Christians have good customs*
Degree of credibility	Sentence with a low degree of initial credibility, in dissonance with the concept of Roman *pietas*. Actually endowed with strong dialogic power it suggests good customs as a meter of evaluation, it is brought back into the idea of the classical *honestum*. It creates a bridge with the other at the moment it differentiates from the other, evoking deep common and rational conceptual structures. The argument is the mediation not only between the determinations of the thesis but between the two civilizations.
Locus	Octavius, through the comparative locus *per vim*, invites us to consider the reasonableness of the choice of the Christian ethical model on the basis of the coherence of the demonstrations with the rational ethical principles.

10. Comparison

The arguments in favour of the Christians, in the *pars construens* of the discourse of Octavius in block B, belong to the semantics of the rational choice; they concern concepts of rationality (XXXV, 5, XXXVIII, 6), reasoned decision (XXXII, 2), philosophical validity of the choice (XXXIV, 5), (XXXII, 3).

The model of the Christian God involves an ordered and comprehensible vision of the world and a congruence between cult and theology. It doesn't contemplate the dissension between theory and practice, it involves the way of living according to wisdom, knowing the truth without falling in fault, according to

temperance, pursuing order and decency. If the process of the final conversion of Caecilius to Christianity can take place, this is due to the fact that the pagan intellectual has recognized that if he intends to live really according to the purest values of the classical civilization, he must admit that in Christianity these find true fulfillment. The strength of Christianity resides in rationality and in coherence (XXVII, 5).

In *Octavius* the idea of a provable existing truth represents a reason of separation and union/agreement with the other. The discourse of the Christian, at the moment it enacts an incompatible difference with the other, builds a new dialogue, founded upon a different basis. In the *pars destruens* the middle terms chosen by Octavius in order to demolish the choice of paganism are not conciliatory and they represent a challenge for the other. They ask for a restructuring of the evaluation model of reality, a deep adhesion on a rational basis of the values of truth, of honesty, of the right. They meet the other on the ground of the reflection and the possibility of rediscovering the meaning of knowledge. They do not seek an easy point of meeting. They enact differences but do not destroy the possibility of a dialogue. Octavius appeals to the sense of justice and truth that has to animate every true philosopher; whoever wants the truth, has to look for the rationality of justice and ethics, has to rise above tradition, pragmatism, gnoseological relativism.

The choice of aggressive middle terms imposes a skimming, choosing who really wants to interact risking being convinced, who really wants to argue. The middle terms are blades that divide the incongruities and they demand a dialogue between men that rationally seek the truth. The middle terms of Caecilius in the *pars construens* recall the values of tradition, of social utility, of the cultural system and they express the belief that the political greatness of Rome is the result of the acceptance of that tradition. In the *pars destruens* the arguments are not founded upon real knowledge of the other, but they represent the acceptance of the widespread voices among the population. It is important to notice how the *endoxa* of Octavius's reasoning belongs to the classical Weltanschauung, and the process of persuasion moves towards the breakup with the immediate acceptance of the tradition and towards the recovery of the universal value of reason.

We are all participants of reason and from this every kind of honesty and decorum is drawn. Octavius, in the field of ethics, appeals to the rational action according to knowledge and wisdom.

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Argumentation In Tourism: An Analysis Of User-Generated-Contents About Lugano (Switzerland)
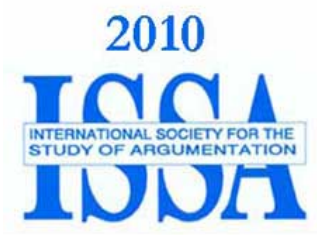
1. Argumentation in the (e)tourism context

Tourism is an experience which needs to be communicated (Inversini & Cantoni 2009). In fact, both if it was wonderful or terrible, a travel experience is usually shared with others; telling it, discussing it, comparing it with previous experiences is nearly a need for someone who just came back from a journey.

Tourism is an experience of freedom, since it gives the tourist the opportunity to decide where, how and with whom to spend her free-time, fulfilling those desires which are usually subordinated to the duties and rules of the daily life.

Many elements of a journey contribute to shape a unique experience, but each journey is usually fixed in the memory because of one or a few more aspects, which makes it special and different from all the others. Such aspect represents the dominant value that a certain travel experience detains for the tourist. The touristic value of the journey one of the authors made in Rome some years ago, for instance, resides in the capacity the city has to evoke ancient civilizations. Every corner in Rome speaks of the glorious Roman empire, and reveals the roots of the European culture. This aspect constitutes the value that the author ascribes to her tourism experience in Rome and, thus, to the destination itself.

When designing a travel experience, the decision of the destination is rarely casual; the most of the times it is the subject of discussions and careful considerations, which are lead by material circumstances, as well as by expectations about the destination and the experience one would like to live, and by a constellation of criteria bound to the lifestyle, values and interests. Such expectations and constellation of criteria have a strong influence on the opinion one gives of her tourism experience and the destination she visited. The tale of a tourism experience, actually, comes out to be a highly argumentative text, where the confrontation and discussion of different opinions with the self or the others brings one to form a reasoned opinion on the destination she visited and the time she spent.

If one considers tourism – i.e. tourism related communication – as a specific context of interaction, she can hypothesize that the argumentative discourse which takes place therein follows proper dynamics and rules. It seems therefore meaningful to ask how argumentation is molded on this kind of context, that is how an opinion about a tourism experience arises and how such opinion is put

forward and defended. In argumentative terms it means, for instance, to look for recurring reasoning schemes or structures, which should help to determine the argumentative quality of the text.

The paper pursues a high-level objective, that is to start an investigation of the argumentative significance of a specific context of interaction, that is constituted by tourism experience and the respective communication. At a lower-level, the aim is to verify the hypothesis according to which the opinion about a tourism experience at a certain destination may be said to depend, principally, by the recognition of a dominant touristic value for that destination.

In order to pursue these two goals, a study has been developed which applied different tools of argument analysis to a corpus of texts reporting the tales of tourists on their experience at a certain destination; the texts were retrieved from the so called web 2.0.

In the last years, in fact, the way tourism-related information is distributed and accessed has been deeply reshaped by the Internet. Xiang and Gretzel (2009) explain that the predominant role is played both by social media websites, which are becoming increasingly popular in online travelers' use of the Internet, and by search opportunities given by the net, which allow to bear one's way in the huge amount of information available. A number of studies confirm the growing importance of social media in the online tourism domain, especially for travel planning (Gretzel 2006; Pan, MacLaurin & Crotts 2007; Inversini, Cantoni & Buhalis 2009). Social media allow users to directly publish contents and, on the other side, to enjoy genuine contents published by other users, this way becoming a valuable source of information besides being a means of social interaction.

Tourism related eWord-of-mouth represents people's wish to share their travel experiences, recommending a destination or complaining about it. Contents published and enjoyed online by tourists on social networks are known as User Generated Contents (UGC), and can equate electronic word-of-mouth. Tourism-related UGC usually reflect the experience of the tourist at specific destinations, her evaluations and reactions about the experience as well as about the destination itself. Prospective tourists use the net for gathering the necessary information to take decisions about the many different aspects of the journey; they trust more contents generated by other tourists – like online reviews or forum posts – than official sources, because they are considered more credible, genuine and not business-driven (Dwyer 2007).

The web allowed the authors to collect the texts for the analysis easily and quickly; it is not among the aims of this paper to discuss the features that argumentation assumes in the digital space. Web 2.0 only worked as a source for gathering convenient types of texts for pursuing the goals of the paper. The following paragraphs sets the method of analysis and describes the steps of the pilot study, which was developed both for observing argumentative interventions in the context of tourism, and for verifying the hypothesis that a dominant touristic value can be identified for a certain destination.

2. Giving opinions on a tourism experience
Lugano has been chosen as destination of attention, due to its limited dimensions and because it is the authors' place of work. Lugano is, in fact, a small city in the Southern part of Switzerland, which counts only about 30.000 inhabitants, but has all the services and facilities of a big city. It is the biggest touristic destination in Ticino – the Italian-speaking canton of Switzerland. It sets at the foothills of the Alps, on the river of lake Ceresio – best known as lake Lugano. It is characterized by a Mediterranean vegetation, due to the temperate climate. It is the third financial district in Switzerland, hosting a number of banks and financial institutes; business and academic tourism has developed in the last few years also thanks to the congress center and the University.

UGC about Lugano have been collected on some of the most common Web 2.0 websites for tourism, including texts in English and Italian. Only UGC containing comments or reviews about the destination were considered, and all those commenting or reviewing services or attractions, like hotels, transports, cultural events, etc. were ignored. Texts were then filtered a second time to sort out only argumentatively relevant ones. The *corpus* of analysis was made up of two kinds of texts: forum posts and reviews. While the former ones are usually short dialogical moves in an asynchronous discussion, the latter are longer monographic texts. Online discussion fora are considered a new type of communicative situation, characterized by the absence of most of the contextual features of face-to-face conversation. They present a considerable dialectical variability, in that the discussion usually moves from a focus on a given topic towards a focus on the interaction and the participants, topic tends to decay, turn-taking is dislocated and several conversations are jumbled together (Lewis 2005). Tourism-related fora are usually the place where to ask for specific and quick pieces of information or tips to organize a trip. Reviews, on the other side, can be

compared to travel diaries, reporting the experience of the tourist on a destination as well as his/her comments and opinions. They are of help to get an overview of the destination, to size expectations according to unofficial voices who are, nonetheless, authoritative and trustworthy thanks to their personal experience gained on the place. Reviews are generally more argumentative, and argumentation develops in a more articulated fashion than in forum posts. Considered the organization process of a trip, if travel reviews support the first phase, that is the deliberation about the place to visit, travel fora are more useful to decide about specific aspects of the trip, because one can directly ask to the virtual community constituted by those who already visited the destination.

The selection process resulted in a corpus of eighty-two texts, constituted by:
- 10 reviews from the Lugano Travel Guide of www.tripadvisor.com
- 47 posts in the Lugano Travel Forum of www.tripadvisor.com (out of over 1000 posts divided in 335 threads)
- 10 reviews from www.igougo.com
- 2 reviews from www.dooyoo.com
- 11 reviews from www.virtualtourist.com
- 2 reviews from www.bootsnall.com.

The selection has been made in July 2010.

The corpus was firstly carefully read, looking for frequent occurrences of arguments supporting Lugano as a destination worth to be visited (standpoint). The hypothesis leading the study implied that only positive opinions were considered; if a dominant recognized touristic value for a destination exists, in fact, it should be identified among those aspects which positively impressed the tourist.

From the analysis of the corpus they emerged three main types of argument supporting the standpoint.
1) The 'nature' argument focuses on the morphological aspects of Lugano, praising its location, often defined as a nestle in the foothills of the mountains, the scenic views of the Alps tumbling down to the lake, the small fishing villages around the city, the romantic and peaceful atmosphere. This argument is often expressed with epithets like: "a little Paradise on Earth", "the gem of Southern Switzerland", "a postcard".
2) The 'confidence' argument exploits the stereotype according to which

Switzerland is well-organized, punctual, efficient, respectful of the rules, clean, tidy: these aspects contribute to create a sense of confidence, since nothing dangerous or unexpected can happen if everything remains at its place. In the forum posts it is said that "you cannot 'not get a train', because if you miss one, there will be the next one an hour later", that "i servizi, e non è cosa da poco, funzionano tutti bene"**[i];** in the reviews they argue that there is "a simple bus system and (...) virtually no crime", that "if you are walking down the street, the second you step off the curb, cars stop to cross the street". The predictability of the city makes it "child friendly", that is, in its turn, an argument for families with children to visit Lugano.

3) The 'culture-mix' argument states that Lugano is a combination of the best traits of the Italian and the Swiss culture. This argument seems to particularly strike Lugano visitors: it is frequently reported and extensively argued.

The 'nature' argument occurs almost in every text, usually in addition to other arguments, to make the argumentation stronger. Since it is based on the ontological (i.e. morphological) aspects of the destination, it may be taken as a first necessary move to convince about its touristic value. In fact, the appearance is the aspect of a destination which immediately strikes a visitor. If this aspect is not valuable – i.e. because the destination cannot naturally boast a beautiful location – then, to support its touristic value one should concentrate on other aspects, which should constitute a sufficient defense. Lugano is naturally set in a charming location, so that the "nature" argument can be exploited to highlight its touristic value. Nevertheless, it is not a sufficient argument, since a tourist may like to find more than just natural attractions. This argument, in fact, is used as a sufficient defense of the standpoint only when arguing for a selected audience, that is "nature lovers" or "outdoorsy types". In these cases the writers *strategically maneuver* according to a specific *audience demand*. "Strategic maneuvering refers to the efforts arguers make in argumentative discourse to reconcile aiming for rhetorical effectiveness with maintaining dialectical standards of reasonableness" (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2006, p. 383). Strategic maneuvering manifests itself in the choice of certain arguments from a paradigm of similar arguments, for framing the discourse in front of a certain audience, making use of certain presentational devices (for a detailed explanation see van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2007, 2009).

There are no solitary occurrences of the 'confidence' argument in the corpus. It is

always put forward in combination with other arguments, this way constituting a *coordinatively compound argumentation* (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1982). Lugano's reputation of an efficient and well-organized place does not suffice to support its touristic value.

From a rhetorical point of view, the 'culture-mix' argument opens in many cases the text, and it is proposed as a sufficient argument to support the standpoint, or it functions as the focus around which the text is developed. It is manifest, here, the use of strategic maneuvering, which takes place at the level of the *topical potential*, that is in the choice of arguments from those available to support the standpoint, according to the (actual features of the) destination considered (van Eemeren and Houtlosser, 2009).

Thus, the 'culture-mix' argument has been selected for a deeper analysis. It has been considered in all its occurrences, the most complex of them have been analyzed and compared, in order to reconstruct its *internal inferential configuration*, that is the intertwining of the logical pattern of reasoning and the cultural and factual premises to which the argument is anchored. The aim was to verify how this argument supports the standpoint that Lugano is worth a short visit and what its strong and weak points are.

3. A Pragma-Dialectical reconstruction of touristic UGC

The reconstruction of argumentative moves containing the 'culture-mix' argument followed the Pragma-Dialectical model of a critical discussion, particularly the studies of van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1982) and F. Snoeck Henkemans (1997, 2001) concerning argumentation structure and indicators. The argumentative reconstruction of the texts aims at driving their evaluation as argumentative interventions, in that it includes ideally all aspects of meaning that are potentially relevant for assessing their dialectical consistency as well as their persuasive power.

Twenty-one occurrences of the 'culture-mix' argument have been counted in the corpus. Six representative occurrences will be here analyzed and discussed, in order to clearly define the meaning, the function and the structure of the argument.

Example (1) (from www.tripadvisor.com, Travel Forum, topic *"How many full days in Lugano?",* Nov 15, 2007, 8:28 PM):
About Lugano – I don't think that the mountains in the Ticino can compare with

the mountains in the Bernese Oberland or the Matterhorn, and if you don't expect them to, you won't be disappointed. What the Ticino has is a startlingly different vegetation and ambiance – lizards and chestnut trees in the mountain forests, banana palms and olive trees on the shore of Lake Lugano. I find this combination of alpine but Mediterranean, Swiss but Italian, fascinating, and if it interests you, then you will like the Ticino.

Lugano itself seems to divide visitors – some love it, some don't like it at all. I think some people don't expect it to be a city, and don't expect Switzerland to be so hot in the summer. (…) I could easily fill up 3 days in and around Lugano.

The argumentative structure of the extract is the following:
SP (1) – Lugano is worth a visit.
(1.1a – Lugano is in Ticino)
1.1b – If you don't expect the mountains in Ticino compare with the mountains in the Bernese Oberland or the Matterhorn you won't be disappointed
1.1c – Ticino has a startlingly different vegetation and ambience (in comparison with the rest of Switzerland)
1.1c.1– Ticino is a combination of Alpine but Mediterranean, Swiss but Italian
1.1c.1.1a – Ticino has lizards and chestnut trees
1.1c.1.1b – Ticino has banana palms and olive trees
1.1d– Lugano has all the facilities of a city.
1.1e – (differently from the rest of Switzerland) Lugano is hot in the summer.

The post is an answer to the question opening the forum thread, that is "How many full-days [are worth spending] in Lugano?". The standpoint is expressed in the last proposition of the post extract and claims: "I could easily fill up 3 days in and around Lugano". It can be substituted with the standpoint that is assumed as the base for this investigation: "Lugano is worth a visit [of at least three full days]".

The standpoint is supported with a *complex argumentation*. The five arguments directly supporting the standpoint constitute a *cumulative coordinative argumentation*, since they have to be taken together in order to sufficiently defend the standpoint, and every new argument is added to strengthen the acceptability of the standpoint. The unexpressed argument "Lugano is in Ticino", is supported by a *complementary coordinatively argumentation*, according to which Ticino is worth a visit for its mountains but, above all, for its vegetation and

ambience. "What the Ticino has" is, here, an indicator for complementary arguments: the argument expressed in "I don't think that the mountains in the Ticino can compare with the mountains in the Bernese Oberland or the Matterhorn, and if you don't expect them to, you won't be disappointed" is an attempt to defend the fact that Lugano is worth a visit because it is in Ticino, by highlighting one of the features of Ticino that make it worth a visit, that are its mountains. Nevertheless, the arguer anticipates that Ticino's mountains probably would not win the competition if compared to the Bernese Oberland, and the argument would thus not be a sufficient support. Therefore, the author of the post adds a complementary argument, that is what has been previously called the 'culture-mix' argument. In the post, indeed, the argument "Ticino is a combination of Alpine but Mediterranean, Swiss but Italian" refers to the vegetation and ambience, rather than to the culture of the place. This combination gives the destination a special charm (it is *fascinating*). The indicator "but" suggests that the combination is to be interpreted as an integration rather than as a sum of different traits: Swiss and Italian traits cannot be divided, they are so well integrated that they cannot even be distinguished.

Example (2) (from www.dooyoo.com; "Italian Swiss-style", Aug 14, 2000):
It seemed as if it would be a lovely place to spend a few days although not terribly lively. It is a little part of Italy, with the organization and efficiency of Switzerland. An odd, but somehow charming combination.

The argumentation put forward in the post can be reconstructed as follows:
SP (1) – (Lugano is a lovely place to spend a few days) Lugano is worth a visit
1.1a – The fact that Lugano is not terribly lively does not impact that much its touristic value
1.1b – It is an odd, but somehow charming combination of Italy and Switzerland.
1.1b.1a – (It is a little part of Italy =) Lugano shares the typical features of an Italian city
1.1b.1b – (with the organization and efficiency of Switzerland =) The organization and efficiency of Lugano are typical of Switzerland
(1.1b.1b.1 – Lugano is in Switzerland)
(1.1b.1b.1a – Italy is not organized nor efficient as Switzerland is)
(1.1b.1b.1b – Switzerland is organized and efficient)

The counter-argument according to which Lugano is not a lively place is acknowledged by the arguer to show that, even if it is true, it may be regarded as

insufficient for attacking the touristic value of the destination which relies, instead, in its "odd, but somehow charming combination".**[ii]** The arguer knows well that Lugano is in Switzerland (the author previously writes that "It is on Lake Lugano, in the foothills of the Alps in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino"), but describes it as "a little part of Italy" having some Swiss features, that are organization and efficiency. It is thus likely to interpret the "combination" as an inseparable integration of cultural traits: Lugano is Italy (it does not look like Italy!), unless for the efficiency and the organization, that are truly Swiss.

Example (3) (from www.igougo.com, "Lugano – The home of la dolce vita, Swiss style", Nov 6, 2003):
One version of a well-known joke states that in heaven, among other things, the Italians are the cooks and everything is organized by the Swiss, and these criteria could also apply to Lugano. The lack of the English police, French lovers, and German mechanics also mentioned in the witticism possibly indicates that it is not quite paradise, but nevertheless, the combination of two sets of national traits is probably the single most appealing thing about the place.

The city has a picturesque backdrop featuring a lake and some mountains, which is obviously quite characteristic of Switzerland. In addition, the high level of efficiency and orderliness found throughout the country exists, but in combination with a less typical Mediterranean atmosphere. For example, sitting at outside café terraces is a popular activity with the stylish locals, as is dining in cozy restaurants such as *La Tinèra* that serve the fine Italian style regional cuisine.

The arguer makes use of a complex argumentation to support the (sub) standpoint that
SP (1) – The combination of two sets of national traits is probably the single most appealing thing about Lugano
then acknowledges the fact that
1.1a – The picturesque backdrop featuring a lake and some mountains is obviously quite characteristic of Switzerland
but implicitly considers it not a strong counter-argument if compared with the pro-argument
1.1b – The high level of efficiency and orderliness found throughout the country is combined with a less typical Mediterranean atmosphere
The Mediterranean atmosphere is exemplified by the fact that
1.1b.1a – sitting at outside café terraces is a popular activity with the stylish

locals

and that

1.1b.1b – dining in cozy restaurants that serve the fine Italian style regional cuisine is a popular activity

The 'culture-mix' argument is better expressed by the witticism opening the review. The structure of the argument is the following:

SP (1) – In Lugano there is a combination of the best of two sets of national traits

(1.1a – The best of Italy is the cuisine / Italians are the best cooks)

(1.1b – The best of Switzerland is the organization / Swiss people are the best managers)

1.1a.1 – In Paradise Italians are the cooks

1.1b.1 – In Paradise Swiss are the managers

(1.1.1.1 – Only the best is worth to be in Paradise)

The witticism works well only if one adds a premise, that has been left implicit because it was assumed to be known by the audience – it is, properly, an *endoxon* –, that only the best is worth to be in Paradise. The combined cultural traits of Lugano are, therefore, the best traits, and this argument is not one reason among the others to visit the city, but it is the most appealing reason, it represents Lugano's distinctive trait, that exceeds the expectations.

In the same vein of example (3), in examples (4), (5) and (6), the 'culture-mix' argument is rewarded as the very touristic value of Lugano. It is expressed through a coordinatively compound argumentation, made up of two cumulative arguments: one of them supporting the sub-standpoint that Lugano has the best cultural traits of Italy, and the other one supporting the similar standpoint for Swiss cultural traits.

Example (4) (from www.dooyoo.com; "Lugano – The home of la dolce vita, Swiss style", May 27, 2009):

Unlike the rest of Switzerland, the atmosphere here is mainly Mediterranean. Trust me when I say that the Ticino, Switzerland's only Italian-speaking canton, is where the country comes alive. It's Italian lifestyle with Swiss efficiency: the best of both worlds.

In example (4), the two cumulative arguments are linked by the indicator "with" ("It's Italian lifestyle *with* Swiss efficiency"), which makes think of a new unique entity, not simply defined by the sum of its parts.

The exhortation "trust me" not only functions as a reinforcement of the argument, but moreover points out its relevance: the combination of two worlds is the very value of Lugano.

Example (5) (from www.virtualtourist.com; "In many ways Ticino is my…", August 26, 2002:
In many ways Ticino is my favorite part of Switzerland, it has a lovely mix of the best bits of Swiss and Italian culture. It is more laid back and relaxed than the rest of Switzerland, but it retains the cleanliness, punctuality and respect. (We thought that there were far more good looking guys here too, Italian looks, romanticism etc, but Swiss manners!)

In example (5), the indicator "but" can be said to represent an exception to the rule for which "if a '*p* but *q*' utterance is put forward by the protagonist in an implicit discussion, it may in general be assumed that the standpoint supported by the second conjunct is the protagonist's own standpoint" (Snoeck Henkemans 1995, p. 292). Here, *p* ("It is more laid back and relaxed than the rest of Switzerland") and *q* ("it retains the cleanliness, punctuality and respect") are, in fact, not arguments for two opposite conclusions, but they are both pro-arguments for the same conclusion that Lugano "has a lovely mix of the best bits of Swiss and Italian culture". The defense of the standpoint requires a combination of the arguments conjoined by "but". It is the combination of relaxed and laid-back Italian attitude and Swiss cleanliness, punctuality and respect, that constitutes the lovely cultural mix.

Example (6) (from http://www.bootsnall.com; "Lounging in Lugano", Aug 23, 2006):
[Lugano, the pride of Southern Switzerland, conjures up images of beautiful scenery and delightful Mediterranean weather. I was holidaying in Switzerland last May with my family (husband and two kids) and had decided to spend a few days at this distinctly Italian flavored resort in the Ticino region. I had heard that Lugano enjoyed the best of Italian and Swiss culture – the vibrant charm of the Italians and the order and punctuality of the Swiss. I was soon to discover more than just that. (…)

I had found this beautiful city to be a laid-back and cheerful place, with warm locals, their easy-going attitude, superb cuisine and great scenery – not to mention eyeing the handsome Lugano men; even middle aged guys are quite

dashing, from the cab driver, to the carpenter, to the housekeeping guy – all with a smile on their faces and trying their best to help you. The Lugano ladies must have been beautiful too, but for that you will have to ask my husband! Mamma Mia, lovely Lugano, we promise to come back again!

Argumentation in example 6 deserves to be reconstructed in detail, for it helps seizing the relevance of the 'culture-mix' argument.
SP (1) – Lugano is the pride of Southern Switzerland
1.1a – It conjures up images of beautiful scenery and delightful Mediterranean weather
1.1b – It enjoys the best of Italian and Swiss culture
1.1b.1a – It enjoys the vibrant charm of the Italians
(1.1b.1a.1 – The vibrant charm of people is the best trait of Italian culture)
1.1b.1b – It enjoys the order and punctuality of the Swiss
(1.1b.1b.1 – The order and punctuality of people is the best trait of Swiss culture)
1.1c – It is a laid back and cheerful place
1.1d –Locals are warm and have an easy-going attitude
1.1d.1 – Men are handsome and dashing
1.1e – Cuisine is superb

The final passage of the review lists, in a condensed way, all the arguments that have been put forward in the text to support the standpoint "Lugano is the pride of Southern Switzerland", that was stated immediately at the beginning of the text. It is a case of coordinatevely compound cumulative argumentation, in which every new argument is added to strengthen the acceptability of the standpoint. The arguer takes herself the commitment to give further evidences for the standpoint, since she attacks the sufficiency of the first proposed argument. For her, Lugano is the pride of Southern Switzerland not only and not mainly because it combines the best traits of two cultures, but also for a number of other reasons. Nevertheless, the arguments put forward are nothing else than a list of typical aspects of Italian culture: a laid-back and cheerful place, where locals have a warm and easy-going attitude, men are handsome and dashing, cuisine is superb.

4. Looking for the Touristic Value of a destination
Once the 'culture-mix' argument has been investigated in its different occurrences, and its facets have been pointed out reconstructing the respective argumentative moves, its internal inferential configuration can be further analyzed, to identify the elements which determine its logic validity and its

pragmatic persuasiveness. The *Argumentum Model of Topics*, developed by Rigotti and Greco Morasso (Rigotti 2006, 2009; Rigotti & Greco Morasso 2009), allows to reconstruct the two inferential paths which together lead to the conclusion (the standpoint). Figure 1 shows how this type of representation is made up of a Y-like structure, constituted by the intertwining of two reasoning lines. The right-hand line (Maxim – Minor premise – Final conclusion) represents the logical pattern that underpins the argument; because of its logic-oriented, procedural nature it is called the *procedural* component (Rigotti and Greco Morasso 2010). The left-hand component (Endoxon – Minor premise – First conclusion) derives from the anchoring of the argument in the cultural and factual premises supplied by tourists who have visited Lugano; its culture-dependent and context-dependent nature justifies the term *material* component (ibid.).

The procedural component originates from an implicit *maxim*: "If a certain effort is worthwhile to get X, the same effort is particularly worthwhile to get twice X value". The concept of *maxim* comes from the Topical tradition, and refers to an inferential principle having the form *p -> q*, which connects two or more aspects of the ontological relationship between premises and the conclusion on which the argumentative reasoning is based. The type of ontological relationship between premises and the conclusion constitutes the *locus* (e.g. cause-effect, genus to species). The maxims generated from the same locus are implications of the ontological relationship constituting the locus (Rigotti and Greco Morasso 2009). In the 'culture-mix' argument the relationship between premises and the conclusion is based on a specific aspect of the touristic value Lugano is argued to have. The touristic value of Lugano lies in the fact that it combines the aspects of two different cultures, that are considered the touristic value (the "best") of those cultures. The touristic values of such two cultures are in Lugano so well combined, that they give birth to a new unique more valuable entity. The *locus*, here, is based on a paradigmatic relationship of analogy, since the touristic value of Lugano is implicitly compared to the touristic value of another generic destination – it is a relationship among similar alternatives. It is, more precisely, the *locus from the more and the less*, which instantiates a relationship between premises and conclusion on the base of the probability or value of one of their factors. If a destination having a recognized touristic value is worth a visit, a destination combining two recognized touristic values is particularly worth a visit.**[iii]**
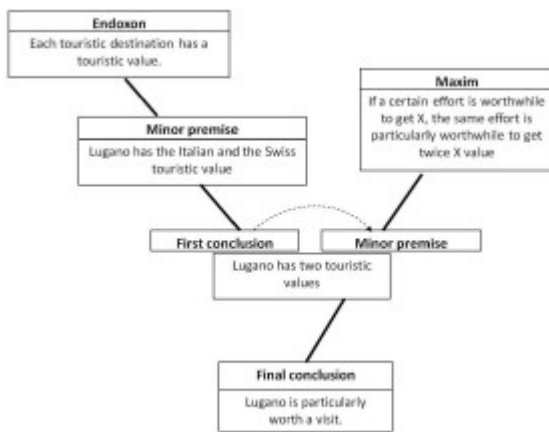
Figure 1: Synergic structure of the 'culture-mix' argument.

The material component, represented in the left-hand part of figure 1, originates from an *endoxon*. "*Endoxa* are the remarkable opinions of a community, that is to say the propositions that are in the common opinion (i.e. the *doxa*) and, as a consequence, are generally accepted, reliable and credited within a community" (Tardini 2005, p. 281). The community to which authors of travel reviews or travel forum posts refer is the generic community of tourists, constituted by all those who intend to organize a trip or are simply keen on travelling. It is thus reasonable to think that the *endoxon* here evoked is: "Each touristic destination has a touristic value."

From the fact that Lugano has both the Italian and the Swiss touristic values, and from the logical implication that a destination having two touristic values is more worthwhile than another having only one of them, comes the conclusion that Lugano is particularly worth a visit.

5. Conclusion
The paper presents a first attempt to critically consider tourism-related User-Generated-Contents, as a means to let emerge and better understand tourists' opinions on their travel experiences and on the destination they visited. The study discussed in the paper suggests that tourism is an interesting context for argumentation studies, considered that opinion giving and deliberation are the engines of tourism organization and consumption. People who intend to leave for a journey, go through a process of information seeking and evaluation aimed at deliberating about the place to visit and the time to spend there. Once they come back from their journey, they are in *the position to know* (Walton 1997) about a destination, and they become worth trust because of their experience. In the Internet society, tourists always more give their opinions and look for others'

opinions on the web, by means of social networks. UGC represent, thus, an easily accessible source for gathering the information needed.

Here, UGC have been used to develop a pilot study on the opinions given by tourists who visited Lugano. The hypothesis leading the study was that it can be identified a dominant value for a certain destination recognized by the most of the tourists, which makes it unique and worth a visit. The pilot study confirmed the hypothesis.

So, what can one say about the touristic value of Lugano? An analysis of a corpus of eighty-two texts produced and published online by tourists has allowed to point out three argument classes which tourists frequently refer to when they report of a positive touristic experience in Lugano: 1) the 'nature' argument, which is based on the morphological aspects of the destination; 2) the 'confidence' argument, which exploits the stereotype usually accompanying Switzerland, that is of an organized, efficient and respectful place; 3) the 'culture-mix' argument, which focuses on the peculiar touristic value of Lugano, given by the combination of the best traits of the Italian and the Swiss culture. The 'nature' argument occurs almost in every text, but usually together with other arguments, since a tourist may like to find more than just natural attractions in a place. It is, thus, not a sufficient argument, unless it addresses a specific audience, that are "nature lovers" or "outdoorsy types". The 'confidence' argument is put forward in addition to other arguments. Lugano's reputation as an efficient and well-organized place does not seem to be sufficient for recommending it for a visit. It is the combination of cultures that particularly strikes Lugano visitors: the 'culture-mix' argument is frequently reported in the texts, extensively argued and many times constitutes a sufficient reason for a visit according to the writer.

This argument has been therefore observed in its most relevant occurrences in the corpus. The argumentative reconstruction of the text passages where it was employed, shows that it represents the key touristic value of Lugano and, broadly, of Ticino. This standpoint, which is expressed with different wordings (e.g. "Ticino is where Switzerland comes alive", "Lugano is the pride of Southern Switzerland"), is supported by a coordinatevely compound argumentation, made up of two similar arguments: one states that Lugano shares the best traits of Italian culture – identified in the easy-going and warm attitude, the fine cuisine, the Mediterranean vegetation – and the other states that Lugano shares the best traits of Swiss culture – identified in the organization, efficiency, order. The

charming cultural combination gives birth to a new and unique entity, which has a "double" touristic value, if compared with other destinations, which can boast only one set of cultural traits. The analysis of the inferential structure of the argument has, in fact, shown that this argument is based on the *paradigmatic locus of the more and the less*, and is rooted in the *endoxon* according to which each destination has a touristic value; such *endoxon* allows the argument to be accepted by the community of tourists.

Future studies should be developed in order to further verify the hypothesis. The corpus used in the case here discussed was made up of texts belonging to different genres: travel reviews, blogs and forum posts, but such difference was not take into account in the analysis. Almost no account of the communication context within which argumentation became relevant was either given. The fact that UGC are produced on the web, in the frame of specific interaction modes having proper rules, dynamics and roles, should be considered in future studies on argumentation in the context of tourism.

NOTES

[i] "All services work well, and this aspect should not be taken for granted" [the implicit comparison is with Italy].

[ii] According to Snoeck Henkemans, when arguers acknowledge counter-arguments, this acknowledgment is apt to show that the counter-argument is less important than the pro-argument. Therefore, the arguer's implicit claim of the irrelevance of the counter-argument should be added to the pro-argument, and the argumentation structure should then be considered coordinatively compound (Snoeck Henkemans 1997).

[iii] Rigotti & Greco Morasso (2009) classify the *loci* according to a taxonomy, which distinguishes among: *paradigmatic loci*, based on relations *in absentia* (of alternativeness), both of opposition and of analogy; *syntagmatic loci*, based on relations *in praesentia* that refer to aspects ontologically linked to the standpoint, as for instance the relationship between the whole and its constituent parts; *complex loci*, which are on the borderline between the previous two ones.

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Points And Purposes Of Argumentative Texts

1. Preliminaries
What does it take to understand an argument? We can't hope to provide the answer to this question in full here. We will instead focus on an obvious point about which there is universal agreement: understanding an argument requires that one be able to identify the argument's conclusion. This apparent truism, however, might not be quite as simple as at first it appears. Arguments do not spring forth from the universe by themselves; they have authors. And their authors have purposes in making their arguments that are not necessarily identical to their conclusions. Indeed, it is another common idea that it in order to fully understand an argument, it is a good idea to identify the *author's purpose* in making that argument. We want to suggest that these two claims are in fact closely related, and that, in fact, comprehension of the

conclusion of the argument and the argument as a whole is often heightened by seeing how the author's activity of attempting to establish that conclusion can be re-described as activity of another (but related) sort.

We approach this matter as developers of a high-level reading and reasoning test—the LSAT (Law School Admission Test). The LSAT is a high-stakes test used for admission into law school in the US and Canada (also currently by one law school in Australia). We will be focusing here on reasoning as found in longish argumentative texts, which appear in the reading comprehension section of the test (our test has four scored multiple choice sections, one of which is reading comprehension).

As is usual for tests of reading comprehension, one of the standard questions on the LSAT asks the test-taker to identify the main point, or main idea, of the passage. The motivation for this is again straightforward. Scholars and instructors of reading agree that understanding a text requires that the reader be able to identify the text's main idea. What *"main idea"* designates across text types (e.g. expository, narrative, and argumentative texts) is a matter of some debate (Cunningham & Moore 1986), but if we restrict our attention to argumentative texts, as we largely do on the LSAT, then the main idea of such a text is the conclusion of the argument.**[i]** We call this the *"main point"* of the text.

Just as one standard reading comprehension question asks for the main point of the passage, another standard reading comprehension question on the LSAT asks about the author's "primary purpose" in the text. This may appear puzzling. You might think that they are probably just two ways of asking the same thing because the primary purpose of the text is just to establish the main point (i.e. the conclusion of the argument). If so, there would be no point in making the distinction between main point and primary purpose. On the other hand, if the author of the passage attempts to argue for the conclusion in order to serve some *further* purpose, then the primary purpose – if it can be identified in the text – might seem *itself* to be the best candidate for the "main point" of the text, at least at first glance. In other words, if something in the text tells us what the author hoped to accomplish in writing his or her text, why isn't *that* the main point? And so, again, the distinction would seem to be doubtful.

We are going to argue that there is a real and significant difference between main points and primary purposes of argumentative texts. We will make our case with

the help of some concepts from the philosophy of action. We will conclude with some remarks about why it might be useful from the point of view of understanding argumentative texts to make the distinction between the primary purpose and the main point of the text.

Let's begin with the above mentioned case, in which the author argues for conclusion p, but in order to, or as part of the effort to establish some further proposition, q. To be explicit (and to somewhat artificially restrict our attention to a special case), let's imagine that p is a premise in an argument for q. Arguing in support of p will typically only be part of the process of attempting to establish q. We want to reject the notion, first, that the "main point" of such an argumentative text *must be q*.

Imagine a hypothetical text in which the author argues as her main point that the death penalty, as it is administered in the United States, leads occasionally to the execution of the wrong person. On the one hand, one might think that the author's purpose is simply to show that the claim in question is true. On the other hand, depending on context and other factors that we will discuss later, it might be more accurate to say that the author's purpose is to persuade the reader that the death penalty should be abolished. We maintain that the main point of such a text is not that the death penalty should be abolished because (so we stipulate for this hypothetical text) it does not *completely* make the case for this further conclusion. We claim that the same will hold for any text with a similar argumentative structure. If establishing p is only one small part of the argument on behalf of q, and it can be gleaned from the text and surrounding clues that the author aims to establish q, we maintain that establishing q is (of the cases we will discuss) most evidently and appropriately described as the author's primary purpose in writing the text, and distinct from the effort to establish the local conclusion of argument in the text.

In other argumentative texts, however, the case for a difference between main point and primary purpose is harder to make. It is to these latter cases that we now wish to turn, and to which the bulk of our argument is dedicated. Our main aim will be to suggest that there can be a primary purpose of an argumentative text that is distinct from the main point of the text, *even when* the case for p thereby completely (or very nearly so) suffices for establishing q. Even in these cases, the main point need not be identified as q. Also, more generally, even when there is no further conclusion to which the case for p contributes, there can be,

we suggest, an identifiable primary purpose of the text that is distinct from the main point.

So how are we to understand the relation between main points and primary purposes for these latter types of cases? They are not identical, though they are obviously closely related. How do they bear on each other? We will argue that the main point and primary purpose of an argumentative text are related to one another in these cases as two actions**[ii]** are related to one another when one action "level-generates" another. This relation, explained in detail by philosopher Alvin Goldman in his *A Theory of Human Action*, holds between co-temporaneous actions that nevertheless stand in something like a means-end relation. We turn now to a brief examination of Goldman's framework and then show how it can be applied usefully to the distinction between main points and primary purposes.

2. Level-Generation
One action "level-generates" a second action when the two actions are performed at the same time and the agent performs the second action *by* performing the first.**[iii]** A third action can, in turn, be performed *by* performing the second act, and so on. As the name suggests, therefore, level-generated actions stand in a hierarchy, with more basic actions standing at lower levels. As levels are ascended, more of the purposive content of the agent's behavior comes into view. For example, Smith signals for a cab *by* raising his hand in the air. Jones checkmates her opponent *by* moving her queen to king-knight seven. And so on. Goldman describes four kinds of level-generation: first, causal generation; second, conventional generation; third, simple generation; and finally fourth, augmentation generation. Because its utility to the textual case is limited, we will ignore the case of causal level-generation (the first in Goldman's taxonomy) and focus instead on the remaining three varieties.

The two examples mentioned above (hand-raising/signaling and checkmating) are cases of conventional generation, which, according to Goldman, "is characterized by the existence of rules, conventions, or social practices in virtue of which an act *A'* can be ascribed to an agent *S,* given [the agent's] performance of another act, *A.*" (Goldman 1970, p. 25) There is a conventional rule, for example, that raising one's hand in a particular way *counts as* hailing a cab. In addition to a rule, conventional generation often requires certain circumstances to be in place. Raising one's hand in a classroom, for instance, counts as a very different action as raising one's hand at the side of a road.

In simple generation (the second type in Goldman's taxonomy), circumstances but no rules come into play in the generation. Goldman's examples include: *S* out-jumps George by jumping 6 feet 3 inches and *S* fishes by dangling a line in the water (Goldman 1970, p. 27). Here circumstances alone dictate that performing one type of action counts as the performance of another type of action. No conventions or rules need come into play.

he final variety of level-generation Goldman discusses is augmentation generation. The key idea here is that one can perform an act and also perform that act in a specific manner. Goldman relates the act described in terms of the manner in which it is performed as the generated (higher-level) act. So *S*'s extending his arm level-generates the action of extending his arm out the car window; *S*'s saying "hello" level-generates his saying "hello" loudly; and *S*'s running level-generates his running at 8 m.p.h. Goldman emphasizes that the performance of the generated act (e.g. running at 8 m.p.h.) *entails* the performance of the generating act (running), but not vice versa. He also notes that this form of level-generation is "not as intuitively attractive" as the other types of level-generation, in part because the actions can't be easily described as standing in the "by" relation. It would be somewhat odd to say that *S* runs 8 m.p.h. by running, in the same way we say that Smith signals for a cab by raising his hand (Goldman 1970, pp. 28-29).

Part of the reason that Goldman finds augmentation generation intuitively unappealing may be because he has reversed the direction of generating and generated actions.**[iv]** In conventional and simple generation, it is the performance of the generating action that "entails" the performance of the generated action (together with some circumstances and/or rules). If that pattern held for augmentation generation, then it would be *S's* running 8 m.p.h. that level-generates his running, not the other way around, as Goldman claims. Also, consider that *in* raising his hand at the curb, *S* signaled, but not vice versa (for he could signal a variety of ways). Applied to the augmentation case, we would say that *in* running 8 m.p.h., *S* runs, but not vice versa. So while we may not get the "by" description of the relation of the two actions, in other ways the augmented actions are, contrary to Goldman, best conceived as standing at the *lower,* generating level. It is this conception of augmentation generation with which we will proceed. We turn now to an application of Goldman's concept of level-generation to the distinction between main points and primary purposes of

argumentative texts.

3. Textual Generation

Taking our inspiration from Goldman, we will call level-generation that takes place within texts "textual generation". If we take arguing for the conclusion (i.e. the main point) to be what an argumentative text, taken as a whole, "does" (Kintsch 1998, p. 66ff), then in some cases we can see that action as level-generating another action – the action in the service of the primary purpose.**[v]** Broadly speaking, there are two species of textual generation, one corresponding roughly to Goldman's simple/conventional generation (we leave aside the complex matter of the role of rules) and one corresponding to augmentation generation. We will consider each in turn.

The first type, analogous to simple/conventional generation, takes the main point of the text and re-describes it in some way. It typically yields a description that contains some of the elements of the description of the main point, perhaps even constituting a paraphrase of the description of the text's main point. In fact, however, there can be new information in such a description – a way of looking at the effort to establish the argument's conclusion that places the conclusion in a different pattern of significance, e.g. *out-jumping George* includes the concept of jumping, but shows the significance of *jumping 6 feet and 3 inches.* And, just as these actions stand in the "by" relation, so too we can say that the author achieves his or her primary purpose *by* attempting to establish the conclusion of the argument. (More on this later.)

The second kind of textual generation occurs when the description of the primary purpose strips away information from the description of the main point. These are cases where the primary purpose appears to be a description cast in more general terms of the attempt to establish the main point. These are most analogous to cases of augmentation generation, where the main point is the analogue of the augmented action – the action performed in a particular manner – and the level-generated action is the more generic action, e.g. running vs. running at 8 m.p.h.

Note that deriving a generic description of the text's main point is not necessarily to derive a description that contains less information. Consider the case of augmentation generation again. Suppose that we ask why S says "hello" loudly. Several answers are possible. It could be that S aimed to make a loud sound. Alternatively, it may be that S wished to greet someone; with this answer we

learn, in effect, what is *not* central about *S's* intentional action – that saying hello at the volume he did was in some way incidental to his main purpose – saying hello. And that, because of the way level-generated actions are structured, he could have achieved this end perhaps by saying hello at a different volume.

To return to textual generation, then, consider the case of a text that seeks to establish that global warming is real and caused by humans. This is the main point, i.e. the conclusion of the author's argument. Here too, the purpose of doing so can be described a number of ways, but not all of them would be correct, i.e. supported by the text, signifying the author's genuine purpose. The main point could be re-described as "discussing a phenomenon caused by humans". Alternatively, it could be that the author aimed to "defend a position about global warming". These are very different descriptions of the main point, and, presumably, only one of them will correctly describe the author's purpose in writing the text. So, while it may appear that the re-description of the main point in these generic terms is a loss of information, being able to derive it correctly requires being able to rule out other possible interpretations. To see these issues in a little more detail, let's turn to another example.

To take an example from our test: the author of one passage argues that the writing in professional history is terrible:
Part of the joy of reading is in being surprised, but academic historians leave little to the imagination. The perniciousness of the historiographic approach became fully evident to me when I started teaching. Historians require undergraduates to read scholarly monographs that sap the vitality of history; they visit on students what was visited on them in graduate school. (Law School Admission Council 2007, p. 32)

The author goes on to argue that one effort to address this problem focuses on the importance of story, of *narrative,* in history. This movement encourages historians to tell stories. But, the author complains that even the papers inspired by this movement are dry, dull, and dreary. At professional meetings of historians, he concludes, "we" still do not see historians who tell stories that move readers "to smiles, chills, or tears."

We might distill the main point as follows: "The writing in professional history is abysmal, and efforts to improve it through attention to narrative are so far not promising." Here we have the gist of what the author argues, the argumentative

thrust of the text. In this case, various indications in the text – for example, his use of the first person "I", indicating that he is a professional historian himself – suggest that the author has a direct stake in the issue. And the author's use of certain phrases – for example, the mordant humor in the phrase, "they visit on students what was visited on them in graduate school" – suggests that he would like the situation he discusses to be improved. So we can infer that the author's *purpose* in writing the piece is something like: to convince other historians that something should be done about this problem. This purpose is pretty closely related to the main point stated above, but it is logically (and perhaps rhetorically) separable, and, importantly, requires utilizing cues from the text independent from those used to identify the main point. In particular the use of "we" in the last sentence indicates that the author is addressing a community to which he belongs, with all that entails – shared interests, goals, etc. Note that this case is relevantly dissimilar to the death penalty case, in that there was more to do to convince the reader of the further conclusion in the death penalty argument, whereas here making the case for the main point pretty much suffices for the making the case for the larger point.

The argument that there is a distinction between main points and primary purposes even in cases dissimilar to the death penalty case is therefore very simple: If the effort to establish the conclusion of the argument textually generates another description of what the author intentionally does in the text, then, ipso facto, there are at least *two* accurate descriptions of the text's most global features. The uppermost description deserves the title "primary purpose", when, like the historian case, it takes some further inference by the reader to derive this description. If this purpose were to be explicitly spelled out as well as its connection to the main conclusion of the argument, then it *would* most likely be the best candidate for the title "main point." But in cases where this is not so, an intelligible distinction between main point and primary purpose can be made, and worth making. We will now explore in a little more detail why such a distinction can be worth making.

4. Points and Purposes

We have already alluded to the way that textual generation gives rise to descriptions of the text that put the main point into a new light, in many cases emphasizing the *significance* of the main point or why it matters that the point be made. The value of this perspective should be self-evident. Even in cases of

textual generation that are closer to augmentation generation can still highlight what is significant about the conclusion or put the effort to establish the conclusion in a light that reveals what is at stake. Consider the global warming case again. Identifying the primary purpose as to "defend a position about global warming", or, even more abstractly, as to "defend a position on a scientific issue", forces us to see the text as engaged in a debate of social-political significance (in the first case) or of scientific significance (in the second). (Note that both descriptions may not be applicable to the same text.)

As indicated above, the importance of being able to correctly identify the primary purpose of an argumentative text often has much to do with being able to *rule out* competing possible interpretations of the primary purpose. As in the historian case: identifying the historian's purpose as advocating for reform requires that the reader rule out other possible uses to which the historian may have put the main point of the text, e.g. to convince writers of history that their efforts to improve are doomed to fail.

Readers of argumentative texts should be able to identify the description of the purpose textually generated from the main point that most accurately captures the author's actual aim in making the argument. How do readers do this? In the case of physical actions, as we discussed earlier, both circumstances and rules can come into play. Being able to see Smith's arm-raising as a cab-signaling required knowing the relevant rule (the "counts as" rule regarding cab-signaling) and appreciating the salience of the relevant circumstances (standing by the side of a road). The interpreter brings knowledge of the rule and the salience of certain circumstances to the interpretation – i.e. as background knowledge – but must observe the situation to see which circumstances actually obtain, and which rules actually apply.

Much is the same in the textual case. The reader brings background knowledge to the text that allows her to see that arguing for *p* counts as an instance of doing *q.* But background knowledge is only part of the story. The reader must be able to *infer* from clues in the text itself which "rules" and "circumstances" apply. Unlike the case of physical actions, in some cases the text itself provides information to the reader about how to interpret the main point that was not already part of the reader's background knowledge. In other cases, the circumstances and rules can be gleaned from indications surrounding the text proper – as in the historian case. These activities require a kind of deep engagement with the text that goes beyond

merely being able to reconstruct the conclusion of the author's argument. Here again we take the value of this kind of engagement with the argumentative text to be self-evident. Its value resides not only in a better understanding of the argument, but, we surmise, can open the door to modes of *evaluation* of the argument that may not have been available without it.

Finally, we suggest that making an effort to identify the primary purpose of an argumentative text is part of a more general interpretative activity – adopting a "purposive stance" with respect to the argument – the value of which is already well-recognized. We began our paper with the truism that understanding an argument requires being able to identify the argument's conclusion. Added to this, and perhaps equally as obvious, is the fact that one must be able to see how the elements of the argument fit together in support of the argument's conclusion. Especially for long arguments, this means being able to decipher the *structure* of the argument. (Without an understanding of the structure of the argument, one well might not be able to identify the conclusion at all.) One asks, for instance, what role the second paragraph (or section) plays in the author's argument, or what the function of a paragraph (or even a sentence) has. Another way to describe this is in terms of the *purpose* of various parts of the argumentative text. One aims to understand *how* the conclusion is supported by asking *why* the author does various things in the text.

The purposive stance with regard to the main point of the text can be directed "upward" in addition to "downward". Textual generation occurs with respect to many elements of the text, and not just the most global aspects of the text. The author argues for *p by* establishing *r*, pointing out *s*, and rejecting the possibility of *t* (one in each paragraph, say). But, likewise, as we have seen, the author can be said in most cases to seek to achieve the primary purpose of the text *by* arguing for the main point. So, just as for smaller elements of the text, the main point and primary purpose stand in the why/how relation. The author aims to achieve the primary purpose by making the main point, and makes the main point in order to achieve the primary purpose. In many cases, an understanding of the argument's structure is incomplete without identifying the primary purpose and how it relates to the main point of the text.**[vi]** Seeking the primary purpose can sensitize the interpreter to questions of finer-grained purposes that can, in turn, yield valuable insights to the argument's structure. The chain of "why" questions should not stop once the conclusion of the argument is reached.

So, not only is the distinction between main points and primary purposes (even when they are seeming re-descriptions) real and defensible, being able to distinguish them in an argumentative text is a valuable skill. There is some evidence from reading studies that identifying the main point of a text does not occur automatically; it is an inference task (Kintsch 1998, p. 180). (Even when it is explicitly stated – *that* it is the main point has to be inferred). Skilled readers have been *trained* to make this inference. We suspect that even skilled readers often do not go the next step. And so our point is also a pragmatic one, especially as applied to *argumentative* texts. Once the reader has identified the main point of an argumentative text, he or she should learn to go the next step and identify what we have described as the primary purpose of the text. Granted, rhetoricians have been telling us for a long time that we should identify the author/speaker's purpose in engaging with some discourse. But what they mean by "purpose" is either something so abstract, "e.g. to persuade, explain, etc." as to be of little value, or something equivalent to what we have identified as the main point.

The main point of our text, then, is, once again, that there is a real distinction worth making between main points and primary purposes of argumentative texts. Our primary purpose, if it were to be spelled out, might be "to articulate and defend a reading-comprehension distinction." This primary purpose can be textually generated from the main point on the model of augmentation generation. It appears to merely re-state the main point in a more generic form, i.e. with less information. But being able to correctly identify it plays a crucial role in correctly understanding the text. We are not, for instance, attempting to participate in some debate about the rhetorical structure of arguments – a purpose which is conceivably compatible with our main point.

NOTES

i In many cases, an articulation of the main point will include more information than the isolated conclusion. In fact, the main point of an argumentative text may best be characterized as a tightly compressed "gist" of the argument that is centered on the argument's conclusion. Note that we are not claiming that that the main point is a summary of the argument, which often includes more information about the argument's structure than a "gist".

ii Or two action-descriptions. We won't take a stand on the question of how actions are individuated, but for expository convenience will adopt Goldman's way of describing level-generation as a relation between distinct actions.

iii Goldman further distinguishes level-generation from cases in which one performs an act while also performing another, e.g. patting one's head and rubbing one's stomach.

iv Another reason may have to do with his insistence on individuating actions so narrowly that each level picks out a distinct action that *S* performs, rather than the levels describing the same action in different ways.

v The application of level-generation to the textual case is analogical since the existence of a text creates conditions and properties that have no obvious parallel in the behavioral case.

vi Probably less for cases analogous to augmentation generation—which is not to say that even in those cases identifying the primary purpose is without value, as we have already suggested.

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