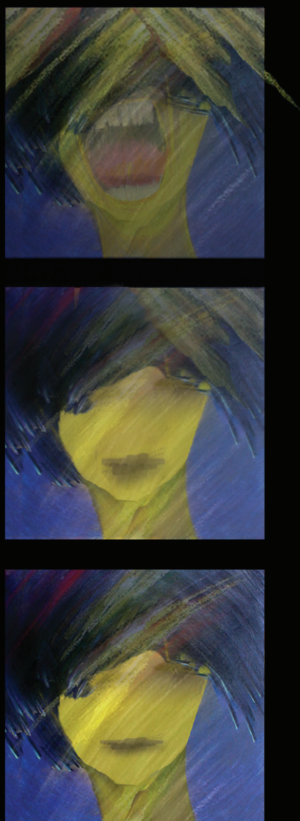
RHETORIC AND ARGUMENTATION IN THE BEGINNING OF THE XXIst CENTURY

EDITED BY
Henrique Jales Ribeiro



(Página deixada propositadamente em branco)

RHETORIC AND ARGUMENTATION IN THE BEGINNING OF THE XXIst CENTURY

EDITED BY
Henrique Jales Ribeiro

I
IMPRENSA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA
COIMBRA UNIVERSITY PRESS
U

• COIMBRA 2009

Coordenação editorial
Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra
Email: imprensauc@ci.uc.pt
URL: http://www.uc.pt/imprensa_uc
Vendas online: http://siglv.uc.pt/imprensa/

Concepção Gráfica
António Barros

Capa
José Luís Madeira (IA / FLUC)

Pré-impressão
Paulo Oliveira
[PMP]

Execução gráfica
Sereer, Soluções Editoriais

ISBN
978-989-8074-77-5

Depósito Legal
????????????????????????

obra publicada com a colaboração de:

FCT Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR Portugal

Ciência.Inovação 2010 Programa Operacional Ciência e Inovação 2010
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR

Unidade I&D | Linguagem, Interpretação e Filosofia

CHAPTER 9

CO-CONSTRUCTING THE "REASONABLE" IN VERBAL EXCHANGES: THEORY OF ARGUMENTATION AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Ruth Amossy*

ABSTRACT: *The New Rhetoric's* main objective is to conceptualize and explore the verbal co-construction of the "reasonable". A full realization of this project calls for an analysis on the ground, thus analyzing actual exchanges in their specific setting. This paper shows to what extent such an approach is in harmony with Perelman's overall enterprise, why he himself, as a philosopher, did not care to engage in case studies, and how verbal argumentation can be accounted for by contemporary linguistic investigation, and more specifically by (French) Discourse Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The New Rhetoric's ultimate goal is to examine how an agreement on what seems acceptable and reasonable to all parties involved can be reached on a controversial matter by *verbal* means (1969 [1958]). To phrase it differently, Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca explore the discursive strategies through which people try to achieve some kind of consensus allowing them to take common decisions and act together. This is what I call *the verbal co-construction of the reasonable*.

My contention is that a full realization of this objective calls for a close analysis of actual exchanges in their specific setting, and that such an approach is in harmony with Perelman's overall enterprise, even if he himself did not engage in case studies. I would like to show on what grounds this claim is built, and why the empirical bias

* University of Tel Aviv, P. O. Box 39040, Tel Aviv 69978, Israel.

Chair Henri Glasberg of French Culture. Coordinator of the Research Group ADARR ("Discourse Analysis, Argumentation, Rhetoric").

E-mail: amossy@attglobal.net

could not be developed by Perelman himself. I will also attempt to show how the co-construction of the reasonable can be accounted for by contemporary linguistic investigation, and how the analysis of actual argumentative interactions paves the way for new theoretical considerations.

1. THE NOTION OF THE "REASONABLE", OR ARGUMENTATION REVISITED

Let us first go back to the dissociation between the "rational" and the "reasonable" that is at the heart of Perelman's conception of argumentation (Perelman 1979 [1977]). Both are related to Reason, but in diametrically opposed ways: the first corresponds to mathematical reason, whereas the reasonable is connected to common sense. Rational reasoning unfolds in a single mind with no connection to experience or dialogue, historical circumstances or social variations. It is valid in itself and has to reach compelling conclusions – absolute Truth. The reasonable, on the contrary, cannot be dissociated from values, norms and feelings. It is never cut off from human agents and is the result of a negotiation between partners whose ways of thinking are culture-dependent. As such, it reaches conclusions that can always be put into question: the reasonable consists of views that are considered acceptable and plausible at a given moment, to a given group.

The importance of the dissociation is clear. It establishes a distinction between scientific demonstration, on the one hand, and practical reasoning based on inter-subjectivity and social values, on the other hand. It thus allows for an extension of rationality to the domain of informal thought. Far from undermining forms of reasoning that do not seek for truth, Perelman gives a considerable weight to men's ability to negotiate their differences without resorting to violence. He pleads for argumentation, which is for him synonym with rhetoric, and sets out to explore its modes of rationality.

Thus, in *The New Rhetoric,* the reasonable appears as an opinion, a stance, a decision, etc., that has been agreed upon by a community of minds. The solipsism of rational thought developing outside any exchange is replaced by dialogue between social partners. On the conceptual level, this approach offers a new conception of rationality outside the realm of formal logic and hypothetico-deductive demonstration. On the social level, this rationality based on the reasonable is closely connected to cultural values and to the norms and sensibility of a social group. On the linguistic level – and this is crucial for our inquiry – it is realized in verbal exchanges and cannot be cut off from discourse.

2. THE STATUS OF THE EXAMPLES IN *THE NEW RHETORIC*

How does *A Treatise on Argumentation* proceed to unfold and describe the procedure "intended to act upon an audience, to modify an audience's conviction and disposition through discourse […] and gain a meeting of minds instead of imposing its will" (Perelman 1982: 11). At the end of their introduction, the authors declare:

> We seek here to construct such a theory [of argumentation] by analyzing the methods of proof used in the human sciences, law, and philosophy. We shall

examine argumentations[1] put forward by advertisers in newspapers, politicians in speeches, lawyers in pleadings, judges in decisions, and philosophers in treatises" (1969, 10).

> Nous chercherons à construire [une théorie de l'argumentation] en cherchant les moyens de preuve dont se servent les sciences humaines, le droit et la philosophie; nous examinerons des argumentations présentées par des publicistes dans leurs journaux, par des politiciens dans leurs discours, par des avocats dans leurs plaidoiries, par des juges dans leurs attendus, par des philosophes dans leurs traités. (1958, 13)

The main issue here is the decision to resort to all kinds of discourses in which argumentation is actualized, and to base theory on concrete examination. Indeed, *The New Rhetoric* offers the most varied examples – literary, philosophical, political, juridical, etc., encompassing different fields much beyond the traditional scope of classical rhetoric. It is clear that the authors gathered an impressive series of texts in order to build their comprehensive taxonomy. This does not suffice, however, to turn the *Treatise* into an empirical work. As has often been noticed, the function of the examples is here to illustrate a kind of argument or a discursive strategy:

> And indeed the book methodically identifies and explicates argumentative structures and techniques – and does so very effectively – but it does not provide thick descriptions of rhetorical practice; it does not show how the argumentative techniques work as part of an integrated persuasive effort. As in a dialectical treatise, examples, even when extended, serve to illustrate principles rather than to stimulate heuristic insight or to serve as models for imitation (Leff, forthcoming).

In other words, the theoreticians draw upon examples to exemplify the category they are describing; they do not rely on discourse analysis to show how agreement can be built in a controversial matter.

3. EXTENDING *THE NEW RHETORIC'S* SCOPE: TOWARD A LINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION OF CASE STUDIES

This is the result of the scope and organization of the 1958 *Treatise*. After dealing with the communication framework of argumentative speech and its *sine qua non* conditions – exposed in Part One and Two of the book –, it turns in Part Three to a categorization and description of specific means called "techniques of argumentation", thus sorting out the types of arguments available to the arguer: quasi-logical arguments (I), arguments based on the structure of reality (II), arguments establishing the

[1] The translator put "argument" instead of "argumentation", which is not without altering the meaning of the text. The correction is mine.

structure of reality (III). This section explains why the *Treatise* is most often quoted for its definitions and categorizations of arguments. Perelman emphasizes, however, that the analytical study of arguments has to isolate them in spite of the fact that they are part of a whole and interact on several planes: there is an interaction between different arguments, between the arguments and the situation of argumentation, and between them and the conclusion. Devoted to this question of interaction, Chapter V examines the force of arguments in view of their combination and ordering. However, it does not elaborate on the relationship between the arguments and the "whole of the argumentative situation" – namely, between the enunciation framework described in Part I and II (who speaks to whom, when, where, in what circumstances, on the basis of what shared premises?), and the verbal arguments and persuasion techniques reviewed in Part III.

And yet, if agreement occurs only when verbal means are adequately mobilized in a given situation of communication, do not all argumentative techniques have to be analyzed in relation to the partners of the interaction, its circumstances, the cultural and ideological premises of the moment – the crucial importance of which is emphasized by Perelman himself? Is it enough to examine arguments in isolation, or even to ask how they can gain power by apt combinations? The co-construction of the reasonable means looking for an adhesion of minds in a specific interaction, with its socio-historical conditions and institutional constraints. In a given situation, people engage in argumentation in order to influence each other and find a solution or choose a stance that can be considered acceptable by all, or at least by a majority. How, then, can we understand the way they interact to find a common place – a space they can share and in which they can live and act together – if we do not examine the verbal exchange that leads more or less successfully to an agreement on the reasonable?

From this perspective, it appears that the communication theory and the taxonomy of arguments elaborated in *The New Rhetoric* should be combined and integrated in order to provide an analytical framework where argumentative schemes could be both brought out, and examined in their specific situation of discourse. In short, the idea of a common search for the reasonable calls for an additional step: an investigation *on the ground*.[2]

4. WHY *THE NEW RHETORIC* DID NOT ENGAGE IN EMPIRICAL STUDY: THE PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK OF PERELMAN'S THEORY

If this be the case, how can we explain that Perelman did not adopt this approach and left this kind of study outside the scope of his own rhetorical enterprise? First of all, Perelman's choice has to be interpreted in terms of his own theoretical bias.

[2] On this specific issue, my own theory of "Argumentation in Discourse" (2006 [2000]) is very close to Leffs' propositions: he speaks about *The New Rhetoric's* "failure to recognize that the techniques provide only part of what is needed in order to understand how arguments behave. And fifty years after Perelman, I believe that we can most usefully advance his project by getting down to cases" (forthcoming).

His introduction shows that he is basing his work on purely theoretical grounds: he makes clear that his objective is to characterize various argumentative structures that have to be described before their efficacy can be checked in specific situations. He thus distinguishes his own philosophical research from the experimental work to be found in contemporary psychology. His insistence on theoretical construction explains why he did not turn to empirical research, even if the experimental methods used by psychologists are not no be confused with discourse analysis (1969: 9). Despite his desire to "examine argumentations put forward" by different kinds of discourse, he does not care to examine how people actually negotiate their differences of opinion, nor does he engage in case studies calling for systematical gathering and description of data.

Another answer to Perelman's neglect of concrete analysis is provided by the unresolved tension, in *The New Rhetoric,* between universal and socio-historical elements. It has often been observed that the *Treatise* builds a model valid across time and space, while exhibiting a deep consciousness of the culture-dependent nature of argumentative exchanges.[3] This oscillation between the universal and the socio-historical is also expressed in the *Treatise*'s twofold construction. On the one hand, it elaborates a communication framework in which the orator has to adapt to his specific audience, or at least to his own representation of this audience; he has to take into account what the latter sees as a fact, a legitimate hierarchy, a value. On the other hand, it establishes a general taxonomy of arguments crossing historical and cultural borders.

This tension is an effect of Perelman's endeavor to reconcile universalism and pluralism. If the reasonable is what can be agreed upon by a group of people, it necessarily varies according to the views and modes of reasoning of this group. However, the risks of such an approach are clear: in its generalized relativity, Reason threatens to disintegrate for want of immutable criteria. *The New Rhetoric* has to deal with this difficulty. This partly explains the work's twofold construction, and its insistence on keeping apart its considerations on argumentative communication and its taxonomy. While showing that argumentation is elaborated in a specific framework where socio-historical circumstances and values prevail, the *Treatise* insists on universals and mainly maps out general techniques of reasoning.

My contention is that the *Treatise*'s double objective (communicational and taxonomical) can be extended and completed by a third enterprise: the concrete analysis of argumentative discourse in its enunciation framework and its linguistic

[3] The co-existence of two diverging approaches is most perceptible in the much debated notion of universal audience. On the one hand, it is an entity transcending historical and national peculiarities. Its existence is a matter "*not of fact, but of right*" (1969: 31): the universal audience is constructed on the model of a man endowed with Reason and compelled by good reasons, as the speakers think that "all who understand the reasons they give will have to accept their conclusions" (*ibid.*). On the other hand, the universal audience is variously constructed by the orator according to his own notions and values. "Everyone constitutes the universal audience from what he knows of his fellow men, in such a way as to transcend the few oppositions he is aware of. Each individual, each culture, has thus its own conception of the universal audience" – so that "we might […] characterize each speaker by the image he himself holds of the universal audience that he is trying to win over to his view" (1969: 33).

materiality. To examine and understand how people can co-construct a "reasonable" view, it is important to know the available means – the types of arguments and verbal strategies – at their disposal. But it is not enough to enumerate, describe and explain the rhetorical tools that can be mobilized in a given situation. Viewed in the global framework of Perelman's thought, taxonomy seems to constitute only one step in the overall project. Agreements are reached, or unsuccessfully looked for, through verbal practices and these practices have to be investigated on empirical case studies. In my last point, I will show how this venue opened by Perelman can be realized by (French) Discourse Analysis or what I call "Argumentation in Discourse".

5. HOW DISCOURSE ANALYSIS CAN THROW LIGHT ON THE CO-CONSTRUCTION OF THE REASONABLE

Once again, let us start from Perelman. On what grounds can verbal exchange build a common view of what seems, in a given situation, plausible and acceptable? Perelman approaches this question from three different, but complementary, perspectives: the communicational, or enunciative, framework; the linguistic dimension (what he calls the verbal presentation of the arguments); the types of arguments and all the underlying schemes that model the exchange. By describing the components of argumentation, dealing separately with each of them, he provides parameters for an analysis of what I call the co-construction of the reasonable. He invites us to check the way these elements combine and actually work together in situations where people try to persuade each other in order to reach an argument. I would like to suggest that this enterprise can be achieved by a rhetorical analysis feeding on Discourse analysis in its French contemporary version. I here refer to the theory exemplified in Charaudeau and Maingueneau's *Dictionary of Discourse analysis* (2002) which explores discourse, or the use of language by a speaking subject, to see how it works and more specifically, how linguistic organization intersects with a social and institutional situation. Rather than presenting the theoretical and methodological background of the discipline,[4] I will try to show through an example how it can be combined with *The New Rhetoric* and illuminate the co-construction of the reasonable on the empirical level.

I would like to ground my argument on the analysis of a short passage from a book entitled *The French Woman. Her activity during the war*, published in 1917 by a feminist writer and essayist, Marie Le Hire.

> Dans l'exercice des fonctions publiques, elles [les femmes] porteront au pays l'aide et le labeur de l'intelligence actuellement à la disposition des services de la guerre et la question sera de savoir s'il est plus loyal de faire appel à la clairvoyance féminine sous l'égide de la paix que de requérir son activité pendant le désarroi des heures difficiles. (p. 130)

[4] Cf. Maingueneau 1991.

> "In the exercise of public functions, women will bring to the country the help and labor of the intelligence now at the disposal of war services and the question will be to know whether it is more loyal to call upon feminine perceptiveness under the aegis of peace than to require her activity during the disarray of difficult hours." (My translation)

Le Hire's argumentation relies on the *topos* of quantity: if she can do the more, she can also do the less, Aristotle's canonic example being – if he beats his father, he can also beat the neighbor. The topos can be here reconstructed as: if women were able to do the more – serving the country during tragic circumstances – they are also able to do the less – serving their country in the much easier circumstances of peace. A parallel *topos* of quantity follows: if the more was done – calling upon women in the most difficult hours – the less can also be done: calling upon the same women when war is over. This second realization of the *topos* fulfills a specific function in the development of the reasoning. It shifts it from the level of mere capacities (what women are able to do) to the moral level (what is legitimate and, so to speak "fair"): it questions the right of those who mobilized women during the war to exclude them from public activities when peace is restored.

It clearly appears, however, that reconstructing underlying logical schemes endowed with universal value and understandable by any human being endowed with reason is not enough. In order to understand the persuasion enterprise, the text has to be analyzed in its specific situation of discourse. Along the lines of Discourse Analysis, which in no way contradict *The New Rhetoric's* views, we have to take into consideration: the nature and status of the speaker and of her target audience; the selected genre of discourse; the exact circumstances of the writing; the prevailing *doxa* – the dominant set of beliefs, values and opinions; the intertext and interdiscourse – what was written and circulated at the time of, and before, the publication.

These few lines are borrowed from a feminist essay published during the third year of the Great War (1917), at a time when French feminists gradually returned to their original mission, abandoned in favor of the national war effort. The essay sets out to persuade the audience that women, deprived of civil responsibilities and rights (they are not allowed to vote and are confined in the private sphere), can legitimately, and usefully, act in the public sphere. The vast majority of the French audience does not recognize feminine aptitudes to civic and professional functions, still considered exclusively masculine. Nor do people care to discuss the topic: circulated before the war, feminist arguments were mostly rejected as transgressing the laws of nature. The risk of Le Hire's enterprise is thus to convince, and even to be read, only by those who already share her views, namely, by other feminists. Persuading those who think like her cannot achieve the desired effect nor promote the cause.

The author herself is lacking in ethos. This means that she is not endowed with any institutional authority that would help her elicit the adhesion of a composite audience largely unfavorable to her thesis. She has no special authority in the intellectual field and what is more, her being a woman does not confer the due legitimacy on an essay presenting suggestions for the improvement of society. The essay, as an intellectual genre, is hardly fit for a woman, supposed at this period to write novels rather than philosophical works. Appropriating an unfit discourse only emphasizes the negative image of the "bluestocking", the female intellectual ridiculed because of her undue aspirations. It thus reinforces the negative stereotype of the feminist at the beginning of the 20th century. As a result, it appears that Le Hire's argumentation meets, and has to overcome, major obstacles: her feminist thesis, already familiar, is unwelcome and can draw no favorable attention; except for her fellow feminists, her audience is rather hostile; her own ethos as a feminist and as a women essayist is negative and does not give her the proper authority and credibility to enforce her vision.

In order to elicit adhesion to her unorthodox views, Le Hire has to base her argumentation on common values. The first words of the utterance: "In the exercise of public functions", do not seem to play this role. The idea that women should have access to administration and to politics, to the tribunal and the hospital, constitutes a most provocative opening. To avoid a blunt petition of principles – taking for granted premises that are not accepted by the audience – that would put an end to any attempt at further communication, the discourse has to ground the main body of the utterance in consensual values. This is why it mentions the praiseworthy "help", "labor" and "activity" women are contributing to the war effort. Le Hire can thus take advantage of the recognition women gained in France after three terrible years of conflict by bravely serving the country as workers in arm factories, field laborers, nurses, ambulance drivers, etc. The author thus relies on a contemporary doxa widely circulated at the time, and expressed in many writings dealing with women and war.

In this perspective, her book, significantly entitled *The French Woman. Her activity during the War*, appears as one more work on a consensual subject. In the same year 1917, several essays were published on the subject. Among them were *Les Vaillantes. Héroines – Martyres – Remplaçantes* (Paris: Librairie Chapelot) written by the respected French historian Léon Abensour, Berthe Berthem-Bontoux's *Les Femmes et la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Bloud et Gay) or Frédéric Masson's, "Les Femmes pendant et après la guerre"(in *La Revue hebdomadaire* 9, 26e année, tome III). Some feminist books dealing with the status of women and their professionalization after the war had already been circulated, as was the case of Henry Spont's *La Femme et la Guerre* (Paris: Perrin et Cie, 1916) or the more obscure Madame H. Cloquié's *La femme après la guerre. Ses Droits, son Rôle, son Devoir* (Paris: Maloine, 1915) advocating the importance of feminine activities in post-war society afflicted by numberless casualties and a growing number of crippled men. Some of these texts were widely read, like *La Parisienne et la guerre* written in 1916 by an estimated member of the Académie Française, or articles published in well-known journals such as *La Revue des deux Mondes* ("Les femmes et la guerre" by Louise Zeys, 1916); some were drawing less attention, or even remained obscure. At any rate, the praise of feminine activity had by that time become a commonplace. Always made on national grounds, it displayed the admirable qualities of French women, and was based on an official patriotic ideology supposed to be shared by all French citizens united in the defense of the fatherland. Le Hire's discourse is thus closely interwoven in the intertext of the time, drawing on its themes and values and stressing its belonging to a shared worldview.

This allows Le Hire to introduce a few notions about women that look less obvious and, first of all, the notion of "intelligence", a controversial feminine feature, presented as a justification of women's right to fulfill public functions. In order to avoid discussion, the author does not use the phrase "feminine intelligence". Moreover "intelligence" appears as a presupposition, meaning that it is not posited in the utterance (what is posited is that women's help will be put at the disposal of the country, a most respectable statement). "Intelligence" is presented as a complement of "labor" (the "*labor of the intelligence* now at the disposal of war services"), implying that it does exist (presupposition of existence). Moreover, it is followed by a phrase qualifying intelligence ("the intelligence *now at the disposal of war services*") which, once more, presents its existence as obvious. The function of the presupposition, as Ducrot has aptly shown, is to avoid any possible contest: anything stated in so many words, any affirmation, can *ipso facto* be criticized and negated. We can see the strategies of indirection mobilized to present feminine efficiency during the war as the result of intelligence without arousing any debate.

The same bias is repeated on the subject of women's lucidity. The formulation: "whether it is more loyal to call upon feminine perceptiveness under the aegis of peace" also presents perceptiveness as a presupposition – to call upon it implies that it exists. "Perceptiveness" complements "intelligence", understood as the ability to reason, to think abstractly, to comprehend ideas, with features like insight and discernment. The French word "clairvoyance" refers to the capacity of having an exact and lucid perception of things, while suggesting the gift of perceiving matters beyond the reach of senses. It is more likely to be part of women's attributes and can therefore be qualified as "feminine". Le Hire does not argue about capacities generally denied to women, nor does she engage in any kind of advocacy. The successful activity of women during the war is supposed to be sufficient proof. In other words, the text implies that the activity deployed by women during "the disarray of difficult hours" is a warrant of their intellectual capacities.

All these oratory precautions are used to justify the capacity of women to perform public functions. They point to an underlying syllogistic argument: activating intelligence and perceptiveness is the condition for success in dealing with public affairs (unstated major premise). Women possess these qualities (implied minor premise), thus they can be given public functions (indirectly though clearly formulated conclusion). It can also be understood as a causal argument: women can fulfill public functions because they have the capacities to do so. As they have to be reconstructed by the reader and are not stated in so many words, the arguments can look more acceptable to the reticent audience.

The indirection used to moderate the violence of the claim also takes the form of a question replacing what would otherwise be interpreted as a blunt critical statement: "the question will be to know whether it is more loyal to call upon feminine perceptiveness under the aegis of peace than to require her activity during the disarray of difficult hours". The somewhat awkward syntax draws the attention: we would expect "whether it is not more loyal to do X … than to do Y". The choice of the axiological adjective "loyal" is also quite unexpected. These incongruities encourage the reader to reconstruct the sentence in order to fully understand it. It then appears as a rhetorical question: Is it fair to call upon women in times of war, and not under the aegis of peace?, a question that obviously provides its own answer. The discourse thus blurs its vehement call for justice and fair-play. It prevents the speech act it performs from being immediately interpreted as a social demand. Moreover, it softens its reproach and attack on the prevalent rules by expressing them on the implicit mode. The text appears not only as a masked causal argumentation, but also as veiled social claim.

It is interesting to see how the essayist addresses a "composite audience", trying to persuade the supposedly hostile readership while keeping the good graces of the militant feminists. We have already noticed that the text, though relying on indirection techniques, opens with a most provocative and controversial proposition. Boldness seems here to combine with caution so as to forcefully launch the reform claimed by feminist movements, while at the same time presenting it in a way that can win over the most reticent audience. It allows the text to address simultaneously two different groups and to satisfy opposite expectations that seem almost impossible to reconcile. Moreover, to avoid the risk of loosing the conservative readership as a result of bluntly expressing a controversial thesis, and of discouraging the progressive audience by painstaking precautions, the author attempts to reunite them around patriotic values common to all. She thus builds an ethos both of feminist, and of devoted citizen deeply attached to the well-being of the nation, who looks for solutions that would best serve the fatherland. Instead of limiting herself to the role of spokesperson of a given community, thus projecting the image of a militant devoted to a revolutionary cause, she appears as a patriot and a valuable human being interested in general welfare. Le Hire thus re-elaborates her negative ethos in order to build in her discourse the image of a reliable and trustworthy speaker.

CONCLUSION

If we come back to *The New Rhetoric*, we can see how the co-construction of the reasonable presented by Perelman is fully realized in argumentative interactions where the underlying argumentative schemes (*topoï*, syllogistic reasoning, causal argumentation, etc) cannot be dissociated from their discursive formulation and their particular situation of communication. The search for an agreement takes place in a virtual or actual dialogue, and it is achieved not only by valid logical schemes, but also by a rich textual network. Part of the analysis is based on Perelman's principles: the search for *topoï* and types of arguments, the importance of avoiding a petition of principles, the emphasis on the audience and on the necessity for the orator to adapt to her composite audience by choosing shared premises. This rhetorical framework is complemented and enriched by the contribution of contemporary linguistics – which Perelman's and Olbrechts-Tyteca's attention to language phenomena, formulated in terms of traditional grammar, actually seems to call for. The analysis thus feeds on pragmatics, and more specifically on Ducrot's pragmatic semantics. But it is also framed by Discourse Analysis with its emphasis on the situation of discourse, the formal frame of enunciation, interdiscourse, and its utmost attention to the discursive construction of the text at all levels.

It is interesting to see how certain points, often neglected by argumentation theories, like *ethos*, or *doxa*, pertain to both rhetoric and Discourse Analysis. Perelman's and Olbrechts-Tyteca pioneering book is entitled: *Traité de l'argumentation. La nouvelle rhétorique*, thus refusing any separation between what is sometimes interpreted as distinct disciplines. Extending their study to actual analysis of case studies in the framework of a linguistic trend focusing on verbal exchange, and enriching in turn this trend with an argumentative study of the force of the spoken and written word, cannot go against the grain of their work.

A last word about empirical research and theory. Closely examining actual verbal exchanges does not simply mean going from theory to practice. Moreover, it does not only mean enriching the theory by bringing to the fore neglected discursive phenomena. Such a view would comfort the initial separation introduced at the origins of contemporary linguistics by Saussure between "parole" and "langue" – the first referring to the individual use of language, supposed to be outside the realm of scientific investigation, while the second one is the system based on general rules that should be the only object of linguistic description. Following the lines of contemporary linguistics of discourse (the study of the use of language, not of its intrinsic system), one can assume that argumentative interactions as a way of reaching, or failing to reach, an agreement also have regularities and non formulated laws to be detected and described. The data taken from empirical research call for theorizing, although in ways both different from, and complementary to, the argumentation theories developed in the wake of Perelman, himself a follower of Aristotle.

REFERENCES

AMOSSY, Ruth (2006), *L'argumentation dans le discours*, Paris: Colin. First edition in 2000.

DUCROT, Oswald (1972), *Dire et ne pas dire. Principes de sémantique linguistique*, Paris: Hermann.

CHARAUDEAU, Patrick, et MAINGUENEAU, Dominique (eds.) (2002), *Dictionnaire d'analyse du discours,* Paris: Le Seuil.

LEFF, Michael, "Perelman, *Ad Hominem* Argument, and Rhetorical Ethos", *Argumentation, Perelman and Beyond* (forthcoming).

MAINGUENEAU, Dominique (1991), *L'Analyse du Discours*, Paris: Hachette.

PERELMAN, Chaïm, and OLBRECHTS-TYTECA, Lucie (1969), *The New Rhetoric. A Treatise on Argumentation*, translated by J. Wilinson and P. Weaver, Notre-Dame/London: University of Notre-Dame Press. First edition in French in 1958.

PERELMAN, Chaïm (1979), *The New Rhetorics and the Humanities. Essays on Rhetoric and its Applications*, Dordrecht: Reidel Publishing Company, pp. 117-123.

———(1982), *The Realm of Rhetoric*, translated by W. Kluback, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

(Página deixada propositadamente em branco)

IMPRENSA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA
COIMBRA UNIVERSITY PRESS

· U C ·