

The New Rhetoric's Inheritance. Argumentation and Discourse Analysis

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Abstract This paper aims at showing how the New Rhetoric's insights allow for an integration of argumentation studies in linguistic investigation, and more specifically in discourse analysis. Claiming that argumentativity is a constitutive feature of discourse, it endeavors to explore *logos* as both reason and language by analyzing patterns of reasoning in their discursive actualization. In this approach, the attempt at influencing the audience's representations is analyzed in the complexity of a discourse explored in its formal and socio-institutional dimensions.

Keywords Argumentation in discourse · Argumentativity · Discourse analysis · *Logos* · New rhetoric

1 Introduction

The theory of “Argumentation in discourse” (Amossy 2000, 2006) is based on the assumption that argumentativity pervades and partly regulates all verbal exchanges.¹ It thus draws on the idea, already expressed in the pioneering work of Grize (1990: 40), that to speak is to act upon an addressee by modifying (or

¹ This approach is not to be confused with Ducrot's “argumentation in language”: the generalized argumentativity discussed here is inherent to discourse and not to language (“la langue”), and it is part of what Ducrot calls “rhetorical argumentation “(as distinct from his “linguistic argumentation”) (Ducrot 2004).

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strengthening) his representations of the surrounding world. This approach to argumentation can be seen as an extension of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's *New Rhetoric* (1969 [1958]), fully drawing the consequences of its key-positions: (1) rhetoric deals with verbal means of persuasion allowing for an agreement on the reasonable; (2) it is achieved in natural language, and exploits its potentialities; and (3) even discourses, such as the epideictic genre, that are not explicitly designed to achieve an adherence of minds to a controversial thesis, are argumentative insofar as they reinsure common values.

I would like to show on these grounds how Perelman's work allows for an integration of argumentative analysis within linguistic investigation—a purpose that was not part of his original enterprise, mainly built on philosophical grounds, but that is nonetheless a consequence of his important insights. My claim is that this adaptation of the *New Rhetoric* to another field of knowledge is of great consequence for linguistics. It shows that the use of language by a speaking subject in a given situation cannot be fully described without taking into account its intended impact on the other. By exploring this crucial dimension, it illuminates the ways in which discourse actually works. Conversely, discourse analysis, by its close examination of verbal exchanges and discursive procedures, throws light on the co-construction of the reasonable that is at the heart of Perelman's rhetoric.²

2 Argumentativity as a Constitutive Dimension of Discourse

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, I would like to specify from the outset that I refer to discourse analysis in its French contemporary version as illustrated by the *Dictionnaire d'Analyse du Discours* edited by Charaudeau and Maingueneau (2002). Discourse as the use of language by a speaking subject is explored in its multiple manifestations: enunciation, modalities, inscription or effacement of subjectivity, the use of connectives as well as of semantic presuppositions and implicit elements, discursive heterogeneity and reported discourse, etc. However, these features cannot be isolated from their frameworks: they are activated in a specific genre, institutional frame, and situation of discourse. From this perspective, verbal organization and socio-institutional components are closely intertwined, meaning that context appears as an integral part of the text. Such an approach has the advantage of combining the study of both the formal and the socio-institutional constituents of discourse.

Thus defined, discourse analysis is a branch of what is broadly called “linguistics of discourse”, focusing on the regularities to be found not in the system of language (Saussure's “la langue”), but in its use by individual speakers (“la parole”). In this framework, a few dimensions can be viewed as constitutive: performativity, at the center of pragmatic studies, assuming that to speak is to act; subjectivity, a study launched by Benveniste's linguistics of enunciation (Benveniste 1974); dialogism,

² This aspect has been analyzed in a paper presented at the “Retórica E. Argumentação” Conference at Coimbra University, October 2008, entitled “Co-constructing the reasonable : the *New Rhetoric* in the prism of Discourse Analysis”, forthcoming.

drawing on Bakhtin's principle that every utterance is necessarily a reaction to a previous one (Bakhtin 1986); interaction, emphasizing the primacy of dialogue, or actual exchanges, mainly explored by conversational analysis; genres of discourse, implying that utterances are always framed by formal and institutional models, a principle that lies at the heart of discourse analysis. *My contention is that argumentativity is one of discourse's constitutive dimensions*, which means that even discourses that do not participate in any formal debate or disclose a manifest persuasive purpose have an underlying argumentative dimension (Amossy 2005).

3 Language and Argumentation: the Scope and Limits of the New Rhetoric

In order to account for this generalized argumentativity, we have to examine how it is woven into the texture of discourse. From this perspective, it is interesting to examine how the New Rhetoric revisits the role of language in its attempt to elicit an adherence of minds.³ First of all, it strongly emphasizes the centrality of natural language, with its constitutive ambiguity. Contrary to demonstration elaborated in symbolic languages (like mathematics or logic) argumentation relies on natural language where univocity is neither possible, nor desirable. In this framework, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) devote a whole chapter (II, 3), entitled "*Presentation of Data and Form of the Discourse*," to the argumentative virtues of language.

The initial point deals with the notion of "effective presentation," which is the view that the capacity of the discourse "to impress itself on the hearers' consciousness" allows it to "give the minds a certain orientation, to make certain schemes of interpretation prevail" (1969:198). This is translated in terms of "presence," achieved by means such as repetition, accumulation, concrete versus abstract elements, etc. Although the role played by these techniques is amply described, Perelman adds that they do not have any definite value in themselves; their impact eventually depends on their suitability in a specific case. The second important point is related to the lexicological level. The selection of a term is never innocent, and it is rarely devoid of argumentative purpose. Each phrasing is the result of a choice between various possibilities, and these choices have to be examined on the paradigmatic axis (to put it in Jakobson's terms). Perelman's and Olbrechts-Tyteca's remarks about synonyms is, from this point of view, symptomatic. According to them, the existence of words that can be indifferently substituted to one another can be admitted only when the argumentative intention is deliberately or involuntarily forgotten—namely, when the terms are examined outside their use in discourse. A third crucial point is the acute criticism of the notion of "neutrality." There are no neutral terms, as there is no neutral style—there are only formulations that seem neutral because they go unnoticed. The choice of a seemingly neutral expression plays a role in argumentation, especially as it often transfers to the norms conveyed by the discourse the agreement spontaneously given

³ For other presentations of the New Rhetoric's contribution to linguistics, see Koren and Amossy (2002).

to language. Before proceeding to figures of rhetoric, the chapter provides a series of important analyses of other elements like modalities, qualification, connectives, hypotactic and paratactic constructions, etc. Although we cannot go into more details for want of space, the few examples provided here amply demonstrate the attention paid by the New Rhetoric to language and, more specifically, to the use of language in its argumentative dimension.

Here again, however, an extension of the New Rhetoric's positions is needed in order to establish a strong connection with contemporary linguistic in its enunciative, pragmatic, and discursive aspects. Two points have to be revised and reformulated from this perspective. The first refers to the extension of argumentation to discourse in general, the second to the role of language in argumentation. Perelman and Obrechts-Tyteca mainly refer to the attempt at eliciting adhesion to a given thesis on a controversial matter. Even if the integration of epideictic, or ceremonial discourse allows for a further extension of argumentation, it does not suffice to define *every* discourse as argumentative. Moreover, even if the chapter dealing with verbal presentation seems to allow for broad generalizations, there is no doubt that its extension to discourse in general goes beyond the New Rhetoric's intended scope. In short, Perelman obviously deals with argumentation as a particular endeavor to find an agreement on a given question, not with argumentativity as a *constitutive feature* of discourse.

The second point refers to the New Rhetoric's conception of language. One has to keep in mind that the Perelman and Obrechts-Tyteca draw a distinction between the presentation of data and the form of discourse, on the one hand, and arguments and patterns of reasoning, on the other hand. Although they criticize the separation between content and style that has progressively led rhetoric to focus on *elocutio* as disconnected from *inventio*, privileging ornament over the art of reasoning and of persuading, they do not totally dismiss the dichotomy between content and form. For them, the search for an agreement is mostly achieved through the arguments and models of reasoning that they amply describe in a vast taxonomical enterprise. The New Rhetoric thus differs from discourse analysis which emphasizes the way contents are constructed in verbal exchanges rather than external, pre-constructed molds of argumentation.

4 How to Account for *Logos*: Patterns of Reasoning and Verbal Communication

This brings us to the problem of language as understood from a rhetorical, and not merely linguistic, perspective. Rhetoric relies on *logos*, meaning simultaneously language and reason. That these two aspects combine within the same concept emphasizes the impossibility of keeping them apart. In other words, verbal exchanges are intrinsically linked to the practice of reason, just as argumentation is achieved by verbal means and cannot be realized outside discourse.

Such a conception is not without problems with regard to the analysis of arguments understood as formal patterns of reasoning developed by various theories of argumentation. In a way, these formal patterns have no actual existence, because

they are abstract formalizations and as such, always have to be reconstructed by the analyst (or the addressee). This is why theories of argumentation investigate schemata built on logical propositions, namely, on elements reconstructed by means of paraphrases. The problem inherent in this approach is described by Anthony Blair (2008) in his consideration of informal logic: the operation of “paraphrasing the discourse into expressions [...] amenable to formalization” raises a few problems. In some cases, it changes the meaning of the original, and in some cases the question of what is the correct paraphrase becomes controversial (2008: 3). These remarks point to the difficulty of cutting off a formal pattern of reasoning from the discourse in which it is embedded and without which it has no concrete existence.

On the other hand, one can wonder how a rational influence can be achieved without any abstract schema allowing for logical connections and for deductive or inductive operations. Syllogistic or analogical patterns of reasoning, causal arguments or arguments by the consequence, topoi of quantity or of quality, have to underlie discourse in order to act upon the addressee. And the audience has to actively engage in explicit or tacit, spontaneous reconstruction of arguments in order to adhere to or disagree with what is expressed. This capacity for abstraction and reconstruction is supposed to ensure the rationality of an exchange meant at mutual persuasion. It is the very basis of argumentation as distinct, for instance, from seduction.

How is it then possible to reconcile the current approach of argumentation theories, focusing on arguments and on their reconstruction, with a discursive approach exclusively targeted at describing verbal exchanges? If the first gives precedence to abstract schemes of reasoning used in ordinary discourse by extracting them from their verbal envelope, the second examines the construction of the exchange without paying attention to underlying logical schemes. In one case, *logos* is reduced to reason; in the other case, it is restricted to language.

Although Perelman himself did not attempt to solve this problem, his emphasis on the reasonable might help resolve this apparent incompatibility. For Perelman, argumentation replaces the rational by the reasonable, namely, by what can be regarded as plausible and acceptable by the participants on a given question (1969, 1979). Thus argumentation is not defined as the art of putting forward formally valid arguments leading to absolute Truth, but as the use of verbal means to ensure a partial, and by definition fragile, consensus on what can be considered reasonable by a group of people, or by what a given society would define as a reasonable person. As a result, argumentation does not simply rest upon solid, immutable logical procedures the validity of which must be tested by the analyst. What is reasonable and plausible is always co-constructed by men and women engaging in verbal exchange, and it is the dynamism of this co-construction realized in natural language and in a communicative framework, that has to be analyzed. From our point of view, this entails the requirement that patterns of reasoning must not only be reconstructed, but also examined in their exact phrasing, which is not an exterior garment, but the very body of argumentation. Instead of evaluating the logical validity of arguments, the analysis deals with the ways in which an agreement is achieved in discourse in a communicative framework.

For discourse analysis, to adopt the rhetorical/argumentative bias is to take into account the patterns of reasoning mostly concealed in the text: *logos* in the sense of

reason and not only of language, has to be integrated into the study of discourse and into the description of its global functioning. For argumentation theories, to adopt the linguistic bias means to deal with reasoning as engraved in discourse and as dealt with in a dialogical framework, thus adopting a descriptive rather than a normative approach.⁴

5 Discourse Aimed at Persuasion: Sarkozy's Campaign Discourse

I will try to illustrate these points by briefly analyzing two examples, one borrowed from a discourse clearly intended to convince, the other from a narrative and descriptive text that has no declared persuasive aim.

In his campaign book, *Together* (2007), Nicolas Sarkozy writes:

French culture would not survive the death of European culture. If Europe were to disintegrate, the European man and his notion of freedom of spirit and dignity of the human being would disappear too, because then no European nation would be strong enough to let its voice be heard in the dialogue of cultures and to oppose planetary standardization by itself (2007:93, my translation).⁵

My first point concerns *the management of argument in a communicative and socio-historical frame*. No doubt a syllogism can be reconstructed and evaluated according to its logical validity. However, as in ordinary discourse it mostly takes the form of an enthymeme (in the sense of a missing syllogism), the very decision to omit or express one of the premises, or the conclusion, heavily influences the reasoning. In other words, the management and verbal phrasing of an enthymeme participates in the attempt to bring about an agreement as much as does the logical construction of the syllogism.

Thus in the quoted passage, the first utterance constructs a syllogistic reasoning in which the conclusion is the only element stated in an explicit manner.

- (1) *Tacit major premise*: When an entity disappears, its constitutive parts disappear with it
- (2) *Tacit minor premise*: French culture is a constitutive part of European culture
- (3) *Expressed conclusion*: Thus if European culture disappears, French culture will disappear too ("French culture would not survive the death of European culture").

⁴ I will not go here into the complex discussion of normative vs. descriptive approaches to argumentation. It is however clear that my attempt at reconciling the study of arguments with the analysis of discursive argumentativity differs on this point from other, stimulating works with which it has some affinities, like Tindale's (2004) or van Eemeren & Houtlosser's developments on strategic maneuvering in pragma-dialectics (2002), where evaluation of arguments' validity remains a central preoccupation.

⁵ La culture française ne survivrait pas à la mort de la culture européenne. Si l'Europe devait se défaire, c'est l'homme européen et l'idée qu'il se fait de la liberté de l'esprit et de la dignité de la personne humaine qui disparaîtraient aussi, parce qu'aucune nation européenne ne serait alors assez forte pour faire entendre sa voix dans le dialogue des cultures et pour s'opposer seule à l'uniformisation planétaire (Sarkozy (2007), *Ensemble*, p. 93).

Leaving unexpressed the two premises on which the argumentation rests presents them as too obvious to be formulated. The text thus circumvents the problem of French culture as an integral part of European culture and presupposes that the latter exists as a unified entity. Moreover, the decision to express fully only the conclusion gives it a great prominence. If isolated, the utterance sounds like an emphatic statement aiming at pathos rather than as a full-fledged reasoning. It is thus the management of the enthymeme, and not only the underlying syllogistic scheme, that contributes to the effort at constructing a shared stance on the attitude French citizens should adopt toward Europe.

A second enthymeme immediately follows the first one, endowing it with the force of repetition while trying to expand and better explain its terms.

- (1) *Tacit major premise*: When an entity promoting specific values disappears, those values disappear with it
- (2) *Expressed minor premise*: Europe promotes certain values: “the European man and his notion of freedom of spirit and dignity of the human being”
- (3) *Expressed conclusion*: Thus if Europe disintegrates these values will disintegrate too (“would disappear too”)

In the development of the argument, this utterance appears as the expansion and concretization of the first statement since it explains what the death of European culture would mean. The unexpressed major premise and the expressed conclusion are mere variations on the previous ones. The only new element lies in the minor premise, here fully expressed and pointing to the values that are at the core of European culture. Framed by repetitive clauses, the minor premise thus introduces a variation that draws most of the attention and brings the weight of the argument to bear on the fact that Europe is the bastion of essential human values.

That the management of both enthymemes promotes the importance of Europe by stressing the role it plays in the world and by representing it as a unified body in which France fully participates, is by no means fortuitous. This image of Europe is meant to modify or re-orient the (supposed) representations of the audience. One of the main goals of Sarkozy's argumentation is to impress on the reader's mind the symbiosis of France with Europe and the fact that they share ideals constitutive of their identity. These theses are not less central than the formulated conclusions about the danger of dissolution. The fact that they are not the conclusion of a formal argumentation, but elements—whether implicit or fully expressed—on which the syllogistic reasoning is built, contributes to their intended impact. Since they are not the point to be discussed, they more easily escape opposition.

It is mainly on the background of an ongoing polemic around the European Union and the place of France in this new political body that Sarkozy's indirect techniques of stressing unity and cohesion acquire their full meaning. If logical constructions partake in the argumentative dialogue through their peculiar phrasing, they also do so through their interrelations with the dominant social discourse and their integration into the current debates of the time. The full integration of France into the European community is a controversial subject among French citizens, who opposed a firm No to the referendum launched by President Jacques Chirac on the question of the European Constitution. Planning to overcome all future obstacles,

Sarkozy wants to impress his audience with the idea that France is linked to Europe by indissoluble ties and that its culture, including the precious values of human liberty and dignity inherited from the 1789 Revolution, belongs to a common European stock. This accounts for the importance of presenting this thesis as already agreed upon instead of rekindling an old debate. The construction and management of schemes of reasoning have thus to be understood from a *dialogical, as well as communicative, perspective*. They have to be analyzed in their specific *situation of discourse*, and in relation to the prevailing *interdiscourse* (what is said and written at the time) that always expresses a shared *doxa* (the prevalent opinions and beliefs of the audience).

Although the double enthymeme seems self-sufficient and does not necessarily call for an additional clause, it is further complemented in the same sentence by a causal argument. Introduced by “because”, this argument opens a new venue of thought. It introduces the theme of force—these values would disappear *because* nobody would be strong enough to defend them:

- (1) *Tacit major premise*: Force is needed to let one’s voice heard
- (2) *Expressed minor premise*: European nations, taken in isolation, do not have force [implied: union creates force] (“no European nation would be strong enough”)
- (3) *Expressed conclusion*: Thus European nations would not be able to let their voice be heard (“no European nation would be strong enough to let its voice be heard in the dialogue of cultures and to oppose by itself planetary standardization”).

New elements, like the need to protect one’s culture against an opponent and the role of strength and power in doing so, are the basis of this addendum and explain its presence at this stage. “Planetary standardization” provides the figure of the enemy against which a protective action has to be taken. The image of a voice among others in a dialogue of cultures supposed to be fruitful turns in the same subordinate clause introduced by “because” into a competition between discordant voices. The principle implied in the expressed minor premise (if separation eliminates force, then union gives force) is, once again, the main message conveyed to the audience. It complements the representation of Europe as an autonomous entity defending universal values by the image of a united Europe giving strength to its members.

The main theses thus conveyed do not, however, deprive the expressed conclusions of their impact. This impact is reinforced by the cumulative effect of the conclusions, built on a common denominator. “Thus if European culture disappears, French culture will disappear too”; “Thus if Europe disintegrates these values will disintegrate too”; “Thus European nations would not be able to let their voice heard”, all rely on an appeal to fear, integrating pathos into the syllogistic reasoning. This appeal to feelings is conveyed by the choice of threatening terms such as not to survive, disintegrate, disappear, accompanied by the fearful mention of “death”. It adds to the enthymeme an appeal to fear that is in itself a powerful argument (Walton 2000).

Let us briefly elaborate on the role of lexical and pragma-semantic elements in the common search for the reasonable. On the semantic level, the text fully exploits

the ambiguity of natural language, and in particular of the word “Europe”. It uses it indiscriminately both in the sense of European Union and of a continent that gave birth to a great civilization. It conveniently shifts from one level of meaning to the other: the disintegration of the European Union entails the disappearance of the European man and his cultural ideal—as if the disintegration of a political and economic entity were synonymous with the destruction of a culture built many centuries ago. Rather than constituting a fallacy, this ambiguity is intended to stress the fact that the contemporary European Union as a political body, and the old European continent as the cradle of culture, are intimately related and cannot be set apart. It thus supports the theses put forward by the verbal management of the enthymeme.

Playing with ambiguity, argumentation is also based on semantic presuppositions (Ducrot 1972) and implicit elements that present as obvious elements that might be questioned or contradicted if they were stated in so many words. The phrase “the European man”, presupposing that such a homogeneous entity exists, is linked to the idea of “freedom of spirit” and “dignity of the human being,” implying that these ideals belong exclusively to European culture. The superiority of Europe is thus indirectly stated. Colloquial expressions are also mobilized. “Planetary standardization” hints at the American way of life through a familiar formula that conveniently omits the name of the opponent. In this context, everything that relates to the USA, including their claim to the values of freedom and the Rights of Man, can be conveniently erased. Competition is hinted at while direct attack is avoided.

6 Discourse Endowed with an Argumentative Dimension: the Testimony of a War Nurse

Let us now take a look at an example borrowed from a text on World War I - a personal testimony on life in the military hospitals that, as such, has no persuasive aim. Following is a description of a group of nurses exhausted after having taken care of soldiers suffering from “frozen feet” that may lead to amputation:

And the white flock, gathered with much difficulty, goes home with aching knees, burning feet and a contented heart. Yet the cannon makes a tremendous uproar in the direction of slope 304 on the right side of Verdun (Clemenceau Jacquemaire 1919: 95; my translation).⁶

Since the text appears as a description that does not aim at reasoning, we will first look into its construction in terms of semantic paradigms and utterance linking through connectives. A contrast is drawn between the difficult conditions of the nurses (a tiresome work leaving them with “aching knees” and “burning feet”) and the outside danger threatening them, on the one hand, and a “contented heart”, on the other. The question of the danger is introduced by the connective “yet” stressing

⁶ Et le troupeau blanc, groupé non sans peine, rentre au logis avec des genoux douloureux, des pieds brûlants et un coeur satisfait. Pourtant le canon mène grand tapage vers la côte 304 sur la droite de Verdun.

the opposition between surrounding violence (emphasized by the name “Verdun”) and the women’s satisfaction and peace of mind. As for physical pain and moral contentment, they are not linked by a mark of opposition but through the connective “and”, allowing for an easy shift between them, as if the contented heart was a natural consequence of the aching members. Acceptance of physical hardship allows for moral reward. In the global interdiscourse of the time, the nurses’ lot resembles the soldiers’ fate: exposed to danger and harsh conditions of life, but contented to “do their duty”. The parallel thus drawn is reinforced by the cliché “the white flock,” the flock being a trite metaphor often used for soldiers during the first World War. The women’s acceptance to merge in a group defined by its functions is expressed by the disappearance in the autobiographical fragment of the singular “I”, the collective description, and the hint at the wearing of (white) uniforms. All these elements turn the nurses into feminine equivalents of the fighting men.

This text does not intend to develop an argument or to take part in a controversy. Rather, it tells a story that projects a consensual image of the nurses in the Great War. Nevertheless, it relies on *doxa* to orient the reader’s viewpoint by reinforcing his/her belief in women’s capacity to preciously contribute to the war effort and to be instrumental in the public sphere. It implicitly reacts to, and rejects, the conventional image of woman as a fragile and futile being, incapable of performing difficult professional tasks or of confronting danger. It thus brings an indirect answer to the much debated question, at the time, of female labor and women’s place in society. It does so in a discrete and moderate way since it deals with a particular case without drawing any far-reaching consequences on the social level. This text is not a militant feminist writing. Nonetheless, it draws a meaningful picture of women in the life of the nation, re-orienting mistaken opinions on feminine capacities.

It thus appears that the writer’s will to persuade, as well as the use of formal arguments, are not a necessary constituent of the text’s argumentative dimension. The latter is developed by the way the narrator presents the situation through the use of connectives, the play of semantic oppositions, and the choice of clichés that link the text to the dominant discourse of the time. At this point, discourse analysis seems to have shifted us far away from the *New Rhetoric* with its insistence on the orator’s deliberately persuasive objective worked out through argument construction. And indeed, it provides another perspective not only on argumentation in discourse, but also on agency. The subject of enunciation both speaks and *is spoken*. It means that her discourse is modeled not only by the intentions manifested in the text, but also by the surrounding *doxa*, namely, by what is written and circulated at the time. The “I” is partly constrained by the language she is immersed in, whether consciously or not. At the same time, she is finding her own way through her specific use of discourse, and taking the responsibility of what it posits or even implies. It is important to stress that this conception of agency also holds for discourses aiming at eliciting adhesion to a thesis. The intention to persuade and the strategies used for this purpose (as in Sarkozy’s text) do not exclude the sometimes unconscious hold of *doxa* on the speaking subject and his/her unaware subordination to the prevailing interdiscourse.

Going back to texts endowed with an argumentative dimension rather than a persuasive aim, it is important to notice that even in this framework, a deductive reasoning can easily be reconstructed by the reader. To be active and contented in the face of danger is a sign of courage; the nurses are contented near the roaring cannons of Verdun; thus the nurses (as women) are courageous. Or, to bear physical pain in order to perform one's duty gives inner satisfaction; the nurses accept this duty and its burden; therefore they have a contented heart. Even if the presence of *logos* is mainly inscribed in the narrative through lexical treatment and use of connectives, it can also be manifested by the reconstruction of underlying patterns of reasoning.

7 Conclusion

The succinct analysis of two short examples is meant to show how rhetorical argumentation, examined in its discursive dimensions, can open a vast field of linguistic investigation. It suggests that discourse analysis should take *logos* into account by integrating in its descriptive approach the underlying argumentative structures of the discourse. At the same time, it shows that the capacity of verbal exchanges to achieve an agreement does not only rely on argument's construction. It derives from the global functioning of discourse. Finally, the juxtaposition of a text clearly aimed at persuasion, and of a testimonial description emphasizes the fact that argumentativity is a constitutive element of discourse, understood as the use of language by a speaking subject in a given social and institutional situation. This significant extension of argumentation modifies its scope as well as the rhetorical conception of agency.

These developments draw on Perelman's and Olbrecht-Tyteca's seminal work, even if they exploit its insights beyond the philosophical domain for which they were intended. In so doing, they radicalize some of the New Rhetoric's essential positions, and exceed its original scope. They nonetheless recognize their debt to the 1958 *Treatise*, and to Perelman's subsequent work. By reuniting rhetoric and argumentation, by providing a new understanding of the "reasonable" and of Reason, by emphasizing the communication framework of argumentation and its linguistic foundations, by extending argumentation to the epideictic genre, the New Rhetoric has paved the way for contemporary research in general and for a theory of "argumentation in discourse" in particular.

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