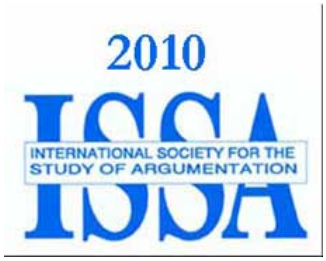
ISSA Proceedings 2010 – The Argumentative And Legalistic Analysis Of Versification



1. Introduction

There have been many argumentative studies of poetry, especially Renaissance poetry, for which Latin and Greek rhetoric and dialectics have been considered particularly relevant. However, one can put forward at least two arguments against the claim, here argued, that argumentative analysis can and should be extended to versification and by implication to verbal rhythm in general, which versification norms regulate.

In rhetorical Latin or Greek terms, research on argumentation concentrates on inventio, and in particular logos, the discovery and evaluation of true or apparently true verbal statements. Words have rhythm and one can describe rhythms verbally, but one cannot translate their meaning, if meaning they have, into verbal statements and so assess them as true or apparently true. Secondly, ancient rhetoric did study rhythm under actio, but actio explored means of heightening the persuasive effect of logos, not of adding arguments. In that, it is arguably similar to pathos and ethos, the other two subdivisions of inventio, although actio concerned, not the composition, but the delivery of a speech. For those two reasons, it appears paradoxical to claim that an argumentative study of versification is possible.

The purpose of research is to question opinion. It is to argue a "thesis", in Aristotle's definition of the term (*Topics*, 104b18-28). Through argumentation, research makes paradoxical claims endoxical or the reverse. Paradoxical claims, however, are often not paradoxical absolutely. They are paradoxical relatively to communities, for instance the communities of argumentation theorists and literary theorists. They are also more or less paradoxical, because communities or their members may be more or less for or against the claim or indifferent. In respect of versification, there is such a division of opinion within the literary community. Many consider versification more or less extraneous to poetry, explicitly like the poet Philip Sidney, in his statement that verse is "but an

ornament and no cause to poetry" (Gavin Alexander, p. 12), or implicitly, perhaps like Aristotle, in the brevity of his metric observations in *Poetics*. Yet, for others, versification matters and, during several centuries, almost all poets writing in English observed the same collective norms of versification, accepting thereby to limit their individual writing freedom. One may inquire why.

Combining formalistic and argumentative, legalistic analysis, the answer argued here is that versification, at least during that period, was not a mere "ornament": the normative form and the practice of versification with its departures from the norm were argumentatively meaningful. To the extent that its normative format allows (6000 words) and taking account of the three reviewers' and an editor's comments, this paper, relating literature, law and argumentation, elucidates the meaning of what it calls the "ideal model" of English versification (section 2), outlines its norms (section 3) and describes departures from those norms in terms of defences (section 4).

There have been other models to account for verse (see T.V. F. Brogan and, for a recent example, Derek Attridge). Unlike the ideal model, too powerful a model dissolves the contrast between norms and departures, by providing for the latter within the normative model. Here, the main sources for the ideal model are essays written under the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. In the chronological order of publication, not composition, those essays are:
Roger Ascham (1570), *The Scholemaster*
George Gascoigne (1575), Certain Notes of Instruction
George Puttenham (1589), *The Arte of Poesy*
Philip Sidney (1595), The Defence of Poetry
Thomas Campion (1602), Observations in the Art of English Poesie
Samuel Daniel (1603), *A Defence of Rhyme*

Alexander includes them all, except the first, in Sidney's 'The Defence of Poetry' and selected Renaissance Literary Criticism. This paper also mentions Francis Meres' Palladia Tamia, Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond and Alexander Pope's Essay on Criticism. They do not appear in the "References" neither do the relevant works of Plato or Aristotle, retrieved from the Perseus Digital Library website in canonically lineated form, nor the lines of verse from William Shakespeare, John Donne, and John Beaumont. Editorial differences are not material here.

2. The Ideal Model: Meaning

The prevailing opinion, which Sidney did not share, was that versification was meaningful. Firstly, it was a necessary condition for poetry. The argument was this: if writing is poetry, then it is in verse; if it is not in verse, it is not poetry. The observance of the ideal model, however, did not only participate in characterizing writing as poetry, and so target the public. For its early upholders, the formal norms of the ideal model had extra-poetical meaning. It was not only a form. It was a code, which converted formal properties into beliefs and values: if verse did not observe the ideal model, then it did not adhere to those beliefs and values.

One could say much the same of other social practices, for instance the formation of contracts. If an agreement is a contract (that is, legally enforceable), then it must satisfy conditions A, B, C, D etc. By complying with the conditions, one removes the agreement from the private to the social sphere and targets a public, the courts of law, and their acknowledgment that this is indeed a contract. Furthermore, compliance implies beliefs and values, for instance the belief that English courts' objective analysis of intention is preferable to the parties' subjective accounts.

The ideal model, as section 3 will show, was uncertain, which legal norms often are also. Nevertheless, according to its early advocates, it imitated or re-presented (the distinction cannot be discussed here) and participated in both the divine cosmological order and the ideal domestic political and ethical order, by which England, combining its several traditions, would attain unity and superiority over its neighbours and rivals. The ultimate authority for the model remains unknown, and some relativistic writers submitted to the model, with scepticism, in deference to authority.

2.1. Cosmological meaning

Puttenham begins book II, entitled 'Of Proportion Poetical', with a statement relating the Universe, music and poetry. Under the express authority of mathematicians (probably the Pythagoreans), he declares "all things [in the Universe] stand by proportion". Campion opens his essay with a similar statement. Section 3 will show that the ideal model indeed stood by proportion.

The argument was this: if and only if the norms of the ideal model were implemented, then verse, observing proportion, would become part of the universal harmony, from which man, in the religious context of the times, could

depart, with a resultant reiteration of the Fall. The argument had political and ethical implications.

2.2. The argument of authority

Coincidentally, a discussion on the educational merits of corporal punishment was the occasional cause of *The Scholemaster*, which includes the earliest extent guidelines as to the ideal model of English versification. The discussion, as reported by the author, Ascham, the Queen's classics tutor, who attended it, took place in 1563 at Windsor Castle and concerned Eton College nearby. It involved members of the government, among whom Sir William Cecil, the Queen's Principal Secretary.

There are several other arguments to associate the ideal model with political authority. However, there is no evidence as to who actually declared, if anyone, that henceforth the ideal model would rule. Ascham and Puttenham claim that in some respects it is natural. Gascoigne does not. He regrets the former freedom of poets, saying "I can lament that we are fallen into such a plain and simple manner of writing" (Alexander, p. 240). (The model was indeed simple, as section 3 will show.)

2.3. Political meaning

Implications about the political order before Elizabeth I can be read into *The Scholemaster*'s statements on the state of poetry before and still at the very beginning of the reign. There was the England before, the political chaos of the War of the Roses, still manifest in the poetry handed down from that period, and the England as from her accession to the throne, in which she would establish order and prosperity.

Half a century after Ascham wrote *The Scholemaster*, Beaumont stated the political significance of the ideal model expressly. In "To the Glorious Memory of our late Sovereign Lord, King James", lines 121-124, he says, with reference to the latter monarch's own essay on poetry:

He leads the lawless poets of our times
To smoother cadence, to exacter rhymes:
He knew it was the proper work of kings
To keep proportion, eu'n in smallest things.

(The very versification of those lines illustrates the political function of the ideal

model, as the analysis proposed at the end of section 3 will show.)

2.4. Ethos (the ethical meaning)

One can relate the ideal model of versification to Plato's major political work, *Republic*, and its discussion on the kinds of poetry to be censured and permitted in the ideal city, in respect of the ethical training of its guardians.

In *Republic*, book III, Plato has Socrates set down the virtues that the guardians of the ideal city should have and the education they should receive to that end (388a-389d). Foremost among the virtues is self-control (389c-d). Poets, Socrates goes on to say, should write accordingly (391a-392b).

Having set up criteria for the censorship of poetical content, Socrates proposes criteria for the censorship of genres and meters (393c ff), with several arguments against imitation as achieved in drama (tragedy and comedy). Poetry, if it is to be allowed in the ideal city at all, must avoid imitation, except the imitation of men who are "brave, sober, pious, free and all things of that kind" (395c).

Therefore, the ideal city must allow only narrative and on condition that the narrator manifests those virtues, *including through his meter*. "The right speaker, Socrates then says, speaks (…) [all through his text] in a rhythm of nearly the same kind" (397b), which follows from the requirement that he should not imitate anything except the virtues required from the guardians of the ideal city.

The next issue is which rhythm(s). Here, Socrates refers to Damon, a musician friend of his who had studied the ethos of rhythms. Socrates declares that poets should observe "the rhythms of a life that is orderly and brave".

The discussion in *Republic* on the appropriate rhythm(s) is difficult to follow, perhaps purposefully, since modern psychologists are still debating the question (Paul Shorey's note to 400a, in the Perseus website edition).

However, Socrates at this point mentions the basic foot of the ideal English model, the iamb and an alternative foot of that model, the trochee. The ethical value Socrates actually attaches to those feet appears unclear, but the words etymologically mean respectively to "assail" and "run", which are surely activities that a soldier must engage in (except in the retreating sense of the second word).

2.5. The cultural policy meaning

Although he called Plato "divine", Ascham, in book II, adumbrates the ideal model within a humanist essay on textual imitation as a pedagogical technique, that is to

say on what the modern French critic Gérard Genette has called “hypertextual” practices.
In respect of versification, he calls for an importation of Greek and Latin versification, with the typically Renaissance policy of drawing English culture out of alleged prior barbarity or bestiality (see the question below).

Meres’ *Palladia Tamia: Wit’s Treasury,* published a few decades later, in 1598, can be read as a statement that Ascham’s cultural project had been successfully implemented, as the subtitle makes clear: *A Comparative Discourse of our English Poets with the Greek, Latin, and Italian Poets*.
Ascham does not use the terms “Middle Ages” and “Renaissance”. However, he presents the Middle Ages as a barbarous era bracketed off from Antiquity, on one side, and, on the other, from the Renaissance.
One of distinctive features of “true versifying”, Ascham says, as practised by the Latin and Greek poets, in contrast with the allegedly barbarous Goths and Huns, is the absence of rhyme.

Accordingly, he proposes (as Campion does also, but contrary to his actual practice) that English versification should free itself of rhyme. “Surely, he says, to follow rather the Goths in rhyming, than the Greeks in true versifying, were even to eat acorns with *swine* [italics here added], when we may freely eat wheat bread among men” [modernized spelling].

The majority of dramatic poetry was to be written in blank verse (unrhymed pentameters, as defined in section 3), thereby emulating Latin and Greek poetry. However, lyrical poetry and some dramatic poetry continued to rhyme.
The two facts suggest a point that section 3 will develop: that, as the Elizabethan Settlement purposed to do, but also as the English language was doing, the ideal model of versification reconciled different traditions.

2.6. Relativism and skeptical submission
Puttenham, while acknowledging the tripartite division of cultural history, does not, contrary to Ascham, disparage rhyming. In book I, arguing that rhyming is not specific to the barbarians, he does not deny, unlike Ascham, the worth of poets other than Greek or Latin.

Moreover, Puttenham (book II, chapter 11) proposes a noteworthy typology of stanzas, which he calls ‘staffs’, with different rhyme patterns and line lengths, as

later found in John Donne's *Songs and Sonets*, first published posthumously in 1633.
Daniel goes further than Puttenham, in declaring, contrary to the tripartite historical schema, that all periods manifest nature's possibilities. Consequently, contrary to Ascham, one should not categorize some as worthy and others as gross.
Puttenham and Daniel, then, do not condemn all poetry except Latin and Greek, especially, as Ascham does, for the use of rhyme nor do they present the ideal model as not allowing rhyme. Rhyme, for them, is a device that poets, have resorted to, both before and after the great Latin and Greek poets and not only in Europe.
In fact, Puttenham (book II, chapter 3, Alexander, p. 113), reversing Ascham's judgement on Latin and Greek unrhymed verse as opposed to barbaric rhymed verse, says that should one take away its meter, Latin and Greek verse would be of no more interest than English verse.

Furthermore, Gascoigne describes and prescribes the ideal model, but as noted previously, with regret for the loss of English poets' former metrical freedom. He does so submissively, saying "since it is so, let us take the ford as we find it" (Alexander, pp. 240-241). Most poets were to observe the model during more or less three centuries.

3. The Ideal Model: Norms
Puttenham and Campion explicitly intended the ideal model of versification to extend the harmony of the Universe to actual versification, which the former like Ascham deemed had become chaotic. Under Plato's utopic political doctrine, verse, written according to ideal model, should also have the ethical effect of portraying the poet as a disciplined individual whom emotions cannot affect, especially fear and pity, which a soldier-citizen in Plato's ideal city should never allow himself to experience.

The poet's self-mastery is manifest in his ability to abide by the ideal model in all contexts. Possibly echoing Plato, Puttenham says poetry requires "law", "restraint", "rules" (book II, chapter 6, Alexander, p. 118-119). Setting aside rhyme and syllabic limitation, the English model required the observance of two norms: the regular distribution of pauses and the regular alternation of two types of syllables.

Gasgoigne characterized the English model as “plain and simple” (Alexander, p. 240) and indeed it was. However, interestingly for the extension of argumentative analysis from law to versification, the norms were uncertain and debated (opposing for instance Campion and Daniel), but the uncertainty did not lessen the force of the obligation to observe them.

In respect of Puttenham’s and Campion’s references to universal proportion, the following is worth noting. There was the same proportion in the pentameter, the most usual line in English poetry under the ideal model, between a line’s number of feet and its number of syllables (5/10) as between the two categories of syllables (1/2), since one category of syllable had twice the value of the other. Puttenham’s rule for the pause in an even numbered line also results in producing the same proportion.

3.1. Pauses

Lineation was and is still considered a distinctive feature of verse: unlike prose, verse divides into lines, irrespectively of the right-hand margin. Furthermore, unlike prose lines, verse lines, it is thought, begin with a capital letter.

Shakespeare’s only extent (but hypothetical) holograph shows that, although composing under the ideal model, the poet, according to Brooke (p. 216) and Parker (p. 140), did not always write in that way graphically, not because he did not acknowledge the ideal model, but because he did not need those visual markers.

Lineation, if correct, merely exhibits the model’s requirement for the distribution of pauses. Before the ideal model was established, poets, says Puttenham, failed to restrain their discourse with pauses, which should be observed “if it were but to serve as a law to correct the licentiousness of rhymers” (book II, chapter 5, Alexander, p. 118).

According to the ideal model, there are two pauses in each line: the first, at the end of the line, which justifies lineation; the second, sometimes called a ‘caesura’, within each line, which divides it into two sub-units.

The requirement may appear rather easy to observe. In fact, Puttenham says that the pauses should correspond to more or less dissociable syntactical units, allowing graphic punctuation. The effect of that rule is that, if the editors had required this text to be in decasyllabic lines, the most common form under the

ideal model, this sentence would need rewriting, as the following lineation shows:
The effect of that rule is that, if the
Editors had required this text to be
In decasyllabic lines, the most com-

3.2. Feet

The ideal model required, not only that the poet should be self-disciplined enough to divide his discourse into end-stopped lines with an additional internal pause in each line, but that the words of each line should fit naturally, not only into the format of a set number of syllables, but into binary syllabic units.

Indeed, just as the Elizabethan settlement purposed to go beyond the clash between Catholics and Puritans or the English language was fusing its French and English sources, so the ideal model of versification, made explicit in the early part of her reign, brought together several models.

The ideal model was to combine the syllabic model of French versification (at least, as interpreted at the time), the ancient Latin and Greek quantitative model, and the accentual system of the English language, if not directly the Old English accentual model of versification.

All the writers agree that ideal model of versification should be syllabic. Verse should be written in homo-syllabic lines (with the same number of syllables per line all through) or in (homo-strophic) stanzas repeating an identifiable pattern of syllabic variations per line (although hetero-strophic verse does exist).

Furthermore, establishing the ideal model of versification, the authors all require that, as in Ancient Latin and Greek verse, lines should divide into feet. However, they also agree that, unlike the Latin and Greek feet, the English foot should be binary.

3.3. Uncertainty

The authors agreed that there should be a medial pause or caesura in each line, but disagreed as to its position. There was also agreement that lines should divide into feet and, more specifically, binary feet, but disagreement about the units of those binary feet. (Syllabic division is uncertain also, but the focus here will be on the binary syllabic contrast.)

Both Puttenham (book II, chapter 5, Alexander, p. 118) and Gasgoigne (Alexander, p. 244) agree that there must be an internal pause. The two authors,

however, disagree on its standard position: if the number of syllables is even, Puttenham says the caesura must fall in the middle, so in a decasyllabic line after the 5th syllable, but Gascoigne says that, in such a line, it should do so either after the 4th or 6th.
Ascham praises Henry Howard as the first, in his translation of Virgil, to have written in blank verse (that is, without rhymes). However, he reproaches him for not adopting the quantitative meter of his source. What Ascham wishes to impose, like Campion later, is the foot in quantitative terms, following the Latin and Greek model: in other words, each line should divide into an alternation of relatively short or light and long or heavy syllables.
In fact, Howard had indeed not *adopted* the Latin and Greek model, but he had *adapted* it to what was being identified at the time as a characteristic feature of the English language, stress or accent, which had governed Old English verse.
He had, by his practice, redefined the foot in accentual terms. Under that redefinition, an iamb, one of the classical feet, does not combine a short syllable and a long syllable, but an unstressed syllable and a stressed syllable.
The accentual-syllabic model was to prevail, but uncertainty as to the definition of the foot, quantitative or accentual, remained for some time. Thus, Alexander (pp. 371-372) notes that Puttenham's treatment of verse is confusing.

Puttenham acknowledges that two syllables can form a foot and that two feet can be made up of four syllables (book II, chapter 4, Alexander, p. 114); he also considers accent (II, 7-9); but he presents the different measures used by English poets in syllabic terms (II, 4).
Puttenham's confusion, one can add, may account for his statement (II, 5) about the medial position of the internal pause, which has the inevitable effect in even-numbered lines of splitting the two syllables of a foot from one another, often with a graphic punctuation mark.
Gascoigne follows the accentual practice, yet he describes the two syllables both in accentual and quantitative terms: "the first, he says, is depressed or made short and the second is elevate or made long" (Alexander, p. 240).

Today, the general rule concerning stress is said to be that lexical words, like "be" or "exist", have one stress and sometimes more as opposed to grammatical words, like "be" as an auxiliary, which have none.
However, accents other than linguistic stress can interfere, as in "To be or not to be: that is…", where the fourth stress, a rhetorical stress, falls on "that", a

grammatical word, not on “is”, a lexical word, with a resultant trochaic variation. Gasgoigne also notes that there are syllables which, contextually, can be either stressed or unstressed (Alexander, p. 240). Puttenham (Alexander, p. 120) says that this polyvalence is characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon monosyllables.
Some modern commentators consider that the Old English model (four stresses per line with a strong medial pause) continued to effect versification. The Elizabethan and Jacobean authors do not refer to that model, but it is a persuasive explanation for cases where grammatical words like “of”, usually unstressed, occur in the slot for a stressed syllable.

Finally, both Puttenham (Alexander pp. 119 and 122), in respect of rhyme, and Gasgoigne (Alexander, pp. 239 and 241), for meter and rhythm, insist that stress must be natural. Stresses must not be “wrenched” or “wrested” in pronunciation to force them into the slots of the metric pattern.
In setting down this requirement, Puttenham and Gascoigne may echo Plato’s statement that *rhythm must follow the words* and not the opposite (399e-400a). Plato’s reason is probably that words or concepts are to rhythm what the mind is to the body, but the injunction clashes with his restriction on permissible meters or rhythms.

3.4. Example
As with legal norms, the uncertainty of the norms, for instance regarding the internal pause, the foot and stress, did not make them any the less obligatory. However differently they were defined, the norms of the ideal model have in common a promotion of self-control and so constancy.

Now, if one examines Beaumont’s above quoted quatrain, it may seem to comply with the ideal model of versification, as it should, given the poet’s statement in those lines about lawless poets on the one hand and bringing them to order on the other.
Indeed, as indicated below there is nothing wrong with the stanza. Each line is composed of 10 syllables. In each, there is an alternation of unstressed and stressed (here italicized) syllables (taking into account the usual accentual ambivalence of ‘of’ and ‘to’). In other words, each line is composed of 5 iambic feet (here separated by a vertical bar), and each line is unquestionably end-stopped:
He *leads*|the *law*|less *po*|ets of| our *times* (10)
To *smoo*|ther *ca*|dence, to| *exact*|er *rhymes*: (10)

He *knew*| it *was*| the *pro*|per *work*| of *kings* (10)
To keep| pro*por*|tion, e*u'n*| in s*mall*|est *things*. (10)

Setting aside the elision in line 4, which section 4.1 will comment, the lines do indeed appear perfect, in subsuming under the ideal accentual-syllabic model the words as naturally pronounced.
However, the analysis has omitted one rule of the ideal model: a pause must divide the line into two and, according to Puttenham (but not Gascoigne), a pentameter into two five-syllable units.
It is the case at lines 2 and lines 4, which divide exactly in the middle and with a comma. It is not the case at lines 1 and 3: the first has either a caesura after the 2nd syllable or none; the third, after the 2nd, the 4th or none.

Now, whereas lines 2 and 4 state the order brought about by the king, those two other lines concern the chaotic situation prior to his actual intervention. The departure from the ideal model therefore appears justified.

4. Defences: Denials and Justifications
George Orwell argued that humankind's need for contrasts made utopias impossible to establish. The same perhaps is true of all ideal models. As early as the late eighteenth century, a few poets may well have invented individual models, as Gerald Manley Hopkins did at the end of the nineteenth.

However, until the institution of free verse, most observed the ideal model. If they failed to do so, they were criticized or "censured" (the two words were synonymous), as Donne was by Ben Jonson, according to Drummond. Even today, editors can re-edit apparent verse as prose: thus Brooke (p. 216) as opposed to Parker (pp. 141-142).
Few poets, however, observed the norms consistently. Literary critics, teachers, students who comment verse (unlike others who ignore it) focus, not on observant lines, but on departures, and they most frequently do one of two things.
In the manner of counsels for the defence, they argue on behalf of the poets, that the departures are in fact not departures or that the departures, limited in number, are meaningful and therefore justified.

4.1. Graphic and non-graphic denials
A pentameter, the most current line in traditional English verse, can have more or less than ten syllables, but the departure be denied. Exploiting dieresis, certain

syllables can count as two. A line may also include a silent pause, counting as one syllable. Poets have also allowed themselves one syllable or two more per line, under what appears to have been or become an additional rule or licence that, before the internal pause or before the end of the line, an unstressed or so-called "feminine" ending did not count, as in "To be or not to be: that is the quest*ion*". Other additional rules enable a pentameter to have more than ten syllables. Syneresis fuses two syllables into one. Likewise, synaloepha merges the end and the beginning of two words, with or without an elision mark.

Writers of verse have often resorted to a graphic denial of departures through elision marks, as seen above in Beaumont's quatrain, where "even" is reduced to a monosyllabic "e'en". The word, arguably, may have been pronounced in that manner, but the standard spelling would have disrupted the meter. In eliding to conform, the poet adhered to the ideal model. In her editions of Donne, Helen Gardner, claimed that Donne did observe the model and, accordingly, added elision marks.

Elision marks, which are frequent, amount to a denial that the line does not observe the ideal model. (Under a more subtle analysis, they both acknowledge the metric model and make another rhythm perceptible.) However, critics (for instance, Brooke and Parker) have justified them. The Jacobean poets, they claim, attempted thereby to narrow the gap between poetry and ordinary speech, allowing truth to oral speech to prevail over graphic spelling norms.
According to Brooke (p. 216), the departures of the Jacobeans, of which this oral preference is only an instance, broke down the categorical barrier between prose and verse, making each a matter of degree, enabling the gradual transition from one to the other. The breaking down of the two categories appears significant and justified, at a time when the cosmological and political orders were also breaking down.

4.2. Aristotelian justifications
However, even before the Jacobeans, undeniable departures from the norms perhaps also became a condition for poetry, but on two conditions: firstly, within limits, beyond which one could not recognize the normative form; secondly, if justifiable as also meaningful.
Certainly, most commentaries by critics, teachers and students for whom verse matters consist in more or less subtle justifications of departures. It is even current to say that, if justified, departures from the ideal model are characteristic

of good verse.
Law can justify defamation or obscenity in consideration of a general interest, for instance respectively truth or literature. Likewise, comments that make departures from the ideal model meaningful justify those departures for their significance or semantic value.

Plato, in *Republic*, book III, considers allowing poetry in the city only if it fulfils several conditions. One of those conditions is that the poet, in his rhythms, constantly imitates virtues that the soldier-guardians of the city must possess, among which self-control. The ideal model of English versification provides the norms for poets to comply with Plato's requirement, at least in respect of self-control.
In book X, Plato develops his metaphysical argument against imitation, broached on in book III. With the implicit exception for the imitation of the accepted virtues, imitation is contrary to philosophy, in its attempt, absurd, because impossible, at copying a mere instance or copy of an Idea whereas the mind should aspire to contemplate the Idea itself, of which its instances are only imperfect copies.

The ideal model conforms to Plato's ethical requirements, but comments on departures from the model, although compatible with his injunction that *meter should follow the words* and not the reverse, are usually more immediately compatible with Aristotle's revaluation of imitation or re-presentation as being akin to philosophy
Imitation or re-presentation, says Aristotle (*Poetics* 48b4-19), is similar to philosophy and the learning process in general, because the mind, conceiving the likeness of, for instance, a two-dimensional oil painting of a person on canvas and that three-dimensional flesh-and-blood person himself, conceives their abstract, more general common denominators.

The analysis of Beaumont's quatrain in section 3.4 has done just that: it has shown how, alternately contrary to and in accordance with the model for internal pauses, the pause system of the lines re-presented their verbal meaning, the practice of "lawless poets" and then the submission to the ideal model.
One could quote a great many other examples of how one can comment departures from the ideal model and how literary critics, teachers and students actually do comment them, as being justified for re-presentational reasons. Here, for want of space, one can consider only two: one relates to the pause, the other

to the foot.

Illicit pauses

The first example is the opening of Donne's "The Flea", quoted here with a double vertical bar to show the internal pauses:
Mark but this flea,|| and mark in this
How little || that which thou deniest me is…

Part of a heterometric stanza, the first, octosyllabic line is divided in accordance with the model, but not the second, decasyllabic line (with a disyllabic pronunciation of "deniest"). In that line, the pause falls arguably just after the 3rd syllable, not after the 5th nor after the 4th (as respectively Puttenham and Gascoigne would have it do).

Why? Surely, the contrast between the alleged littleness of what is denied (defloration) and the allegedly disproportionate immensity of the woman's refusal justifies the departure, which breaks the line up into 3 syllables, on the one hand, and 7 syllables, on the other.

The words justify the rhythmic departure. They say: "Look, I am not observing the model, but the words provide the reason why." Indeed, notwithstanding Plato's statement that words should not follow the rhythm, but the latter, the former, one might say that *the words are merely an argument to justify the formal departure*.

Illicit feet

Literary critics, teachers and students comment departures from the ideal model's syllabic and accentual norms, like departures from the ideal model's norms on pauses, as being justified semantically.

In the ideal city, poetry, Plato argued, must imitate nothing, except allowed virtues. It should imitate neither characters or passions nor perceptions of the physical world, for instance "neighing horses and lowing bulls, and the noise of rivers and the roar of the sea and the thunder and everything of that kind" (396b, repeated more or less at 397a).

Published long after the essays referred to here, Pope, in *An Essay on Criticism*, prescribed exactly the contrary: "The sound, he declared, must seem an echo to

the sense" (line 365). Here also, notwithstanding Plato's prescription about words and rhythm, one might claim the opposite: *the sense must seem an echo to the sound*.

Apparently alluding to Plato's examples, Pope exemplified his own prescription in the following lines (368-369), where spondaic feet (two stressed syllables) represent the sense together with different categories of phonemes (the analysis of which cannot be undertaken here):

But when *loud Sur*ges lash the sounding Shore,
The hoarse, *rough Verse* shou'd like the Torrent roar.

5. Conclusion

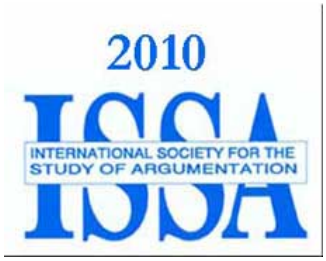
Contrary to the usual focus of argumentative studies on *logos*, this paper has argued within its limited format for the extension of argumentative analysis to versification, which regulates verbal rhythm. In the case of English versification, it has shown that, originally, the ideal model was not the empty form it may well have become, but was cosmologically, politically, ethically and culturally meaningful. It has also shown that the model functioned like a law, departures from which have resulted in censorship or criticism, denials and justifications.

During several centuries, the majority of poets observed the model and their departures were not such as to jeopardise the recognition of the model. Most poets, by fitting words into the slots of the model, gave the abstract model existence. They implicitly argued, in each of their poems, that observance of that collective model should limit individualistic formal inventions, even when and if the other implications were lost, contrary to those who, as early as the late eighteenth century, developed their own model, putting originality first.

The extent of the adherence to the model and its meaning and of the departures from it is the most significant aspect of a versified poem as such. Whatever else versified poetry has to say, one can find elsewhere: the social sciences, the humanities, prose literature, pop songs, or tabloids. Charged with meaning, the model and the possible departures came first. Poets then found words. Yet, many, perhaps most, literary specialists reverse the order, some ignoring versification completely and leaving one amazed at why poets bothered. Argumentation theorists, also, should perhaps be more attentive to rhythm, were it only to elucidate ethos.

REFERENCES
Alexander, G. (Ed.) (2004). Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism, London: Penguin
Ascham, R. (1570). *The Scholemaster*, retrieved from http://worldlibrary.net/Renascence_Editions.htm
Attridge, D. (1995). *Poetic Rhythm: an Introduction*, Cambridge: CUP.
Brogan, T.V. F. (1981). *English Versification 1570-1980: a Reference Guide with a Global Index*, Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1981, updated in *Versification: an electronic journal of literary prosody* website, retrieved from http://oregonstate.edu/versif/.
Brooke, N. (Ed.) (1998). William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Oxford: OUP
Genette, G. (1982). *Palimpsestes*, Paris: Seuil.
Orwell, G. (1943). Can socialists be happy?, *Tribune*, December 20, 1943, retrieved from http://orwell.ru/library/articles/socialists/english/e_fun
Parker, R.B. (Ed.) (1998). William Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, Oxford: OUP

ISSA Proceedings 2010 – From Polemical Exchanges To Dialogue: Appreciations About An Ethics Of Communication



1. Introduction

Although agreement and consensus are widely considered respectful and play a fundamental role to solve conflicting situations, how can we deal with circumstances which agreement and consensus seem too far? Is consensus a necessary factor for a fair dialogue? To polemize is a way to manage disagreements and it is commonly presupposed that in order to attain better communication, good relationship and mutual understanding we must require agreement, consensus and common ground conceptions. Are

disagreements necessarily unfair? Are agreement, consensus and common ground conceptions to be pursued in all situations? Can people not live in harmony even though they have different opinions or discrepant world-views? Would not it be more beneficial to a more harmonious coexistence to emphasize as Nicholas Rescher a concept of rationality which includes a legitimate diversity, a constrained dissonance, an acquiescence in the difference and a respect for the autonomy of others than taking the consensus as an imperative of reason or as a requirement for its limitations? (Rescher 1995, p. 3, 7, 14)

Disagreement and dissent are attitudes that oppose dogmatism and are important elements of being rationally critic. Karl Popper stated that "the growth of knowledge depends entirely on the existence of disagreement" and even though it may lead to "strife" or "violence" it "may also lead to discussion, to argument and to mutual criticism"(Popper 1996, p. 34). However, why do disagreements instead of rational debates turns so frequently into quarrels or offensive disputes? How do we handle with these extremes situations? Habermas in his theory of communicative rationality has pointed out that "reaching understanding is considered to be a process of reaching agreement among speaking and acting subjects" (Habermas 1984, p. 287). But even critical rationality seems to be insufficient to preclude insulting remarks and irrationals discussions grounded on harsh feelings, desires and beliefs.

To manage controversies is not sufficient to appeal only to rationality. Ethical values should be reflected on, in order to deal with attitudes that are not attained exclusively at a cognitive level or that can not be settled on an informational base solely. When a reasonable debate turns into a quarrel, it is necessary for the disputants, even for a moment, to suspend the opinions or the judgments and keep simultaneously a dialogical attitude so as to renew the controversy later in a less exalted mood.

Ethical values deal with sentiments, desires, beliefs, accountability, reliance, truthfulness, and respect. Their concern is at the core of a dialogical attitude that may keep the disputants in touch while the judgments are suspended. Suspension of judgment is a state of our intellect that we do not assert nor negate any proposal or assertion whatsoever. It is called *épokhé* in the Pyrrhonean skeptical tradition (Popkin & Stroll 2002, p. 55). Suspension of judgment or *épokhé* follows soon after a situation in which disagreement – opposed views or attitudes – seems to prevent any decision in a dispute. It is in the state of *épokhé* the promising

terrain that dialogue may grow. It is in the state of *épokhé* that the confrontational animosity is kept aside and follows on a state of moderate feelings and tranquility (called *ataraxia* by the Pyrrhoneans).

In this paper, Marcelo Dascal's theory of controversies is taken as a general framework, and in order to avoid any attraction towards angry and offensive disputes, a maneuver is proposed to help move from a contentious to a dialogical attitude by exploring an interplay between Pyrrhonean skepticism and Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue. A dialogical attitude is fundamental in order to regain a state of reasonableness and fairness and this state is a necessary condition for argumentation. As David Bohm says:
"The object of a dialogue is not to analyze things, or to win an argument, or to exchange opinions. Rather, it is to suspend your opinions and to look at the opinions – to listen to everybody's opinions, to suspend them and to see what all that means. If we can see what all of our opinions mean, then we are *sharing a common content*, even if we don't agree entirely." (Bohm 2007, p. 30)

2. The Irresistible Attraction towards Dispute: The Evil of Certainty
Our daily life, be it public or private, professional or not is entangled in debating, discussing or arguing. The content of strife may vary from trivial domestic quarrels, to disputes over labor demands, to conflicts in organizations, to political dissensions, or to scientific controversy and so on.

In order to understand the phenomena of polemical exchanges, Marcelo Dascal (Dascal 1998) proposed, as a general hypothesis, a typology that consists of two sets of abstract "ideal types". The two sets represent two "macro" levels of organization which Dascal calls, respectively, "strategical" and "tactical". The first level comprises the polemical types; they refer to the structure of the polemical exchange; the second level comprises the *types of polemical move*; they refer to the process of the polemical exchange.

There are three polemical types: 1) discussion, 2) dispute and 3) controversy.
1) A discussion is a polemical exchange whose object is a well-circumscribed topic or problem that allows for solutions which result from the application of procedures that the contenders accept in a well-defined field. The root of a problem is a mistake relating to some important concept or procedure within this field. Discussion is basically concerned with the establishment of truth. It follows a "problem-solving" model. The Popperian schema of conjectures and refutation

fits very well into this type of polemic.
2) A dispute is a polemical exchange whose object is also a well-defined problem. But instead of allowing for solutions, at best it can only dissolve or be dissolved, because the contenders at no point accept its definition as grounded in some mistake, and neither do they accept any procedure for deciding the dispute. The root of the problem is not a mistake, but differences of attitudes, feelings, or preferences that seems unsolvable. Disputes are basically concerned with winning, and winning involves a "contest" model.
3) A controversy is a polemical exchange that occupies an intermediate position between discussion and dispute. It has no steady specific problem and can spread quickly to other problems. The contenders reveal profound divergences about the extant methods of problem solving. The problems are not perceived as a matter of mistakes to be corrected, nor are there accepted procedures for deciding them. Controversies are an ongoing process that are neither solved as discussions, nor dissolved as disputes; they are, at best, resolved. Their resolution may consist at the "weighting" of the conflicting positions to see at which side reason favors, or at the modifying of the accepted positions of the contenders, or at the clarifying the nature of the differences at stake. Controversies are basically concerned with persuading. It follows a "deliberative" model.

The types of polemical moves are also three: a) proof, b) stratagem, and c) argument.
a) Proof is a move that aims to establish the truth of a proposition by employing some inferences that lead from various propositions to the one that needs to be proved. It is related to discussion.
b) A stratagem is a move that aims to cause a relevant audience to (re)act in a certain way, by inducing it to believe that a proposition is true. It may involve deception and dissimulation. The force of this move lies in rendering the contender "speechless", i.e., unable to react with a satisfactory counter-move. It is related to dispute.
c) An argument is a move that aims to persuade the addressee to believe that a proposition is true. Like stratagems, arguments are also concerned with beliefs also. But unlike stratagems, arguments seek to achieve their effect by providing recognizable reasons for inducing in the contender the desired belief. Unlike proofs, these reasons need not be based on a logically conclusive inference pattern or on truthful evidence, but on sufficiently sound reasoning and some factual agreements. It is related to controversy.

It ought to be emphasized that real cases of polemical exchanges do not appear as exactly circumscribed by these three ideal types. Instead, polemical exchanges turn out to be a mixture of all three types.

It is desirable that conflicting situations in all contexts should be handled by using proof and argument, and by maintaining polemical exchanges at the realm of either discussions or controversies. A stratagem may be effective, but it is clearly undesirable from an ethical standpoint. It may even seem obvious from a rational point of view to reject stratagem as a move. Although argumentation is not necessarily conflictive, there is an irresistible attraction to contention, especially if the issues at stake involve not just relevant interests and beliefs but also commitment.

However, why does fair and reasonable argumentation lead to tricky stratagems? Why do disputes seem to be so inevitable?
A hypothesis that can be worked out is that dispute, at a strategical level, contain a strong element of certainty that awakens in the contender an overwhelming desire to win; and, at a tactical level, there is at the disposal of the contender a broader repertory of argumentative maneuvers ranging from arguments not committed with validity or fairness to arguments with strong elements of rationality especially of juridical character.

Dispute deals with differences of attitudes, feelings, or preferences which are invariably based on beliefs. Belief refers to something we take to be the case or regard it as true. Therefore, beliefs nurtures and supports our certainties.

José Ortega y Gasset, widely known for his 1930 work *The Revolt of the Masses*, made a fundamental distinction between ideas and beliefs in an essay entitled "Ideas and Beliefs" (Ideas y Creencias), published in 1940. "Ideas" we have and "beliefs" we are. "Ideas" may be disposed of or changed at convenience, or by empirical testing or by rational proof. According to Ortega, "ideas" are "the thoughts that we have about things, were it original or received, they do not possess in our life the value of reality" (Ortega y Gasset 1959, p. 10). "Beliefs", as Ortega says, "constitute the base of our life, the terrain that it happens in". Following on, he says, "Because it poses us in front of what is for us the proper reality" (Ortega y Gasset 1959, p.10).

In this study, "ideas" and "beliefs" will be taken as guiding poles through which a

possible way toward dialogue departing from a dispute will be discussed.
It is a natural and very frequent phenomenon that a good debate turns into a quarrel, and that a fair dialogue sadly ends up in a conspicuous contention. Proofs and arguments may also turn into tricky stratagems, and discussions and controversies may turn out to be fierce disputes. This attraction to contention leads to a lessening of the possibilities for the solution to the issues at stake. Dascal (Dascal 2008, p. 34) gave the name "dichotomization" to the process of radicalization of the debate through emphasis on the incompatibility of the poles and the disavowal of intermediate alternatives. Dispute implies certainty of decision procedures in a negative way, so the issue cannot be decided. On the other hand, discussion implies certainty of decision procedures, but in a positive way, so the issue can be decided. Once the dichotomy is accepted by the contenders, it will alternate the debate between discussion and dispute. Discussion treats the issues as "ideas" which scientifically confront each other for the sake of truth. Dispute treats the issues as "beliefs" which are opposed to each other like armies in a trench battle. It is more frequent a truth-searching discussion to incline toward a belief-laden bitter dispute instead the contrary, i. e., a belief-laden bitter dispute to incline toward a truth-searching discussion. Belief-laden arguments, even when fallacious, are many times "heavier" than informative-laden arguments even when they are clear and sound reasoning.

In a controversy, the space for possibilities of the issue at stake is widened through a process which Dascal (Dascal 2008, p. 35) named "de-dichotomization". This approach leads to a breaking of the poles so as to search for a cooperative dialectical solution for the debaters. Controversy implies a questioning attitude of deliberative procedures that view the issue as not susceptible to being reduced or simplified but instead to being made more complex. Although controversy appears to be a flexible and open-ended way to persuade rationally by favoring the growth of knowledge and interpersonal cooperation, most of the real polemical exchanges are irresistibly attracted toward dispute. Disputes are conveyed in a dogmatic manner owing to the certainty that belief-laden arguments yield. They have a restrictive scope and as it pushes the debate to an imperative and imposed solution it is quite often that the debate get stanched at a dead-end. It is at this moment that polemical exchanges gets harsh and become a bitter quarrel. What can be done to make things flow again without mutual aggression? How can we turn a quarrel into a good debate? How can an angry contention be turned into a fair dialogue? How can a tricky stratagem be turned out into a reasonable

argument? How can a dispute be changed into a wider scope controversy?

Belief is in the background of most disputes and it is the main force that nurtures them; it controls our lives and plays a vital role in our actions and produces certainty in our speech. To believe something implies certainty without the necessity of reflection. The term “certainty” means the psychological state of being without doubt. Belief and certainty are not evil in themselves, but all fanaticism and dogmatism are full of beliefs and certainties. As William Butler Yeats said in his poem “Second Coming”:
“The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.”

It is a well-known fact that differences in belief can give rise to perilous states of affairs and can provoke much bloodshed and disgrace such as those of the religious wars that devastated Europe in the16th and 17th centuries, the totalitarianism of the 20th century and currently Islamic fundamentalism. These events involve disputes over religious and political ideology which the protagonists are full of a certainty that their beliefs are unquestionably true. How do we deal with the ruinous and pernicious consequences of the confrontation of beliefs? How do we face the clash of personal certainties avoiding humiliation and nullification of one of the contenders? How can ethical values play a fundamental role in polemical exchanges?

A common maneuver of controversy is to doubt the alleged certainty of the decision procedures. To question fundamental beliefs directly is philosophically legitimate, but this questioning is a very dangerous and inadvisable move in certain contexts. It can give rise to our most terrifying sentiments, in a manner similar to the opening of Pandora’s Box. Prudence and respect are essential when dealing with beliefs. Hence, it can be distinguished in a debate certain dogmatic assumptions that are held as “beliefs”, and as “beliefs” these assumptions, when they are questioned or cast into doubt, they invariably provoke a defensive reaction full of passionate feeling. On the other hand, if these dogmatic assumptions are held as “ideas” they can more easily be questioned or cast into doubt without provoking such defensive reactions full of excitement. Therefore, it is reasonable to enlarge the domain of assumptions that can be taken as “ideas” and restrict the core of the assumptions that can be treated as proper “beliefs”. Henceforth, we should direct all questioning and all doubts over the assumptions

taken as “ideas” in order to proceed the debate and take for granted all assumptions held as “beliefs”. Even so, the debate may undermine itself and give rise to exchanges of insults and aggressions.

At this point we can turn the attention to the anti-dogmatic tradition of philosophical skepticism.

3. Suspension of Judgment: The Benefits of Doubt

The history of philosophy presents us with endless debates between great systems, each trying to represent the true answer to the problems of being and knowing and each trying to convince the others of its own truth. In the history of science the controversies are so common that we may trace the succession of theories and concepts as if they were a succession of oppositions of scientists trying to convince each other of the truth of their results and conclusions. Also the ordinary life is interlaced with confrontations and disagreements. This experience of conflicting opinions brought about the Skeptical Tradition starting at the time of the ancient Greeks and continuing to the Renaissance and Reformation with thinkers like Montaigne, to the development of modern philosophy with Descartes, Hume and Kant until the present day (Popkin 1979; Popkin & Stroll 2002). As Richard Popkin pointed out in his preface (Popkin 1979), the argumentations of the early Greek thinkers tried to establish either that no knowledge was possible or that there was insufficient and inadequate evidence to determine if any knowledge was possible, and hence that one ought to suspend the judgment on all questions concerning knowledge. The first type of skepticism is the so called Academic skepticism of Arcesilas (315-241 b.c.) and Carneades (213-129 b.c.) and was formulated in the Platonic Academy. The second type is the so called Pyrrhonean Skepticism of Pyrrho of Elis (360-225 b.c.), Aenesidemus (100-40 b.c.), Agrippa (around the end of 100 a.d.) and Sextus Empiricus (160-210 a. d.). Pyrrhonean skepticism and its relationship to the theory of controversies will now be focused on.

Pyrrhonean skepticism had flourished mainly in the medical community around Alexandria and had Sextus Empiricus, a physician and philosopher, as responsible for the most complete account of ancient Greek skepticism. His two remaining works are the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (*Hypotypōseis Pyrrhōneioi*, thus commonly abbreviated *HP*) and *Against the Mathematicians* (*Adversus Mathematicos* in Latin or *Pros Mathematikois* in Greek).

The skeptical tradition of Sextus Empiricus called *diaphonía* this perpetual divergence of opinions. Sextus asserts that face the interminable conflict with regard to the object presented and unable either to choose a thing or reject it, is left over for us to suspend all judgment (Empiricus 1990, p. 63). Sextus defined skepticism as follow:
"an ability, or mental attitude, which opposes appearances to judgments in any way whatsoever, with the result that, owing to the equipollence of the objects and reasons thus opposed, we are brought firstly to a state of mental suspense and next to a state of "unperturbedness" or quietude" (Empiricus 1990, p. 17).

In this passage, the main features of Pyrrhonean skepticism is exposed by Sextus as a three-step sequel that firstly considers the equipollence or the equal force between dogmatic arguments contrary to non evidence, which may be called the principle of *isosthéneia* (equipollence); secondly, the attitude of *epokhé*, the suspension of judgment in the face of different propositions equally plausible or equally "weighted"; thirdly, the attainment of *ataraxia*, a state of quietude, derived from the interruption of dogmatic discrepancies. The disturbing situation of dogmatic quarreling about disparate points of view is seen by Pyrrhoneans skeptics as a disease to be cured.

The third step shows a very important characteristic of Pyrrhonism: that stillness and tranquility of mind is more important than the attainment of knowledge by all means, in spite of considering themselves as the type of philosophers that keep on searching the truth. The word "*Skepsis*" comes from the Greek and means investigation. Pyrrhonean skepticism is perhaps best described as a deep and persistent commitment to the searching of truth. Sextus classified philosophers with regard to the truth of an object as of three types: 1) the dogmatists, who believe that have discovered the truth, as for example the Aristotelians, the Epicureans, and the Stoics; 2) the academics, who considered it inapprehensible as Arcesilas and Carneades; 3) the skeptics, which persist in their search (Empiricus 1990, p. 15-16).

The state of suspension of the judgment, *épokhé*, is an intellectual state that does not assert or negate any proposal or assertion; all are equally plausible and unverifiable. It is not a permanent state, but a provisional one that the investigator or debater arrives at, moments after verifying that the arguments of each system are of equal force (*isosthéneia*), and that is an obstruction to a final decision. Hence, incapable of deciding between equal weight arguments the

skeptic suspends the judgment.

The Pyrrhonean skeptics are as truth searcher as dogmatists, but the last ones are much more compelled to certainty than for truth properly. This makes a sharp difference of attitudes because the dogmatists are more susceptible to be certain to have reached the truth than the skeptics. Having certainty about a truth is a strong guidance for action in life, so how can the skeptics live without such guidance?
The dogmatists frequently argue the Pyrrhoneans about how they can live and act without beliefs, and keep doubting uninterruptedly all apophantic judgments. The Pyrrhonean philosophy has been answering these objections since the time of the ancient Greeks (Porchat Pereira 1993, p. 174).

Is there any proposal that the Pyrrhoneans can not incontestably reject? Sextus had answered this question by concluding that appearances or phenomena (*tò phainómenon*, that which appears) imposes unquestionably to us: "when we question whether the underlying object is such as it appears, we grant the fact that it appears, and our doubt does not concern the appearance itself but the account given of that appearance …" (Empiricus 1990, pp. 21-22). Skeptics do not try to dogmatize or to assent to a non evident object. They do not transcend the phenomenon; they make all of their assertions in the realm of that which appears. Adhering to appearances, the Pyrrhonean skeptics can live undogmatically in accordance with the normal rules of life. By rules of life, Sextus means a fourfold orientation (Empiricus 1990, p. 23): (1) guidance of nature, which means "we are naturally capable of sensation and thought"; (2) constraint of passions, which means we are commanded to satisfy hunger and thirst; (3) accordance with tradition of customs and laws; (4) instruction of the arts (*techné*), which means that the skeptics accepts whatever technical results may benefit them.

For the Pyrrhoneans a phenomenon is a criterion for action in the world. It does not direct the argumentative battery towards that which appears but towards all pretension to explain what underlies the phenomenon. Sextus says that "even if we do actually argue against the appearances, we do not propound such arguments with the intention of abolishing appearances, but by way of pointing out the rashness of the dogmatists …" (Empiricus 1990, p. 22).

Dogmatic argumentation, be it through the Socratic practice of the antinomies of the Platonists or through the Aristotelian dialectic, proposes to persuade

opponents to construct a truthful epistemic knowledge which yields certainty. The Pyrrhonean skepticism argumentation makes every effort to break the pretensions of dogmatic discourse by driving the polemical exchanges to an undecidable situation where things continue to be in opposition. That situation favors the suspension of judgment in order to interrupt the conflicts or the quarrels that arise when the disputants seem to be moving in circles and repetitions.

Pyrrhoneans skeptics, as great debaters, organized patterns of reasoning or argumentation, called *Tropos*, which in the face of undecidable disagreements, it followed the suspension of judgment. The patterns of argumentation (*Tropos*) of the Pyrrhoneans consists of a certain set of arguments each focusing on a specific issue on which the suspension of judgment followed as an inevitable result of endless disputes. According to Popkin the *Tropos* are "ways of proceeding to bring about suspension of judgment on various questions" (Popkin 1979, p. XI).

For our purposes in this study we take from the Pyrrhonean skepticism three procedures that will act in order to avoid the aggressive contention: firstly, the argumentative ability of the Pyrrhoneans to question and to test the certainties of their opponents; secondly, the attitude of suspension of judgment (*épokhé*); and thirdly, the attitude of *ataraxia* or tranquility of mind which follows *épokhé*. Therefore, when a debate is deeply mired in a dispute and the debaters do not seem to understand each other anymore and the mood are exalted enough for to end the polemical exchange in a respectful and friendly manner, the first maneuver is to introduce the seeds of doubt in order to cool down some certainties, especially those based on "ideas", not those based on "beliefs". The Pyrrhonean action of pure rational questioning without the purpose of establishing a point of view can move the polemical exchange from the condition of dispute to a controversy. At this stage of the debate when some controversy begins to set and emotions are properly dammed is the right time to trigger the second maneuver which is to suspend judgment. Suspension of judgment (*épokhé*) and the state of "unperturbedness" or quietude (*ataraxia*) are maneuvers deeply connected to the dialogical attitude developed by the philosophy of Martin Buber. Both Buber and the Pyrrhoneans follow a common path of wisdom that seeks to avoid the fierce willingness of debaters trying to massacre each other by all means imposing their point of view.

Robert Nozick pointed out, at the beginning of his introduction to *The Nature of*

Rationality, that what philosophers really love is reasoning instead of wisdom as could be supposed by the very meaning of the word "philosophy" (Nozick 1993, p. xi). It can be said that not only philosophers but also politicians, lawyers, theologians and ordinary men, especially when they are full of certainty, seems also to accede to an endless and bitter reasoning, not rarely producing offenses, humiliations and lack of respect. The Pyrrhoneans, in this regard, seem closer to wisdom since they aim at quietude and moderate feelings in order to avoid sterile disputes. Buber´s approach takes dialogue as way to bind the disputants, one toward the other, without any previous requirement to each one give up their point of view (Buber 2006, p.7).

However, before getting to the state of *ataraxia* (stillness, quietude), the skeptic suspends all judgment and adopts the attitude of *epokhé*. It is in the *épokhé* the terrain that dialogue can grow and expand. Dialogue for Buber is not just talking to each other or exchanging words with cultural significance. It is fundamentally the reciprocity of the self towards the other, the mutual contact that makes the one's presence to the other an open experience of genuine communication that includes silence as well (Buber 2006, p. 1-45). Principles of sound reasoning alone cannot bring groups or individuals together; these principles, however, are a necessary condition for doing so. For managing controversies, it is not sufficient to appeal to rationality alone in order to avoid fallacies or to keep deliberating correctly. We ought to reflect on ethical values in order to deal with attitudes that are not attained exclusively at a cognitive level, and that can be disposed of by an inductive experienced process based on information exchange. Sentiments, desires and beliefs are the ground in which differences of opinions are most explosive, and irrational elements develop, getting stronger. Ethical values deals with sentiments, desires and beliefs and are at the core of a dialogical attitude that can keep the disputants in touch while the judgments are suspended.

4. The Interhuman as the Sole Ground for a Genuine Dialogue: Preparation for an Ethics of Encounter

When discussing social phenomena there are several approaches that try to understand the interplay between the individual and society by using concepts like, for example, Durkheim's social facts, Marx's social class or Weber's social action. All these approaches roughly consider values, cultural norms, and social structures that are external to the individuals and coerce them, as is established in the sociology of Marx and Durkheim; or the interaction of individuals

determining the changes on the external structures, as is established in the sociology of Weber. At the sociological level, the individuals are tied to groups, classes, institutions etc., but do not have necessarily any kind of personal relation with each other. Martin Buber's approach looks at the personal level, which is an existential relation between one individual and another or an interhuman relation (Buber 1965, Ch. III).

The wide range of conflicts in society that are basically determined by human differences (class, value, culture, ideology, interest) can be seen as an intercourse between disputant groups or individuals trying to impose their own points of view on each other. In order to establish the contextualization of these polemical exchanges not only social but also behavioral sciences should be considered. However, all these fields omit the personal or existential sphere treated by Buber.

This sphere leads to the perspective of searching for a real encounter between the self and the other; this real encounter is the deepest ground for dialogue. It is an inter-human sphere that is not the purely social one usually defined as what is shared in common by individuals and that previously coerces them. Instead, the inter-human sphere is a face-to-face relationship, a one to the other connection that sustains the dialogical dimension. Genuine dialogue is not just talking to each other or exchanging opinions as an intellectual activity. It is fundamentally the reciprocity between the self and the other, the mutual contact that makes one person present to another in an open experience of genuine communication that includes the mutual acceptance of partnership (Buber 1965, p. 85-88; Buber 2006, 1-45).

According to Martin Buber, dialogue happens when the relationship between one human being and another is not perceived as consisting merely of specific, isolated qualities, but as having a unity of being, a subject-to-subject relationship that Buber himself expresses as the primary word "*I-Thou*". This primary word guarantees that human beings' integral and dialogical relationships must be founded on reciprocity and mutuality and not on detachment and separateness as in a subject-to-object relationship. Dialogue is thus on an ontological ground. Hence for Buber "all real living is meeting", and any postures or attitudes that would lead to a disruption or separation at either side of an encounter would obstruct such a meeting. What could obstruct this meeting? What postures or attitudes would lead to a disruption at either side?

At the very beginning of *I and Thou* Buber (Buber 1958, p. 3) asseverates that "to man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude." Going further he says that "the attitude of man is twofold, in accordance with the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks."

The first attitude is a subject-subject attitude which is characterized by the primary word *I-Thou*. This attitude presupposes a connection between one human being and another. The second attitude is a subject-object attitude which is characterized by the primary word *I-It*. This attitude presupposes the separateness of human beings from the world around them. *I-Thou* and *I-It* signify relations rather than things.

When a debate between individuals points irrevocably to an undecidable and harsh dispute between one disputant and another, it means that they do not recognize each other as partners or do not foresee a horizon of cooperation. Then the skeptical argumentative machine may work to disrupt certainties about the ideas at issue, and go into a state of *epokhé*, i.e., to suspend judgment.

At the moment that all judgment is suspended, the words that are spoken may not be those of the ideas at issue but may be those that go in search of a common human and existential ground. The relevant words that move us towards an ethical claim of communication are those who say that the other person must always count in our deliberations; that the other person is not a thing to manipulate or to experience, as in an *I-It* relation, but it is a whole being presence of the one to the other that we ought to pursue. The relevant words ought to reflect our intentional consciousness which has a fundamentally relational character. Buber says:
"Let it be said again that all this can only take place in a living partnership, that is, when I stand in a common situation with the other and expose myself vitally to his share in the situation as really his share. It is true that my basic attitude can remain unanswered, and the dialogue can die in seed. But if mutuality stirs, then the interhuman blossoms into genuine dialogue". (Buber 1965, p. 81)

The demand for being rationally critical seems to be insufficient not only for preventing angry contends and recurring discussions that are solidly grounded on beliefs and certainties, but also for entering into a genuine dialogue. Genuine dialogue is rooted in the terrain of inter-subjectivity whose first move is to recognize the other as a partner. This recognition demands the capacity to realize

a subject-subject, or an *I-Thou* relationship. Buber says:
"If I face a human being as my Thou, and say the primary word I-Thou to him, he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things. (…) I become through my relation to the Thou; as I become I, I say Thou. All real living is meeting." (Buber 1958, pp. 8-11)

The ethical commitments that we can take from Buber's philosophy of dialogue are then solidly grounded on an ontological level. This ontological level reflects itself as speech and counter-speech, as words that are spoken between people in the mutuality of *I* and *Thou*, in "the between". "Trust" is a purely relational term that is free of all content and just expresses the turning of oneself toward the other. It is a confident affirmation of the acceptance of the other as a subject. Another relevant term which Buber frequently uses is "spirit". Buber says:
"Spirit in its human manifestation is a response of man to his *Thou*". (…)
"Spirit is not in the *I*, but between *I* and *Thou*." (Buber 1958, p. 39)

"Spirit" for Buber is the capacity and the propensity to encounter another person as other and as a singular person; it is the capacity and the propensity to realize the meeting of the one to the other. Buber also uses the term "faith" to mean the confidence that this meeting is realizable.
The terms "spirit" and "faith" are connected ontologically and do not necessarily refer to God or have necessarily a religious character. One may be an atheist and have faith and spirit.
If I trust you as a singular person, I will respect you in my deliberations, and I will be fair in my argumentation. This attitude brings about tolerance, but tolerance does not mean putting up with disrespect, unfairness and manipulation.

5. Concluding Remarks
The main purpose of our study was to find a way to overcome the deadlock in a situation in which a debate became bitter, harsh and offensive with no prospect of solution. In order to avoid this situation we proposed a maneuver to move from a contentious and confrontational attitude to a dialogical attitude by exploring an interplay between Pyrrhonean skepticism and Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue.

To join two matrices of thought as diverse as Pyrrhonean skepticism and Buber's philosophy of dialogue we made intuitively some reflections on the problem of the change of rational and polished discussions to offensive and harsh disputes. Our

purpose was not to prove any advantage of being a skeptical philosopher or to induce any adherence to the ontological commitments of Buber's philosophy. What we tried to show is how the different aspects of these two philosophies can find a common ground and work together. The common ground is the context of a contentious debate whose arguments have degenerated into mutual aggression. One need not be a Pyrrhonean or a Buberean, or even be sympathetic to them, to use in polemical exchanges rational strategies to challenge certainties of the first and the ethics of meeting of the second. We do not attempt to offer a solution to the argumentative quarrels. They are part of our nature. However, we can and must seek a way to deal better with them.

REFERENCES

Bohm, D. (2007). *On Dialogue*. London and New York: Routledge.

Buber, M. (1958). *I and Thou*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. (In Portuguese: (1977). *Eu e Tu*. São Paulo: Editora Moraes)

Buber, M. (1965). *The Knowledge of Man*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers.

Buber, M. (2006). *Between man and man*. London and New York: Routledge.

Dascal, M. (1998). Types of Polemics and Types of Polemical moves. In S. Čmejrková, Hoffmannová, J., Müllerová, O., & Světla, J. (eds.), *Dialogue Analysis VI* (= Proceedings of the 6th Conference, Prague 1996), vol. 1. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 15-33.

Dascal, M. (2008). Dichotomies and Types of Debates. In Eemeren, F. H. van & Garssen, B. (Eds), *Controversy and Confrontation*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Empiricus, S. (1990). *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. Translated by R. G. Bury. New York: Prometheus Books.

Habermas, J. (1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action.* Volume one. Boston: Beacon Press.

Nozick, R. (1993). *The Nature of Rationality*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Popkin, R. (1979). *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*. Berkeley, LosAngeles and London: University of California Press.

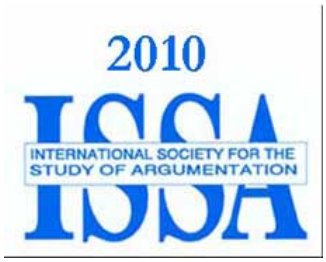
Popkin, R., & Stroll, A. (2002). *Skeptical Philosophy for Everyone*. Prometheus Books.

Popper, K. (1996). *The Mith of the Framework: in defense of science and rationality*. New York: Routledge.

Porchat Pereira, O. (1993). *Ordinary Life and Scepticism* (in Portuguese: *Vida*

Comum e Ceticismo). São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense.
Ortega y Gasset, J. (1959). *Ideas and Beliefs and other philosophy essays* (in Spanish: *Ideas y Creencias y otros ensayos de filosofía*). Madrid: Revista de Occidente.
Rescher, N. (1995). *Pluralism: against the demand for consensus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Intractable Disputes: The Development Of Attractors



1. Introduction

In this paper an attempt is made to shed some light to a phenomenon that has created problems not only for the theoreticians of conflict resolution, argumentation theories and other various disciplines alike, but for the practitioners as well – the phenomenon of intractable conflicts or disputes. In this paper, I discuss the role played by the "third party" in dealing with disputes of an intractable nature by forming an "attractor" whose gravity is powerful enough to pull inside parties that are engaged in an intractable dispute. This powerful role played by the "third party" will be demonstrated by concentrating on a case study about a conflict in Macedonia between Macedonian governmental forces and Albanian armed groups.

2. Intractable Conflict

According to scholars, like Kriesberg (1999) and Coleman (2003), intractable conflicts are those that persist in a destructive state and seem impossible to resolve. Kriesberg (1999), for example, stresses three dimensions that distinguish intractable from tractable conflicts: their persistence, destructiveness, and resistance to resolution. I would add that conflicts of an intractable nature are the ones when there is a clash of underlying or fundamental principles

between the parties engaged in such types of conflicts, or that they lack common knowledge or consensus about various issues. Despite the fact that such conflicts are uncommon, yet they are very important to understand them better because of our survival as species.

According to Coleman (2003), it is complex interactions among multiple factors across different levels of these conflicts over long periods of time that brings them to a state of intractability. Coleman is citing the centuries-old conflict in Northern Ireland as a good example of this multi-level complexity. The complexity of this conflict could be seen not only from the role played by religion, but also from other factors like global affairs, history of international dominance, economic and other types of inequality, issues of social identity, and the existence of multiple factions within each community. These factors, claims Coleman (2003), have a considerable impact on interpersonal relations and personal functioning. Thus, claims Coleman, long-term patterns of interethnic violence in Northern Ireland are multiply determined. I could cite a similar example that would fit into this category, and that is the example of Former Yugoslavia, where multiple factors were at play that led to a destruction of the highest magnitude. This was true for almost all the republics that were part of Former Yugoslavia.

3. Understanding Intractable Conflicts through Dynamical Systems Theory
According to Coleman, Nowak, Vallacher (2005), the dynamical systems approach provides instruments that allow us to describe in mathematical terms the mechanisms underlying intractable conflicts. According to Lewenstein & Nowak (1994), a dynamical system is a set of elements that interact in time. According to these two scholars, multiple influences between elements of the system can be described with differential or difference equations. In a dynamical system, claim Guckenheimer & Holmes (1983) and Ott (1993), formal mathematical systems consisting of sets of coupled nonlinear ordinary differential equations that have proved valuable in modeling a number of different physical systems, the evolution of the system either reaches a stable state, or a more complex pattern, described by the attractor. For these complex systems, claim scholars, as each element adjusts to the joint influence from other elements, the system evolves and changes in time until it arrives at its attractor. Attempting to move the system out of its attractor promotes forces that restore the system at its attractor.

In trying to relate this phenomenon to psychological and social processes Coleman (2005) claims that the behavior of human beings runs along the same

line of thinking. According to Coleman, it might happen that sometimes a very strong influence or information not to have any observable effect whatsoever on our thoughts, feelings, and actions of a person or a group, but that at other times, a seemingly trivial influence of a piece of information can promote a dramatic change in the way people think and groups function. With respect to psychological and social processes, claims Coleman, this means that some patterns of thinking, feeling, and action are deeply embedded in a person or group. Such patterns correspond to attractors, or in other words, they "attract" a wide variety of other thoughts, feelings, and action, so that over time even a highly incongruent thought or action tendency becomes assimilated to the embedded pattern.

According to Nowak & Vallacher (2007), the properties of attractors have been shown to have clear relevance for social judgment, interpersonal relations, group dynamics, and societal processes. In similar lines, Coleman et al., (2007), believe that the properties of attractors may also be useful for understanding intractable conflicts. According to these scholars, as the time moves, the parties that are engaged in an intractable conflict develop a range of ideas and actions that tend to evolve toward the predominant mental and behavioral pattern characterizing a person, group, or society. This is known as the width of the basin of attraction accumulated through time. On the other hand, the depth of an attractor represents how difficult it is to escape the powerful gravity of evil thoughts and behaviors. When we are faced with such a situation, claim the authors, it requires a considerable effort in moving the parties from one attractor to another more powerful attractor. Sometimes, claim the authors, this effort might be futile because even a small thought or action might pull back parties in the original attractor.

According to Coleman et al., (2007), attractors develop as elements interact and form positive feedback loops. Generally speaking, positive feedback loops are balanced by negative feedback loops, which are a self-regulatory process that prevents a system from spiraling to an extreme state. Therefore, in order for these efforts to be successful there has to be a negative feedback loop that would counter the positive feedback loop that was created for quite some time by the parties themselves or even by external forces. The balance between positive and negative feedback loops is the essence of self-regulation.

4. The Attractor of "Third Party Intervention"

According to Coleman et al., (2007), once a conflict is governed only by positive feedback loops, the resolution of specific issues is unlikely to terminate or even reduce the conflict. Each party's goal is transformed from issue resolution to survival and causing harm to the opposing party. Issues then may come and go, but what remains constant are the negative perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and actions defining the relationship between the parties. From a dynamical perspective, claim Coleman et al., (2007), the maintenance of such negative mental and behavioral patterns can be understood in terms of attractor dynamics. In short, in order to get out of this black hole we have to develop another black hole that is powerful enough to suck in everything we had in the original black hole. In dealing with intractable conflicts, however, I am proposing an attractor of "third party intervention" as powerful enough to balance the original attractor of being in a state of intractable nature. I believe that this attractor can be the solution for many, if not all, conflicts that are characterized as being of an intractable nature.

The point of departure is that it is not very likely that human beings willingly enter into an intractable conflict. Parties in a conflict will probably not know in advance that they will be locked into an "intractable conflict" and that they will continue to stick to their position no matter what. I believe that parties often seem to be capable of behaving, more or less, according to the ideal conditions presupposed by the critical discussion model of pragma-dialectical approach. Therefore, the analyst is obliged to look more deeply into discourses that are characterized as being in an intractable conflict because of the fact that parties are capable of having a "normal" argumentative exchange. The reason why we are nonetheless faced with such situations where parties are engaged in an intractable conflict can be answered by the fact that this is happening at the first level of engagement, but this is not so at the second level. In short, I believe that situations that are in an "intractable conflict," at least some of them, can be treated as situations that attempt resolution of difference of opinion, if we introduce the concept of "third party."

In order to demonstrate the role of third party in situations that are in an intractable conflict, I am going to refer briefly to a case study from Macedonia. In 2001 Macedonia faced a conflict that lasted about 7-8 months between the Macedonian governmental forces and the Albanian armed groups living in Macedonia. During this period, the media, be that the local or the international

one started covering this conflict from the fear that this conflict might have far worse consequences than all other conflicts witnessed throughout the Former Yugoslavia. Both the Macedonian and the Albanian language media, among all other things, were constantly concentrating on the causes of the conflict between the Macedonian governmental forces and the Albanian armed groups. The most noticeable observation in both sides of the media was the huge gap that existed in both camps with regard to the causes of the conflict. When seen from a birds eye perspective, one might be forgiven for claiming that we are talking of a completely two different conflicts. On one hand, the Macedonian language media was constantly claiming that the conflict was caused by the actions of Albanian people in creating a "Greater Albanian" state. On the other hand, however, the Albanian language media was constantly claiming that the conflict was initiated in order to get "Greater Rights" for the Albanians living in Macedonia. The situation between the Macedonian and the Albanian language media displays precisely the kind of incommensurability of viewpoints that has been discussed until now. The columns presented in the newspapers were incapable of generating resolutions of disagreements. The situation at hand displays an "intractable conflict" of the highest magnitude.

The newspaper columns from both the Macedonian and the Albanian language media generated an intractable dispute of the highest magnitude if taken as a discussion between the Macedonian and the Albanian language media. The discussion can be viewed in this direction due to the fact that the disagreement was between these two sides of the media with regard to what caused the conflict. The Macedonian language media was trying to reach across at the other side by claiming that the conflict started because of the desire for a "Greater Albania." On the other hand, the Albanian language media was trying to do the same thing by addressing the other side that the conflict started in order to get "Greater Rights." At this superficial level, there are clear indications that the disagreement is between the Macedonian and the Albanian language media with regard to the causes of the conflict, and that this discussion has generated an intractable conflict.

However, if we go beyond this superficial level, the analyst can reveal that there is a presence of another audience that plays a crucial role in reconstructing the discussion better between the Macedonian and the Albanian language media. This role is played by the "international community" and by the international

community is meant the entire West. When we analyze the discussion at the second level, we can see that both the Macedonian and the Albanian language media were not trying to reach at each other, but at the international community. The two sides of the media function as a kind of a bridge in reaching the international community. The Macedonian and the Albanian language media were simply attempting to convince the international community that the conflict started because of "Greater Albania" and not because of "Greater Rights," respectively, and vice versa.

Having done all this, we can see now that the discourse should be reconstructed as such where the international community is incorporated inside the discussion between the Macedonian and the Albanian language media. This reconstruction will produce a kind of a triangle where the international community is on top of the discussion playing a role of a "judge." This role meant as if the international community or the West are the only party that can judge the reasonableness of the arguments presented by both the Macedonian and the Albanian language media with regard to the issue of "Greater Albania" and "Greater Rights," respectively. This kind of reconstruction opens the way for defending the claim made earlier with regard to the role of "third party," i.e. the international community in resolving discourses that are stuck in an intractable conflict.

From this superficial analysis, we can see that what was considered as an intractable conflict at the first level, cannot be said the same thing at the second level, when incorporating the "third party" into the same discourse. The intractable conflict that was created in the discussion between the Macedonian and the Albanian language media is non-existent when incorporating the international community or the West into the discourse. At this stage, we can see a "normal" argumentative exchange, to use Fogelin's concept (1985), between the Macedonian and the Albanian language media in relation to the international community. The reasoning of the Macedonian and the Albanian language media is part of the appeal to the common beliefs, values, and starting points in relation to the international community or the West. Therefore, with the incorporation of "third party" into those discourses that are in an intractable conflict, at least some of them, we can have a normal disagreement where parties in a discussion will attempt to resolve it through the use of arguments.

In short, the "international community" here functions as a powerful attractor that pulls together both sides of the conflict, i.e. the Macedonian and the Albanian

side. The gravitational force of the "third party" here is so powerful that leaves both parties with no other choice, but addressing constantly this attractor. The basin of attraction is both quite wide and deep that leaves both sides of the divide with no other choice, but remaining inside this attractor for quite some time due to its gravitational force in pulling inside both sides of the media. Speaking from a practical viewpoint, the longer they stay inside this attractor the better it is for both side of the media to get out of this intractable conflict. It will take another powerful attractor in order to move both parties from this original attractor involving the force of the international community. It should be emphasized, however, that in order for the "third party" to play the role of this powerful attractor, it must first have certain characteristics that would make this party to play this powerful role explained so far. In the following section, therefore, an attempt will be made to introduce some criteria that are of crucial importance of creating such a powerful attractor played by the "third party."

5. Characterizing the "third party" attractor

According to Bitzer (1968), there are two conditions or criteria for recognizing who the "real" audience is that the discourse is referring to. The first criterion, according to Bitzer, is that an audience in a discourse is the one that must be "capable of being influenced." There must be a certain elementary level of regard and openness to the speaker or writer's arguments. For Bitzer, it does not make any sense to try to persuade an audience if that audience is not capable of being persuaded. It is possible, of course, for the discussants in practice not to think in the same way as does Bitzer. Nevertheless, this idea corresponds to what was stated earlier that it would be naïve to suggest that discussants willingly enter into such discussions of intractable disagreement. At the superficial level, it might look like that discussants continue to attempt to persuade even those that seems cannot be persuaded, but at a more deeper level, discussants seem to address those that can be persuaded. If the audience does not have this condition, argues Bitzer, then it would be fruitless or even impossible to try to influence an audience.

This condition simply means that an analyst is supposed to search inside the discourse an audience that can be influenced. This criterion would not allow any discourse of the type of "intractable disagreement" where the parties in a discussion stick to their own position regardless of the strengths of the arguments by the other party. In such a situation, no audience is capable of being influenced.

Bringing this criterion to the case study at hand, we would say that according to Bitzer, we have to search for an audience that is capable of being influenced, i.e. the international community, and to ignore the discussion between the Macedonian and Albanian language media because of the fact that both of them stick to their own position without any chance of being influenced by one another.

The second condition, which for the case study at hand is even more important, says that an audience is that group of individuals who have the capacity to act as "mediators of change." According to Bitzer, an audience is that person or group of people that has the capacity to change things. If an audience does not have that capability to change things in favor of the one or the other side, then there is no need to try to persuade them in the first place. Usually, this type of audience that acts as "mediators of change" is more "powerful" than the one who is directly addressed, or that is physically present during the discussion. In the case study at hand, this particular audience can be recognized quite easily because of the fact that at the time the international community was the only party capable of playing the role of mediators of change because they were powerful enough to play this role. On the other hand, this criterion implies that it does not make any sense to consider the Macedonian or the Albanian language media as if they attempt to persuade each other because none of them had that capacity to play the role of mediators of change. Inferring from Bitzer's condition, it would be naïve to imply that the Macedonian language media were attempting to convince the Albanian side because this side did not have that capacity to change things. The same thing might be said about the other side as well.

Another condition that is of equal importance for the powerful attractor of the "third party" is the condition of "neutrality." According to this condition, the "third party" must be neutral or objective in order to be accepted as a party that can play that powerful attractor of pulling together the sides that are engaged in an intractable conflict. The parties engaged in an intractable conflict can redirect their attention to another attractor, provided that that attractor is neutral and objective in dealing with the conflict at hand. When talking about the conflict at hand, the Macedonian and the Albanian side referred to the "third party" as a powerful attractor because both sides believed that the international community was neutral and objective in mediating with the conflict between the Macedonian and the Albanian side.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this modest paper was to shed some light to the already existing debate on the implications of intractable conflicts to both theoreticians and practitioners alike. I tried to summarize most of research done on this topic without any intention to comment on the solutions presented by various scholars to the idea that there is no rational solution to discourses that are stuck in an intractable disagreement. In this paper, an attempt was made to provide another solution by reconstructing the discourse in a more careful way with the introduction of "third party," as a powerful attractor that can pull inside its gravity both sides that are engaged in an intractable conflict. By working on a case study, albeit very superficially, we tried to show the role played by the international community in understanding the discourse better. Through this reconstruction, the discourse that at first level was treated as "abnormal," at the second level became "normal" thanks to the role played by the "third party." At the end, we tried to provide some criteria, not meant to be exclusive at all, in helping to identify the role played by the third party, i.e. the international community.

REFERENCES

Bitzer, L. F. (1968). "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1.1: 1-14.

Coleman, P. T. (2003). Characteristics of protracted, intractable conflict: Towards the development of a meta-framework. Part I. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 9,* 1–37.

Coleman, P. T. (2004). Paradigmatic framing of protracted, intractable conflict: Towards the development of a meta-framework. Part II. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 10,* 197–235.

Coleman, P. T., Bui-Wrzosinska, L., Vallacher, R., & Nowak, A. (in press). Approaching protracted conflicts as dynamical systems: Guidelines and methods for intervention. In A. K. Schneider & C. Honeyman (Eds.), *The negotiator's fieldbook: The desk reference for the experienced negotiator*. Chicago: American Bar Association Books.

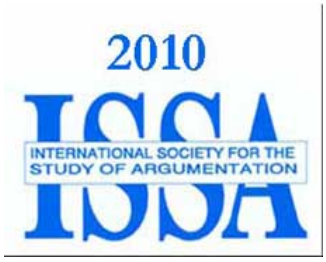
Coleman, P. T., Hacking, A., Stover, M., & Fisher-Yoshida, B. (2003, August). *Reconstructing ripeness: A study of constructive engagement in complex, intractable systems of conflict.* Paper presented at the American Psychological Association conference, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Coleman, P. T., Vallacher, R., Nowak, A., & Bui-Wrzosinska, L. (in press). Intractable conflict as an attractor: Presenting a dynamical model of conflict escalation and intractability. *American Behavioral Scientist.*

Deutsch, M. (1973). *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes*. New Haven. CT: Yale University Press.
Eemeren, F.H. van, Grootendorst, R., Jackson, S. & Jacobs, S. (1993). *Reconstructing Argumentative Discourse.* Tuscaloosa: Univ.of Alabama Press.
Fogelin, R. J. (1985). "The Logic of Deep Disagreements." *Informal Logic* 7: 1-8.
Guckenheimer, J., Holmes, P. (1983). *Nonlinear Oscillations, Dynamical Systems, and Bifurcations of Vector Fields.* New York, Springer-Verlag.
Kriesberg, L. (1999). Intractable conflict. In E.Weiner (Ed.), *The handbook of interethnic coexistence*. New York: Continuum.
Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies.* Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.
Lewicki, R. J., Gray, B.,&Elliot, M. (2003). *Making sense of intractable environmental conflicts: Concepts and cases.* Washington, DC: Island Press.
Nowak, A., & Vallacher, R. R. (1998). *Dynamical social psychology.* New York: Guilford.
Nowak, A., & Vallacher, R. R. (2001). Societal transition: Toward a dynamical model of social change. In W. Wosinska, R. B. Cialdini, D. W. Barrett, & J. Reykowski (Eds.), *The practice of social influence in multiple cultures*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
Nowak, A. (2004). Dynamical minimalism. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*. 8, 138-145.
Ott, E. (1993). *Chaos in Dynamical Systems*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Constituting The "Good Patient" – The Effect Of "Clustered

Argumentation" In Dutch Personal Healthcare Budget Policy



1. Introduction[i]

Public policy proposals for radical transformations often draw on a large number of premises. In this paper, we show that argumentation is complicated by what we call a "cluster of arguments", of which the parts are not evaluated independently, but seem to be either accepted as a whole or rejected as a whole. Our case study examines one such cluster. The case concerns the introduction of a personal budget for healthcare in the Netherlands. This implies that, for particular types of treatments, citizens can opt for receiving a budget that is allocated for their case directly to their bank accounts, rather than receiving care "in kind". Our analysis is based on a study of the key policy reports that constitute this discussion, as well as on a confrontation with the academic literature.

The focus of our analysis is on how the personal budget policy affects how the patient is constituted as a healthcare actor. The patient seems to be attributed a new role. We argue that discussions on this new role in fact aim to constitute a new subject of healthcare, a "good patient", to use a term that was introduced by the Dutch Public Health Council (RVZ 2007).

We approach this topic by first presenting the interconnected expectations about the subject, its surroundings and the interaction between subject and surroundings. We build on earlier work on expectations in healthcare policy (Mensink & Birrer 2010). We proceed by analysing the argumentation around problems that were raised by actors in the discussion. Many of the types of argumentation we found can in fact be described as what we will call "evading mechanisms". Evasion does not point at purposeful attempts to mislead other actors. We merely describe mechanisms that can be observed around a particular argumentation cluster. After going over these mechanisms, we unfold how the "argumentation cluster" of this discussion can be understood. We show how the complexity and interconnectedness of premises leads to ineffective handling of criticism by the discussants.

We use Michel Foucault's work as a starting-point for the discursive constitutions of subjects (see e.g. 1977; 1982; 2008). Acknowledging that a subject is constituted this way counters the modern-liberal idea of the subject as an autonomous free-floating entity. We extend Foucault's usual approach by including arguments that fall outside the dominant discourse, which puts this discourse in a different light.

On the basis of our analysis, we can first ask whether the subject that is sketched in political discussions surrounding the personal budget is deemed realistic. Secondly, we can assess what clustered argumentation implies for the subject, in the light of normative oppositions between the dominant discourse and the "non-dominant statements" we include.

Because of the nature of our analysis, we translated a substantial set of statements to make this Dutch discourse accessible to an English-speaking audience. By giving a detailed analysis of political argumentation, we try to go beyond popular accounts of the personal budget. The argumentation clusters we identify are not universal. Nevertheless, they provide insights into how governments and industry argue to deal with supply and demand driven models of health care delivery. Furthermore, the notion of subjectivity lies at the heart of critical/cultural, rhetorical, and argumentation-based analyses of health care controversies.

2. The good patient

We start by analysing how a new type of patient was proposed in the policy for a personal healthcare budget. We consider this the dominant discourse in this study.

The personal budget was put on the political agenda in the late 1980s (Tweede Kamer 1988)**[ii]**, by advocates for disability rights and a vice-minster of the liberal conservative party (VVD). In 1995, experiments started for certain types of nursing and care. Soon, the budget was drawn into a broader policy discussion regarding the perceived crisis of ever-rising exceptional medical expenses. It was seen as a wedge to break open this supply-oriented system, by granting force to the demand-side. The scheme was fundamentally revised in 2003, and again in 2007, with the introduction of the new, municipally managed Social Support Act (WMO). The latter mainly connected the budget to the discourse of citizen participation in society.

The initiators aimed to use the budget to 'overcome signalled bottlenecks of organisational nature in the homecare offered to handicapped people, such as insufficiently flexible support, or an excess of care providers' (1988, p. 14). After introducing the scheme, however, argumentation shifted considerably, incorporating more macro-political elements and societal challenges perceived by subsequent governments.

In order to counter these challenges, government used the personal budget as an instrument to attribute a new role to the patient, or citizen. This "new healthcare subject" is expected to bring about the changes that were deemed necessary. We use the Public Health Council's term "the good patient" to denote this new subject. Nevertheless, we point to a broader set of requirements than the council does. Initially, the term referred to having proper conduct manners, to meet business obligations and to co-operate in treatments (RVZ 2007, p. 7). We draw out the rationale that is provided for the constitution of such a subject, highlighting how this relates to a number of general challenges. The new subject is a rational consumer, who adopts sovereignty over his/her own health. (S)he is supported by government and society in continuously re-evaluating the quality of providers, in order to put pressure on the walls that surround the healthcare institution.

2.1. More control by the citizen on healthcare

The disability rights movement has called for a more influential role of the patient, or citizen. Bulmer, for instance, has formulated the "cash position" most strongly, arguing that 'cash gives choice and dignity whereas welfare systems enslave' (Bulmer 2008, p. 47). Many authors take a similar normative stance (see e.g. Morris 2002; Timonen et al. 2006).

Different ministers positioned the subject as a client of healthcare providers – 'client sovereignty' (2000a, p. 6) – or as a consumer of healthcare products or services – 'consumer sovereignty' (2004a, p. 13). The notion of self-interested sovereignty is central to modern, liberal conception of subjectivity, as Foucault highlighted (Foucault 2008). Already in the 1980s, the then-vice-minister argued that: 'even though [the organisations of people with a handicap] prefer the term "person-bound budget", I will still use the term "client-bound budget", considering the orientation on the person and the community' (1988, p. 14). However, is a budget more focused on the person if it is called "client-bound" rather than "person bound"?

Alternatively, the subject is positioned in the role of employer of healthcare workers (e.g. 1988; 1998d). In the literature, the notion of a citizen-employed personal assistant is often portrayed as an ideal model (e.g. Morris 2002). It seems, however, that employment is seen as a consequence of accepting the responsibility of a personal budget, rather than an objective that was purposefully sought.

Relations to care providers are primarily conceived of as economic in nature (Kremer 2006). Two types of relations need to be distinguished. First, there are those that always had an economic component, i.e. formal care providers offered a product or service to a citizen, in return for a financial reimbursement that was received from a third party. The change in such relations is that the payment relation changes: the citizen is now handling reimbursement. When it comes to this type of relationship, the main arguments in favour of this new arrangement that are given are: (i) the sense of self-sufficiency and autonomy that it provides (1988; MDW-werkgroep AWBZ 2000b), with a particular focus on choice (1988; 1998c), (ii) the practical possibility of making effective decisions in terms of organising healthcare (1988) and (iii) the expectation that the costs of a personal budget will be lower (1998b).

The second type involves informal care situations, for which, previously, no financial reimbursement was available. When it comes to economising this second category, another set of arguments is provided: (i) informal care is generated on the basis of a 'legitimate need for care' (1997, p. 5), (ii) in part of the cases, more expensive professional care can be avoided because of the availability of informal care (1997e; 1998a; RVZ 2005a), (iii) informal care is highly valued by the patient, and is made attractive by being financially rewarded (Ramakers & Van den Wijngaart 2005b), (iv) paying informal care givers opens up a previously non-existent labour market (2005c), (v) two third of budget holders paying for informal care still receive additional unpaid care from the same providers (Ramakers & Van den Wijngaart 2005a), and (vi) the vice minister stressed that we have to take better care of informal care givers, as there are many known cases of burnouts (2005b). Particularly in the light of the new labour market and the potential of a "free" care surplus, this last issue gains economic relevance: burnouts are expensive for society, as observed in related policy-discussions (TNS NIPO 2004). It is telling that informal carers are described as the "cement of society".

2.2. Replacing supply orientation by demand orientation

Supply-oriented healthcare is perceived as undesirably rigid and ineffective. In international comparison, this qualification is particularly attributed to the Netherlands (Timonen et al. 2006). This second challenge is addressed by positioning the new subjectivity of the patient as an element in the transformation to a demand-oriented system. It is argued that '[t]he personal budget [is] an important instrument to achieve demand-orientation and increasing flexibility in the Exceptional Medical Expense Act' (2000, p. 13). This implies 'the strengthening – in a formal sense – of the position of the client in the chain from demand for care to delivery of care' (Ministerie van VWS 1999, p. 22).

In this role, individual citizens are deemed to be supported by mediating agencies and organisations that represent their interests in discussions with healthcare providers and insurance companies (2001l; MDW-werkgroep AWBZ 2000a). The same is noted internationally (Spandler 2004). With respect to mediating agencies, citizens are attributed the "agent-role" of monitoring the qualities of their services (College Voor Zorgverzekeringen 2009b).

2.3. Reducing the role of government

Bulmer formulates the third challenge as: getting rid of 'long-term, inflexible, public-sector-style contracts' (2008, p. 48). This is done by reshuffling the relation between government and the new subject. Government will do no more than to set the framework conditions within which the citizen interacts with other players in the healthcare system, or market as it is typically called. Government relates to the citizen mainly in terms of providing support, and in terms of taking responsibility for cases that can impossibly be handled by citizens themselves (2005f). This does not imply, however, that government withdraws; government and the active citizen have a relationship of collaboration (2007e), which is based on support, rather than on a form of dependency (2004b, p. 9).

A number of framework conditions are mentioned. First, in order for citizens to be able to monitor price and quality, information should be available (2001k) for the system to be sufficiently transparent (MDW-werkgroep AWBZ 2000c), particularly in the form of benchmarks (2001c; 2004d). Second, sovereignty should be restricted to certain types of care (autism, for instance, is to be excluded) (2000d). A strict demand is that the budget only be used for intended "spending goals" (2001b), and on care providers who meet certain minimal quality criteria (MDW-werkgroep AWBZ 2000d). Ex post evaluation is proposed to assess

whether these demands have been met (2001a). Finally, a “money back” policy, or complaint procedure should be created (2004c).

2.4. Reciprocity between citizen and society

Government perceives that it can no longer take full responsibility for steering society, and care in particular. The citizen’s responsibility is extended to the macro-level by positioning him/her as an active participant of a wider civil society. First of all, ‘citizens and their organisations’ are considered the makers of civil society (2004a, p. 9). At the same time, they stand in a reciprocal relation to it: citizens may expect the support of their surroundings in terms of receiving care from, for instance, family members and voluntary community activities, but at the same time they should return such favours by assuming an active participatory role in these same surroundings (2007d; 2009c). Reciprocity is also expected in relation to government: in return for its support, government expects citizens to adopt what they call ‘good patientship’, a term coined by the Public Health Council (RVZ), which implies that ‘the client bears responsibility: for a healthy lifestyle, for actively participating during his treatment and for judging, and giving feedback on, the care that was consumed’ (2004, p. 2).

Ideas about participation are even put into practice by introducing a so-called “participation budget” (2006b), for instance for arranging transportation, education and labour integration. The vice-minister states that government appeals to people’s “carrying capacity” (2005, p. 7), and that ‘self-organisation, social adhesion and personal responsibility are the starting-point for a stronger social structure’ (2005, p. 8).

2.5. Cost containment

The constitution of the subject as specified above is supposed to meet the challenge of cost containment (Kerff 1998; Houtepen & Meulen 2000). Certain studies suggest that direct payments are more cost effective than other financing models (Spandler 2004), for instance because overheads would be lower (Timonen et al. 2006).

The new subject is positioned as a rational economic actor; it is argued that ‘[r]equesting and managing a personal budget requires entrepreneurship’ (2009a, p. 3). In such a role, the citizen is the primary responsible actor when it comes to monitoring price (Ministerie van VWS 2001) and quality (2001h). Demand orientation is introduced on the basis of the general assumption that it

‘contributes to quality, effectiveness and efficiency’ (2001a, p. 4). The assumption regarding the positive effects of focusing on demand is based on the reliance on incentives, both for those who request and those who supply care. With respect to the latter, the argument is that ‘if the individual can decide for him or herself from which provider to purchase a product or service, an incentive arises for the provider to make a better product’ (2001b, p. 4). It is expected that ‘providers have to compete for the customer’s favour on the basis of price and quality’ (2001, p. 2). Research reflects this way of thinking (Carmichael & Brown 2002). When it comes to incentives for citizens, the argument is that they will be more restrictive in their spending if they manage the budget themselves.

3. Analysis of critique within the discourse

As noted in the introduction, our approach differs from Foucault’s. We also include statements that contradict or criticise the assumptions or expectations that we described in the previous section. The documents that constitute these policy discussions include numerous perceived problems in association with the argumentation highlighted above. We first provide a short overview of the problems that are noted by critics, before exploring the argumentation about them. We examine both criticism by parties that penetrated parliamentary discussions, and academic critique that stayed outside parliamentary circles. Even though we present issues as “singular” problems here, they are in fact interconnected. We return to the “cluster” of problems below.

3.1. Singled-out problems

The main problem for the “good patient”, both in the Netherlands and in other countries (Glendinning et al. 2001; Carmichael & Brown 2002; Rummery 2006), is the administrative overload to which (s)he is exposed (2001f), even after fundamental revisions, which were particularly designed to diminish such burdens (2004; 2004k; 2007b). Overload particularly occurs when budget holders formally employ care workers (Van den Wijngaart & Ramakers 2004).

Another problem is that the support network of representative organisations is not yet in place (2002b). A number of councils that represent insurance clients are hardly functional, if at all (2001j); local organisations are not yet in place (2004m). Also scholars note that, for instance, ‘user co-operatives are only likely to work for a small proportion of claimants and would exacerbate a culture in which some claimants are winners at the expense of others who become losers’ (Lyon 2005, p. 247). Transparency is considered inadequate, even though it is not

concretely specified what is lacking; the vice-minister perceives an 'excess of financial partitions' (2004b), referring to administrative separations between different parts of the healthcare system. In addition, there have been cases in which brokering agencies were criticised for committing fraud, or for offering low service quality (Research voor Beleid 2009). As a result of this, the "countervailing power" that citizens can generate is considered strongly limited (2001i; RVZ 2005b),

Even though the quality of care that was purchased with a personal budget is generally considered high in the Netherlands (2006a), the fact that citizens are made responsible has created an ongoing concern nonetheless (2000c; 2004j; College Voor Zorgverzekeringen 2004; IBO 2006b). With respect to threats to quality, the literature notes a lack of training of personal assistants (Pickard et al. 2003; Kremer 2006) and a devaluation of professional care and care standards (Knijn & Verhagen 2007). The capability of citizens to behave as rational consumers and assess quality is questioned as well (Kremer 2006; Knijn & Verhagen 2007; Prideaux et al. 2009); at best, they are considered quasi-consumers by some (Glendinning et al. 2001). This goes back to the ambiguous issue of patients' "health literacy", which we mentioned in the introduction (Rubinelli et al. 2009).

Since its inception, the personal budget has become a popular option for funding informal caregivers who had previously been unpaid (1997c; 1998f; 2001e), which has also been noted internationally (Askheim 2005; Kremer 2006). This issue is referred to as the monetisation of informal care (2004i; 2005a; Ramakers & Van den Wijngaart 2005c). This has made public spending grow, which seems to be in direct conflict with one of the original objectives: cost containment. Something similar may be argued when it comes to the risk of fraud or abuse (Askheim 2005; Kremer 2006; Ellis 2007). In the Netherlands, fraud is estimated to occur in 1-5% of the cases (2004h).

A problem that is indirectly related to the empowered role of the subject is the position of care providers (Ungerson 1997; 2004). Scholars have reported bad working conditions and an overwhelming sense of responsibility (Spandler 2004), overburdening and exploitations of informal carers (Kremer 2006; Rummery 2006) and carers being trapped in short-term contracts (Kremer 2006; Leece 2010). In the Netherlands, the topic entered political discussion in the second half of the past decade. The minister acknowledged the problem that many employees

of traditional home care organisations lost their jobs (2007c). In addition, many skilled care providers have been forced to accept contracts for unskilled work (2007f).

Even though it is not specifically mentioned as a problem, it is often acknowledged that difference in capacities of the citizen leads to inequality and/or social exclusion. The international literature pays more attention to this issue (e.g. Lyon 2005; Rummery 2006). It is pointed out, for instance, that there are relatively many budget holders with a higher education background (1997b; 2009b). On top of that, the skills of the applicant in terms of formulating the request for care have an influence on the amount that is awarded (1999; IBO 2006a).

It is worth noting that scholars have articulated a number of problematic issues that have played only a minor role in Dutch political discussions, if at all. These issues are of a different nature than the fairly practical points that we addressed above. First, it is argued that, with an individualised set-up like the personal budget, economies of scale are likely to be lost compared to collective service provision (Spandler 2004; Lyon 2005). Second, the notion of the economic nature of the relations that we discussed is problematised. In a much-discussed paper, Ungerson argues that:
'"empowerment" is becoming two-pronged: the community care legislation gives disabled people *procedural rights* to an assessment, although not to services; the direct payments legislation will give disabled people the means to enter a *market* for care where they can operate *contractual rights*' (Ungerson 1997, p. 47, original italics).

The Dutch system is particularly mentioned as an example of 'fully commodified "informal" care' (Ungerson 2004, p. 197; see also Timonen et al. 2006; Knijn & Verhagen 2007), which is reported to be problematic for part of the users. It is articulated, for instance, how 'market logic intrudes into family logic' (Kremer 2006, p. 396). Furthermore, some have pointed out that, in different countries, funding has proven inadequate and that 'it is vital that the real costs of living with a disability are recognised' (Carmichael & Brown 2002, p. 807). Particularly market logic is reported to have a detrimental effect on the amount of funding awarded (Spandler 2004; Scourfield 2005). Finally, different scholars have pointed at the 'consequences of a state that wanted a market of care but at the same time introduced control' (Kremer 2006, p. 392; see also Ellis 2007; Priestley

et al. 2007; Prideaux et al. 2009).

3.2. Argumentative responses to problems

We have found many ways to argue about such problems. Rather than going over every problem one by one, we go over the different argumentative mechanisms. We have mainly observed mechanisms that effectively evaded problems that are noted by actors in this discussion. This does not necessarily imply that such evasion stems from an intention to not address an issue. We do not discuss motivations, only practices.

3.2.1. Stating, rather than solving problems

The most common way of dealing with problems in the documents that constitute the policy discussion is to acknowledge them, establish their importance, and then move on without offering argumentation or solution. All of the problems mentioned above have been handled this way several times over the past years. Particularly the issues of administrative burdens, limited skilfulness of budget holders, quality of care and the lack of a proper infrastructure are dealt with in this manner.

3.2.2. Offering partial, but insufficient solutions

In case suggestions are offered, they are often insufficient. By this, we mean that the problem in question keeps on being signalled. We provide a number of examples. When it comes to administrative overload and the limited, or unequally distributed capacities of budget holders, it has been proposed that a personal budget may be refused (1997a) or that a negative recommendation may be given to a particular applicant (2009a). This approach is not just restricted to the Netherlands (Priestley et al. 2007). Alternatively, a facilitating agency would be formed, of which citizens can make use voluntarily (2001d), and an instructive DVD will be prepared (2009d). The international call for simplifying application procedures (Leece & Leece 2006) is also recognised in the Netherlands (2002a). Monetisation and abuse are to be addressed by creating more objective indications (1997f) and control instruments (2000b), by reclaiming budgets in case of abuse, by obeying informal care providers to show that they have limited other activities for being able to provide (paid) care (2004l). Abuse by agencies is addressed by restricting payment of the personal budget to the budget holder’s bank account and by creating a behavioural code for agencies (2009e). In spite of these efforts, we continued to observe subsequent worries about the same issues.

3.2.3. Ambiguity

We understand ambiguity as a vague use of terms. As the Council of State pointed out, for instance, it is fairly unclear what "participation of all citizens" means (2005e). In spite of the vice-minister's clarifications, it remains unclear what is intended exactly. On the one hand, it seems to refer to participation in the care and support process, in the sense of charity or volunteer work (2004n), but often the vaguer concept of participation in society is allured to. Mostly, this is argued to be inspired by values such as empowerment for people with a disability or chronic illness, but also participation in policy making (2005g) and labour participation (2006c) are mentioned. It is noted that local governments, which will execute this policy, should further specify the definition of participation.

3.2.4. Conditionality

There are many ways in which conditionality plays a role in this policy discussion, not only in the Netherlands (Ellis 2007; Priestley et al. 2007). By conditionality we mean that certain conditions need to be met in order for a policy to be executed. We juxtapose this with the unrestricted adoption of the policy on the basis of the *assumption* that these conditions are met. Most interesting are cases in which certain attributes are described as both a condition and an assumption. Even though it is sometimes acknowledged that positioning an attribute as a condition implies a serious limitation, this does not stop politicians from formulating it as a general assumption as well. With respect to sovereignty, it is argued that the 'starting-point of the personal budget is that the budget owner is reasonably capable of judging the quality of care (consumer sovereignty)' (2004b, p. 13). This statement puts the emphasis very differently from saying that sovereignty is 'not equally applicable to everyone and everything' (2000b, p. 6). The emphasis of the latter formulation is on conditionality, which is lacking in the former. Similarly, it is argued that 'requesting and managing a personal budget requires entrepreneurship' (2009b, p. 3). The question whether this requirement is reasonable was posed in 2009 only, almost 15 years after launching the first experiments. Responsibility is another example. When the personal budget entered the discussion in the late 1980s, the ability to take responsibility was a condition (1988), suggesting that there would be some sort of judgment of this ability. Later on, more emphasis was placed on the argument that accepting a personal budget implies accepting responsibility (1998e), i.e. without a judgment of ability.

3.2.5. Shifting the responsibility for unsolved problems

Another common mechanism is that responsibility for unsolved problems is passed on to another actor; local governments and the individual citizen are the most common candidates for this. In terms of major challenges – inadequate societal participation and excess costs – the Public Health Council posed the question: 'How will we handle this?' The answer given was: '[b]y making the municipality responsible for the societal participation of people with a disability' (RVZ 2005, p. 2). In particular, '[r]ealising a social support infrastructure with adequate societal facilities falls under the responsibility of local government. This responsibility should most certainly remain where it is' (2002, p. 4).

The citizen is first responsible for assessing the amount of budget that it is needed: 'if desired, an applicant for a personal budget for mental disability can try to manage with a lower norm amount than for which he could receive an indication' (1997, p. 7). This implies that (s)he can try to purchase a cheaper treatment than what is deemed necessary by experts. It seems to make sense to measure quality from the citizen's perspective (2004a), but should "client satisfaction" be the main indicator for quality (Van den Wijngaart & Ramakers 2004)? When it comes to administrative burdens, government opted for a procedure that gives more freedom, but more burdens at the same time (2001g). Concerning burdens for care providers, regulations were adapted: 'By this change in the law, the citizen can be confronted with these burdens. This in fact implies a shift of burdens to the right place' (2008, p. 8). Whereas lowering burdens was one of the prime objectives of a major revision of the scheme, in 80% of the cases these remained the same or actually increased (2004e). The conclusion, surprisingly, was that the objective had partially been reached (Van den Wijngaart & Ramakers 2004). As a reply, the vice minister argued that citizens should not only expect taking the benefits, but also the hardships (2004g). Taking into consideration that less skilful citizens not only need to hire consultants to deal with the ever-increasing burdens of complexity, but that, in addition, they are expected to monitor the potentially abusive behaviour of such consultants (College Voor Zorgverzekeringen 2009a), we may wonder how this relates to the freedom that the scheme was meant to promote.

3.2.6. Implicitly contradicting the stated objectives

The introduction of new control mechanisms seems to contradict the original principle of patient sovereignty. Already a couple of years after introducing the

scheme, it was stated that ‘implementing demand-orientation ought to be accompanied by strengthening the set of supervisory instruments’ (2000a). For instance, house visits are proposed as a mechanism of proper coordination (2007g). Cost control has led to the lowering of budgets in later updates of the scheme (Van den Wijngaart & Ramakers 2004), regulations for using personal budgets for paying informal care have been sharpened (2004f) and the part of the budget (€2500) that was previously exempted from evaluation was cancelled (2007a). Using a title like ‘Liberating Frameworks’ (Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling 2002) for a crucial report in this discourse is telling in this respect.

3.2.7. Leaving underlying arguments unspecified

A final issue relates to not making underlying argumentation explicit; we take the example of monetisation and abuse. Considering that cost containment is always presented as a prime challenge, it seems awkward that few measures are taken to control this. What does the argument look like? First, the negative perception of the issue is downscaled by saying that the scheme is perhaps not ‘waterproof’ (2004, p. 15), but that abuse only happens on a very limited scale (1-5%). Another option is to establish a favourable definition of monetisation, stating that if a personal budget is awarded in a situation in which informal care was previously delivered unpaid, there is still a ‘legitimate need for care’ (1997d). The vice-minister’s argument was: ‘We find it normal to pay care providers for delivered services, then why should we not find it normal to pay informal carers for delivering formally required care’ (2005, p. 3). She accepts a narrower definition of monetisation that only considers cases in which the personal budget makes informal caregivers unwilling to continue providing unpaid care (2005d). Even though this is in part speculation, the underlying argument seems to be that new markets may open up and that unpaid care will still be provided on top of paid care.

3.3 Clusters of problems

As said, the “singular” problems are interconnected through measures that are supported by different forms of argumentation. In this section, we provide a few examples to indicate to what extents problems are “clustered”. Through a description of these clusters, and the evading mechanisms that surround them, we try to highlight a particular form of discursive formation. We still use the singular problems as an “entry point” to the cluster.

When it comes to *administrative burdens* for the citizen, the existence of the new

market for brokering agencies and personal budget consultants is put forward as a *partial solution*. As we have seen, however, this solution raises the problem of potential abuse by such organisations; citizens are now also responsible for *monitoring the quality* of service that they deliver. This new problem is dealt with by two different ways of argumentation: first of all, a *partial solution* is offered by creating a quality mark for such organisations, and secondly, government simply states that it *cannot take responsibility*. The fact that such agencies need to be paid for creates *inequality* between citizens who have the skills to manage a personal budget themselves and citizens who don't. If payment is an issue, assistance of family members is offered as a *partial solution*. Even though issues of inequality are hardly discussed at all, it is argued that selecting care in kind would be a *solution* for those with limited capacities. This option, however, places the responsibility for deciding on the *quality of care* with the patient, which was considered as an issue of concern in the first place. At this point, government *restates the original ideology* by arguing that this is part of the citizen's responsibility, while remaining *ambiguous* about the question whether capacities for handling responsibility are assumed or considered a condition.

Moving on to the problem of the citizen as the prime responsible for the quality of care as an entry point, the argument is that the receiver of care is the most capable to decide what happens to him or her. As we have seen, the way to do this was to *stage a measuring tool* that used citizen satisfaction as the main indicator of quality. This seems problematic, considering that further medical indicators or long-term perspectives are *not considered directly*. A further argument used is that it is necessary to move the monitoring of quality to the demand side if we want to *move from a supply-oriented to a demand-oriented system*. This brings us back to the earlier question regarding the skills of the citizen. That question evokes the elements of the problem cluster discussed in the previous paragraph.

The question of "system innovation" from supply to demand highlights the lack of a supporting infrastructure. It is *assumed* that self-organisation is the best way to form a stronger social structure. In practice, however, it turns out that citizens neither form collectives, nor are they represented by patient organisations sufficiently. Still, the responsibility for organising this is partially *shifted to the citizen*, even though government states that such an infrastructure is *required* for achieving system change, considering that citizens will not be able to gain sufficient strength otherwise. A partial solution is to *make local governments co-*

responsible for creating this infrastructure, while referring to the *ambiguous* term "participation" as a basis for this. However, this applies only to the social support act, which is just a small part of the entire healthcare sector; therefore, this is certainly *not a complete solution*.

If we look at the issue of monetisation, we have seen that the basic argument was that informal care is provided on the basis of a *legitimate* demand of care. This is based on *redefining* what monetisation is, thereby *downscaling* the number of cases that meet the definition. Still, it seems problematic from the point of view of government's objective of *cost containment*. Even though it is not clearly articulated, it seems there is an *underlying argumentation*, i.e. paying informal care has positive economic effects as well. Whether these benefits outweigh expenditures remains *ambiguous*, however. The notion that monetisation might grow in the future is not articulated. The *solution* that is offered is to increase supervision to single out cases in which monetisation ought to be considered abuse, in line with the new definition. Such an increase in control is again *at odds with the original principle of sovereignty*. The argument here, however, is that this should be regarded as part of new "liberating frameworks", a fairly *ambiguous* term.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Even though our main focus has been on the problems that we have identified, it needs to be said that several of these issues have been contested or relativised in the literature. A few examples: first, training has been effective in handling administrative overload. In addition, many receivers of direct payments have voiced the opinion that they gladly accept this load, compared to the downsides of the previous system (Carmichael & Brown 2002). Third, quality of care has definitely improved in certain respects (Carmichael & Brown 2002); satisfaction is obviously not completely unrelated to quality. Similarly, there are many known cases of care workers that were happily employed by holders of a personal budget (Kremer 2006; Leece 2010). Just as market logic has a potential "dark side", so does "family logic": '[f]amily care may be based on "warmth", but it is parochial and arbitrary at the same time' (Knijn & Verhagen 2007, p. 468). With respect to the issue of monetisation, finally, it is suggested by some that informal carers do not in fact change their behaviour because of the financial benefit, but that they appreciate their increase in income and recognition nonetheless (Ungerson 2004).

Personalised healthcare is not a black and white issue. Our conclusion is similar

to what other have argued with respect to the question of attributing “skills” to the patient (Rubinelli et al. 2009). On the one hand, “health literacy” is promoted in the framework of patient empowerment. On the other hand, critics argue that it may be undesirable for the patient to take place on the doctor’s chair. We do not suggest that personal budgets be cancelled because of the problems we found. Rather, it makes sense to investigate how to better deal with criticism in complex and interconnected arguments. On the basis of our analysis, we conclude that “clustered argumentation” is associated with mechanisms that evade problems that are raised. This would provide an interesting, but ambiguous case for theorists and practitioners working on the basis of the notion of political responsibility. How could we deal with the question of accountability in such cases?

Returning to the question we posed in the introduction: it seems reasonable to question how realistic the subject is that is portrayed in the dominant discourse. The use of the “cluster of argumentation” and “evading mechanisms” concepts highlights more than just the question of how realistic a particular subject is. We have tried to make clear that clustered argumentation is a discursive formation that makes certain things transparent and others opaque. Even though we do not comment on the question of intentionality, we have tried to highlight how clusters are accompanied by mechanisms that effectively imply that criticism is evaded. We may wonder whether the new subject will really be a “good patient”. Is (s)he indeed a cash-supported, rational sovereign, who constantly shuffles relations with care givers and is putting pressure to break rigid healthcare institutions? On the basis of the problems that participants in the policy discussion raised, another image of the patient-subject appears. It could also be an overburdened individual, constantly involved in unequal power relations, suspect in the eyes of government and society, and, therefore, increasingly constrained. This points at an entirely different type of subject, a “problematised subject”, so to say. This forms an interesting reflection on Foucault’s work on subjectivity.

NOTES

[i] Translations of Dutch documents were performed by the authors

[ii] Most documents analysed in this study are (vice-)ministerial statements to the Dutch assembly; references in which we do not specify an author or organisational author should be considered as such (Tweede Kamer)

REFERENCES

Askheim, O. P. (2005). Personal assistance – direct payments or alternative public service. Does it matter for the promotion of user control? *Disability & Society, 20,* 247-260.
Bulmer, F. (2008). A new model for public services. *Economic Affairs, 28,* 47-51.
Carmichael, A. & Brown, L. (2002). The future challenge for direct payments. *Disability & Society, 17,* 797-808.
College Voor Zorgverzekeringen (2004). *Kernmonitor PGB nieuwe stijl*. 196. Diemen: College voor zorgverzekeringen.
College Voor Zorgverzekeringen (2009a). *Onderzoek PGB-bemiddelingsbureaus*. POU/29016444 / DLZ/ZI-U-2854526.
College Voor Zorgverzekeringen (2009b). *Onderzoek PGB-bemiddelingsbureaus*. POU/29016444 / DLZ/ZI-U-2854526.
Ellis, K. (2007). Direct Payments and Social Work Practice: The Significance of 'Street-Level Bureaucracy' in Determining Eligibility. *British Journal of Social Work, 37,* 405.
Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*. London: Penguin Group.
Foucault, M. (1982). The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry, 8,* 777-795.
Foucault, M. (2008). *The Birth of Biopolitics. Lectures at the College de France, 1978-79*. Palgrave MacMillan.
Glendinning, C., Halliwell, S., Jacobs, S., Rummery, K., & Tyrer, J. (2001). Bridging the gap: using direct payments to purchase integrated care. *Health & Social Care in the Community, 8,* 192-200.
Habermas, J. (1994). Some questions concerning the theory of power: Foucault again. *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate,* 79-108.
Houtepen, R. & Meulen, R. (2000). The Expectation (s) of Solidarity: Matters of Justice, Responsibility and Identity in the Reconstruction of the Health Care System. *Health Care Analysis, 8,* 355-376.
IBO (2006b). *Zelf zorg inkopen: persoonsgebonden bekostiging. Is het volledig invoeren van persoonsgebonden bekostiging in de AWBZ haalbaar?*
IBO (2006a). *Zelf zorg inkopen: persoonsgebonden bekostiging. Is het volledig invoeren van persoonsgebonden bekostiging in de AWBZ haalbaar?*
Kerff, R. G. H. G. (1998). Het persoonsgebonden budget in de thuiszorg. Bestuurskundige aspecten van een nieuwe financieringsvorm. *Bestuurskunde, 8*.
Knijn, T. & Verhagen, S. (2007). Contested Professionalism Payments for Care and the Quality of Home Care. *Administration & Society, 39,* 451.
Kremer, M. (2006). Consumers in charge of care: the Dutch personal budget and

its impact on the market, professionals and the family. *European societies, 8,* 385-401.
Leece, D. & Leece, J. (2006). Direct payments: creating a two-tiered system in social care? *British Journal of Social Work, 36,* 1379.
Leece, J. (2010). Paying the piper and calling the tune: Power and the direct payment relationship. *British Journal of Social Work*.
Lyon, J. (2005). A systems approach to direct payments: a response to 'Friend or foe? Towards a critical assessment of direct payments'. *Critical Social Policy, 25,* 240.
MDW-werkgroep AWBZ (2000d). *De ontvoogding van de AWBZ*.
MDW-werkgroep AWBZ (2000b). *De ontvoogding van de AWBZ*.
MDW-werkgroep AWBZ (2000c). *De ontvoogding van de AWBZ*.
MDW-werkgroep AWBZ (2000a). *De ontvoogding van de AWBZ*.
Mensink, W. H. & Birrer, F. A. J. (2010). The role of expectations in system innovation: the Electronic Health Record, immoderate goal or achievable necessity? *Central European Journal of Public Policy, 4,* 36-59.
Ministerie van VWS (1999). *Zicht op Zorg. Plan van aanpak Modernisering AWBZ* Den Haag.
Ministerie van VWS (2001). *Vraag aan bod. Hoofdlijnen van vernieuwing van het zorgstelsel*.
Morris, J. (2002). Care of empowerment? A disability rights perspective. *Social Policy & Administration, 31,* 54-60.
Pickard, S., Jacobs, S., & Kirk, S. (2003). Challenging Professional Roles: Lay Carers' Involvement in Health Care in the Community. *Social Policy & Administration, 37,* 82-96.
Prideaux, S., Roulstone, A., Harris, J., & Barnes, C. (2009). Disabled people and self-directed support schemes: reconceptualising work and welfare in the 21st century. *Disability & Society, 24,* 557-569.
Priestley, M., Jolly, D., Pearson, C., Ridell, S., Barnes, C., & Mercer, G. (2007). Direct Payments and Disabled People in the UK: Supply, Demand and Devolution. *British Journal of Social Work, 37,* 1189.
Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling (2002). *Bevrijdende kaders*. Advies 24. Den Haag: RMO.
Ramakers, C. & Van den Wijngaart, M. (2005c). *Persoonsgebonden budget en mantelzorg. Onderzoek naar de aard en omvang van betaalde en onbetaalde mantelzorg*.
Ramakers, C. & Van den Wijngaart, M. (2005b). *Persoonsgebonden budget en*

mantelzorg. Onderzoek naar de aard en omvang van betaalde en onbetaalde mantelzorg.
Ramakers, C. & Van den Wijngaart, M. (2005a). *Persoonsgebonden budget en mantelzorg. Onderzoek naar de aard en omvang van betaalde en onbetaalde mantelzorg*.
Research voor Beleid (2009). *Ondernemend betrokken bij zorg? Aard en kwaliteit van dienstverlening door PGB-bemiddelingsbureaus*. B3501. Zoetermeer: Research voor beleid.
Rubinelli, S., Schulz, P. J., & Nakamoto, K. (2009). Health literacy beyond knowledge and behaviour: letting the patient be a patient. *International journal of public health, 54,* 307-311.
Rummery, K. (2006). Disabled citizens and social exclusion: the role of direct payments. *Policy & Politics, 34,* 633-650.
RVZ (2005b). *Briefadvies WMO*. 4341.1-16. Zoetermeer.
RVZ (2005a). *Briefadvies WMO*. 4341.1-16. Zoetermeer.
RVZ (2005). *Briefadvies WMO*. 4341.1-16. Zoetermeer.
RVZ (2007). *Goed patiëntschap. Meer verantwoordelijkheid voor de patiënt*. 07/02. Zoetermeer: Raad voor de Volksgezondheid en Zorg.
Scourfield, P. (2005). Implementing the Community Care (Direct Payments) Act: Will the supply of personal assistants meet the demand and at what price? *Journal of Social Policy, 34,* 469-488.
Spandler, H. (2004). Friend or foe? Towards a critical assessment of direct payments. *Critical Social Policy, 24,* 187.
Timonen, V., Convery, J., & Cahill, S. (2006). Care revolutions in the making? A comparison of cash-for-care programmes in four European countries. *Ageing and Society, 26,* 455-474.
TNS NIPO (2004). *Fouten worden duur betaald – Een onderzoek naar medische overdrachtsfouten (deel 2)*. B5561. Amsterdam.
Tweede Kamer (1988). *Hulp vanwege algemene eerstelijnsvoorzieningen aan (geestelijk) gehandicapten*. vergaderjaar 1987-1988 . 20551 Nr. 2. Den Haag.
Tweede Kamer (1997c). *Jaaroverzicht Zorg 1997*. Vergaderjaar 1996-1997. 25004 Nr. 34.
Tweede Kamer (1997d). *Jaaroverzicht Zorg 1997*. Vergaderjaar 1996-1997. 25004 Nr. 34.
Tweede Kamer (1997). *Jaaroverzicht Zorg 1997*. Vergaderjaar 1996-1997. 25004 Nr. 34.
Tweede Kamer (1997a). *Jaaroverzicht Zorg 1997*. Vergaderjaar 1996-1997. 25004

Nr. 34.
Tweede Kamer (1997b). *Jaaroverzicht Zorg 1997*. Vergaderjaar 1996-1997. 25004 Nr. 34.
Tweede Kamer (1997e). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 1997-1998. 25657 Nr. 1.
Tweede Kamer (1997). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 1997-1998. 25657 Nr. 1.
Tweede Kamer (1997f). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 1997-1998. 25657 Nr. 1.
Tweede Kamer (1998b). *Persoonsgebonden budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 1997-1998. 25657 Nr. 4. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (1998c). *Persoonsgebonden budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 1997-1998. 25657 Nr. 4. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (1998d). *Persoonsgebonden budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 1997-1998. 25657 Nr. 4. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (1998a). *Persoonsgebonden budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 1997-1998. 25657 Nr. 4. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (1998f). *Persoonsgebonden budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 1997-1998. 25657 Nr. 4. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (1998e). *Persoonsgebonden budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 1997-1998. 25657 Nr. 4. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (1999). *Persoonsgebonden budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 1998-1999. 25657 Nr. 11. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2000c). *Marktwerking, deregulering en wetgevingskwaliteit. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 1999-2000. 24036 / 26631 Nr. 166. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2000b). *Marktwerking, deregulering en wetgevingskwaliteit. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 1999-2000. 24036 / 26631 Nr. 166. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2000a). *Marktwerking, deregulering en wetgevingskwaliteit. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 1999-2000. 24036 / 26631 Nr. 166. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2000d). *Marktwerking, deregulering en wetgevingskwaliteit. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 1999-2000. 24036 / 26631 Nr. 166. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2000a). *Marktwerking, deregulering en wetgevingskwaliteit. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 1999-2000. 24036 / 26631 Nr. 166. 's

Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2000b). *Marktwerking, deregulering en wetgevingskwaliteit. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 1999-2000. 24036 / 26631 Nr. 166. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2000). *Persoonsgebonden budgetten. Zorgnota 2000*. Vergaderjaar 1999-2000. 26657 / 26801 Nr. 14. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001a). *Marktwerking, deregulering en wetgevingskwaliteit*. Vergaderjaar 2000-2001. 24036 Nr. 222. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001). *Marktwerking, deregulering en wetgevingskwaliteit*. Vergaderjaar 2000-2001. 24036 Nr. 222. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001b). *Marktwerking, deregulering en wetgevingskwaliteit*. Vergaderjaar 2000-2001. 24036 Nr. 222. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001a). *Marktwerking, deregulering en wetgevingskwaliteit*. Vergaderjaar 2000-2001. 24036 Nr. 222. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001b). *Marktwerking, deregulering en wetgevingskwaliteit*. Vergaderjaar 2000-2001. 24036 Nr. 222. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001c). *Marktwerking, deregulering en wetgevingskwaliteit*. Vergaderjaar 2000-2001. 24036 Nr. 222. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001g). *Modernisering AWBZ. Persoonsgebonden Budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 2001-2002. 26631 / 25657 Nr. 16. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001e). *Modernisering AWBZ. Persoonsgebonden Budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 2001-2002. 26631 / 25657 Nr. 16. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001f). *Modernisering AWBZ. Persoonsgebonden Budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 2001-2002. 26631 / 25657 Nr. 16. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001d). *Modernisering AWBZ. Persoonsgebonden Budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 2001-2002. 26631 / 25657 Nr. 16. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001h). *Modernisering AWBZ. Persoonsgebonden budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 2000-2001. 26631 / 25657 Nr. 14. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001k). *Patiënten/consumentenbeleid*. Vergaderjaar 2000-2001. 27807 Nr. 2. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001l). *Patiënten/consumentenbeleid*. Vergaderjaar 2000-2001. 27807 Nr. 2. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001i). *Patiënten/consumentenbeleid*. Vergaderjaar 2000-2001. 27807 Nr. 2. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2001j). *Patiënten/consumentenbeleid*. Vergaderjaar 2000-2001. 27807 Nr. 2. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2002a). *Modernisering AWBZ. Persoonsgebonden Budgetten*.

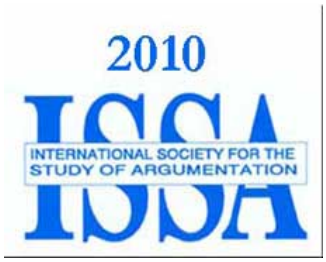
Vergaderjaar 2001-2002. 26631 / 25657 Nr. 20. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2002b). *Modernisering AWBZ. Persoonsgebonden budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 2001-2002. 26631 / 25657 Nr. 19. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2002). *Modernisering AWBZ. Persoonsgebonden budgetten*. Vergaderjaar 2001-2002. 26631 / 25657 Nr. 19. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004a). *Patiënten/consumentenbeleid*. Vergaderjaar 2003-2004. 27807 Nr. 21. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004). *Patiënten/consumentenbeleid*. Vergaderjaar 2003-2004. 27807 Nr. 21. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004c). *Patiënten/consumentenbeleid*. Vergaderjaar 2003-2004. 27807 Nr. 21. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004d). *Patiënten/consumentenbeleid*. Vergaderjaar 2003-2004. 27807 Nr. 21. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004b). *Patiënten/consumentenbeleid*. Vergaderjaar 2003-2004. 27807 Nr. 21. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004h). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 25657 / 26631 Nr. 29. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004l). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 25657 / 26631 Nr. 29. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004i). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 25657 / 26631 Nr. 29. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004j). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 25657 / 26631 Nr. 29. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004k). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 25657 / 26631 Nr. 29. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004a). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 25657 / 26631 Nr. 29. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 25657 / 26631 Nr. 29. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004f). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 25657 / 26631 Nr. 29. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004e). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 25657 / 26631 Nr. 29. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004b). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 25657 / 26631 Nr. 29. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2004g). *Persoonsgebonden Budgetten. Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 25657 / 26631 Nr. 29. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.

Tweede Kamer (2004n). *Zorg en maatschappelijke ondersteuning*. Vergaderjaar 2003-2004. 29538 Nr. 1.
Tweede Kamer (2004m). *Zorg en maatschappelijke ondersteuning*. Vergaderjaar 2003-2004. 29538 Nr. 1.
Tweede Kamer (2004a). *Zorg en maatschappelijke ondersteuning*. Vergaderjaar 2003-2004. 29538 Nr. 1.
Tweede Kamer (2004b). *Zorg en maatschappelijke ondersteuning*. Vergaderjaar 2003-2004. 29538 Nr. 1.
Tweede Kamer (2005b). *Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2005-2006. 26631 Nr. 153. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2005a). *Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2005-2006. 26631 Nr. 153. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2005c). *Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2005-2006. 26631 Nr. 153. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2005d). *Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2005-2006. 26631 Nr. 153. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2005). *Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2005-2006. 26631 Nr. 153. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2005e). *Nieuwe regels betreffende maatschappelijke ondersteuning (Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning)*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 30131 Nr. 3. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2005). *Nieuwe regels betreffende maatschappelijke ondersteuning (Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning)*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 30131 Nr. 3. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2005). *Nieuwe regels betreffende maatschappelijke ondersteuning (Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning)*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 30131 Nr. 3. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2005f). *Nieuwe regels betreffende maatschappelijke ondersteuning (Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning)*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 30131 Nr. 3. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2005g). *Zorg en maatschappelijke ondersteuning*. Vergaderjaar 2004-2005. 29538 Nr. 13. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2006c). *Kabinetsplan administratieve lasten*. Vergaderjaar 2006-2007. 29515 Nr. 175. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2006a). *Kabinetsplan administratieve lasten*. Vergaderjaar 2006-2007. 29515 Nr. 175. 's Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2006b). *Kabinetsplan administratieve lasten*. Vergaderjaar

2006-2007. 29515 Nr. 175. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2007a). *Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2007-2008. 26631 Nr. 232. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2007b). *Modernisering AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2007-2008. 26631 Nr. 232. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2007g). *Zorg en maatschappelijke ondersteuning*. Vergaderjaar 2007-2008. 29538 Nr. 58. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2007e). *Zorg en maatschappelijke ondersteuning*. Vergaderjaar 2007-2008. 29538 Nr. 58. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2007c). *Zorg en maatschappelijke ondersteuning*. Vergaderjaar 2007-2008. 29538 Nr. 58. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2007f). *Zorg en maatschappelijke ondersteuning*. vergaderjaar 2006-2007. 29538 Nr. 38. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu Uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2007d). *Zorg en maatschappelijke ondersteuning*. Vergaderjaar 2007-2008. 29538 Nr. 58. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2008). *Wijziging van de wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning, wat betreft de wijze waarop een aanspraak bestaat op een individuele voorziening en enige andere wijzigingen*. Vergaderjaar 2008-2009. 31795 Nr. 3. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2009c). *Toekomst AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2008-2009. 30597 Nr. 73. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2009e). *Toekomst AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2008-2009. 30597 Nr. 73. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2009d). *Toekomst AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2008-2009. 30597 Nr. 73. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2009a). *Toekomst AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2008-2009. 30597 Nr. 73. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2009b). *Toekomst AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2008-2009. 30597 Nr. 73. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2009a). *Toekomst AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2008-2009. 30597 Nr. 46. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Tweede Kamer (2009b). *Toekomst AWBZ*. Vergaderjaar 2008-2009. 30597 Nr. 46. ‘s Gravenhage: Sdu uitgevers.
Ungerson, C. (1997). Give them the money: Is cash a route to empowerment? *Social Policy & Administration, 31,* 45-53.
Ungerson, C. (2004). Whose empowerment and independence? A cross-national perspective on ‘cash for care’ schemes. *Ageing and Society, 24,* 189-212.

Van den Wijngaart, M. & Ramakers, C. (2004). *Monitor budgethouders pgb nieuwe stijl*.

ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Construction Types And Argumentative Functions Of Possibility Modals: Evidence From Italian



1. Introduction

Modality has to do with communicating about possibilities rather than about the actual world, with construing alternative scenarios and with assessing the relationships between scenarios. This mode of communication has obvious affinities with argumentation, a communicative activity in which speakers compare and evaluate alternative views, exploring their relationships with beliefs and known facts. That is why linguistic expressions happen to have both modal and argumentative functions, as shows the example of negation markers, used to mark states of affairs as non-real, but also to disagree (cf. among others Anscombre & Ducrot 1983). In other words, modal expressions – among which negation markers, mood, conditional constructions and modal verbs as well as other expressions of possibility and necessity – happen to function as "argumentative indicators" (cf. Snoeck Henkemans 1997, van Eemeren et al. 2007).

According to the pragmatic-dialectical approach to argumentative indicators, the range of possible argumentative functions of linguistic expressions covers the content level, the level of discourse relations, the level of speech act types and illocutionary force, as well as the discursive-sequential level of signaling

particular argumentative moves or discussion stages. Within this framework, considerable attention has been paid to pragmatic and dialogical aspects, i.e. to indicators that are useful to reconstruct stages and moves in a critical discussion (cf. also, among others, Tseronis 2009). As to modal expressions, they have been analyzed first and foremost as markers of the degree of commitment to a standpoint (Snoeck Henkemans 1997, p. 108-117).

A slightly different approach is adopted by Rocci (2008, 2010) in his investigation of Italian possibility and necessity modals as argumentative indicators. His analysis draws on a "stratified account of arguing" (Rocci 2010, p. 585-588), following Rigotti (2005) and Rocci (2005b), and taking into account earlier work by James B. Freeman (Freeman 1991) on modal expressions of probability as relational operators. It investigates the modals' functions zooming in on the act of arguing for a standpoint and on the structure of enthymemic reasoning, including *loci*, i.e. the underlying ontological relations warranting the inference of the standpoint from premises (e.g. cause-effect, authority etc.).

The research conducted by Rocci (2008, 2010), which is based on the careful semantic analysis of a series of attested and constructed examples, suggests that modal verbs have argumentative functions that are partly similar to those of argumentative connectives, contributing to the construction of argument-conclusion relations. At the same time, it draws the attention to an analytical difficulty that is relevant for a large range of argumentative indicators, i.e. their highly polysemous nature. The polysemy of modal expressions, especially of modal verbs, is well-known in the field of research on modality (cf. also section 2 below). Rocci (2008, 2010) sustains that it is argumentatively relevant, i.e. that differences in meaning correspond to differences in argumentative functions. In particular, it is claimed that inferential and non-inferential readings of the modals differ as to the relations they signal.

In this paper, a corpus-based approach will be adopted to further investigate the kinds of relations indicated by modal verbs and to lend empirical support to the idea according to which the distinction between the modals' inferential and non-inferential readings is highly relevant for the organization of argumentative discourse. I will examine a particular highly frequent modal expression in Italian, *potrebbe*, which is the conditional form of the possibility modal *potere* and roughly corresponds to English *could* or *might*. Combining insights from semantics, pragmatics, text linguistics and argumentation theory, this form will

first be analyzed as a polysemous expression corresponding to different construction types, which involve different readings of the verb *potere* and of the conditional mood (section 2). In section 3, I will formulate specific hypotheses about the argumentative functions of the construction types in question, which will then be examined by analyzing a corpus of economic-financial newspaper articles**[i]**.

2. Preliminary considerations on the semantics of potrebbe

2.1. The modal verb potere

Italian has two modal verbs conveying the notions of possibility and necessity, respectively, i.e. *potere* (engl. 'can', 'may'; when nominalized: 'power') and *dovere* ('must', 'should'; when nominalized: 'duty'). These may be considered the partly grammaticalized core of a larger semantic field of lexical expressions of modality and evidentiality. The two verbs are polysemous. The meanings of *dovere* include at least need, obligation, agent-oriented (Bybee et al. 1994) and non agent-oriented ontological necessity, and different kinds of inference. Those of *potere* include at least

– ability (e.g. *Il re può decidere del destino dei suoi sudditi* 'The king has the power to decide on his subjects' destiny');
– permission (e.g. *Puoi andare adesso* 'You may go now');
– agent-oriented ontological possibility (e.g. *Qui puoi tornare a destra – la strada è sbloccata* 'You can turn right here – the street is not blocked anymore');
– non agent-oriented ontological possibility in generalized statements (e.g. *Un computer può rompersi* 'A computer can crash');
– sporadicity (cf. Kleiber 1983) (*A volte le telecronache possono essere noiose* 'TV news can sometimes be boring');
– inference (e.g. *Perché non è venuto? – Può aver dimenticato il nostro appuntamento* 'Why didn't he show up? – He may have forgotten our appointment').

In order to describe the interrelations between the modals and their polysemous semantics, it is useful to consider them as relational predicates with invariant and variable components.

An influential approach to the polysemy of modals, which has been adopted in the works by Rocci (2008, 2010) cited above, is the one outlined by Kratzer (1981). In Kratzer's view, modals are seen as operators relating a proposition to a set of propositions called *conversational background* or *modal base*. According to this

author, possibility modals express the proposition's compatibility with the conversational background, whereas necessity modals indicate that the proposition is entailed by the conversational background. The differences between the modals' various uses are accounted for by assuming different types of conversational backgrounds. So in the case of *potere* (cf. Rocci 2008), the ability reading implies a conversational background containing propositions concerning an agent's faculties; the deontic reading of permission implies a conversational background consisting of laws, norms or rules; ontological possibility is equivalent to compatibility with a relevant set of circumstances (a "realistic background", in Kratzer's terms); sporadicity may be analyzed as compatibility with a relevant set of experienced past events; and the inferential meaning amounts to compatibility with an epistemic conversational background, i.e. with a set of propositions known to the speaker.

A slightly different view is advocated by cognitive linguists, who postulate an underlying force-dynamic schema (Talmy 1988), implying a basic concept of causality which is present already in precursory work inspired by generative semantics, e.g. in Sueur's (1979) idea of different types of "causatifs" underlying the various readings of French *pouvoir*. In these approaches, the relation signaled by the modal is supposed to hold between a presupposed *modal source* and a state of affairs or proposition influenced in some way by the modal source (e.g. Diewald 2000). According to this view, the various readings of the modals differ both as to the types of entities involved as arguments of the relational predicate and as to the type of relation that holds between them. *Potere* conveys the idea that a modal source brings about a situation in which some relevant conditions for the realization of a state of affairs are fulfilled (in non-inferential uses), or puts the speaker into the position to claim that a certain conclusion might be true (inferential uses).

For the sake of the present analysis, I will adopt the cognitivist frame-semantic perspective, in particular the idea that the modals' non-inferential and inferential readings differ as to the kind of entities involved. To refer to these entities, the model of clause structure proposed in Functional Grammar (Dik 1989) will be used, distinguishing four layers of utterance meaning: predications (predicate-argument attributions not situated in time/space), states of affairs (situations and events in the discourse world), propositions (mental constructs concerning states of affairs, which can be true or false), and speech acts. Combining this model with

the lexical semantic perspective sketched above, we may say that the modals' different readings function as operators on different layers of the clause, a main difference being that between inferential readings, which have scope over propositions as mental constructs, and non-inferential readings having scope over states of affairs.

2.2. Inferential readings of potere *and the context dependence of modals*

When analyzing modal verbs, it is important to acknowledge that the various readings of a modal depend to a certain degree on context. The distinction between inferential and non-inferential readings of *potere*, in particular, cannot always be drawn in a straightforward way. If it is signaled clearly by construction types in some co-texts, such as with past events (*può aver visto* 'she may have seen' vs. *ha potuto vedere* 'she was able to see / it was possible for her to see', cf. Rocci 2010, p. 600), in other cases pragmatic considerations contribute to decide whether an inferential meaning is intended or not.

This is the case with future events, the dominant context of use of *potere* in the economic-financial news under analysis in this paper, as will become clear in section 3. Consider the following example:

(1) Il forte ipervenduto *può* innescare un rimbalzo tecnico ma prima di *poter* tentare una reazione di una certa consistenza è necessaria la costruzione di una solida base accumulativa. (MF 26-4-2006, doc. 51)

The strong oversold situation may trigger a technical bounce, but before having the possibility to venture a clear reaction it is necessary [for the obligation market] to form a solid accumulation base.

In this economic forecast, a future development of obligation prices is envisaged, referred to first as "a technical bounce [of prices]", then as "a clear reaction [of the markets]".

In the second part of the utterance, this future development is modalized by *potere* in the infinitive and presented as dependent on a necessary condition (the generation of a solid accumulation base). The most plausible meaning of this instance of *potere* is agent-oriented ontological possibility, the agent being personalized markets, as often encountered in economic discourse, and the modal source being a set of economic circumstances – more precisely, the generation of a solid accumulation base. Evidence in this direction is both the presence of a verb implying an agent (*tentare* 'venture') and the syntactic embedding of the

infinitive clause under a temporal connective (*prima* 'before'), which as a typical operator on the level of states of affairs excludes an interpretation of the infinitive clause as an inferred proposition.

The first part of the utterance, on the other hand, is potentially ambiguous between several readings:
a) A first possibility is a metaphorical ability reading by which the oversold situation is attributed the semantic role of a Force (cf. Dik 1989, p. 101), comparable e.g. to natural phenomena such as earthquakes, capable of causing changes. According to this interpretation, the modal source consists in a set of properties of the actual oversold situation. Reference to a possibility in the future is not expressed explicitly but is entailed (it cannot be excluded that the oversold will cause the effects it is capable of causing).
b) A second possibility consists in interpreting the modal as an operator that takes scope over a complex state of affairs consisting of two causally linked events (the actual oversold situation triggering a future technical bounce). The modal source would then have to be identified with factual economic circumstances other than the oversold situation itself, which create conditions making it possible for this complex state of affairs to occur. In this case, too, future reference is entailed rather than expressed explicitly.
c) The third possible interpretation is an inferential one, in which a conjecture about the future is directly expressed. An inferential reading can be paraphrased by "one may hypothesize that [the oversold will trigger a technical bounce]$_p$", p being a proposition, not a state of affairs. What functions as a modal source, in this case, is a reasoning process based on different types of premises.

If with respect to the second part of example (1) an inferential interpretation of the infinitive *potere* can be ruled out on co-textual grounds, it is difficult to definitely rule out any of the interpretations sketched above for the first part of the example. In particular, even if there is strong evidence for the relevance of causality and thus ontological possibility (facts in the world making possible / not impeding other facts), the inferential interpretation, which implies the mobilization of wider and more general knowledge of the speaker and focuses on the guess made as to the probability that a specific event will take place, is clearly communicatively relevant in the context of economic forecasts. A plausible solution is to assume inference based on causal reasoning, in which the relevant causal relations function as premises. So in example (1), we can assume that the

premises leading the speaker to infer that there could be a technical bounce centrally include knowledge about oversold situations and the circumstances under which they influence the movement of prices, according to economic laws and experience.

2.3. The conditional mood

The Italian conditional mood (COND) is, like *potere*, a polysemous relational operator (cf. Miecznikowski 2008a, 2009 Ms). Its core meaning is to signal that a state of affairs or a proposition

i) stands in a sequential or consequential relation of some type with what I will call a reference point, in analogy with Reichenbach's (1947) model for the description of tenses;

ii) that the reference point contrasts with a further entity, which is mostly an aspect of the speech situation (the speaker's *hic et nunc*, or *origo*, in Bühler's 1934 terms), but can also correspond, in some readings, to a different co-textually salient entity.

This core meaning gives rise to different readings of the form and different relation types depending on which type of reference point is involved. The Italian COND has three canonical meanings acknowledged by most traditional and contemporary grammarians, among which the first one requires the composed form of the COND:

– posteriority of a state of affairs with respect to a past state of affairs (the reference point is a moment in time and is construed as distant from the *origo*): *Ha annunciato che sarebbe arrivato in ritardo* 'She announced that she would be late');

– a hypothetical condition-consequence relation between states of affairs (the reference point is a non-factual – possible or counterfactual – state of affairs, contrasting with what is the case in the actual world): *Se tu ci aiutassi, ce la faremmo facilmente* 'If you helped us, we would manage easily');

– report, i.e. the evidential qualification of a proposition as originating in a discourse different from the speaker's: *Secondo lui sarebbe colpa di Mario* 'According to him, it is Mario's fault').

These three main meanings strongly presuppose the reference point in question. If, differently from the examples given above, no co-textual antecedent is given, this presupposition will be accommodated, i.e. hearers will use all available information to make a hypothesis about which reading of the COND is the good

one and to infer the reference point accordingly (cf. e.g. *io non mi lamenterei* 'I wouldn't complain', an instance of the hypothetical COND in which an implicit counterfactual condition 'if I were you/X' has to be inferred to make the COND interpretable).

In contrast, the COND has a fourth class of uses, traditionally called "attenuating", which occurs mainly with a range of modal or evidential verbs and with performatively used verbs of saying (cf. Miecznikowski 2009). It differs from the temporal and the hypothetical use in that it has no effect on the level of propositional content. Furthermore, it differs from all canonical meanings by the fact that the reference point corresponds to an element closely related to the semantics of the immediate co-text, especially the verb the COND is attached to. More specifically, thanks to a kind of semantic merger, the attenuating COND finds its reference points in propositions forming the background of the "scene" construed by the semantic frame of the modal/evidential/performative verb or larger construction the verb is part of; propositions which in the indicative form acquire the pragmatic status of presuppositions, whereas the attenuating COND cancels their presupposed, taken for granted status, construing them as non-factual, unknown, or controversial.

Consider the following example:
(2) *Vorrei un panino* 'I want$_{cond}$ (≈ 'would like') a sandwich'.

The use of the COND in (2) differs from the hypothetical use of this mood by the fact that the state of affairs of the speaker's desiring a sandwich is neither dependent on another state of affairs nor can it be interpreted as non-factual; there can be no doubt about the speaker's desiring the sandwich. In contrast, the utterance conveys doubt about an implicit proposition, i.e. about the possibility for the speaker to get her desire realized. This doubt differentiates examples like (2) from their counterpart in the indicative, in which an attitude and intention of the speaker towards a non-factual state of affairs is asserted taking for granted that the necessary conditions to get the latter realized are fulfilled; a difference, by the way, which in the context of requests, in which those necessary conditions include the hearer's plans of action, regularly acquires politeness functions.

2.4. Potrebbe*: interaction with the hypothetical and the attenuating COND*
The conditional form of the modal *potere*, *potrebbe*, is frequently used both hypothetically and in an attenuating way. In the former case, the form raises

problems of scope that interact with the readings of *potere* involved. In the latter case, no variation of scope occurs, since modal and mood combine to form a single complex operator; what does vary, in function of the reading of the modal activated, is the set of presuppositions modalized by the attenuating COND. In what follows, I will briefly consider the four most frequent construction types encountered:
– first type: hypothetical COND with scope over non-inferential *potere*;
– second type: inferential *potere* with scope over hypothetical COND (conditional conjecture);
– third type: the attenuating COND form of *potere* expressing agent-oriented ontological possibility;
– fourth type: the attenuating COND form of inferential *potere* (simple conjecture).

In the first construction type, *potere* has an apodosis of a conditional construction in its scope. Since the hypothetical COND relates states of affairs and not propositions, the apodosis has the status of a state of affairs, and *potere* has always a non-inferential reading. The speech act performed is the assertion of an if-then-relation opposing possible and impossible scenarios ('only if p, is q possible'; 'if p, then only q is possible'; 'if p, then q is not possible'). This case is illustrated by example (3) with deontic *potere* and a protasis establishing a necessary condition:
3) *Se Maria avesse dieci anni compiuti, potrebbe partecipare al concorso* ('If Maria had already reached the age of ten years, she could participate at the contest').

In the second construction type with the hypothetical conditional, *potere* undergoes raising and takes scope over the conditional construction. Since the if-then construction as a whole is a proposition and not a state of affairs, *potere* then necessarily acquires inferential meaning. The resulting speech act is a conjecture about a possible consequence of a non-factual state of affairs (*conditional conjecture*). Accordingly, *potrebbe* can be paraphrased by raised impersonal *può darsi che*, which has always inferential meaning (cf. Rocci 2005a) – a paraphrase that would be inadequate in the assertive construction type discussed above. (4) is an example of this:
4) *Se la domanda continuasse ad aumentare i prezzi potrebbero salire* ('if demand continued to increase prices could rise').

Possible paraphrase: *Può darsi che se continuasse ad aumentare la domanda i prezzi salirebbero* ('It is quite possible that if demand continued to increase prices would rise').

The third type involves the attenuating COND and the agent-oriented use of *potere*. The latter is the only non-inferential reading of *potere* that can be used in the attenuating COND, whereas the ability reading as well as generalized and sporadic statements are not interpretable in the attenuating COND. The reason for this special status of agent-oriented modality is probably that it involves practical reasoning, i.e. options of action are evaluated with regard to the agent's goals, providing a possible reference point of the COND. By default, the indicative use of *potere*, when referred to a possibility of action, presupposes that the realization of the action in question is part of the agent's goals. It is the content of this presupposition that functions as a reference point for the attenuating COND: the latter form signals that the issue of which goals the agent has is open. This contrast is illustrated by the following two examples:
5) *Domani è festa; possiamo andare a vedere i nonni.* 'Tomorrow is a holiday; we can go and see the grandparents'.
6) *Domani è festa; potremmo andare a vedere i nonni.* 'Tomorrow is a holiday; we could go and see the grandparents'.

In (5), the speaker takes for granted that seeing the grandparents is part of the goals and wishes of the group referred to by the first person plural.
In (6), this presupposition is cancelled. Seeing the grandparents could be an option nobody has thought of, or there could be doubts or controversy about the desirability of the action.

The fourth construction type are simple conjectures. As with the present tense of *potere*, these can concern both past events and possible future events:
7) *Che cosa è successo a Piero? – Ha una brutta ferita; potrebbe essere stato morso.* 'What has happened to Piero? – He has a ragged wound; he may have been bitten'.
8) *Attenti: il cane potrebbe mordere* 'Watch out: the dog could/might bite'.

In this type, the modal source of *potere* is a reasoning process which leads the speaker to privilege one possible hypothesis without excluding others. The COND's reference point can be identified with major premises activated in enthymemic reasoning, e.g. that dogs sometimes bite, that ragged wounds

happen to be caused by bites, or that what has been observed in the past has a certain likelihood of occurring again. Such premises are construed as taken for granted when using the indicative form of *potere* inferentially. The attenuating COND suggests that they are either unknown to the hearer (e.g. when utterances such as (7) and (8) are addressed to non-experts such as children) or controversial, or of doubtful reliability/relevance. In all cases, the COND's contrastive feature is relevant (cf. (ii) mentioned in section 2.3. above), which gives alternative outcomes of the reasoning process greater relevance than *potere* used in the present tense. Moreover, an important function of the attenuating COND is to foreground the reasoning process itself as a mental effort to apply general knowledge to a concrete case. This has an important disambiguating and particularizing effect with respect to *potere* used in the indicative. When no agent-oriented modality is relevant, attenuating *potrebbe* is indeed clearly inferential and applied to a specific case, whereas the use of non agent-oriented *può* in the present tense centrally includes generalizing interpretations, and the inferential reading is context-dependent to a much larger extent, as we have seen discussing example (1) above (cf. section 2.2.).

3. Argumentative functions of potrebbe *in a corpus of economic-financial news articles*

3.1. Hypotheses

According to the semantic analysis of modals proposed by Rocci (2008, 2010) (cf. 1. above), all modals contribute to the construction of argument-conclusion relations. One important claim made is that argumentative functions are present both in inferential and non-inferential uses of the modals, albeit on different levels of argumentation. On the one hand, by referring to distinct types of conversational backgrounds (in a Kratzerian perspective), all types of modals guide the receiver in the reconstruction of *loci*. On the other hand, when used inferentially, modals may function more specifically as direct argumentative indicators signaling that a standpoint is being advanced with a certain degree of commitment, and that premises allowing to infer that standpoint are to be found in the context (Rocci 2010, p. 614).

According to this approach, inferential modals signal that the speaker is engaged in a process of reasoning; they do not only guide the reconstruction of premises, but prompt their phorical recovery in the first place. In example 7 given above, for instance, *potrebbe* may be analyzed as an indicator of a conjectural (weak)

standpoint, combined with an instruction to look for premises. The latter instruction facilitates the retrieval of both unexpressed premises and textually given premises (*ha una brutta ferita* 'he has a ragged wound'), supporting text coherence and reinforcing relations of text cohesion between explicit premises and the conclusion.

I will start out from these considerations to investigate *potrebbe*'s functions a of argumentatively relevant discourse relations. I will assume that in the case of *potrebbe*, argumentative functions vary according to the construction type, and that the type of reading of *potere* – inferential or not – is highly relevant at this regard. I hypothesize, in particular, that the second and the fourth construction type (conditional and simple conjectures) are more likely to contribute to discourse cohesion at an argumentative level than the first and the third type. Moreover, since the fourth type (simple conjectures in the attenuating COND) is a particularly explicit marker of inference, we might expect, following Rocci (2008, 2010), that this type behaves most clearly of all four types as a pointer to premises.

These hypotheses can be verified empirically in written texts in a number of ways. The method I have adopted in the present paper is that of examining all occurrences of *potrebbe* in a text corpus, treating them, by default, as standpoints and looking for arguments given in the text to support them. What we may expect is that in the case of clearly inferential constructions, we regularly find argument-conclusion relations, which may be varied and span over larger portions of text. In contrast, in non-inferential or less clearly inferential constructions, eventual discourse relations between the modal and portions of co-text are expected to hold at the level of propositional content; explicitly expressed arguments are likely to be rarer, less varied and more closely related to the modal source in question (ability, circumstantial causes, laws and norms).

3.2. Data

For the present analysis, a corpus of 65 articles taken from two Italian economic-financial newspapers (*Sole 24 Ore, Milano Finanza*) has been used, part of the larger corpus studied in the project *Modality in argumentation. A semantico-argumentative study of predictions in Italian economic-financial newspapers* (cf. footnote 1).

Sections of *Il sole 24 ore*	number of texts	Sections of *Milano Finanza*	number of texts
Economia italiana	10	*Analisi tecnica*	4
Mondo e mercati	10	*Banche e banchieri*	3
Finanza e Mercati	13	*Media marketing & finanza*	3
Finanza	8	*Mercati globali*	7
		first page	7
Total	41		24

Table 1. Composition of the corpus.

3.3. Construction types

in the sub-corpus studied here, 63 tokens of *potrebbe(ro)* have been identified. These occur almost exclusively in predictions of future economic developments, a finding that is hardly surprising, given the key role predictions play in economic-financial argumentation (cf. Rocci, Miecznikowski & Zlatkova in press). Most of these 63 tokens are simple conjectures (33 tokens), followed by conditional conjectures (21 tokens), assertions of a necessity relation with *potere* in the scope of the hypothetical COND (6 tokens) and agent-oriented *potere* in the attenuating COND (2 tokens). This distribution of construction types is highly genre-specific. In particular, the low frequency of agent-oriented attenuated *potrebbe* contrasts with the high frequency of this type in other contexts such as informal and formal spoken interactions (cf. Miecznikowski 2009, Ms.).

The two most frequent types are illustrated by the examples 9 (construction type 2: conditional conjecture) and 10 (construction type 4: simple conjecture):

9) In caso di violazione di area 44,50 quindi il titolo *potrebbe* puntare verso 42,00/42,50. (Sole 24 Ore, doc. 166)

In the case of a violation of the 44,50 region, the price could *therefore target 42,00/42,50.*

10) Nell'intero 2006 l'espansione *potrebbe* essere del 3,6 per cento. (Sole 11-4-2006, doc. 258)

In 2006, on the whole, growth could/might *be 3,6 per cent.*

Example (11), finally, is an instance of the somewhat rarer construction type 1: *potere* is placed within the apodosis of a conditional construction preceded by a

nominalized protasis ("a drop below 14 euro" may be paraphrased as 'only if prices dropped below 14 euro'):
11) […] solo una discesa sotto 14 euro *potrebbe* seriamente deteriorare l'attuale dinamica rialzista. (MF 5-4-2006, doc. 2)
[…] only a drop below 14 euro could *jeopardize the actual upward trend.*

3.4. The textual expression of arguments in predictions containing potrebbe
In what follows, I will concentrate on the three most frequent construction types, neglecting agent-oriented attenuated *potere*. The instances of these types can be considered weak predictions of future events. In many cases, and especially with conditional constructions (construction types 1 and 2), these weak predictions are composite: the asserted content centrally regards an association of events (if p then q) and implies a weak prediction of both single events (p, q).

Among the various possible argument-conclusion configurations that occur in the texts examined, it is useful to distinguish two main types: on the one hand, causal relations between states of affairs, expressed by means of an event noun and a causative verb within the proposition containing *potrebbe*; on the other hand, arguments expressed outside the scope of the construction type containing *potrebbe*.

Proposition-internal causality is exemplified by (9) above (event noun: "una discesa sotto 14 euro"; causative verb: "deteriorare"). It is present also in the first and the third instance of *potrebbe* in (12) below. The first instance (causative verb: "determinare") is a simple conjecture with an event noun referring to a factual state of affairs ("il raggiungimento di un riferimento grafico di tale rilevanza"); the third instance (causative verb: "favorire") is a conditional conjecture with an event noun referring to a non-factual state of affairs ("un rapido pull-back verso l'area 5.150-5.135 punti"):
12) […] il benchmark tedesco ha superato l'importante soglia psicologica a 6.000 punti, rilanciando quella tendenza rialzista che lo sostiene ormai da cinque mesi. Nel breve, proprio il raggiungimento di un riferimento grafico di tale rilevanza *potrebbe* determinare una salutare pausa di consolidamento, con le quotazioni che *potrebbero* così ricoprire il gap rimasto aperto attorno a quota 5.920 prima di provare una nuova accelerazione. Una dinamica molto simile ha premiato anche l'indice francese, con i corsi che hanno strappato fino a 5.250 punti, lasciando aperto un analogo gap attorno a 5.190: in questo senso, un rapido pull-back verso l'area 5.150-5.135 punti *potrebbe* favorire un utile alleggerimento

dell'ipercomprato di breve, creando i presupposti migliori per un successivo, nuovo allungo. (MF 5-4-2006, doc. 1)
[…] the German benchmark has exceeded the important psychological threshold of 6000 points, reinforcing the upward trend that has held for the last five months. In short terms, precisely the fact that such an important graphical reference has been reached could *lead to a healthy pause of consolidation; stock prices* could *fill the gap opened around 5.920 points before trying to accelerate again. A very similar development can be observed on the French stock market, where prices have jumped to the 5.250 level, opening an analogous gap around 5.190 points: in this sense, a rapid pull-back towards the 5.150-5.135 region* could *favor a useful decrease of short-term oversold, creating ideal conditions for a subsequent long-lasting recovery.*

The presence of a causative verb relating two events p and q directs the attention of the reader towards causal chains of states of affairs. On the argumentative level, it suggests that the inference of a possible or necessary association between p and q, as well as the inference of q itself, are justified by relations of economic causality – similarly to example (1) discussed earlier, which contains in fact an analogous causative construction.

When *potrebbe*-predictions are justified by arguments that are given in the preceding or in the following co-text, these are quite varied.

On the one hand, argumentation often includes causal reasoning of a more complex kind, with multiple causes and hints towards *endoxa*. In (12), for example, the journalist does not only name a cause (i.e. reaching 6000 points) that could lead to a healthy short-term pause, but provides further reasons to justify this expectation. In particular, he activates *endoxa* that are typical for the kind of economic forecast in (12), i.e. for so-called technical analysis. He starts out by introducing the *terminus medius* "psychological threshold", which is then, in the first *potrebbe*-prediction, referred to anaphorically by "un riferimento grafico di tale rilevanza" ("proprio il raggiungimento di un riferimento grafico di tale rilevanza *potrebbe* determinare una salutare pausa di consolidamento"). The second part of the prediction ("con le quotazioni che *potrebbero* così ricoprire il gap rimasto aperto attorno a quota 5.920 prima di provare una nuova accelerazione") is construed as a further development of the initiated reasoning process: not only is it tightly linked to the preceding co-text by a special type of subordination ('*with* NP + relative clause') and by the causal-argumentative

connective *così* ('in this manner', 'thus'), but it contains, moreover, a further hint towards *endoxa* related to technical analysis, namely the metaphor of a "gap" left open in the graph representing the development of stock prices, which is likely to subsequently be "filled" by the line of the curve.

On the other hand, argumentation may be other than causal. In (12), for instance, the third *potrebbe*-prediction, introduced by the connective "in questo senso" ('in this sense'), combines causal argumentation and argumentation from analogy: it follows from the same line of reasoning as the predictions before, and this line of reasoning is reinforced by the similarity ("una dinamica molto simile", "un analogo gap") between the German and the French situation. In other cases, causal argumentation is supported by arguments from authority, referring explicitly to economic-financial theories and approaches, to experts and analysts, or to opinions and announcements of key economic actors.

The analysis of all 63 tokens of *potrebbe* in the corpus examined suggests that the choice of an argument-conclusion configuration – proposition internal causal argumentation or proposition externally given arguments of various kinds – is closely related to the choice of a particular construction type, and thus to the degree of inferentiality of the *potrebbe*-construction (see table 2 below), matching quite well the semantic properties of the construction types identified in section 2 of this paper. These results are compatible with Rocci's (2008, 2010) hypothesis stating a close relationship between the type of argumentative relation signaled by a modal and the presence vs. absence of the feature /inferential/.

Construction type	Total number of tokens	event noun + causative verb	arguments present in co-text
potere in the scope of COND (type 1)	6	6	0
Conditional conjecture (type 2)	21	10	17
Agent-oriented possibility (type 3)	2	0	1
Simple conjecture (type 4)	33	5	29

Total	63		

Table 2. Arguments given proposition-internally and proposition-externally with different construction types of potrebbe.

Type 1 is always combined with a causative construction, whereas it is never accompanied by arguments or hints to further premises given in the surrounding co-text. Causal verb constructions seem to converge with non-inferential *potere* in the construction of relations between specific states of affairs on the level of propositional content.

As to type 2, conditional conjectures, *potrebbe* combines both with causal verbs (present in about half of the tokens) and, very regularly, with arguments given in the larger co-text (present in 17 out of 21 tokens). It can be argued that these various elements converge in locating the modal source of inferential *potere* in a process of primarily causal reasoning.

Simple conjectures, in turn, in which the attenuating COND foregrounds and reinforces the inferential interpretation of *potere*, are even more often accompanied by arguments and hints given in the larger co-text (such arguments lack in only 4 out of 33 cases), whereas causative verbs are present in as little as 5 out of 33 tokens. This finding is compatible with the hypothesis that inferential *potrebbe* in simple conjectures indicates primarily an argumentative premise-conclusion relation, and not a relation on the level of propositional content. In the reasoning process, causal relations may play an important role, but primarily as instances of more general patterns, and in combination with other argumentative resources the speaker mobilizes.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, inferential and non-inferential construction types of the Italian modal *potere* in its conditional form (*potrebbe*) have been distinguished on semantic grounds and have been examined as to their distribution in a corpus of economic-financial news.

The corpus study, which has focused on problems of text coherence and cohesion, has shown a regular co-occurrence of inferential constructions with portions of the immediate co-text that are interpretable as premises in an argumentation. This distribution supports the analysis of these modals as relational operators presupposing a reasoning process. According to this analysis, the relation

between co-textually expressed premises and the modal is in fact not one of mere co-occurrence, but an anaphoric link between an argument slot presupposed by the modal's semantic frame – the modal source – and suitable textual antecedents that partially fill this argument slot. Which kinds of textual antecedents occur and in which range of co-text (proposition-internal vs. external) depends on the construction type. If we find textually expressed partial antecedents for the modal source in all cases, these are different in simple conjectures, in conditional conjectures and in non-inferential modal constructions.

Modals differ from connectives such as *therefore* by the fact that, like other presupposition triggers (cf. Van der Sandt 1989, Sbisà 2007, as well as the discussion, in 2.3. above, of presuppositions triggered by the COND's canonical readings), they do not obligatorily require textually given antecedents matching the presuppositions in question; presuppositions may be entirely or partially accommodated. Moreover, as the *potrebbe* example shows clearly, modals interact with morphology and syntax in even more complex ways than lexicalized connectives, whose polysemy and context dependency is widely acknowledged in the field of discourse marker studies (cf. e.g. Bazzanella 2006 and Miecznikowski et al. 2009). Despite these differences, the small corpus study presented here confirms the proximity between modals and argumentative connectives. It suggests that at least in the written text genres examined, the reasoning process presupposed by inferential modals is quite regularly made partially explicit, such that *de facto* textual antecedents are present and cohesive links between different portions of the argumentative texts are established.

NOTES

[i] The corpus is part of the larger text corpus currently studied in the project *Modality in argumentation. A semantico-argumentative study of predictions in Italian economic-financial newspapers* (Swiss National Foundation grant n° 100012-120740), directed by Andrea Rocci at the Università della Svizzera italiana (Lugano).

REFERENCES

Anscombre, J.-C., & Ducrot, O. (1983). *L'argumentation dans la langue*. Liège/Bruxelles: Pierre Mardaga.

Bühler, Karl (1934). *Sprachtheorie*. Jena: Fischer.

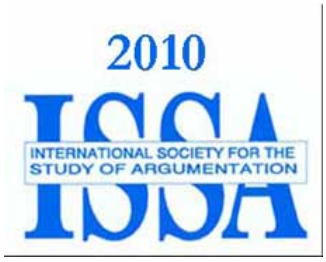
Bybee, J. L., Perkins, R., & Pagliuca, W. (1994). *The Evolution of Grammar. Tense,*

Aspect and modality in the languages of the world. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Bazzanella, C. (2006). DMs in Italian: towards a 'compositional' meaning. In K. Fischer (ed.), *Approaches to Discourse Particles (pp.* 449-464*),* Amsterdam: Elsevier.
Dik, S. C. (1989). *The Theory of Functional Grammar*. Dordrecht: Foris Publications.
Eemeren, F. H. van, Houtlosser, P., & Snoeck Henkemans, A. F. (2007). *Argumentative Indicators in Discourse. A Pragma-Dialectical Study*. Dordrecht: Springer.
Freeman, J. B. (1991). *Dialectics and the macrostructure of arguments. A theory of argument structure*. Berlin/New York: Foris.
Kleiber, G. (1983). L'emploi sporadique du verbe *pouvoir*. In J. David & G. Kleiber (eds.), *La notion sémantico-logique de modalité* (pp. 183-203), Paris: Klincksieck.
Kratzer, A. (1981). The notional category of modality. In H.-J. Eikmeyer & H. Rieser (eds.), *Words, worlds, and contexts: New approaches in word semantics* (pp. 38-74), Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter.
Miecznikowski, J. (2008a), Gli usi del condizionale nel parlato italiano e francese. In M. Pettorino, A. Giannini, M. Vallone & R. Savy (eds.), *La comunicazione parlata*, vol. II (pp. 865-902), Napoli: Liguori.
Miecznikowski, J. (2008b). I verbi modali *volere*, *potere* e *dovere* come attivatori presupposizionali. In E. Cresti (ed.), *Prospettive nello studio del lessico italiano: atti del 9. congresso SILFI (Firenze, 14-17 giugno 2006)* (pp. 351-360), Firenze: Firenze University Press.
Miecznikowski, J. (2009). Tratti attenuativi e rafforzativi del condizionale italiano con i verbi performativi. In B. Gili Fivela & C. Bazzanella (eds.), *Fenomeni di intensità nell'italiano parlato* (pp. 115-126), Firenze: Franco Cesati.
Miecznikowski, J. (2009, Ms). *Modalität und Gesprächsorganisation. Eine korpusgestützte Studie zum Konditional im gesprochenen Französisch und Italienisch*. *Habilitationsschrift*, University of Basel.
Miecznikowski J., Gili Fivela, B., & Bazzanella C. (2009). Words in context. Agreeing and disagreeing with *allora*. *L'analisi linguistica e letteraria 16*(1) (Special Issue: *Word Meaning in Argumentative Dialogue*), 205-218.
Reichenbach, H. (1947). *Elements of Symbolic Logic*. New York: MacMillan.
Rigotti, E. (2005). Congruity theory and argumentation. In M. Dascal, F. H. van Eemeren, E. Rigotti, S. Stati, & A. Rocci (eds.), *Argumentation in Dialogic Interaction* (pp. 75-96). *Studies in Communication Sciences*, Special Issue.

Rocci, A. (2005a). Epistemic Readings of Modal Verbs in Italian: the relationship between propositionality, theme-rheme articulation and inferential discourse relations. In B. Hollebrandse, A. van Hout & C. Vet (eds.) *Crosslinguistic Views on Tense, Aspect and Modality* (pp. 229-246), Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi (*Cahiers Chronos 13*).
Rocci A. (2005b). Connective predicates in dialogic and monologic argumentation. In M. Dascal, F.H. van Eemeren, E. Rigotti, S. Stati, & A. Rocci (eds.), *Argumentation in Dialogic Interaction* (pp. 97-118)*. Studies in Communication Sciences*, Special Issue.
Rocci, A. (2008). Modality and its conversational backgrounds in the reconstruction of argumentation. *Argumentation 22*(2), 165-189.
Rocci A. (2010). Modals as lexical indicators of argumentation. A study of Italian economic-financial news. *L'analisi linguistica e letteraria 16*(2) (Special Issue: *Word meaning in argumentative dialogue*), 577-619.
Rocci, A., Miecznikowski, J., & Zlatkova, G. (in press). L'argumentation dans la presse économique et financière italienne. In L. Gautier (ed.), *Actes du colloque 'Discours boursiers et financiers', Dijon, 26 febbraio 2010*, Tübingen: Francke.
Sbisà, M. (2007). *Detto e non detto*. Roma/Bari: Laterza.
Snoeck-Henkemans, A. F. (1997). Verbal Indicators of Argumentation and Explanation. In: *Proceedings of the Second Conference of the Ontario Society for the Study of Argument*. St. Catharines, Ontario.
Sueur, J.-P. (1979). Une analyse sémantique des verbes *devoir* et *pouvoir*. *Le français moderne*, *47*(2), 97-120.
Tseronis A. (2009). *Qualifying standpoints. Stance adverbs as a presentational device for managing the burden of proof*. Utrecht: LOT Dissertation Series.
Van der Sandt, R. (1989). Presuppositions and Discourse Structure. In R. Bartsch, J. van Benthem, & B. van Emde (eds.), *Semantics and Contextual Expression* (pp. 267-294), Dordrecht: Foris.

ISSA Proceedings 2010 – "Crisis"

And Argument By Definition In The Modern American Presidency



Definitional argumentation theory remains a subject of significant study, primarily through the examination of argument *about* definition (Schiappa, 1993) and argument *from* definition (Schiappa, McGee, 1999). Although Zarefsky (1997) has briefly surveyed argument *by* definition, attention to this perspective remains anorexic. This essay begins to rectify that oversight by illuminating argument *by* definition through an analysis of modern presidential crisis rhetoric. This essay posits that argument *from* definition has as its locus the definition itself but argument *by* definition resituates that locus to the definition's user or creator. This essay first differentiates and clarifies argument *by* definition from argument *from* definition before examining five areas of "concerns" about argument *by* definition by argumentation scholars through the lens of the modern American presidency and the word *crisis*. This essay suggests that words like crisis contain core elements germane to any crisis situation but are flexible and modifiable depending on the user, the user's definition, and the crisis event. It also identifies several issues arising of out presidential definitional usage, including time, ethos, intent, strategies and audience as well as the need for additional crisis rhetoric essays examined from an argumentative perspective. The essay concludes with a call for additional studies encompassing several crises within a specific presidency as well as more attention devoted to the notion of *time*. In addition, I suggest that scholars should incorporate more primary research into their analyses, an approach fully embraced by other branches of academe.

1. Argument from Definition versus Argument by Definition

Schiappa (1993, p. 404) contends that argument *from* definition arises from Weaver's (1953, pp. 55-114) position that "arguments reason from a premise about the nature of a thing." Expanding Weaver, Schiappa argues that argument *from* definition occurs with "well-established and uncontroversial definitions." Zarefsky (1997, p. 5) extends Schiappa by examining three sets of examples that he deems exemplar of argument *by* definition. Zarefsky asserts that argument *by* definition means "the key definitional move is simply stipulated, as if it were a

natural step along the way of justifying some other claim." Schiappa (2003, p. 130) concurs, stating that orators using argument *by* definition "simply posit that X is Y and move on."

Although both scholars acknowledge the presence of a definition as well as its user, the theoretical implications of definitional shifts from the first to the second remain unexcavated. This essay extends definitional argumentation theory works by claiming that while argument *from* definition has as its primary locus the definition itself or the words that are used to define what Walton and Macagno (2009, p. 83) call a "fragment of reality," argument *by* definition shifts that locus to the definition's *user*. Individuals who define (create) or redefine (modify) a word or phrase when engaging in argument *by* definition often garner significant power and control that could become problematic if left unchecked.

1.1 Illustrating Argument by *Definition*

Zarefsky (1997, p. 2) illuminates the definitional shift from argument *from* definition to argument *by* definition in his discussion of the affirmative action debate. Zarefsky notes that the original definition of affirmative action shifted when Allan Bakke claimed reverse discrimination in his lawsuit against the University of California at Davis when he was denied entrance to their medical school. Zarefsky states, "Affirmative action, now meaning quotas and racial preferences, was redefined as 'reverse discrimination' against white males…" In other words, the original locus of the debate was the initial affirmative action definition itself, or what I would call argument *from* definition. When Bakke redefined affirmative action, his redefinition shifted the locus from the affirmative action definition (quotas and racial preferences) to the Bakke, the user (reverse discrimination), or what I see as argument *by* definition. *From* focuses on the definition; *By* focuses on the user.

Williams and Young's (2005, pp. 100-102) essay examining Bush's and Putin's use of the word *democracy* further illustrates the difference between argument *from* and *by* definition. They claim that Bush was able to define and subsequently discuss *democracy* from a position of argument *from* definition based on the word's ideographic nature. In comparison, Putin initially had to resituate the concept of democracy via argument *by* definition to make it more compatible with Russian history, ideology, principles, institutions, and practices before he could employ his own *democracy* argument *from* definition. In other words, while traditional notions of democracy afforded Bush the opportunity to argue *from*

definition, the same notions could not be employed by Putin without some intentional redefinition, thus forcing him to first argue *by* definition before he could draw level with Bush through his own argument *from* definition.

As such, argument *from* definition has as its center the definition that is selected and utilized to describe a fragment of reality. Argument *by* definition, on the other hand, shifts that center to the word's *user.* Subsequently, the user advances an argument based on their definition or redefinition of a situation and thus becomes the second, but primary, component of a controversy.

1.2 Schemes

Walton and Macagno (2009, pp. 84-85) diagram Schiappa's "two main schemes relative to definition." They claim his argument *from* definition is akin to the categorical syllogism: "All X are Z; Y is an X; therefore Y is Z." In turn, they diagram Schiappa's argument *by* definition as: "X is Y (therefore R)," where "X" is named as "Y" and "R" is a provoked emotion. It is the user who re(names)"X" into "Y" to draw an emotive response.

Schiappa (1993, p. 413; 2000, p. 18; 2003, p. 45) argues at length that the "What is X?" question is problematic for it implies the real or true "X" claims a metaphysical absolutism based on "facts of essence" or information that describes what "X" "really is" (2003, p. 6). Instead, Schiappa suggests we ask "'How *ought* we use the word X?' or 'What should be described by the word X?'" I would argue that his position is acceptable for argument *from* definition, but argument *by* definition necessitates the "What is X?" question.

The position of re-definition presupposes that "X" has been defined by the user. But what happens if X goes undefined? I include both definition and redefinition in my position about argument *by* definition because in some instances, "X" has evolved into a commonplace usage in everyday dialogue that does not prima facially prompt a definition. Words like *terrorism* and *corruption*, for example, are employed by various audiences without much significant thought about its meaning. The assumption is that audiences will have a basic, general understanding of these words, so definitions or its users are not challenged. But as Palczewski (2001, p. 6) indicates, unarticulated or poorly expressed definitions harm "dialectical engagement." In addition, "for redefinition to occur, engagement with existing meanings is necessary." Palczewski's claim underscores my position that for redefinition to occur, an initial definition of "X"

must exist, even if that definition is unarticulated. As such, with argument *by* definition, the "What is X?" must be asked.

Also, the question of "What is X?" is necessary because it establishes a comparative and evaluative standard for examining a user's employment of "X." Without the question, some presidential crisis rhetoric studies claiming false, inappropriate, or unethical crisis definitions and descriptions (see Hahn, 1980; Johannesen, 1986; Bostdorff, 1991; Bostdorff and O'Rourke, 1997) cannot be made. While I am not advocating "X" be absolutely defined, I do think a reasonable construct of "X," one originally accepted by audiences, is necessary when argument *by* definition is enacted.

McGee (1989, p. 412) neatly sums up the difference between argument *from* definition and argument *by* definition: "While the argument from definition reasons from an uncontroversial definition concerning the nature of thing, the argument by definition is employed when a controversial definition is advanced in support of a claim for purposes of framing that claim to the advantage of the rhetor."

2. The Modern American Presidency and "Crisis"

Although little scholarship about argument *by* definition exists, argumentation scholars' occasional direct or indirect references can be generally categorized into five areas of *user* concern: 1). Definition and Redefinition; 2). Definitional Power; 3). Institutional Legitimacy; 4). User Manipulation; and 5). User Justification.

While the shift from *from* to *by* may initially seem insignificant, subsequent analysis in a comparable area reveals important information about a definition's user. As such, examining argument *by* definition through the lens of the modern American presidency offers a fresh perspective toward presidential crisis rhetoric for it spotlights a unique, analytical approach of an individual who traditionally enjoys strong definitional power due to his position and stature.

2.1 Definition and Redefinition

Schwarze (2002, pp. 134; 140) notes that words and phrases like "feasible" and "traditional activities" are ambiguous and can have multiple interpretations. The word "crisis" is an additional, problematic word. Like others in a position of power, the American president rarely defines "crisis" in his public oratory,

instead favoring emotive words that describe or allude to its nature. Perhaps the executive branch's assumption of "crisis" is akin to Justice Potter Stewart's claim about obscenity in cinema in *Jacobellis v Ohio* (1964): "I know it when I see it." Everyone knows about it, but not everyone can provide even a general consensus of what it means, much less a narrow, strict, dictionary definition.

Presidents also use additional words like "urgent" or "emergency" to describe their perceptions of situations. These additional words pose a problem with regards to the notion of *time*. Time, like crisis, is an elusive, ambiguous, vague term that typically is not defined. But the notion of time, as in length, is present in all three words. For example, the word "urgent" could imply "immediacy" or "as soon as possible." The seemingly synonymous word "emergency" may not be the same as "urgent." To me, an "emergency" has a longer time element than "urgent." Others may argue the opposite. When "crisis" is added to the temporal continuum, some may agree that an even greater sense or notion of time is present. As such, the element of time arguably identifies an event's intensity or force.

Returning to Schiappa's "What is X?" question, how then are Reagan's Lebanon and Grenada crises, Carter's Iranian Hostage crisis, and Nixon's Watergate crisis all considered to be "crises?" The notion of time varies in each one yet all are labeled a "crisis." Zarefsky (1997, p. 5) offers a clue toward an answer when he argues that definitions "are not claims supported by reasons and intended to justify adherence by critical listeners. Instead they are simply proclaimed as if they were indisputable facts." Words vary based on user and use, but all seem to initially understand certain commonplace words like "crisis." As such, "crisis" and other words appear modular in the sense that they are flexible, movable, interchangeable, and adaptable to a situation. They are like linguistic rubber bands, modifiable to each crisis event regardless of time. The bands contain core elements germane to all crisis events, but also possess additional elements that make each crisis situation unique.

Schiappa (2003, p. 30) offers a second clue when he states that persuasion "may be simple and direct or complicated and time consuming." His time observation suggests that presidential definitional conception and acceptance of a "crisis" could vary due to the length of time it takes to convince interested parties that the crisis exists. This could also explain why the above crises all contain the same "naming" word.

Schiappa's "How *ought* we use the word X?" question thus prompts the identification of the core elements of "crisis" as a word. An amalgamation of political science and communication studies essays (see Genovese 1986; Graber 1980; Nacos 1990; Edelman 1977, 1988; Head, Short and McFarlane 1978; Pratt 1971; Church 1977; Bostdorff 1992; Dow 1989; Windt 1973) initially suggests seven core elements: 1). a rhetorical construction of reality that 2). is created by decision-makers, the mass media and/or the public and 3). describes a situation as an emergency marked by a sense of urgency; 4). the exigency or climate is unstable and includes heightened tensions; 5). immediate action is necessary; 6). decision-makers are under pressure, and 7). time for decision-making is short.

These core elements embrace Schiappa's preferred position of a pragmatic definitional approach while avoiding the metaphysical absolutism generated by the "What is X?" question. The elements also illustrate how some words act like linguistic rubber bands by functioning with semantic flexibility. When the core elements are applied to presidential crisis oratory, the executive's individuality is highlighted as well as the varying subjects and the situations that foster crises.

It would behoove rhetorical scholars to play closer attention to their definitional analyses when examining an example of an argument *by* definition. For example, some critics have inconsistently examined presidential crisis definitions. Several scholars (see Church 1977; Bostdorff 1992; Kiewe, 1994; Medhurst, 1994) interject an external crisis definition in their analyses, what Walton (2001, pp. 124-125) and others call "essentialism" that subsequently exemplify Schiappa's concerns about the "What is X?" question. The interjection results in scholars imposing their *own* crisis definitions, thus arguably invalidly intervening in the analytic process. In effect, they questionably add themselves into the examination process as a third element beyond definition and user. Such intervention shifts argument *by* definition away from the user to the critic which may produce flawed conclusions. If scholars have a reason to "intervene," then their reasoning for such intervention should be explained in their respective works.

2.2 Definitional Power

Schiappa (2001, p. 26) asks two provocative questions regarding definition and power: who has the right to define "X" and which institution has the power to make such a determination. In terms of crisis and the modern American presidency, the answers initially are the president and the executive branch. But do they have the right and is their branch the most suitable one? Titsworth (1999,

p. 181) argues that definitions utilized in public arguments are ideological in nature and "enable arguers to establish power." Zarefsky (1986, p. 1) claims further that presidents who have the power to define in effect have the power to persuade.

Numerous essays examine a president's persuasive definitional appeal (for example, see Newman, 1970; Windt, 1990) but Medhurst's (1998, pp. 58-59) essay about Truman and the Soviet Union uniquely illuminates definitional failure during times of presidential reticence (see also Ritter, 1994). Medhurst claims that by remaining silent about Soviet-American relations for nearly 24 months, Truman gave away one of the most important weapons of his rhetorical presidency – the ability to define a situation and shape public perception. Instead, Truman allowed others to define the situation and subsequently fill in "information gaps" for the American public. Medhurst's conclusion attests to the significant import of presidential definition and the power it embodies. It also illuminates the idea that definitional power does not reside solely in public oratory: it is also present in times of presidential silence, thus introducing an important new area for future analysis.

The body of presidential crisis rhetoric literature initially yields four general sub-categories of executive definitional power: 1). Ethos; 2). Intent; 3). Strategies; and 4). Audience.

2.2.1 Ethos

Ethos, in the classic Aristotelian sense, refers to the credibility and goodwill of an orator. Young and Launer (1988, p. 272) state that a crisis occurs suddenly for the American public, resulting in the creation of audience reaction and response problems. As a result, they claim that the public relies on government officials to provide meaning to a crisis event. In times of significant domestic or foreign crises, typically that government official is the president.

Zarefsky (2004, p. 611) argues that "because of his prominent political position and his access to the means of communication, the president, by defining a situation, might be able to shape the context in which events or proposals are viewed by the public." In other words, the president's *ethos* is invoked, in addition to the *ethos* of the office he holds. Ethos is typically granted to the office and its holder because of the connotations associated with both: Commander-in-Chief, the "most powerful leader of the free world," etc. Presidents are expected to be

fully abreast of crisis developments and are assumed to have the most knowledge and information possible as well as the best means of response. They are also generally given approval for their crisis resolution decisions. Scholars note that a president could employ ethos strategically, consciously and selectively (Medhurst, 1994, p. 22), particularly for image reframing and repair (King, 1985, pp.291-296).

From an argument *by* definition standpoint, the president enjoys an initial position of argumentative superiority because his ethos in a crisis is not always questioned. But when the question "What is X?" is posed or audiences begin to question "X," ethos questions also arise. Audiences, discussed more fully elsewhere, begin to disagree with how the president frames a crisis or its resolution. Bush's 2003 Iraqi invasion is exemplar. Several audiences initially accepted Bush's crisis definition but over time began to question it as well as his ethos. In a crisis event, audiences generally accept a president's definition of a crisis situation until information suggests otherwise. The importance of time is illuminated again as the amount of time between the crisis event itself and the release of information that contradicts a president's crisis definition varies by crisis. This, in turn, could provide an additional answer as to why crises of differing lengths and substance all carry the same "crisis" name.

Presidents, in times of crisis, need to ensure they are defining the event ethically and act according to avoid doubt or tarnish the reputation of themselves or the executive branch. Because of ethos, both are held to higher standards that, to the best of their ability, they are expected honestly and ethically fulfill. As Walton (2001, pp. 117, 119) notes, the power that accompanies persuasive definition encompasses strategic political and legal argumentation with significant financial, public, and national policy implications.

2.2.2 Intent

A second sub-area is the *purpose* of and *interest* in public definitional arguments (Schiappa, 2001, p. 25). In times of crises, the president's primary responsibility is to discuss, respond and resolve. Presidential crisis rhetoric studies identify two additional reasons of intent: image and motives.

Presidents use argument *by* definition during crises to cultivate, magnify, refine or alter their public image, or enhance the ethos of themselves and/or their office. As Goldzwig and Dionisopoulos (1989, p.195) point out, the president will be

concerned with the grave personal, political and social consequences of their crisis decision-making. For example, Goncher and Hahn (1971, p. 3; 1973, pp. 29-42) claim that Nixon took a highly personalized view of the presidency, perpetuating a moralist/benevolent myth attempting to demonstrate he was America's confident, personal and moral leader who represented America's past and future and could unify the country while moving her forward. Vartabedian (1985, pp. 366-381) argues that Nixon, during the Vietnam crisis, depicted himself as a victim of circumstances who was a hero sympathetic to others. In addition, he highlights Nixon's claim of exemplifying the Puritan work ethic when he chose to pursue the more difficult path to resolve the Vietnam conflict for he recognized the greater sense of obligation to world peace and freedom. These and other essays (for example, see Cherwitz, 1980; Blair and Houck, 1994) aptly demonstrate presidential crisis definitions being employed strategically for image purposes.

Presidents also use argument *by* definition to bolster their respective motives in a crisis situation. Typically that motive is political benefit. Exerting situational control (see Hahn and Gonchar, 1980), garnering public support (see Cherwitz, 1978; Bostdorff, 1987), and deflecting attention from other presidential problems (Bostdorff and O'Rourke, 1987) are three primary ways presidents utilize argument *by* definition for political gain. Manipulation, a fourth strategy identified by argumentation scholars as critical, is discussed separately below.

Presidents define events as crises for personal reasons too, as was the case with Carter and Nixon. Strong (1986, pp. 636-650) notes that Carter intentionally redefined the energy crisis from a political to a moral and personal one due to his audience's lack of faith. Nixon, argues Blair and Houck (1994, p. 108), went one step further by misrepresenting crisis claims for personal gain, particularly his popularity, ideology, and status in office. They argue that the resulting Nixon crises were not genuine ones for the American public. Blair and Houck's conclusions raise an interesting question that extends Schiappa's *interest* position: *Who* is a crisis for? Current presidential crisis rhetoric scholarship focuses primarily on the president, but additional studies may reveal alternative, interested parties.

2.2.3 Strategies

A substantial number of presidential crisis rhetoric essays examine presidential crisis strategy. As a result of their collective works, crisis scholars have identified

numerous successful or failed rhetorical strategies that can be categorized three ways: the crisis event, presidential rhetoric, and audience. The first category includes crisis management and crisis manipulation/promotion. Crisis management strategies include shifting crisis attention (Windt, 1990; Bostdorff, 1987), situating crisis in a continuum (Young, 1992; Zagacki, 1992), levels of crisis personalization (Gonchar and Hahn, 1973; Blair and Houck, 1994) and levels of presidential and personal responsibility (Strong, 1986). Crisis promotion or manipulation strategies include direct presidential manipulation (see Hahn, 1980; Dowling and Marraro, 1986; Bostdorff, 1991; Bostdorff and O'Rourke, 1997); demonstration of political leadership (King, 1985) and promotion of American values and ideologies (Zarefsky, 1983; Heisey, 1986; Bostdorff, 1992).

The second category, presidential rhetoric strategies, includes rhetorical consistency (Cherwitz, 1980; Kay, 1988) or rhetorical dichotomy, shifts, and distancing (for example, see King and Anderson, 1971; Newman, 1992). By far, the most popular form of study encompasses stylistic devices like narrative and metaphor, and various Burkean elements, including apologia (for example, see Bass, 1985; Klope, 1986; Birdsell, 1987).

Audience strategies, the third category, includes examinations of public support levels (see Newman, 1970; Cherwitz, 1978), creation of national unity (Windt, 1973; Cherwitz and Zagacki, 1986) and media manipulation (Benson, 2004). Audience, as a separate sub-category of definitional power, is discussed in the next section. Overall, very few essays focus explicitly on argumentation structure (Stelzner, 1971; Hill, 1972; Dowling and Marraro, 1986) or theory, so there is clearly more room for expansion.

2.2.4 Audience

Argument *by* definition is contingent on audiences. Definitional argumentation theory examines definitions by an orator as well as competing definitions by various publics. Walton (2001, p. 131) states that persuasive definitions place the burden of proof on the user when s/he redefines. In addition, he asserts that the audience has the right to refute the redefinition and "retain existing usage" of the original definition "if it seems to them to better represent their views on the matter." The definition's user, like a president, therefore, has a powerful political tool in his or her hands that could favorably shape public perception and garner support as long as the definition resonates with listeners. Misreading audience perceptions or reactions, though, could result in definitional failure and

subsequent claims of crisis mismanagement or nonsuccess.

The importance of audience reaction to crisis oratory is a common thread in presidential crisis rhetoric studies, including the responses by American citizens, allies and other opponents as well as media commentary. Many essays identify some type of public reaction to a crisis message as a measure of its success or failure (for example, see Rowland and Rademacher, 1990; Wilson, 1976) and the media's impact on audience reception of a crisis (Goldzwig and Dionisopoulos, 1989). Newman (1970), Smith (1998), and Pauley (1998) emphatically insist that rhetorical scholars examine the role of audience, particularly multiple audiences, as part of their analyses.

2.3 Institutional Legitimacy

Institutional legitimacy, or the power of institutions to advance definitions, is well noted in argumentation scholarship. Referencing competing definitions of "X," Schwarze (2002, 139) argues that, in addition to persuasion and coercion, "in the realm of public policy, the empowerment of a definition is dependent on the *legitimacy* of the institution authorized to define the term" and that "institutional arguments justify the acceptance or rejection of a particular definition" (p. 143). Titsworth (1999, p. 183) notes the power resulting from public institutional definitions "'privilege[s] the perspectives of those in power,' resulting in not only a legitimization of those perspectives, but also becomes a 'mechanism of hegemony where institutional power over the individual [is] expanded.'" Institutional legitimacy has also been addressed in crisis literature, including power (Windt, 1973; Young, 1992), institutional failure (Zagacki, 1992; Brummert, 1975), and presidential personalization of and blending with institution (see Gonchar and Hahn, 1971, 1973; Gibson and Felkins, 1974).

Three critical observations subsequently arise. First, the mythical power of the office of the presidency as an institution substantially contributes to presidential pressure. Zagacki (1992, p. 53) claims that "institutions are so molded by underlying myths of American superiority, presidents cannot handle failure for it would imply they are incapable of reconciling the nation to its ultimate historical purpose." Second, personal presidential perspective of "X" is also important. Brummert (1975, p. 256) argues that Nixon's institutional definitional approach of deflecting criticism and personal attacks depicted the president seeing himself as *reacting* to evil and not part of the evil family. Brummert's observation of presidential self-perception identifies a concept that has been studied sporadically

by rhetorical scholars. Third, Kiewe (1994, p. xxxiii) notes that the presidency, as an institution, typically ignores the long term impacts of the occupant's crisis rhetoric, preferring its enactment to garner immediate image considerations and to secure quick policy goals. States Kiewe, "The modern presidency, with some exception, does not seem to appreciate the limits of its own crisis rhetoric." If Zagacki is correct, it can be argued that presidential failure is a paramount concern which may contribute to a president's preference for short-term gains over long-term goals, as Kiewe suggests. Perhaps presidents need some formal crisis training as well as instruction on definitional argumentation. Collectively, these observations suggest that further analysis of the institution's role in definitional argument is necessary, both from the institutional office holder as well as the institutional point-of-view.

2.4 User Manipulation

A major concern arising out of definitional argumentation scholarship is user manipulation, including concealing the user's ideological assumptions behind definitional usage (Titsworth 1999, p. 182), user commitments (Walton and Macagno, 2009, p. 82), and information concealment (Titsworth, p.182) that results in audience "duping" (Walton, 2001, pp. 130-131). Walton and Macagno (2009, pp. 87-88) argue further that the meaning of an abstract word may not be shared by all involved parties by signifying "two contradictory concepts, and thereby manipulate communication" possibly resulting with the emergence of several fallacies.

The largest body of work examining crisis manipulation is exaggerated, promoted, or manufactured crises (for example, see Cherwitz, 1980; Hahn, 1980; Dow, 1989). The authors claim that presidents embellish or manipulate and defend crisis situations for political or personal gain for themselves or their office. Beyond crisis promotion, there are several individual essays examining different cases of definition manipulation, including the manipulative appeal to the "American Dream" (Goldzwig and Dionisopoulos, 1989, p. 194), strategic crisis address (Windt, 1990, pp. 95-96), and media manipulation (Benson, 2004).

Kiewe (1994, p. xxxiii) suggests that most modern presidents miscalculate crisis construction, especially their initial response, often in favor of immediate rewards. This parallels his earlier observation of institutional manipulation for short-term gains. There is room for additional works examining the theoretical or philosophical nature that compels a president to define a situation as a crisis.

While Schiappa (2001, p. 26) warns of a "potentially dangerous ideology" arising from the "What is X?" question, studies of "X" are pertinent when examining argument *by* definition for without it, the above studies would not be possible.

2.5 User Justification

McGee (1999, p. 154) states that arguments *from* definition have "the advantage of seeming to be grounded in a fact or set of facts that must be taken as a given and cannot be disputed," yet when a dispute occurs, "the other party or parties are placed at a disadvantage" and "the rhetorical advantage of the argument from definition neutralized." McGee claims that orators must justify their definition choice and provide reasons for the unsubstantiated claims that benefit definers. When a definition is disputed, the argumentation shifts *from* words to the user. Further, the definition's rhetorical advantage remains neutralized until one party's definition eventually presides over the other. If an agreement cannot be reached, then neutralization occurs. McGee is correct in demanding that users offer justifications for their word choices, a demand often unheeded when the user is the American president.

Plentiful crisis studies examining user justification exist to adequately review here, but a few are worthy of a quick glance. A series of works from the 1970s and 1980s (see Rasmussen, 1973; Zarefsky, 1983; Cherwitz and Zagacki, 1986) investigated consummatory and justificatory rhetoric before Medhurst (1994), perhaps prematurely, suggested scholars direct their attention elsewhere. Dow's (1989, p. 296) claim of consummatory discourse as crisis-responding and justificatory discourse as crisis-creating matches Graber's (2002, pp. 137-158) identification of a "public" crisis as either natural or man-made, with the latter accruing her "pseudo-crisis" label. Both distinctions suggest that some crises are purposefully created and manipulated to achieve a desired goal.

Dowling and Marraro (1986, p. 350), offering a rare examination of definitional argumentation, examine Reagan's Grenada crisis oratory and determine that he acted unethically: "He apparently ignored, suppressed, distorted, created, and (in a sense) destroyed relevant evidence. In addition, Reagan withheld, ignored, and/or misrepresented crucial arguments raised to support and oppose the invasion." Subsequently, they claim that a presidency should employ four "democratic ethical standards" and engage in transparency when engaging in political oratory: 1). all information needs to be revealed; 2). all arguments need to be made clearly and be understood by listeners; 3). individuals have the ability

to make rational, well-informed decisions; and 4). presidents should use appropriate emotion. Paradoxically, Rowland and Rademacher (1990, pp. 331, 335) claim Reagan's Superfund crisis oratory was successful because his passive approach did not require an apathetic audience to be familiar with his overall rhetoric regarding the environmental and political crisis. In turn, Dowling and Marraro's call for ethical standards assume an involved constituency, a presumption Rowland and Rademacher's conclusion contradicts. As such, additional work in this area is prudent.

3. Implications for Scholars Conducting Presidential Crisis Rhetoric Analyses
The preceding section suggests that some areas of definitional argumentation have been robustly explored, some remain neglected, and new ones are emerging. Collectively, two significant sets of implications for presidential crisis rhetoric scholars arise: Critics should play closer attention to their arguments as well as the role of argument *by* definition.

Regarding critic arguments, I pose two suggestions: individual case studies should be avoided and scholars need to contemplate crisis "time." Walton (2001, p. 132) argues that the study of persuasive definitions could yield fruitful results if a case-based approach is employed. I disagree. How a president defines a crisis in one situation may not be the same in another, as Windt (1990) discovered with Kennedy. In addition, there could be potential differences within a presidential approach, characterization, management and resolution of domestic *and* foreign crises. Since foreign crisis rhetoric dominates the communication literature landscape, additional domestic crisis rhetoric studies are necessary before a definitional comparison can be made. In addition, scholars would be better informed if they examine a president's crisis life cycle, which in turn would lead to better conclusions.

Second, scholars need to contemplate the notion of "time" in a crisis. Not only should they analyze crisis length, they should examine how much time is available before and during a crisis, its effects on the decision-making process, how time shapes a crisis response's content and form, and how time affects a president as he moves from one crisis to another. This exploration may also offer clarity to the "What is X" question. In addition, scholars also need to avoid unintentional critic intervention by employing *their* definition that shifts the analysis from the original orator as user to the scholarly critic as user.

Medhurst (1994) and Young (1992) provide two possible remedies. Medhurst contends that scholars should study a crisis's history as part of their analyses to examine how "X" has been viewed by past presidents and if the current incarnation is consistent or different. Schiappa (2003, p. 176) supports this historical approach, suggesting that careful analysis would identify "what has been constant and what has changed about 'X' and would give reasons when changes have occurred." Young's position that scholars should examine presidential crisis rhetoric in a continuum suggests that that a comprehensive analysis of a president's foreign *and* domestic crisis oratory would assist with the discernment of common topics, features, approaches, or elements that could better inform understanding of a president's crisis conception.

A second error regards the critic's analytical framework. Several methodologies are employed to examine presidential crisis rhetoric, include close textual analysis, apologia, tragedy, myth and other various Burkean terminology, and genre (both rhetorical and literary), resulting with the identification of multiple rhetorical strategies (noted earlier).

Yet some scholars neglect a president's post-crisis thoughts and opinions. Instead, they primarily focus attention on his public oratory as it occurred, resulting in occasional critic error. For example, Goldzwig and Dionisopoulos (1989) claim that Kennedy's September 30, 1962 Oxford, Mississippi civil rights speech addressed a crisis situation. Conversely, Windt (1990) finds that the same address did not. The dilemma stems from varying critical approaches. Goldzwig and Dionisopoulos utilize a combination of situational and historical methodologies whereas Windt's approach employs a public presidential announcement of a crisis situation. Windt (1973, p. 7) claims, "Situations do not create crises. Rather, the President's perceptions of the situation and the rhetoric he uses to describe it mark an event as a crisis," a rationale that serves as a foundation for his approach.

While Windt's methodology contains its own problems, it does possess some currency. One way to potentially adjudicate critic error is for scholars to analyze president's post-crisis and opinions, primarily from their public presidential papers. This approach is widely uses in other academic fields but remains underused within communication studies. Scholar examination of documents that were generated "in the moment" would likely be more "truthful" and revealing since they describe factually the crisis's who, what, where, when, how and why as

that moment was occurring. They would also reveal the sentiments of the players involved, identify what options were available for crisis resolution, and illuminate other competing presidential activities. They are also not subject to post-presidential revisionist history like presidential memoirs. Such analyses would yield valuable insight into a crisis comprehensively, the president's decision-making approach and style, and prevent potential "What is X?" mistakes.

4. Conclusion

Little-studied argument *by* definition shifts argument *from* definition's locus from words to the user, thus adding the definer as a strategic element in the definitional process. As such, Schiappa's "What is X?" question becomes a necessary one for analysis. Blending definitional argumentation theory with the study of the modern American president's use of the word "crisis" generates five areas of concern: (re)definition, power (including ethos, intent, strategies, and audience), institutional legitimacy, manipulation, and justification. Presidential crisis rhetoric literature has addressed some of these concerns and neglected others while posing new areas for research. In addition, it has raised issues regarding critic arguments and methodological approaches that warrant further scholarly attention. Incorporation of materials like a president's public papers into future scholarly analyses should provide scholars with unique information that could better inform their examinations and conclusions as such documents arise out of the crisis moment and are not subject to post-presidential revision.

REFERENCES

Bass, J. D. (1985). The appeal to efficiency as narrative closure: Lyndon Johnson and the Dominican crisis, 1965. *Southern Speech Communication Journal, 50,* 103-120.

Benson, T. W. (2004). *Writing JFK: Presidential rhetoric and the press in the Bay of Pigs crisis*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press.

Birdsell, D. S. (1987). Ronald Reagan on Lebanon and Grenada: Flexibility in the application of Kenneth Burke's pentad. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 73,* 267-279.

Blair, C. and Houck, D. W. (1994). Richard Nixon and the personalization of crisis. In A. Kiewe (ed.) *The Modern Presidency and Crisis Rhetoric* (pp. 91-118). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Bostdorff, D. M. (1987). The contemporary presidency and the rhetoric of promoted crisis (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Purdue University, West

Lafayette, IN.
Bostdorff, D. M. (1991). The presidency and promoted crisis: Reagan, Grenada, and issue management. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 21*, 737-750.
Bostdorff, D. M. (1992). Idealism held hostage: Jimmy Carter's rhetoric on the crisis in Iran. *Communication Studies, 43,* 14-28.
Bostdorff, D. M. and O'Rourke, D.J. (1997). The presidency and the promotion of domestic crisis: John F. Kennedy's management of the 1962 steel crisis. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 27,* 343-361.
Brummert, B. (1975). Presidential substance: The address of August 15, 1973. *Western Speech, 39,* 249-259.
Cherwitz, R. A. (1978). Lyndon Johnson and the 'crisis' of Tonkin Gulf: A president's justification of war. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 42*, 93-104.
Cherwitz, R. A. (1980). Masking inconsistency: The Tonkin Gulf crisis. *Communication Quarterly, 28,* 27-37.
Cherwitz, R. A. and Zagacki, K. S. (1986). Consummatory versus justificatory crisis rhetoric. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 50,* 307-324.
Church, R. T. (1977). President Richard M. Nixon's crisis rhetoric, 1969-1972. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Temple University, Philadelphia.
Dow, B. (1989). The function of epideictic and deliberative strategies in presidential crisis rhetoric. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 53,* 294-310.
Dowling, R. E. and Marraro, G. (1986). Grenada and the great communicator: A study in democratic ethics. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 50,* 350-367.
Edelman, M. (1977). *Political language: Words that succeed and policies that fail*. New York: Academic Press.
Edelman, M. (1988). *Constructing the political spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Genovese, M. A. (1986). Presidential leadership and crisis management. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 16,* 300-309.
Gibson, J. W. and Felkins, P. (1974). A Nixon lexicon. *Western Speech, 38,* 190-198.
Goldzwig, S. R. and Dionisopoulos, G. N. (1989). John F. Kennedy's civil rights discourse: The evolution from 'principled bystander' to public advocate. *Communication Monographs, 56,* 179-198.
Gonchar, R. M. and Hahn, D. F. (1971). The rhetorical predictability of Richard

M. Nixon. *Today's Speech, 19,* 3-13.
Gonchar, R. M. and Hahn, D. F. (1973). Richard Nixon and presidential mythology. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 1,* 25-48.
Graber, D. (1980). *Mass media and American politics*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.
Graber, D. (2002). *Mass media and American politics*. (6th ed). Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.
Hahn, D. (1980). Corrupt rhetoric: President Ford and the MAYAGUEZ affair. *Communication Quarterly, 28,* 38-43.
Hahn, D. and Gonchar, R. M. (1980). The Watergate strategies of Richard Nixon during the 1972 campaign. *The Communicator, 10,* 64-75.
Harrell, J., Ware, B.W., and Linkugel, W. A. (1975). Failure of apology in American politics: Nixon on Watergate. *Speech Monographs, 42,* 245-261.
Head, R., Short, F. and McFarlane, R. (1978). *Crisis resolution: Presidential decision making in the MAYAGUEZ and Korean confrontations*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
Heisey, D. R. (1986). Reagan and Mitterrand respond to international crisis: Creating versus transcending appearances. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 50,* 325-335.
Hill, F. (1972). Conventional wisdom – traditional form – the president's message of November 3, 1969. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 58,* 373-386.
Jacobellis v Ohio, 378 U.S. 184 (June 22, 1964).
Johannesen, R. T. (1986). Ronald Reagan's economic jeremiad. *Central States Speech Journal, 37,* 79-89.
Kay, W. D. (1998). John F. Kennedy and the two faces of the U.S. space program, 1961-1963. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 28,* 573-586.
Kiewe, A. (1994). Introduction. In A. Kiewe (ed.) *The Modern Presidency and Crisis Rhetoric* (pp. xv-xxxvii). Westport, CT: Praeger.
King, R. L. (1985). Transforming scandal into tragedy: a rhetoric of political apology. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 71,* 289-301.
King, A. A. and Anderson, F. D. (1971). Nixon, Agnew, and the 'silent majority': A case study in the rhetoric of polarization. *Western Speech, 35,* 243-255.
Klope, D. C. (1986). Defusing a foreign policy crisis: Myth and victimage in Reagan's 1983 Lebanon/Grenada address. *Western Journal of Speech, 50,* 336-349.
McGee, B. R. (1999). The argument from definition revisited: Race and definition

in the progressive era. *Argumentation and Advocacy, 25,* 141-158.
Medhurst, M. J. (1988). Truman's rhetorical reticence, 1945-1947: an interpretive essay. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 74,* 52-70.
Medhurst, M. J. (1994). Eisenhower, Little Rock, and the rhetoric of 'crisis.' In A. Kiewe (ed.) *The Modern Presidency and Crisis Rhetoric* (pp. 19-46). Westport, CT: Praeger.
Nacos, B. L. (1990). *The Press, Presidents, and Crises*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Newman, R. P. (1970). Under the veneer: Nixon's Vietnam speech of November 3, 1969. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 56,* 168-178.
Newman, R. P. (1992). 'Pity the helpless giant' Nixon on Cambodia. In T. Windt and B. Ingold (eds.), *Essays in Presidential Rhetoric* (pp. 257-276). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.
Palczewski, C. H. (2001). Contesting pornography: Terministic catharsis and definitional Argument. *Argumentation and Advocacy, 38,* 1-17.
Pauley, G. E. (1998). Rhetoric and timeliness: an analysis of Lyndon B. Johnson's voting rights address. *Western Journal of Communication, 62,* 26-53.
Pratt, J. W. (1971). A study in presidential crisis speaking as a potential rhetorical type. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.
Rasmussen, K. An interaction analysis of justificatory rhetoric. *Western Speech, 37,* 111-117.
Rowland, R. C. and Rademacher, T. (1990). The passive style of rhetorical crisis management: a case study of the Superfund controversy. *Communication Studies, 41,* 327-342.
Schiappa, E. (1993). Arguing about definitions. *Argumentation, 7,* 403-417.
Schiappa, E. (2000). Analyzing argumentative discourse from a rhetorical perspective: Defining 'person' and 'human life' in constitutional disputes over abortion. *Argumentation, 14,* 315-332.
Schiappa, E. (2001). What is golf? Pragmatic essentializing and definitional argument in *PGA Tour, INC. v. Martin Argumentation and Advocacy, 38,* 18-27.
Schiappa, E. (2003). *Defining reality: Definitions and the politics of meaning*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP.
Schwarze, S. (2002). Rhetorical traction: Definitions and institutional arguments in judicial opinions about wilderness access. *Argumentation and Advocacy, 38,* 131-150.
Stelzner, H. G. (1971). The quest story and Nixon's November 3, 1969 address. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 57,* 163-172.

Strong, R. A. (1986). Recapturing leadership: The Carter administration and the crisis of confidence. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 16,* 636-650.
Titsworth, B. S. (1999). An ideological basis for definition in public argument: A case Study of the individuals with Disabilities in Education Act. *Argumentation and Advocacy, 35,* 171-184.
Vartabedian, R. A. (1985). Nixon's Vietnam rhetoric: a case study of apologia as generic paradox*. *Southern Speech Communication Journal, 50,* 366-381.
Walton, D. (2001). Persuasive definitions and public policy arguments. *Argumentation and Advocacy, 37,* 117-132.
Walton, D., and Macagno, F. (2009). Reasoning from classifications and definitions. *Argumentation, 23,* 81-107.
Weaver, R. M. (1953). *The ethics of rhetoric*. Chicago: Regnery.
Williams, D. and Young. M. (2005). Managing "democracy" in the age of terrorism: Putin, Bush, and arguments from definition. In R. Riley (ed.), *Engaging Argument: Selected Papers from the 205 NCA/AFA Summer Conference on Argumentation* (pp. 97-103). Washington, DC: National Communication Association.
Wilson, G. L. (1976). A strategy of explanation: Richard M. Nixon's August 8, 1974, Resignation address. *Communication Quarterly, 24,* 14-20.
Windt, T. O. (1973). The presidency and speeches on international crises: Repeating the rhetorical past. *Speaker and Gavel*, *11*, 6-14.
Windt, T. O. (1990). *Presidents and protestors: Political rhetoric in the 1960's*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
Young, M. J. (1992). When the shoe is on the other foot: The Reagan administrations Treatment of the Shootdown of Iran Air 655. In M. Weiler and W. B. Pearce (eds.), *Reagan and Public Discourse in America* (pp. 203-224). Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
Young, M. J. and Launer, M. K. (1988). KAL 007 and the superpowers: an international Argument. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 74,* 271-295.
Zagacki, K. S. (1992). Rhetoric, failure, and the presidency: The case of Vietnam. *Communication Studies, 43,* 42-55.
Zarefsky, D. (1983). Civil rights and civil conflict: Presidential communication in crisis. *Central States Speech Journal, 34,* 59-66.
Zarefsky, D. (1986). *President Johnson's war on poverty: Rhetoric and history*. University, AL: University of Alabama Press.
Zarefsky, D. (1997). Definitions. In J. F. Klumpp (ed.), *Argument in a Time of Change: Definitions, Frameworks, and Critiques* (pp. 1-11). Annandale,

VA: National Communication Association.
Zarefsky, D. (2004). Presidential rhetoric and the power of definition. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 34,* 607-619.