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In collaboration with Sara Cigada

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Preface

In April 1997, a team of selected linguists met in Lugano for the I.A.D.A. Conference *Rhetoric and Argumentation*. At that time the University of Lugano was a mere fledgling: it was about to celebrate the accomplishment of its first year of activity (1996-1997). In this preface to the Conference Proceedings, collected in the present volume of the series *Beiträge zur Dialogforschung*, it is for me a special pleasure to recall those days, when many notorious scholars and dear friends from all over Europe (the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Romania, Switzerland; even from Tel Aviv) shared an important step in this University's scientific growth, demonstrating their esteem for the young Faculty of Communication Sciences by taking part in the meeting.

At this point it can be said that promises have been fulfilled and more have been made for the future.

The works of the 1997 Lugano Conference took place over two days. As is usual in our Congresses, during both mornings we worked in plenary sessions, while the afternoons were devoted to 'section sessions'. Following this main division, the structure of the volume represents that of the Conference; moreover, contributions to section sessions have been subdivided according to content.

In the first part of the Proceedings (*Rhetoric in Argumentation*) the reader will find the lectures delivered by František Daneš, Vincenzo Lo Cascio, Edda Weigand and myself. These texts address some central aspects of the role played by rhetoric in argumentation. From various perspectives and with different stresses, these all point to the fact that rhetoric does not represent a counterpart to argumentation, as if they were inconsistent dimensions: on the contrary, the powerful role of rhetoric in argumentative texts is repeatedly underlined. At the same time, these contributions focus on different aspects in which it can be seen that rhetoric itself is "full of reason", not a stranger to it.

It should be said that the other 16 contributions also stress the same scientific attitude, albeit in different ways as is conceivable considering the variety of interests and research fields testified. Besides, as the section lectures focus on three main themes, we

decided to group them in three different sections, namely: *Rhetoric and Text Analysis*; *Rhetoric, Argumentation and Reason*; *Rhetoric in Oral Interactions*.

As the reader himself can easily note, two leit-motivs meaningfully emerge in many contributions: first of all, the relation between reason and emotions, and secondly, the fact that the methodological starting point is, naturally, almost always fixed in the analysis of texts, both oral and written ones.

I wish to mention here Silvia Gilardoni, who helped Sara Cigada and me prepare the volume for publication.

Special thanks should be given to two friends, Sorin Stati, who spared no pains in promoting this I.A.D.A. Meeting, and Edda Weigand, who negotiated the publication of these Proceedings with Max Niemeyer Verlag.

I also wish to thank the University of Lugano, as well as the 'Ufficio Studi Universitari del Dipartimento Istruzione e Cultura del Canton Ticino', which gave the Conference friendly hospitality and financial support.

Lugano, Easter 1999

Eddo Rigotti

Rhetoric in Argumentation

Extra-logical Factors in Argumentation

1. Argumentation from the viewpoint of discourse studies
 2. Pragmatic aspects of argumentation
 3. Emotion in argumentative discourse
 4. An analysis of two argumentative passages from dramatic texts
- References

1. Argumentation from the viewpoint of discourse studies

At the beginning let us consider the status of the term *argumentation* in discourse studies. I suggest differentiating three levels of its employment. On the first level, the general one, we find different *stylistic modes of subject-matter presentation*, that is, typical ways in which thematic material will be grasped and, in the construction and production of a text, processed and presented. At least the following modes can be distinguished: descriptive, narrative, expository, argumentative, reflective. On the second level, that of individual texts, we often find passages based on different modes, but mostly one of the modes appears as dominant or typical. Thirdly, when in a given text such predominance is highly conspicuous, then this text could be characterized as a description, a narration, an argumentation. This kind of characterization should not, however, be identified with the *text types (sorts)* or *genres*: these are specific formations (Ger. *Gestaltungen*) arranged or organized according to a text pattern (I mean formats such as the historical novel, a business letter, a lecture, etc.). Thus argumentative passages appear in various texts belonging to different genres. Argumentative passages are mainly of dialogical character, both in spoken and written communication (also in literary texts) and, in turn, argumentation is an essential part of dialogues. "Dialogues are argumentative texts par excellence", asserted Freddi (1998). Moreover, even without accepting the claim that any language use is dialogical, we clearly recognize evident dialogic features in monological texts (often written). A classical example of such an "inner dialogue" is the famous Hamlet's monologue "To be, or not to be ...". Its underlying dialogical structure corresponds to the particular steps in the process of argumentation.

2. Pragmatic aspects of argumentation

If we consider “argumentation” as a piece of discourse, then we have to respect that it has its producer and receiver (interpreter), that it is going-on in a particular speech situation (context), and, consequently, to take all the pragmatic moments involved in these three factors into account, lock, stock and barrel. The partners enter argumentative discourse in their integrity, with their entire mental endowment, and all their human faculties (cognition, will, emotion) are operative in the process of argumentation.

The classical rhetoric (in principle logical) approach to argumentation is of a formal character. It aims at a “rational reconstruction” of the assumed strict logical schema underlying any argumentation, consisting in the presentation of premises and presupposing proper rules of inference by means of which the given opinion can be justified or proved.

It may be that this simplified and idealized picture could more or less fit some types of argumentative discourses in purely rational and intellectual domains, but it has a low validity in the bulk of the other argumentative discourses or passages in various domains and of different stylistic types.

1. First, any argumentation inseparably involves the above mentioned pragmatic moments of individual and social nature, which are operative both on the speaker’s and the receiver’s side, though in different ways. Thus argumentation reflects preferences, interests, value orientations, as well as the set (or system) of personal features and dispositions of individual partners, especially their actual manifestations prompted by the on-going discourse. Among others, it is omnipresent *emotion* (or affect) that plays an enormous role. No less consequential are the experience and competence of the partners, particularly differences between them, be it differences in the particular modules of knowledge, in various skills, intellectual abilities, inclinations, stereotypes, prejudices, and the like. – Last but not least, the important fact that argumentation is context-dependent or context-bound should be mentioned.

2. Second, it is dubious, to what a measure argumentation is, in fact, based on strict logical schemata and rules of inference (sometimes called “cognitive reasoning”). It is significant that Johnson-Laird (1983) arrived at the conclusion that “reasoning ordinarily proceeds without recourse to a mental logic with formal rules of inference ... The simplest inferences depend on the interrelations between propositions, not on their internal structure” (41). “People follow extra-logical heuristics when they make spontaneous inferences. They appear to be guided by the principle of maintaining the

semantic content of the premises but expressing it with greater linguistic economy” (40). Other authors (e.g. von Wright) speak of “practical” or “instrumental” reasoning or inferring. L. Tondl (1997) goes further and maintains that this kind of reasoning does not have, in fact, a character of logical inference and that it is rather a form of association. It manifests a certain level of practical experience and knowledge of the partners and might be regarded as generalized experience or accepted rule. – Viewing this issue from another angle, Aldo di Luzio (1998) arrived at a concurrent and similarly significant claim, namely that “the force and power (*vis et potentia*) of the arguments are not a function of rational truth – as sheer rationalistic theory would imply – but a function of their socio-cultural relevance for the life-world of the disputants”.

3. Third, from the logical point of view, argumentation aims at justification or proof of an opinion or standpoint. On the other hand, argumentation regarded as a piece of discourse is expected to have a certain communicative (illocutionary) function. This function will mostly be seen in the producer’s endeavour to convince or *persuade* the partner. Of course, in ordinary argumentative discourses, this persuasive function mostly occurs in differently modified varieties (mainly weakened ones) or combinations. Thus the aim of the arguing person may be to gain support or assent to or acceptance of his/her opinion, of the proposed course of action, and the like, briefly, to win the partner over. Sometimes further (accessory) functions may be present, for instance to influence the partner’s behaviour or mental state, to “show off”, to put the partner down, to deceive him/her, or, in turn, to win his favour, etc.

The persuasive communicative function, being the overall function of an argumentative discourse as a whole, involves the various communicative sub-functions of particular component parts of the discourse, that is of paragraphs or individual utterances. I mean such functions as demand, order, prohibition, consent, and several others.

4. Let us add that an analogous analysis can be performed on the level of stylistic (rhetoric) composition of discourse. Whereas the communicative (illocutionary) functions are directed outside the text, to the receiver, the said compositional functions derive from the relations between particular text components as they are set by the producer in the process of building-up the text according to a plan. I have in mind such functions as thesis, antithesis, substantiation, conclusion, exemplification, counter-example, illustration, documentation, enumeration, specification, evaluation, explanation, and many others.

3. Emotion in argumentative discourse

In the subsequent part of my paper I will focus on the role of *emotion* in argumentative discourse.

1. My considerations start with the claim of the *omnipresence* (ubiquity) of emotion in discourse and with its consequence that **any** utterance and higher discourse unit has an *emotional value* (cf. Daneš 1987/1990). As regards the relation of emotion to cognition, let us quote Piaget (1961): "The layman would speak about 'emotions' and 'intelligence' as about two opposing faculties, but, in fact, in either of these forms affective as well cognitive aspects of acting take place, so that they in no case represent two independent faculties." Another scholar, Mowrer (1960), went even further and claimed that "the emotions are of quite extraordinary importance ... and do not at all deserve to be put into opposition with 'intelligence', ... [rather they are] themselves a higher order of intelligence." From the side of linguists, let us remember, that as early as in 1927, E. Sapir claimed that "denotative functions of speech are always compounded with certain expressive factors", and a similar claim appeared in the "Theses" of the Prague Linguistic Circle in 1929. – Quite recently, Robert de Beaugrande (1996) explains the present "renaissance of the psychology of emotions" (Scherer's wording, 1986) by pointing to the fact that "the cognitive revolution cleared the way for more elaborated and integrated models of the 'whole man'". For a full understanding of dialogic discourse, the following formulation by Izard (1977) seems to be of primary importance: "The emotions in consciousness influence all perception, cognition, and behaviour. ... Some emotion is always present in ordinary states of consciousness, [although] it is not always cognized or symbolized."

The "emotional value" of an utterance can tentatively be defined as the complex of emotions associated with it, in the given communication, both on the producer's and the receiver's side. I do not assume a state of "emotional neutrality", since in a certain situation, also tranquilization or a calm state can reckon as emotional. It is, of course, clear that only those components of the rich emotional complex are linguistically relevant which appear operative in the given discourse interaction.

The fundamentally relevant fact is that cognition incites emotion (it is emotiogenic) and, in turn, emotions influence cognitive processes. Moreover, emotions themselves often evoke emotions in the other partner. The latter emotions may be either congruent or incongruent with the stimulus. (Thus anger showed or expressed by the producer can in the receiver elicit an angry emotional response, or ridicule, wonder, and the like). Certain

types of emotions tend to be evoked more often cognitively (e.g. grief, by sad news), some others rather by manifestation of an emotion.

As regards the extension of the field of emotion, it seems suitable to circumscribe it rather broadly, so that it would comprise not only short-time arousals and non-acute states (moods or feelings), but also more cognitive emotions, evaluative attitudes, emotions accompanying or even implied by opinions and various illocutionary acts. Briefly speaking, there is a whole gamut of related phenomena, whose functioning in discourse interaction justifies treating them as a unique category, though a rather complex one, with its centre and periphery. This decision is substantiated by certain facts from the domain of prosodic and other non-verbal devices of manifestation: By means of a rather complex phonic (vocal) signals, accompanied by some non-vocal features, complex functional wholes can be manifested, in which features of emotionality proper, attitudes, personality traits, together with social categories of the partners, their interpersonal relations and other pragmatic features (also illocutionary functions) are amalgamated.

I will not discuss here the rather problematic issue of the classification of emotions. In linguistic description, it seems sufficient to work with a small number of polar dimensions, distinctive positions on the scale between two poles, and degrees of intensity. Sometimes one general “positive – negative” dimension is sufficient.

This does not mean, however, that the different “content” classes of emotion are irrelevant to discourse processes. Thus, a positive excitement will influence the partner’s discourse activity in a evidently different way than his/her state of anger or, again, of fear. We find interesting suggestions in Izard’s (1977) classification. For instance, that interest and excitement “keenly motivate the agent to access knowledge, skills, or make creative innovations”, that surprise or startle “deactivate a sector of current processing to clear a space for activating a quick response”, or that anger “motivates the agent to defend the goal”.

The mentioned facts could be subsumed under the *catalytic* function of emotion: emotional states can promote (stimulate, facilitate), or, again, inhibit (make difficult, damp) discourse processes. Moreover, the impact of emotion concerns all linguistic as well as non-linguistic components of communication. In many languages we find locutions saying that fear or terror paralysed somebody’s tongue or speech, or that a person couldn’t speak for joy or because he/she was deeply moved.

The manifestation of emotions is, in essence, *spontaneous*. Nevertheless, sometimes the speaker expresses them with a *strategic* intention, when he/she wants to influence the partner, to achieve a desired effect, to evoke a certain emotional state in the receiver (e.g. to soothe his/her grief by showing sympathy). The distinction “spontaneous vs. strategic”

was in the Prague “Theses” labeled “emotional vs. emotive”. The intentional manifestation of emotion may be either “sincere”, ie. genuine, actually experienced by the speaker, or only performed (more or less pretended, simulated). Furthermore, the speaker can suppress (conceal, hide) his/her emotion, but, at the same time, unawares let it out, reveal it by various features of the utterance and by other communicative as well as non-communicative behaviour.

2. At this point I set forth a general reflection on the correlation between emotion and cognition in discourse. One of the important differences between the two is the fact that while the intensification of cognitive processes appears as a positive and desirable phenomenon, “the more cognition, the better”, the intensification or increase of emotion has a threshold of acceptability or tolerability, the threshold being, of course, different with different types of emotion and partly conditioned by cultural norms. Some scholars look at emotion as at an unwanted irrational element, if not as at a regressive or immature behaviour (cf. de Beaugrande, 1996, 557). Emotion will strongly be opposed to cognition and so, in this view, emotion in discourse should be left hidden or, at least, controlled. Such a principle we find formulated, for instance, in the significant Prague paper by E. Weigand (1998). In my opinion, this radical stance is acceptable with several strong qualifications only.

First, I think that at least emotions of positive kind, such as liking, inclination, delight, pleasure, joyfull mood, sympathy, and the like, should not be hidden, but, on the contrary, they ought to be manifested. E.g. **not** to show a friend my pleasure when hearing of his great success, or my sorrow and sympathy when learning about the death of his mother, such a bearing would go against the point.

Second, it is true that in a civilized society, the ways of the manifestation of emotion need some control. Nevertheless, a control performed not only by cold reason, but motivated also by ethical emotions (attitudes) and by respecting the situation of the partners.

Third, from the psychological and psycho-therapeutic point of view, to keep back or suppress emotions is regarded as unsound, if not dangerous. The so-called ideology of “anti-emotionalism” appears mistaken and undesirable.

My counsel would read: Emotions should not be hidden, but cultivated.

From my above considerations it follows that we need an **integration** of emotion with cognition, feeling with thinking. That is, a **balanced** interaction of the two, in which positive along with negative emotions operate productively and support appropriate actions. In fact, to quote de Beaugrande, “a balanced economy actually needs to accredit both ameliorative and pejorative emotions, and to dynamically weigh off pleasure with

displeasure in ways that promote long-range progress" (1996, 557). To achieve such a balance is, of course, difficult. Nonetheless, the integrating potential of discourse offers a prime possibility.

4. An analysis of two argumentative passages from dramatic texts

Without doubt, the most emotionally loaded discourses are the oral ones, especially impromptu speech and dialogue. The ideas expounded in the preceding part of my paper I will illustrate by analysing and interpreting two literary fragments.

1. The first sample is a dramatic passage taken from J. D. Salinger's piece "Zooney":

- (1) TINA (*morosely*): Oh, darling, darling, darling. I'm not much good to you, am I?
- (2) RICK: Don't say that. Don't ever say that, you hear me?
- (3) TINA: It's true, though. I'm a jinx. I'm a horrible jinx. If it hadn't been for me, Scott Kincaid would have assigned you to the Buenos Aires office ages ago. I spoiled all that. (*Goes over to window*) I'm one of the little foxes that spoil the grapes. I feel like someone in a terribly sophisticated play. The funny part is, I'm not sophisticated. I'm not anything. I'm just me. (*Turns*) Oh, Rick, Rick, I'm scared. What's happened to us? I can't seem to find us anymore. I reach out and reach out and we're just not there. I'm frightened. I'm a frightened child. (*Looks out window*) I hate this rain. Sometimes I see me dead in it.
- (4) RICK (*quietly*): My darling, isn't that a line from "A Farewell to Arms"?
- (5) TINA (*turns, furious*): Get out of here. Get out! Get out of here before I jump out of this window. Do you hear me?
- (6) RICK (*grabbing her*): Now you listen to me. You beautiful little moron. You adorable, childish, selfdramatizing.

(J. D. Salinger, *Zooney*, 1964, 71)

To be sure, the analyst of such a printed dialogue is severely handicapped by the absence of phonic suprasegmental as well as other non-verbal features, that are the main carriers of emotion. Thus he can infer emotions only tentatively, vaguely, and with a dose of subjectivity, from various cues and clues prompted by the written text (including the dramatist's scenic hints).

The text fragment represents a dramatic text having the quality of an argument on the edge of a quarrel, the "emotional topic" of which could be summarized as "Rick's calm effort to soothe passionate and morosely disposed Tina".

From the interactive point of view, we may state its rhetoric argumentative structure involving an "emotional course or profile": In (1) T's morose and passionate emotional bearing, associated with her selfaccusation leads R to respond in (2) by soothing her. He

refutes her argument (though in an indirect wording in the form of an illocutionary act of urgent request/appeal not to say such things, so that the inference of his (sincere) intention does not seem to be quite firm). But his soothing attempt is futile, T in (3) persists in her morose temper, she repeats her argument, makes it more particular, simultaneously revealing her present mental state to him in detail. But R in (4) has apparently not been influenced by her gloomy account. His quiet factual comment on the final part of her turn, seemingly innocent, but in fact covertly (and maybe intentionally) pointing at her self-dramatizing inclinations (explicitly mentioned by him in (6)) and at the performance character of her emotional display, is perceived by T as a provocation, infuriating her (one may only guess that such a response might have been anticipated by R himself). Thus the peacefulness of R's speech in (4) could have a strategic function and in any case it carries a very high context-dependent emotiogenic potential. T's fury in (5), accompanied with a menace, prompts R to choose other tactics to soothe her: In (6) he takes on a very active, energetic (if not invasive) role, using four kinds of devices: first, he uses an extralingual, manual means of a sudden, forcible and rough seizing, secondly, he shows that her performance in (5) has not moved him much, thirdly, he shows a high degree of tender liking for her (though revealed with a kind of superiority), and fourthly, he uses an intellectual device, trying to reveal to her that she should look for the real reasons of her pessimistic approach and gloominess in her personal dispositions.

2. Let us now turn to the second, more perspicuous text sample, to the well-known scene from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

JULIET: Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate-tree:
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

ROMEO: It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

JULIET: Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I:
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua:
Therefore stay yet; thou need'st not to be gone.

ROMEO: Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
I'll say yon grey is not the morning's eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads:
I have more care to stay than will to go:
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.
How is't, my soul? let's talk; it is not day.

JULIET: It is, it is: hie hence, be gone, away!
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.
Some say the lark makes sweet division;
This doth not so, for she divideth us:
Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes;
O, now I would they had changed voices too!
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day.
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

ROMEO: More light and light; more dark and dark our woes!

(W. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, III/V)

The overall ambience of this argumentative dialogue involves affectionate love on the background of existential uncertainty and grave anxiety. In the dialogue itself, two pairs of conflicting mental states are operative: reason vs. affect, and male vs. female approaches. The complex of implied affections comprises the following kinds of emotions: positive ones of mutual love and of desire to stay together, and negative ones of grief over their inevitable parting and of the fear of Romeo's death.

The argumentative course and corresponding emotional profile look as follows:

- 1) Juliet, being motivated by her strong affection, sets forth and specifies an argument against Romeo's reasons to leave.
- 2) Romeo's male rational attitude disproves her argument, realistically pointing to some evident facts and calling to mind the fatal dilemma.
- 3) Juliet, without noticing his rational warning, stubbornly holds her own (in a female manner), adducing further, though rather poetic, arguments and entreating him to stay.
- 4) Romeo is, in fact, not persuaded by her problematic argumentation, nevertheless, having been moved by the power of her deep affection, apparently gives her truth and, in a sophisticated way, manifests the depth of his love for her by willingness to stay at the price of the disastrous consequences.

- 5) Romeo's argumentative tactics produce now a dramatic effect and a decisive turning point in the process of argumentation (and in the story as well): Juliet, seeing now the possible tragical consequences of her entreaty, at once becomes rational and realistic, recognizes and fully accepts his previous arguments, and being overcome by fear and panic-stricken, she turns her argument about and vehemently and passionately endeavours to make Romeo to take flight.

Well, now I would pose a question to my present readers: Did the arguments adduced by the two heroes express their true opinion, or were they used as a strategic device? Maybe consciously, maybe only subconsciously. Who knows? Do you think that Shakespeare would know the answer? Such are the vagaries of interpretation – in literature as well as in life.

In any case, our analysis and interpretation clearly reveals that in argumentation, cognition and emotion go hand in hand and that an argumentative dialogue may not be only an issue of discourse, but also of people's lives and fates.

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Vincenzo Lo Cascio

Narration and Argumentation: a Rhetorical Strategy

1. Narration and Argumentation
 - 1.1 Types of texts and participation
 - 1.2 Narration and modality: a rhetorical strategy
 - 1.3 The modal value
 2. Narrative texts and argumentative texts: their nature
 - 2.1 Differences between narration and argumentation
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1. Narration and Argumentation

In the present paper I am not concerned with the pragmatic function of argumentative or narrative texts, but rather with their linguistic organization and with the formal characteristics which allow the two kinds of texts to interact. I will argue that there are many similarities between the two types of texts, which make it possible for both to have an argumentative and a narrative function at the same time.

Narration and argumentation can interact in two ways:

a) argumentation can be a part of a story (a novel or something else), as in a detective novel where reasoning is naturally required. For instance:

- (1) ... he snapped the case open, and the secretary drew in his breath sharply. Against the slightly dingy white of the interior, the stones glowed like blood.
"My God! sir," said Knighton. "Are they – are they real?"

"I don't wonder at your asking that. Amongst these rubies are the three largest of the world ... You see, they are my little present for Ruthie."

The secretary smiled discreetly.

"I can understand now Mrs. Kettering's anxiety over the telephone," he murmured.

But van Aldin shook his head. The hard look returned to his face.

"You are wrong there," he said. "She doesn't know about these; they are my little surprise for her."

(A. Christie, *The Mystery of the Blue Train*, New York 1971, 13-14)

b) narration can be used in a text which is primarily argumentative, either as a matter of similitude or with the function of delivering events presented and interpreted as arguments. For instance:

- (2) She stared at him. He nodded back at her.

"I mean just what I say. Have you got the grit to admit to all the world that you've made a mistake? There's only one way out to this mess, Ruthie. Cut your losses and start afresh."

"You mean-"

"Divorce."

"Divorce!"

Van Aldin smiled drily.

"You say the word, Ruth, as though you'd never heard it before. And yet your friends are doing it all round you every day."

"Oh I know that. But-"

She stopped, biting her lip. Her father nodded comprehensively.

"I know, Ruth. You're like me, you can't bear to let go. But I've learnt, and you've got to learn, that there are times when it's the only way. I might find ways of whistling Derrek back to you, but it would all come to the same end. He is no good, Ruth: he's rotten through and through. And mind you, I blame myself for ever letting you marry him. But you were kind of set on having him, and he seemed in earnest about turning over a new leaf – and well, I'd crossed you once honey ..."

(A. Christie, *The Mystery of the Blue Train*, New York 1971, 16)

or

- (3) ROBERT. Now listen to me, Polly. I must talk to you like a father.

It's about the girl you are interested in. Now, I have seen her. I have talked to her. First, she's mad. That doesn't matter. Second, she's not a farm wench. She's a bourgeoisie. That matters a good deal. I know her class exactly. Her father came here last year to represent his village in a lawsuit: he is one of their notables. A farmer. Not a gentleman farmer: he makes money by it, and lives by it. Still, not a labourer. Not a mechanic. He might have a cousin lawyer, or in the Church. These sort of people may be of no account socially; but they can give a lot of bother to the authorities. That is to say, to me. Now no doubt it seems to you a very simple thing to take this girl away humbugging her into no end of a mess, as I am her father's lord, and responsible for her protection. So friends or no friends, Polly, hands off her.

(B. Shaw, *Saint Joan*, London 1948, 86)

It can be seen from the above that narration in argumentative texts can have the function of providing data (arguments) and rules from an (apparently) real world, or examples taken from (invented or possible) reality, so as to support proposed statements or conclusions, or trigger suggestions supporting a possible argument, and therefore contributing to the persuasive process.

In other words, stories, sequences of events going backwards or forwards in time in an argumentative text are rhetorical forms and strategies which can create specific worlds where it becomes possible for a proposed argumentation to hold.

In example (1), when the Butler says “I can understand now Mrs Kettering’s anxiety”, he refers to an event which took place or could have taken place earlier in time, namely that Mrs Kettering knew about the jewels. That event apparently allows him to guess the reason and the cause of Mrs Kettering’s anxiety. This is apparently a logical inference, but it will be frustrated by Mr Kettering’s reaction which claims that the real state of affairs is different: Mrs Kettering does not in fact yet know about her father’s present.

(2) is an example where the narration (a set of events and facts which happened around Mr and Mrs Kettering) is in support of a reasoning, which suggests that Mrs Kettering should divorce.

In (3) an argument given as support for the statement that Saint Joan is a “bourgeoise” is provided by the fact that in the previous year, Sir Robert met her father when he came to represent his village in a lawsuit.

1.1 Types of texts and participation

Every language has a number of forms which can create different types of texts at surface level: narrative texts (NARR); argumentative texts (ARG); descriptive texts (DES).

Two structures are particularly important for the way communication takes place: monological and dialogical structure. This differentiation is important both for the way the text is constructed and for the way the protagonists participate in the communicative process.

Every text is characterized by different propositions connected to each other and organized according to different basic principles and hierarchical relations. I distinguish two basic types of organization: horizontal organization and vertical organization. Both have a semantic and a syntactic part.

A text is also made up of a tense dimension, an inferential activity, a schema of a story or of an argumentation.¹

1.2 Narration and modality: a rhetorical strategy

Argumentation in general is a form of defining the truth value of a statement. As a matter of fact, by adding an argument to a statement, a modal force is assigned to the former. Counterargumentation, in particular, always seems to impose a modal interpretation upon the argumentation to which it refers or to which it is a reaction. Counterargumentative categories are ways of questioning the validity of the truth of an argumentation.

Narration is a form of giving more information about the reality of worlds. If an argumentation is placed in a “tensed” world, it means that it is placed in a world which is presented as existing but instantiated (i.e. bound to a specific time) and, therefore, does not always hold true.

That world (like every world) can be characterized or described as containing aspects and characteristics which create the conditions in which events or states take place or are present. This happens if the conditions that those events are respectful of – in coherence with the semantic and encyclopaedic congruency principles – are met. A congruency principle requires that events meet the rules of the scenario in which they take place, i.e. in coherence with the world in which they are considered to take place. This then enables one to accept all the facts and events that can be inferred or can take place in that world as plausible. So, in a world where it is raining, an event such as “somebody closes his umbrella” is improbable. It follows that other characteristics must be assigned to that world in order to make an event like “somebody closes their umbrella” plausible when it is raining.

Narration therefore seems to be a form of modality which gives the frame and the truth value to argumentation.

Argumentation can be tensed and presented as narration, but it can also contain a narration which has the function of proposing an example in support of the argument chosen to support a statement. Indeed any story has an argumentative function (see Schiffrrin 1990, 133).

Narration is a good and successful tool with which to convince or persuade addressees. It generally provides examples from the real (or invented, semi-real) world. An instance of this is Scripture, in which all argumentation and propositions about religion are sustained by parables (cf. the parables of the prodigal son or of the sower).

Narrative examples in argumentation are forms in vertical direction appended to data and arguments which must sustain/support a statement or chain. As Geargakopoulou & Goutsos (1997, 160) also sustain, “narratives are powerful forms of asserting views, shielded from proof, justification, testing and debate.”

A story in a non-narrative text owes its effect to the sense of immediacy, involvement and personal perspective it creates. The participation framework invoked

also plays a crucial function: scientific information is nicely couched. "Narratives in conversation can be thought of as long turns that provide tellers with strong floor-holding rights" (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos 1997, 161).

Georgakopoulou & Goutsos (1997, 162) also sustain that "through dramatization and vividness, narratives are capable of compelling belief in various views with minimal risk of argumentation challenges and truth-claims based on testing and debate." Georgakopoulou & Goutsos also sustain that one of the main uses of conversational narratives is in supporting an argument. I would nevertheless add that this is very often the case in all argumentative texts.

Narratives can also have the task of making an argumentation more expressive and therefore more persuasive, since they present in concrete form that which reasoning normally presents in an abstract way.

The introduction of a joke or of an anecdote in a lecture, with the intention of making it more pleasant for the audience is a "culturally bound" phenomenon. Italian speakers would not introduce such an element into their lecture because they would consider it offensive for the audience. In the Anglo-Saxon world, on the contrary, a speech would not be considered carefully prepared unless an anecdote or a joke as an example were introduced to make the audience relax and have some fun.

In many cases, the story functions as backing, to speak in Toulmins terms, or as a source for the arguments, or so as to establish the general rule or warrant in favour of a statement.

Bringing out an evidence in narrative form can always be a strategy. Speakers are always fascinated by stories, particularly if they refer to the past. The past guarantees the truth of things to the human mind. This is in fact the task of memory.

Since human knowledge is the result of experience, and since stories are symbols of experience, it can then be argued that stories are good scenarios to propose warrants and general rules.

1.3 The modal value

As mentioned above, the rhetorical value of using narratives in argumentative texts is both a modal (definition of the truth value) and an emotional (involvement in situation and experience) one. From the modal point of view, when used in argumentation narration has the function of creating possible worlds which are considered or could be considered as true, presenting characteristics and conditions which allow a proposed statement or an entire argumentation to hold.

Abstract reasoning is very often left to the inferential work of the addressee who has to develop and formulate explicitly or implicitly the lacking abstract rules and relations which are made or can be made by applying a logical system. But such a task is arduous, while narration, as an exemplification of argumentation, is much easier to interpret and to follow.

On the other hand, most of the addressees of a specific novel or argumentation (speakers) generally prefer to work out the inferences since this task can be developed in a way which fits their world, knowledge and capacity to reason. This kind of freedom, which the addressee wants and which is allowed thanks to the possibility of different interpretations and evaluations of linguistic messages, increases and enlarges the encoder's chance of succeeding in persuading the addressee.

Non-narrative reasoning is typical of scientific texts in general and of math or chemistry texts, in particular. On the contrary, politicians, advertising people or speakers in ordinary life and conversation or communication lean considerably on narration, even when the communication they are involved in has a primarily argumentative character. A good example of a narration employed as a support for a claim could be the following:

- (4) "You say that this vase is not in harmony with the appointments of the room – whatever that means, if anything. I deny this, Jewes, in toto. I like this vase. I call it decorative, striking, and, in all, an exceedingly good fifteen bobs worth."

"Very good sir."

On the previous afternoon, while sauntering along the strand, I had found myself wedged into one of those sort of alcove places where fellows with voices like fog-horns stand all day selling things by auction. And, though I was still vague as to how exactly it had happened, I had somehow become the possessor of a large china vase with crimson dragons on it ...

I liked the thing. It was bright and cheerful. It caught the eye. And that was why, when Jeeves, wincing a bit, had weighed in with some perfectly gratuitous art-criticism, I ticked him off with no little vim. *Ne sutor ultra* whatever-it-is, I would have said to him, if I'd thought of it. I mean to say, where does a valet get off, censoring vases? Does it fall within his province to knock the young master's chinaware? Absolutely not, and so I told him.

(P. G. Wodehouse, *Life with Jeeves*, London 1981, 195)

The speaker in building his argumentation can sometimes use possible counterarguments presented as weak or unacceptable. In some cases he reports somebody else's argumentation, with a possible counterargumentation, or he reacts to this person's argumentation (protagonist or writer) by adding a counterargumentation.²

By making his statements explicit and by expressing possible counterarguments, the speaker makes his reasoning stronger, since he argues that it is possible to reject or evaluate them in advance.