WRENCHING FROM CONTEXT: THE MANIPULATION OF COMMITMENTS[1]

Abstract

This article analyzes the fallacy of wrenching from context, using the dialectical notions of commitment and implicature as tools. The data, a set of key examples, is used to sharpen the conceptual borderlines around the related fallacies of straw man, accent, misquotation, and neglect of qualifications. According to the analysis, the main characteristics of wrenching from context are the manipulation of the meaning of the other's statement through devices such as the use of misquotations, selective quotations, and quoting out of context. The theoretical tools employed in the analysis are pragmatic theories of meaning and a dialectical model of commitment, used to explain how and why a standpoint is distorted. The analysis is based on a conception of fallacies as deceptive strategic moves in a game of dialogue. As a consequence, our focus is not only on misquotations as distortions of meaning, but on how they are used as dialectical tools to attack an opponent or win a dispute. Wrenching from context is described as a fallacy of unfairly attributing a commitment to another party that he never held. Its power as a deceptive argumentation tactic is based on complex mechanisms of implicit commitments and on their misemployment to improperly suggest an attribution of commitment.

Keywords

Commitment; ambiguity; emphasis; misquotation; implicature; selective quotation ; selection bias; special pleading; fallacy.

The central purpose of this inquiry is to analyze the fallacy of wrenching from context. Logic textbooks and other accounts briefly explain this manipulative technique as a linguistic distortion of the other party's thesis. It is a fallacy in which there are two or more parties engaged in argumentation and one has interpreted or represented the position of another in an improper way that has failed to take the context of the other's statement into account.[2] Misrepresentation of another party's words has been familiar enough in the media coverage of the last presidential campaign, as illustrated by the following two cases, both useful to help us begin to identify the fallacy of wrenching from context. The first one shows how wrenching from context is a type of misquotation used to prove a point[3]:

Case 1

During the February 19 broadcast of his nationally syndicated radio show, Rush Limbaugh falsely stated that President Obama said "that we all must learn to live within our means and not expect the values of our homes to go up 10, 20 percent over our lifetimes ever again." Limbaugh also stated: "This is what I mean by him talking down the economy. Don't think of your house as going up in value anytime soon." However, Obama actually said during a February 18 speech in Mesa, Arizona, that we should "not

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2 Often it is not the position of the other party that is misrepresented, but that of some third party, authority, or position that is discussed. Thus in addition to two-party dialogues, our analysis using commitment as a basis (section 6) will also be taken to encompass three-party dialogues.

3 (Limbaugh misquoted Obama on home values, used it as evidence of Obama "talking down the economy", 2009)

assume that housing prices are going to go up 20, 30, 40 percent *every year*" [emphasis added], not "over our lifetimes" as Limbaugh asserted.

Obama's words are altered in this quotation and used to support Limbaugh's thesis that he is talking down the economy. The most common case of misquotation occurs where words are changed or omitted in order to support a conclusion; however, positions can be misquoted in a less obvious fashion by taking the quotation out of context. In the following case, the journalist takes a quote out of its context, and an indictment of the media for inappropriately covering the Republican campaign becomes an attack against the republican candidate[4]:

Case 2

But also, some conservatives have been pretty hard on you, as well. "The National Review" had a story saying that, you know, I can't tell if Sarah Palin is "incompetent, stupid, unqualified, corrupt, or all of the above."

The national review actually said:

"Watching press coverage of the Republican candidate for vice president, it is sometimes hard to decide whether Sarah Palin's incompetent, stupid, unqualified, corrupt, backward or, well, all of the above

The argumentative use of quotes taken out of their context clearly appears from the following case[5]:

Case 3

The *Post* reports that in a meeting with congressional Democrats, Obama said, "This is the moment…that the world is waiting for.…I have become a symbol of the possibility of America returning to our best traditions." But the Obama campaign claims the quotation in context isn't nearly as arrogant: "It has become increasingly clear in my travel, the campaign, that the crowds, the enthusiasm, 200,000 people in Berlin, is not about me at all. It's about America. I have just become a symbol."

The quote is selected and taken out of context, and used to show how arrogant Obama is.

In order to understand the structure of wrenching from context, this tactic is compared to other related fallacies and distinguished from them. The different comparisons cast lights onto different aspects of the argumentative strategy of decontextualizing the opponent's words. In particular, the aims of this paper are to understand how this argumentative tactic works, why it is fallacious and under which respects it is different from other similar manipulative techniques, how it affects a discussion and how powerful it is.

From the twenty examples presented in this paper, it emerges that wrenching from context is a distortion of the other's position and is based on ambiguity arising from emphasis on a particular aspect

[4] (Gingrich: CNN Misquote in Palin Interview Shows 'The Fix Is In', 2008)

[5] (Obama: Messianic or Just Misquoted?, 2008)

of a quotation. This strategy is an extremely powerful instrument in news reporting in the media (see for instance Dunsky, 2001; Boller, 1967), but also in everyday argumentation and law. Selection bias and special pleading are normal in argumentation and media reporting, but misquotation and otherwise distorting what a source says are often associated with dangerous forms of error and strategies of deceptive manipulation. This close relation between the different uses of wrenching from context and many other fallacies makes it very difficult to classify these fallacies as a group. However, the blurred boundary between the different types of manipulative moves to which wrenching from context is usually associated reflects different aspects, characteristics, and uses of this fallacy.

Obviously we cannot offer analyses of all these fallacies in the scope of a single article. Utilizing the existing literature in which these fallacies have been treated, we move towards analyzing the fallacy of wrenching from context in a precise model that enables us to deal in an orderly way with twenty key cases. We begin by presenting a series of cases of wrenching from context in section 1, followed in section 2 by the presentation of a number of cases that fit the category of misquotation, or selective quotation, but are different from wrenching from context. In section 3 the fallacy of wrenching from context is distinguished from the related fallacies of straw man, accent, loaded terms and special pleading, as well as the related phenomena of ambiguity, bias and loaded terms. Section 4 explains how the mechanism behind the fallacy of wrenching from context is based on Gricean implicature, which produces cognitive effects when a change in previous assumptions takes place in a dialogue through contextualization of an utterance. The problem with analyzing wrenching from context is that we have lacked an underlying theory of how wording used in an argument properly commits the arguer to propositions that can later be used in a way that he might not have intended, even to distort his argument and attack it. We provide such a theory in section 5, based on the notion of commitment in dialogue studied in (Hamblin, 1970) and (Walton & Krabbe, 1995). Section 6 shows how misquotation is commonly used as a deceptive tactic to fulfill different goals in argumentation. We divide these strategies into pro strategies, used to support one's own position, and contra strategies, used to attack an opponent's position. In section 7 we apply the distinctions and the analytical tools drawn from linguistic and argumentation theories to the cases presented and discussed in the previous sections. A general conclusion summing up our analysis is provided in section 8.

1. Wrenching from Context: An Exploratory Introduction

Wrenching from context is a fallacy extremely hard to univocally classify, since in the literature it has been described under different labels, like ambiguity, accent, and straw-man. The purpose of this article is to describe its dialectical technique as an independent strategy by pointing out its peculiar features. In order to understand how it works, however, it is useful to begin with an exploratory introduction of how the fallacy is usually conceived and examine some examples.

1.1. Typical cases and uses of Wrenching from Context

In this subsection, the most typical cases, mainly drawn from logic textbooks, of the fallacy of wrenching from context are presented.

A typical example used to illustrate the fallacy of wrenching from context is given in the exercise page of a textbook (Carney & Scheer, 1964: 55):

Case 4

Sir, you unfortunately display ignorance of the religious views of Thomas Jefferson when you call him an agnostic or atheist. The following quotation from the Jefferson Memorial should clearly illustrate this ignorance: "I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." – Strange language for an atheist or agnostic!

The quote from the Jefferson Memorial is fragmented. The complete quote, from Jefferson's letter to Dr. Benjamin Rush, is as follows: "They [the clergy] believe that any portion of power confided to me, will be exerted in opposition to their schemes. And they believe rightly: for I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man"

This selective quotation from Jefferson's writing certainly distorts his meaning, making it appear to be something other than it is. But why is that distortion a fallacy, and what kind of fallacy is it? It is not a fallacious argument *per se*, but it does seem to be a fallacious misrepresentation of Jefferson's point of view.

A misrepresentation of another's point of view can be achieved, as in the following case given by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992: 128), by quoting the other's statements out of their original context, omitting specifications and interpreting the original words:

Case 5

Kok, invited to speak at the official opening of the academic year, reflected on the fact that in our society there are essential jobs for which it is becoming increasingly difficult to find people. Why not, by analogy with national service in the forces, have a sort of national service in social well-fare, he suggested. "It was just an idea," says Kok, "but the next day *The Telegraph* came out with a 7-column headline on page 3: Kok wants forced labour! I felt I'd really been taken for a ride."

In this case Mr. Kok's declaration is weakened by wrenching it from its context, making it very easy to attack. This example reveals a connection between the straw man fallacy and the fallacy of wrenching

from context: the distortion of wrenching from context is a strategy used to build a fictitious image of the opponent and then use it to attack his view by making it look extreme.

Logic textbooks often cite selective quotations taken from sources like books, movies, and plays that are taken out of context by a reviewer and used to imply a meaning quite different from the one meant in the literary work. The following cases[6] are examples of reviews.

Case 6

This has been the best play I've seen all year! Of course, it is the only play I've seen all year.

Case 7

This was a fantastic movie, as long as you aren't looking for plot or character development.

Both reviews consist of an ironic observation followed by an explanation telling the reader that it is meant to be taken ironically. However, a reviewer could use selective quotation as follows:

(Case 3) John Smith calls this “the best play I've seen all year!”

(Case 4) “...a fantastic movie...” - Sandy Jones, Daily Herald.

In both cases, the original material has been selectively quoted and taken out of context, thus distorting the original meaning. In the altered quotes, there is an implicit argument that others should come see the play or movie, while in the original reviews the advice was exactly contrary. These cases are relatively simple made-up examples used to illustrate the fallacy, but it is not hard to imagine how such practice of selective quotation could be the basis of many biased, misleading and even fallacious political arguments.

1.2. Wrenching from context in political and scientific communication

While the purpose of the previous examples was to illustrate what the fallacy of wrenching from context is, the following cases show how it could be used in politics and other conversational settings, and its effects on a discussion.

In the 1996 US presidential election campaign a Republican press aide quoted Democratic candidate Al Gore as having made the following statement:

6 (Nooriala, 2004)

Case 8

"there is no proven link between smoking and lung cancer."

This statement was quoted accurately from a television interview conducted in 1992. But it was only part of a longer sentence quoted below.[7]

"[some tobacco company scientists] *will claim with a straight face that* there is no proven link between smoking and lung cancer. . . . But the weight of the evidence accepted by the overwhelming preponderance of scientists is, yes, smoking does cause lung cancer."

In this case selective quotation has been used to attribute a conclusion to Gore that is the opposite of the one he actually stated. This use of quotation is so clearly meant as a tactic of deceit, in addition to being partisan, that it is more than merely bias of a harmless kind. It represents a fallacy of some sort, where the term 'fallacy' means a deceptive trick used to try to unfairly get the best of an opponent in argumentation. This case could be cited as a certain sort of paradigm of the fallacy of wrenching from context.

Another significant kind of example of this fallacy also involves the misleading use of quotation in media reporting of political discourse. In this case, however, the quotation is not taken out of what is normally conceived as "context", namely the part of text surrounding the quoted passage, but out of its communicative setting. It is from an internet source on the use of political quotations[8]. Former President Dan Quayle, labeled by the media as a terrible speaker, was once was quoted as having made the following statement, described as ridiculous.

Case 9

"I was recently on a tour of Latin America, and the only regret I have was that I didn't study Latin harder in school so I could converse with those people"

This statement, however, was originally put forward with a humorous purpose. In fact, as reported in the web site:

In April 1989, Representative Claudine Schneider of Rhode Island told a gathering of Republicans that she had recently attended an event at the Belgian embassy, where Vice-President Quayle complimented her on her command of French. Then, Schneider said, the Vice-President added:

"I was recently on a tour of Latin America, and the only regret I have was that I didn't study Latin harder in school so I could converse with those people."

7 (A Freeper's Introduction to Rhetoric, 2004)
8 (Quayle quotes, 2007)

Ms. Schneider concluded by admitting that the story was merely a joke, but not all the newspapers reported it that way. Several publications, either through carelessness or a desire not to let the truth get in the way of a good story, reported the story as true.

The problem in this case is not omission of text: the mere words reported without specifying their intent (humorous in this case) suggest a different context of use (a serious speech in this example). The statement quoted was meant to be joke, but it was represented as a factual statement: Quayle was made to appear to be an ignorant person who should not be judged capable of holding political office.

The next example also concerns media reporting of Vice-President Al Gore. It concerns what Gore actually said that led to the widely circulated story that he claimed to have “invented” the Internet.[9]

Case 10

Al Gore did not claim he "invented" the Internet, nor did he say anything that could reasonably be interpreted that way. The derisive "Al Gore said he 'invented' the Internet" put-downs are misleading distortions of something he said (taken out of context) during an interview with Wolf Blitzer on CNN's "Late Edition" program on 9 March 1999. When asked to describe what distinguished him from his challenger for the Democratic presidential nomination, Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey, Gore replied (in part):

During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet. I took the initiative in moving forward a whole range of initiatives that have proven to be important to our country's economic growth and environmental protection, improvements in our educational system.

Clearly, although Gore's phrasing was clumsy (and self-serving), he was not claiming that he "invented" the Internet (in the sense of having designed or implemented it), but that he was responsible for helping to create the environment (in an economic and legislative sense) that fostered the development of the Internet.

In this case, Gore did say something that was ambiguous and that perhaps could be taken to imply that he was claiming to have invented the Internet. But if you look at what he actually said in the context of the surrounding text, Gore is simply stating that he promoted several projects, among which was the project regarding the creation of Internet. Wrenching the quotation from context resolved the ambiguity of Gore’s statement, making a possible implication of his claim an actual assertion.

It is extremely interesting how the meaning of the words used is bound to the context they are used in. In philosophical disputes wrenching from context causes the attribution of positions the speaker never held on the basis of an excerpt from a text. The discussion can be directed against the particular meaning of a word that, if correctly interpreted, has in the real context a different meaning. The whole

9 (Internet of Lies, 2005)

position of a philosopher can be distorted by manipulating the specification of the terms used. The following example is a quotation from Thomas Huxley used by Rooster, a user in a Usernet group:[10]

Case 11

"This is ... all that is essential to Agnosticism. That which Agnostics deny and repudiate, as immoral, is the contrary doctrine, that there are propositions which men ought to believe, without logically satisfactory evidence; and that reprobation ought to attach to the profession of disbelief in such inadequately supported propositions. The justification of the Agnostic principle lies in the success which follows upon its application, whether in the field of natural, or in that of civil, history; and in the fact that, so far as these topics are concerned, no sane man thinks of denying its validity."

Rooster used this quotation to argue that, according to Huxley, all that is “essential” to Agnosticism is to deny the statement that there are propositions we should believe even though we do not have logically satisfactory evidence. However, if you examine the original passage that the quotation above was part of, you can see that it has been wrenched from context in a way that alters its meaning:

I further say that Agnosticism is not properly described as a "negative" creed, nor indeed as a creed of any kind, except in so far as it expresses absolute faith in the validity of a principle, which is as much ethical as intellectual. This principle may be stated in various ways, but they all amount to this: that it is wrong for a man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of any proposition unless he can produce evidence which logically justifies that certainty. This is what Agnosticism asserts; and, in my opinion, it is all that is essential to Agnosticism. That which Agnostics deny and repudiate, as immoral, is the contrary doctrine, that there are propositions which men ought to believe, without logically satisfactory evidence; and that reprobation ought to attach to the profession of disbelief in such inadequately supported propositions. The justification of the Agnostic principle lies in the success which follows upon its application, whether in the field of natural, or in that of civil, history; and in the fact that, so far as these topics are concerned, no sane man thinks of denying its validity.

The statement “it is all that is essential to Agnosticism” refers back to the first passage above. It conveys the meaning that what is “essential” to Huxley’s agnosticism is that people should not claim to be certain of ideas when they do not have evidence that logically justifies such certainty. Thus although the case is not an easy one to analyze, and the issues are highly controversial, this case clearly shows how the selective quotation is a wrenching from context that changes the meaning of the argument and the viewpoint attributed to the other party in the discussion.

1.3. Wrenching from Context: problems encountered and object of inquiry.

10 (Nooriala, 2004)

Thus we can see that the simpler cases cited in this section, although they give a paradigm notion of how the fallacy of wrenching from context basically works, look trivial, as though the fallacy is easy to spot and is not of much real importance in practical argumentation in daily life. However, the more complex kinds of cases cited show quite the opposite. Such cases can be quite serious, and they can be very difficult to properly sort out. They can be controversial, and strong partisan arguments can be put forward on both sides. In a paper, the capability for analyzing such lengthy cases is limited. But it is important to make the point that they exist.

2. Misquotation and Selective Quotation

Wrenching from context is related to another error or fault of argumentation that often underlies it as a fallacy – misquotation. Misquotation may be defined as the changing of the wording of a quotation, either by changing specific words, phrases or sentences, or by changing their order or arrangement, so that the wording appears to have a meaning other than the one intended. So defined, misquotation did not occur in the examples of wrenching from context presented in section 1[11]. Although misquotation could be described as a fallacy, especially if used to attack an opponent or his viewpoint, it may be just a fault that is the basis of several fallacies, including wrenching from context and straw man, depending on how these fallacies are defined. In any event, it is a phenomenon that is highly significant in argumentation, as the following cases will show.

2.1. Possible strategies of distorting a quotation

One of the most famous cases of alleged use of misquotation in argumentation is the trial of the psychiatrist Jeffrey Masson[12]. In her book, The Freud Archives, Janet Malcom built a distorted image of Dr. Masson by use of selective quotations from tapes on which he had been interviewed. Examination of the tapes showed that in many cases she had distorted or changed his wording. Because there is so much data, and because we would like to reserve the study of the use of such tactics and fallacies in legal argumentation for a separate paper, we will not cite specific examples here. We will cite one classic case of how these kinds of fallacies can occur in a trial, however. In the Galileo trial, quotes were manipulated by changing some words. The information conveyed by the text may be the same, but Galileo's position is completely twisted due to the difference of wording. In transcribing a letter by Galileo, Father Niccolò Lorini changed two words and uses the altered quotations against him (De Santillana, 1962: 45).

11 This is not true, however, for selective quotation.
12 (Masson v. New Yorker Magazine, Inc. et al., 1991)

Case 12

Galileo had written: “There are in Scripture words which, taken in the strict literal meaning, look as if they differed from the truth”. Lorini wrote instead: “Which are false in the literal meaning”. Galileo had written: “Scripture does not refrain from overshadowing [adombrare] its most essential dogmas by attributing to God qualities very far from and contrary to His essence”. Lorini changed “overshadowing” into “perverting” (pervertire).

The use of misquotation is not very subtle in this case, because it merely involves the changing of the original words. Many more subtle tactics of misquotation are possible that do not change the words themselves.

One form of misquotation that uses the original words involves the erasing of qualifications that were stated in the original text. The first example comes from a book review[13]. In a critical essay about conservative thinkers written in 1985, Sidney Blumenthal is said to have made the following statement about Gregory A. Fossedal.

Case 13

On the right, Fossedal is widely regarded as his generation's most promising journalist.

Compare this quotation with a 1989 advertisement for Fossedal’s, which contained the following statement attributed to Blumenthal:

Many consider Fossedal the most promising journalist of his generation.

Omitting the qualification “on the right” distorts the meaning of the original sentence, leading the reader to taking it to express quite a different statement. The second statement is a highly positive generalization that makes a ringing endorsement whereas the first could be positive or negative, depending on the reader’s political viewpoint. Many might consider this kind of problem relatively trivial, because it only occurs in an advertisement, where selective quotation can be used as a promotional device. But other examples suggest that the problem is quite serious and common in media reporting of politics. The following example of a quotation was used in the American media to depict French foreign policy as against giving support to the war on Iraq (cited on an argumentation web site).[14]

Case 14

“My position is that, regardless of the circumstances, France will vote 'no'.” (Jacques Chirac, President of France, 10 March 2003).

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[13] Cited in (A Freeper's Introduction to Rhetoric, 2004)

14 (Baggini, 2003)

The problem (commented on both by BBC radio's *World at One* and the *Guardian* newspaper) was that the quotation above was selected in a misleading way from what Chirac actually said, quoted below:

"My position is that, regardless of the circumstances, France will vote 'no' because she considers this evening that there are no grounds for waging war in order to achieve the goal we have set ourselves, i.e. to disarm Iraq."

The crucial words omitted in the selective quotation are "this evening". The context of the discussion had been about how France would vote that evening in different hypothetical circumstances. In this context, "regardless of the circumstances" refers to circumstances such as how other members of the council would vote. Hence the use of the expression 'this evening' indicates that the position taken was not meant to express a general policy that was not subject to change. Chirac even went on to add that France doesn't refuse war on principle, but only considers war the final stage of a process. When the omitted context of the speech has been inserted, it is clear that Chirac has been the victim of a wrenching from context, similar to the one illustrated in case 8. But the effect of the wrenching from context, in case 14, is to make Chirac's stated policy seem to be much more rigid and absolute than he meant it to be. The sophistical tactic illustrated here combines the traditional fallacy of neglect of qualifications (*secundum quid*) with the fallacy of wrenching from context of the kind studied in section 1. And yet the erasing of the important qualifications also gives grounds for classifying the problem at least partly under the heading of misquotation.

2.2. Selective quotations and distortions of quotations

In the cases cited above, misquotation is such a serious distortion of the source's real viewpoint, causes so much damage, and is so deceptive that there are grounds for classifying it as a fallacy. But in some instances, selective quotation does not seem to be quite so bad (Boller, 1967: 27).

Case 15

President Johnson, on signing a $280 million health research bill on August 10, 1965, said that he believed, as Thomas Jefferson did, "that the care of human life and happiness is the first and only legitimate object of good government". […] In a speech which he made in March 1809, shortly after leaving the White house, […] Jefferson said that he hoped to be remembered for keeping the peace, because "the care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government".

In this case, Johnson used quotation out of context to support his own point of view, or perhaps just to eliminate a part of what Jefferson said that might appear distracting or confusing to Johnson's audience. His use of the quotation certainly distorted what Jefferson said, but there is hesitation to accuse Johnson of having committed a fallacy. Still, by selecting out an important part of the text to support his

own viewpoint, Johnson could be accused of manipulating the quote by stressing only part of it. This leads us to a consideration of the fallacy of accent.

It is difficult to draw a clear line between selective quotation and wrenching from context, for many cases of the former have routinely been classified as committing the latter fallacy, and selective quotation can properly be described as quoting out of context of the larger text of discourse from which the selected part has been taken. Another factor is that selective quotation by itself does not seem to be fallacious, or even wrong, in all instances. After all, a quotation is something normally extracted from a larger body of text. Thus quotation, by its nature, is selective. And as the Johnson case suggests, even when the quote does inaccurately report the original statement by leaving something significant out, the change does not distort the original meaning so badly that we would classify the misquotation in the case as a fallacy[15]. Selective quotation could be classified as a means for carrying out wrenching from context.

2.3. Misquotation and Wrenching from context

Misquotation, however, is different from wrenching from context, as pointed out at the beginning of section 2. Even so, there is one case presented in section 2 that combines the two fallacies.The Chirac case shows that there are overlaps between the two fallacies. His statement on French foreign policy was reported in a way that amended crucial words. The misquotation suggested that his policy was more rigid and absolute than the right wording indicated. This case can properly be classified under the category of wrenching from context because the quotation omitted the reason that Chirac gave for his position, making it seem more dogmatic. This case is a tricky one, however, because it involves three fallacies: wrenching from context, misquotation, and neglect of qualifications. Even so, the mixture of the three fallacies in this case is not problematic, from a point of view of our analysis. Fallacy overlap of this kind is common. We conclude that we can still maintain our classification of misquotation as distinct from wrenching from context.

We conclude this section with a decision on terminology. The first point concerns the meaning of 'misquotation'. Does this always refer to changing the wording of a text, or can it also be committed by omitting part of it? We take it in the former way. In other words, we take misquotation to always involve changing the wording of an original text. It could be a paraphrase, but it has to be one that

15 Schipper & Schuh (1959:52) recognize the widespread use of this fallacy: "The fallacy of special pleading or half-truth may be considered a distinctive kind of illegitimate accent. For if one emphasizes only those circumstances favorable to his own case, and conveniently forgets the unfavorable circumstances, he is wrongfully accenting or stressing only part of the truth. It must be admitted that special pleading is the stock in trade of legal profession. One wonders how an attorney, especially one who pleads his cases in court, could possibly build a successful practice without persistently and cleverly resorting to this fallacy. When an attorney becomes a jurist, however, it then becomes essential that he learn to detect and honestly evaluate special pleading…". Our explanation for this kind of fallacy of accent is based on the concept of bias (see below), and our evaluation of fallaciousness is founded on the distinction between bad and harmless bias.

purports to be a quotation, rather than just a paraphrase. We use the expression 'wrenching from context' for a fallacy in which a quotation, although it may be (and typically is) accurately quoted, is used in a different context to suggest a different meaning, which is attributed to the arguer and then used to discredit his viewpoint in some way. In section 4 we will show how exploiting such a meaning shift can be explained as an argumentation strategy by using Gricean conversational implicature. Misquotation and selective quotation are ways to carry out this argumentation maneuver. We will explain in section 6 how such strategies work. Thus, in our view, wrenching from context is not based on misquotation and is different from it. Wrenching from context, in our view, changes the context of a quotation, either by omitting fragments of the original text it was part of, and/or by suggesting a different context that shifts the meaning of what was quoted.

3. Related Fallacies

In order to understand how the fallacy of wrenching from context works and consequently classify it, it is useful to point out its main characteristics, by showing why and how this fallacious technique must be distinguished from other fallacies or related phenomena that may or may not be fallacies. In section 3 we consider the fallacies of straw man, accent and special pleading, and the phenomena of ambiguity and loaded terms. We begin with the straw man fallacy.

3.1. Straw-man and Wrenching from Context.

Straw man is often connected to quotation. However, a straw-man is based on paraphrasing (Wright, 1989: 278-279) the other party's words in order to represent a distorted position that is easier to attack. Such paraphrasing may or may not involve quotation. Consider the following example[16]:

Case 16

Fred: "Poverty is one factor that causes crime".

Alice: "You're wrong to claim that all poor people are criminals. My friend Jack is poor, but he is not a criminal!"

Alice's argument involves neglect of qualifications in reporting Fred's words, but the point is that the proponent's position is paraphrased, not quoted. She is using a misrepresentation, not a misquotation, of Fred's viewpoint to make it appear more extreme than it really is. This exaggerated account is used to

[16] (Straw Man, 2009)

attack Fred's viewpoint and refute it by giving a counter-example. It is this sort of use of distortion of another party's viewpoint to attack it that characterizes the straw man fallacy.

In committing the straw man fallacy (see Johnson & Blair, 1983 p. 71; Govier, 1992 p. 157) an arguer describes the position of another arguer in a distorted representation that makes it appear more unreasonable or extreme, and thereby easier to refute. The straw man fallacy requires two components. One is the misrepresentation of another arguer's position or viewpoint. The other is the use of that misrepresentation to attempt to refute her argument. As the Kok example above (case 5) showed, both wrenching from context and straw man fallacies violate the Pragma-Dialectical rule requiring accurate representation of an opponent's standpoint in a critical discussion[17]. But each one has a special component that separates it from the other. Wrenching from context involves the use of the opponent's exact words, whose context has been altered in order to change its meaning. On the other hand, in the straw-man a distortion of meaning (not necessarily based on context shift) is brought about by means also of paraphrases as a vehicle to carry forward an attack on the opponent's viewpoint or argumentation. There is also another difference that should be highlighted. While straw-man always refers to the other's point of view in the discussion, wrenching from context can refer to a point of view of a third party (in arguments from authority, for example). Whereas straw-man is misrepresentation aimed at distorting the opponent's viewpoint, and therefore a violation of rule 3 of critical discussion, wrenching from context is a wider strategy of altering a position to support the speaker's viewpoint. Wrenching from context can be a manipulation of the other party's standpoint, but is not only that. Authorities' claims, opponent's past statements, a third party's viewpoint can be taken out of context in order to support a position. This strategy cannot be explained simply applying the third Pragma-Dialectical rule.

3.2. Emphasis, Bias, and Wrenching from Context

The comparison between straw man and wrenching from context sheds light on the basic strategic aspects of wrenching from context. Other key features of this fallacy can be brought out by comparing the strategy of quoting out of context with the fallacy of accent. The two fallacies are, in fact, only apparently incompatible[18]. In Hamblin (1970) we find the first hint of the possibility of a broader definition of the originally fallacy of ambiguity. Originally the fallacy was conceived as a manipulative tactic grounded on the confusion between words spelled in the same way, but different in accentuation.

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17 In the pragma-dialectical theory, wrenching from context is described as a fallacy in representing a standpoint. In the normative model of dialogue called "critical discussion", this fallacy is considered a violation of the third rule, stating that an attack on a standpoint must relate to the actual standpoint advanced by the other party. This technique consist in distorting the opposed point of view, often in order to attack a straw man instead of the original position, by exaggerating, simplifying, generalizing the original standpoint and omitting its qualifications.

18 The original treatment of this fallacy only concerned the "polisemy of a word [or a group of words] substantively the same, caused by a diversity of accents" (Petrus Hispanus, 1990: 109).

This technique has now come to describe manipulation by exploiting the ambiguity arising from different sentence stress (see for instance Copi, 1978)[19].

Widely construed, "stress" can be taken to include wrenching from context or leaving out a significant part of a quoted text. For instance, Toulmin (1979: 181) describes the device of taking someone out of context and altering his words or omitting parts of his statement as means of emphasizing certain parts of his sentence and giving it a new meaning. The connection between the fallacy of accent and the tactic of quotation manipulation can be traced to the use of emphasis in newspaper titles. Rescher, for instance, gives the following example (Rescher, 1964: 76).

Case 17

"DEAD MAN MURDERED" in large and bold type may be followed by "authorities suspect" in small print.

Copi also described the fallacious use of emphasis in newspapers or advertisements (see for instance Copi 1978: 115). Accentuation may change the meaning of a statement by licensing fallacious inferences. The examples given do not concern quotations, but show how these devices can distort information without altering the facts. The important difference between the fallacies of accent and wrenching from context is well illustrated in James Carney's *Fundamentals of Logic* (1964: 53). While accent involves a change in meaning when a statement is verbally reported, by using a different sentence stress, wrenching from context is described as occurring when the context necessary to its interpretation is not supplied. In both fallacies the mistake is committed in the use of a quotation, the difference lies in the means of sense distortion.

For comparison with accent or, better, emphasis, it is useful to cite another relevant point related to the dialectical explanation of the strategy. Walton (1999: 109), analyzed the fallacy of wrenching from context as a fallacy of bias. The fallacy of wrenching from context comprises both suppression of evidence in a text of discourse, and distortion of that text, by presenting only the parts of the text that support the speaker's interpretation. The words in the quotation are not altered or replaced with others, but simply selected. The manipulation of a quotation's sense is achieved by ignoring all the verbal or contextual information that contrasts with the desired conclusion. From this comparison, one might conclude that the fallacy of wrenching from context is a form of fallacy of accent, where accent has to be read as emphasis, not only in the sense of word stress, but in the wider one of relevance and information selection. The problem arises in the definition of bias[20] and selection of information. In

[19] The following sentence is an example of this account of accent: "We should not speak ill of **our** friends." If the sentence is normally read, the meaning is not controversial at all. However, if reporting it we stress "our" or "our friends", its meaning would noticeable change. It would mean that we are free to speak ill of anyone except our friends.

20 The fallacy of bias occurs when a one-sided argument consisting "of pure pro-argumentation for one side of an issue in a dialogue, while failing to genuinely interact with the other side in a balanced way" (Walton 1999: 86). Thus bias is described as a fallacy when the interaction has been incorrectly represented. Bias in quotation occurs when the sense of the original utterance is not only adapted and used for the arguer's own purpose, but changed. Consequently, a commitment is attributed to the quoted person that he or she never held: for this reason the interaction is incorrectly altered. Fallacious bias here arises for a slightly different reason, but leads to the same dialectical effect.

many contexts of dialogue, the speaker is expected to present a case or a fact from his own point of view and to give an interpretation that involves omissions.

Related to the notion of bias is the connection between wrenching from context and two other fallacies, often called special pleading and loaded terms. Robinson (1947: 191) defined the fallacy of special pleading as emphasizing those subjects or arguments that are favorable to your own position and omitting those that are not. This fallacy is often considered in the textbooks as a subspecies of the fallacy of accent (Walton, 1996a: 134-136). It is also related to the notion of bias. The problem is that bias, or partisan use of arguments to support your own viewpoint, is not always fallacious. Advocating your own viewpoint by marshalling arguments that support it is often not only not fallacious, but quite appropriate. In many instances, the other side has the burden of bringing forward subjects or arguments that are not favorable to your side. As Schipper and Schuh noted (1959: 52), one wonders how an attorney could ever succeed in her profession without persistently resorting to this fallacy in trials. Generally then, it is hard to see why special pleading is a fallacy, and to grasp exactly how it is related to bias and accent.

3.3. Ambiguity and Wrenching from Context

An important point that is useful to highlight the gap between advocacy and fallacious bias is the notion of ambiguity, the generic label under which wrenching from context has often been classified. This fallacy is, in fact, based upon the ambiguity (or, better, polisemy) of the utterance, where the term "ambiguous" is used to indicate both the semantic aspect of the sentence and the pragmatic role it covers in the actual communication. Regarding the semantic point of view, apart from the deictic and ostensive component of communication that are overly influenced by placing the sentence out of context, the meaning of the very terms used is highly determined by the context in which they are placed. Context specifies the meaning of the terms. Every predication reduces the broad meaning of the term as it applies to the specific meaning it covers in the text. By omitting context, an important specification might be lost, altering the whole sense of a sentence.

Ambiguity in determining the meaning of a linguistic element is one factor in the ambiguity of the whole speech act. Ambiguity of a verbal move is caused by other factors as well, pragmatic factors. The use of a sentence in a context may trigger some implicatures, and have a precise meaning in one context, while in another context the same sentence may be read in a completely different way. Ambiguity, for this reason, may be described as the plurality of interpretations of a speech act. So-called semantic ambiguity, the ambiguity of semantic meaning, is only one instance of a wider phenomenon found in fallacies arising from ambiguity. Using these distinctions we can classify ambiguity according to its role in the communicative process. In fact, following Walton (1996b), the different interpretations of a sentence may be only potential, or imaginary, or pragmatic. To illustrate, they may be only potential, not actually realized; or they may stem from emphasis or possible implications that a reader can draw from the sentence, without the ambiguity playing any role in the communicative process; or they may

be actual, namely ambiguities that are used to aim at a precise semantic target. The difference between potential, imaginary, and pragmatic ambiguity lies in the dialogical factors of misunderstanding and communicative strategy.

In the first case, the ambiguity derives from lexical, syntactical, inflective (or morphological) elements. Some misunderstandings may be caused by the indeterminate meaning of linguistic units because of unsuccessful attempt to specify their meaning. In the second case, the interpreter may read the sentence in different ways, but this possibility leads only to a potential misunderstanding. In the third case, the possible readings of a sequence are intentional means of the speaker to realize some other interaction effect, for instance, avoiding burden of proof or responsibility for an utterance by concealment behind another possible sentence meaning.

Van Laar in his Ph.D. thesis (2003) explained ambiguity utilizing a pragma-dialectical point of view. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984: 25) had distinguished between two types of dialectical effects brought about by ambiguity, namely communicative and interactional effects. An ambiguous utterance may give rise to a failure of understanding in the communicative interchange, and the hearer, because of the ambiguity, is not able to understand the kind of speech act performed by the speaker, or the propositional content of his utterance, or both. The interactional effects concern the argumentative purpose of a speech act, and relate to the hearer's acceptance of the speaker's move. An ambiguous sentence has two readings. One interpretation may lead to the acceptance of the move, while the other leads to the challenge of it. The first kind of ambiguity, unlike the second, has no consequences from a dialectical point of view. The most serious problem that may follow from it is the necessity of clarification for understanding the meaning of an utterance (van Laar, 2003: 26). Van Laar defines an active ambiguity as an ambiguity that plays an active role in the discussion[21]. Semantic and contextual ambiguities are mostly latent, but when their different interpretations leads to different dialectical attitudes towards the utterance, they become active. In this sense, active ambiguity is close to Walton's pragmatic ambiguity, but while Van Laar's account is centred mostly on dialectical effects, Walton mostly focuses on their origin. Conceived in Walton's way, ambiguity may be considered to be the general phenomenon of the strategy of emphasis.

We can observe that the analysis of wrenching from context in terms of ambiguity is a useful instrument to detect when emphasis is used in a quotation to highlight some aspects of it, and when it is employed to introduce ambiguity and exploit it to distort the meaning of a quote.

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21 "An expression *E* that occurs within a question *S?* or a statement *T* is actively ambiguous in a context of discussion C if and only if (1) *E* admits of several interpretations in C, expressed by *E1*,...,*En*, such that (1a) each of these *Ei*, i ≤ n, is more precise than *E* in C and (1b) none of these *Ei*, i ≤ n, expresses an

incorrect interpretation in C according to some set of criteria for the correct use of language, and (2) neglecting to notice and articulate this specific distinction between *E1*,...,*En* may plausibly influence the course of the discussion." (Van Laar, 2003: 27-28).

3.4. Wrenching from Context: relation with other fallacies and distinctive features

What we have found about these fallacies can be summed up as follows. Straw-man is closely related to wrenching from context, but different from it for three reasons. One is that wrenching from context is based on quotation whereas straw-man is more often based on paraphrase. Another is that straw man always refers to the other's point of view in a discussion, whereas wrenching from context can refer to points of view of a third party. A third is that straw-man is always used to attack the viewpoint of the other party (by distorting it). Wrenching from context changes the meaning of another party's viewpoint as well, but not necessarily in order to use the changed version to attack that viewpoint.

The fallacy of accent varies in its textbook treatment, and is sometimes taken in a stricter sense, other times in a more inclusive sense-- in which it includes matters of stress and emphasis. Widely construed, accent can include wrenching from context. The fallacy of wrenching from context can be connected to the notion of bias, comprising both suppression of evidence and distortion of the text by presenting only part of it. As these fallacies are treated by the textbooks, wrenching from context is difficult to separate not only from the fallacy of accent, but also from the fallacies of special pleading and loaded terms. Whether these latter two really are fallacies remains a bone of contention, as discussed above.

The same could be said about ambiguity, another fundamental linguistic phenomenon involved in the strategy of wrenching from context. Wrenching from context, in fact, introduces ambiguity. The context, as seen above, specifies the meaning of terms and reduces the risk of an ambiguity in interpreting a sentence. Moreover, as it will be explained in section 4, context is fundamental for the notion of imaginary ambiguity, namely ambiguity deriving from implicatures and innuendo (see, for this concept, Walton, 2006: 289). The elimination of a sentence's context can thereby be used to make a sentence ambiguous and exploit this ambiguity to emphasize an otherwise unwarranted interpretation of the quoted words. This interpretation can stem from a lexical ambiguity, or from implicatures drawn from the new context in which the sentence is placed.

4. Interpretation and implicatures

The relationship between sentence and context is the most important concept to understand ambiguity and, consequently, fallacies of ambiguities. Context includes several aspects: the temporal and geographical situation of the utterance, the textual situation of the sentence, and the interaction features of the speech act. Ambiguities may also derive from the instantiation of the variables, or deictic expressions, and from wrong interpretation of lexical elements when the context is not clear enough to specify their meaning. It may also derive from communicative intent when the interlocutor cannot understand the real meaning the move is supposed to have or what change in the interaction the speaker wants to perform with his words. The most complex aspect of context is the last one because it

is related to the concept of implicature and thereby to implicit assumptions required to make sense of discourse.

4.1. Theories of implicature

First, the notion of implicature must be distinguished from the concept of inference. Implicatures are means to communicate and to interpret speaker's meaning. They are part of a speaker's and a hearer's competency, of her knowledge of linguistic meanings and discourse laws. They are sometimes manifested through connectives like 'and', 'but', etc., which can have pragmatic content, namely they can have implicit propositions as arguments[22]. On the other hand, inferences are part of the speaker logical faculty, which involves knowledge of logical rules and *topoi*, that is to say argumentation schemes. Sperber and Wilson (1986: 37) recognized this difference in their definition of implicatures as species of non-deductive inferences.

The notion of implicature was introduced by Paul Grice (1975) to indicate the implicit semantic re-elaboration that is generated by apparent flouting of conversational maxims. Grice (1975: 45-46, 49-50) stated four main conversational maxims, principles that stem from the cooperativeness between interlocutors. A speaker must be as informative as required and not more than it (quantity) he must tell the truth and what is supported by adequate evidence (quality); he must be relevant (relation); and he must be perspicuous, avoiding obscurity, ambiguity, being brief and orderly (manner). Speech acts may break these rules, but in this case the whole interaction is damaged, because the speaker reveals with his move a lack of cooperation and, consequently, of rationality. But the maxims can also be flouted. The speaker may perform a speech act that apparently breaks a rule, but the sense of the move can be saved by means of an implicature. Thus a correction obtained by attributing to the statement a new meaning related to the conventional one that follows the apparently broken maxim.

Sperber and Wilson (1986), in their theory, found the basic principle for explaining the mechanism of implicatures in the rule of relevance. All the maxims, in other words, can be read as different applications of the unique rule. Utterances can be interpreted in several ways, following different criteria and disambiguation principles. In their account, "human cognition is relevance-oriented, we pay attention to information that seems relevant for us"(Wilson & Sperber, 1998: 8). The hearer, in other words, expects the utterance to be relevant for him and informative. He interprets it according to the principle that every utterance creates, in this sense, a presumption of relevance (Wilson & Sperber, 1998: 9). Relevance is described in cognitive terms, as cognitive effects resulting by a minimum processing effort. A cognitive effect is produced when a change in the previous assumptions is realized, when assumptions are for instance deleted, strengthened, or combined. Contextualization is defined as the placement of the new information in a context in order to achieve cognitive effects, to draw

22 The first account of this kind of treatment of linguistic connectives was given by Paul Grice in his *William James Lectures*. See also Sperber and Wilson (1986: 37).

implications, and new conclusions. The most important feature in this theory is the role of context. It is conceived as the set of previous information where new information is placed. It is chosen by the interlocutor according to his knowledge and to the mental effort in reaching it. The hearer will chose the context that is easier to single out and that produces more cognitive effects. For instance, the utterance "I have had breakfast" may be interpreted as "I have had breakfast in the last few minutes, in the last few days, weeks or months…" (Wilson & Sperber, 1998: 13). The hearer chooses the interpretation that is most relevant for him.

4.2. Context and implicature in interpreting and manipulating quotations

The two theories presented above are useful in order to explain the strategies of manipulation or selection of quotation illustrated in the examples given above. The most important maxim for this purpose is the maxim of quantity, because it is related to the selection of information. The principle of "every affirmation is negation" can clarify the mechanism of implicatures that arise from this rule. The given information is supplemented by the possible information available and requested, comprising what has not been said and could have been said. The reasoning that originates it is a kind of *ad ignorantiam*, or default inference in a closed world. For example, suppose a professor, writing a recommendation letter for one of his students, states only the following words: "Smith's attendance at lectures was excellent, and Smith is also very friendly and congenial" (Walton, 1999:111). The teacher presumably knows the student well enough to recommend him, and he could (and normally would) have offered several kinds of positive judgements on his academic career. But he wrote only a brief comment on his character and attendance in classes. The quantity maxim leads the reader to draw the implicature (conversational) that the student lacks other important positive qualities. This case can also be analysed using relevance theory. The letter of reference is informative if it gives sufficient means to evaluate the student, but in the letter there are only statements about the student's character and attendance. If we place these statements in a context where other judgements would also normally be required, it is not informative at all. In this context, the letter is highly informative: the reader can draw the conclusion by implicature that the student lacks the other positive qualities needed for the position.

In this perspective, it is clear how the relation between context and sentence is fundamental for the interpretation of a quote. By wrenching a quotation from its original context, implicatures different from the intended ones can be elicited. Imaginary ambiguity can be introduced and used to distort the original sense of the quoted words.

4.3. Ambiguity and argumentation: interpretation and communicative intent

Wrenching from context is, in the first place, an argumentative strategy. The underlying strategy of ambiguity and the related phenomenon of interpretation should, for this reason, be connected to a theory of argumentation. The link between these two aspects is given by the notions of sense of an utterance and speaker's intentions.

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992: 14-15) described the relation between interpretation and argumentation in terms of standpoints. In this perspective, a standpoint is considered to be the combination of propositional attitudes (positive, negative, neutral) with a proposition. A speaker, in other terms, expresses in a dialogue a proposition and a judgment on it, and is committed to defend it in case it is challenged or doubted. But how can a standpoint be determined if an arguer's statement is ambiguous, obscure, vague, or may have been wrenched from context? To deal with such possibilities, the context and the intentions of the speaker must be taken into account in the process of interpretation. For this reason, van Eemeren and Grootendorst introduced the notion of sense of an utterance. The sense of an utterance may be described as the function of a verbal sequence in the text, which we can consider as a whole communicative move (see Rigotti, 1997). A speaker, in order to perform a communication move, expresses a text, constituted by utterances. The basic units of a text are the sequences, namely the verbal steps (utterances or complexes of utterances) of the process of changing the communicative status, a process which represents the textual sense[23]. For this reason, a single sequence cannot be interpreted alone. A sequence's sense is in function of the whole move (see Rigotti, 1997). Van Eemeren and Grootendorst provided a criterion for connecting the interpretation of a textual sequence to the sense of the text based on the intentions of the speaker. In their view, the determination of a text sense is made primarily by the comprehension of the speaker's intentions[24]. The notion of intention, in our interpretation, can be considered in relation to the change of the communicative status. By means of this criterion, we can interpret the fallacies arising from wrenching from context as caused by a wrong attribution of communicative intent.

4.4. Wrenching from Context as a Manipulation of Intentions

In the previous subsections, the relation between ambiguity, context, and interpretation has been explained. This connection enables one to analyze the fallacy of wrenching from context in terms of an argumentation strategy based upon the manipulation of the quoted person's communicative intentions. This manipulation is founded upon different kinds of ambiguity, and the subtlest and most complex of which is the imaginary ambiguity, stemming from implicatures.

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23 This concept has been introduced by Peirce with the term "habit change", see (Rigotti, 2001: 48)

24 "[…]it must always be assumed that the verbal presentation of his communication reflects the intentions of the speaker or writer. However, unless we can ask for clarification, we must base our interpretation on the verbal presentation as has arisen, and try to find the interpretation of utterances that are obscure, opaque, or vague that fits best to the context" (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992: 22).

In the following section the fallacy of wrenching from context will be analyzed as a fallacy of manipulation of commitments. This treatment allows one to relate the fallacy to its possible purposes and roles in a dialogue.

5. Commitment as a Basis for Analysis

With many of the informal fallacies, the problem of fallacy identification, analysis, and evaluation is made easier by the fact that the fallacy is closely related to a known argumentation scheme (Walton, 1995). For example, the fallacy of improper appeal to authority is based on, and can be evaluated, using the argumentation scheme for argument from expert opinion. This resource is not available however in the cases of wrenching from context and straw man. These fallacies are more purely dialectical in nature. They basically arise from or result in the misrepresentation of one party's position by another party with whom the first party is engaged in a dialogue. In many cases, the dialogue is implicit, because the one party has written a text of discourse that the other is interpreting. Thus these fallacies are closely related to the problem of how to interpret a text of natural language discourse. They are specifically grounded upon how one arguer attributes commitment to the other party in a dialogue on the basis of the evidence of what that other party has supposedly said at some previous point in the dialogue. For this reason, they are based on the capability of determining an arguer's commitments in a dialogue (Hamblin, 1970).

5.1. Interpretation and attribution of commitments

In order to explain how the determination of the other party's commitments in the dialogue works, it is useful to deepen the concept of commitment, only just introduced in the section above, and to distinguish between the different kinds of commitments in a dialogue.

Hamblin (1970: 257) first defined commitment by means of a store of statements that a participant in a dialogue is obliged to maintain consistently or retract. Walton and Krabbe (1995) enlarged this concept; in their view not only assertions, but all kinds of speech acts were shown to involve commitments. From this perspective, commitments are not only negative prescriptions concerning statements, but states of being obligated or bound to a definite course of action. The total commitments of a person can be described as personal engagements to follow some sets of strategies derived from imperatives associated to particular statements he made.

Speech acts are actions associated with propositions, performed in and through speaking. Action commitments represent one type of commitment. Propositions that are object of speech acts give rise to propositional commitments, commitments to a proposition ensuing from a dialogical action centred

on a proposition. Walton and Krabbe (1995: 22) clarified this distinction with an example. One evening John asks Mary: "Where will you put the garbage for me to take out tomorrow morning?" Mary answers: "Behind the door, as usual". Mary has promised with her speech act to put the garbage behind the door and she is committed to this action commitment. On the other hand, Mary is propositionally committed not to deny that she will put the garbage behind the door. She is committed to the proposition that it will be behind the door, and to the proposition that if there is any garbage, she usually puts it behind the door. These commitments bind Mary to different kind of actions. She is now committed only to perform dialogical moves that conform to her commitments.

Commitment is the dialogical alternative to belief. Commitment is the way to explain the structure of how an arguer's position should be represented in a dialogue without having to invoke the psychological notion of belief. Hamblin (1970: 257) distinguished commitments that are dialectical from beliefs that are internal to an agent and therefore psychological. Commitments arise from moves (speech acts) put forward in a dialogue, and are maintained during the dialogue. They represent a *persona* of belief, in that they can be used to infer provisionally what are assumed to be beliefs, but they are not necessarily identical with what a person actually believes.[25] While real beliefs are sometimes irrational and contradictory, if a commitment set is not consistent, it can be challenged by the other party in a dialogue and a demand for retraction can be made if the inconsistency cannot be explained or otherwise resolved. However, the borderline between what a speaker said earlier in a dialogue and what she says later rarely is perfectly defined. Inconsistencies in commitments frequently arise from incoherent verbal moves of a person, but when pointed out by the other party, they must be resolved in further dialogue. Thus the notion of commitment represents what an arguer has gone on record in a dialogue as accepting, how what he said is interpreted by the other party, and how his commitments hang together as a set.

5.2. Quotation, commitments, and burden of proof.

The discussion on commitments now needs to be tied in to the previous remarks on quotation. Quotation is a means of altering the status of a discussion by influencing a participant's commitment set in a particular way. The dialogical force and peculiarity of quotation can be explained in terms of burden of proof. In this subsection the relations between commitment store and quotation, and quotation and burden of proof, will be taken into consideration.

There are refined possibilities of commitment in dialogue needed to deal with misquotation, wrenching from context, and straw man. One party (A) in a dialogue can misrepresent the other party's (B) position by attributing commitments to B that B does not hold, according to the evidence of what has been said in the discussion. There are other possibilities as well, where one party can misrepresent the

25 "The [commitment] store represent a kind of *persona* of beliefs: it need not correspond with his real beliefs, but it will operate, in general, approximately as if it did" (Hamblin, 1970: 257)

commitments of a second party in order to argue to a third party that the argument of the second party is mistaken. Here we have a three-party dialogue. The main feature of the use of quotation in a dialectical perspective is that participants can remind other parties of their previous statements in order to make them explicit and draw inferences from them in relation to their commitment stores. An interlocutor, through quotation, can increase her commitment set without performing any speech act putting forward an argument herself. She may later even reject these commitments, if they turn out to be contradictory with her current commitments or lead to strategically dangerous moves. Such possibilities of distancing and retraction suggest another critical aspect of quotation, the shifting of burden of proof. In contrast with all the other kinds of propositional contents of assertions, reported speeches do not place the burden of proof so much on the speaker as on the quoted hearer, who has to prove that he has been misquoted, if it is the case.

The term "burden of proof", well described in Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric* (1963: 112-113) is defined in Walton (1988: 234) as "an allocation made in reasoned dialogue which sets a strength (weight) of argument required by one side to reasonably persuade the other side". The allocation and shifting of this obligation to prove is ruled by discourse norms: for instance, the party who asserts a standpoint must defend it if challenged, or the party who attacks a piece of common knowledge has the burden of proving his position. In case he cannot fulfil the burden, the party loses his argument. If a party cannot prove the truth or plausibility of a proposition when requested, the proposition can be considered presumptively false or implausible. The concept of burden of proof, we should notice, is closely related to the notion of presumption. Quotation of the words of another party in a dialogical context is maintained presumptively correct until evidence of misquotation or misinterpretation is produced. The interlocutor quoted has a burden of proof to fulfil. He is committed to the quoted words and if he wants to retract them he needs to produce sufficient proof. The reason for this argumentative characteristic of quotation can be traced to the notion of implicit commitments.

5.3. Quotation, dialectical rules of retraction and dark-side commitments

If we interpret quotation in terms of commitments, it is necessary to explain how the rules of dialogue work relative to quotation. This subsection is therefore centred on the relationship between interpretation and the different levels of commitment, along with their dialectical effects on the burden of proof.

The interpretation of an utterance is essentially dependent on the distinction between light and dark side commitments (Walton & Krabbe, 1995: 12). In order to understand the relationship between these two concepts, it is necessary to briefly explain the structure of presupposition and implication. The propositional content of an utterance can be defined as a description of a possible fragment, or history, of the world (Hamblin, 1987, ch.4). Actions and deeds that propositions represent are related among themselves, that is, they may presuppose or implicate other deeds or actions. Implications depend on the possible organization of reality, that is, on the histories of the world that are considered possible.

For instance, the action of properly preparing green salad is commonly conceived as excluding the possibility of not washing it. In this case, washing salad is held to be an implication of properly preparing salad (Walton & Krabbe 1995: 43-47). Presupposition, on the other hand, is a relationship based on the ontological structure of reality, reflected by the language. Presuppositions can be defined as the necessary conditions for an utterance to make sense[26]. The fact that Mary is preparing green salad can have a truth value only in the case that Mary exists. Consequently, the utterance 'Mary is preparing green salad' can have sense only if the presupposition 'Mary exists' is assumed to be true. Such matters of entailment and presupposition are vital for understanding wrenching from context.

As noted above, a commitment set is divided in two parts, the light side and the dark side (Walton & Krabbe, 1995: 12). The light side is the set of the overt, expressed commitments, generated by speech acts and direct inferences. The dark side is a veiled set of commitments that are unknown to the interlocutors. It is constituted by presuppositions of the participant's position, implications of its commitments, or propositions he was committed to in previous dialogues regarding the same argument. This last aspect of implicit commitments is the most important for our treatment of the misquotation fallacy. The difference between dark and light side commitments lies in the different roles commitments play in a dialectical game. When the speaker asserts a statement inconsistent with his dark side commitments, the hearer can question his assertion on the basis of presumption of commitment. In this case, the burden of proof is thrown on the speaker's side. He needs to reconcile his position, by retracting some commitments or clarifying his meaning. In most games of dialogue, retraction of commitments is possible, but there are relevant differences between dark and light side commitments about retraction. Dark side commitments in permissive dialogue are not retractable. If the speaker is really committed to a proposition belonging to the commitments underlying his position, he cannot withdraw it (Walton & Krabbe 1995: 169)[27]. In order for a commitment to be retracted, it must be brought from the dark side to the light. Quotation, for this reason, can be considered a means to bring dark side commitments to the explicit side. The speaker asserts the other's words and so he purportedly shows the hearer's real position on the question at issue. Quotations represent the other party's assertions, as explicitly stated in other dialogues, and they may imply veiled commitments.

A problem for Hamblin's theory of commitment is that commitment is supposed to be determined by what an arguer actually said, i.e. what was inserted into her light side commitments set. But the fallacy of wrenching from context shows that what the speaker actually said has to be interpreted in light of context. This task of interpretation needs to be based not only on the wider text of discourse attributed to the speaker, but also on Gricean maxims that enable the interpreter to draw the right inferences from what was said concerning the speaker's commitments.

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26 For the theory of the ontological status of presupposition and its definition as the necessary condition of sense, see Rigotti (2001).

[27] We can notice that, if we interpret dark side commitments in terms of presuppositions or common knowledge (presupposed by the whole communication), it is possible to understand the stricter rules of retraction. Dark side commitments represent what has already been taken for granted, what is not at stake in the discussion. A discussion on presuppositions would be a discussion on commitments in a previous dialogue.

5.4. Wrenching from context and burden of proof

As seen above, one of the fundamental dialectical characteristics of quotation is that it brings dark-side commitments to the light side and influences the allocation of burden of proof. Since wrenching from context consists in a distortion of quotation, the same features characterize this type of fallacy. This argumentative phenomenon can be used to explain other dialogical moves.

Wrenching from context, we can observe from the discussion above, is based on this shifting of burden of proof. If the hearer wants not to be committed to the quotation, he must do the work of satisfying the burden of disproof. In the section above, the problems of quotation and misquotation are connected to the notion of interpretation. After explaining a conception of interpretation related to the meaning of the text conceived as a change in the interlocutor's habit, the use of quoting in argumentation is explained in terms of dark-side and light-side commitments. While light-side commitments can be retracted, dark-side commitments represent the common ground, that is, the set of propositions taken for granted and presupposed in the communicative event. When dark side commitments are brought to light as parts of strategies, they have a sense only if they develop a change in the dialogue or hold a function in the text. For this reason, wrenching from context is always joined with a move to defend one's own statements or to attack the opponent.

The different quotation strategies will be presented in the section below. From understanding how a correct quotation works, it is possible to explain how a distorted quote can be manipulated and abused in a discussion. Distortion of quotes, in this perspective, needs to be evaluated in relation to its purposes in a discussion. Even in a case of less dangerous misrepresentation of the other's words, for instance misquotation used for embellishment of the kind that will be discussed in the section below, the distortion cannot be considered a fallacy of misrepresentation unless the meaning is distorted to support a particular point of view. This connection makes it difficult to draw a clean line between wrenching from context and straw man in many cases[28].

6. Quotation Strategies

In order to understand the fallacy of misquotation as a deceptive tactic in dialogue, it is necessary to study quotation as a common vehicle for carrying out strategies used in argumentation. Strategic use of quotation, even selective quotation, is not inherently fallacious but in some cases may become a step in setting up fallacious strategies. Quotation is often used as a strategy for deflection of commitment that works because quoted words are not properly speaker's words. The speaker is not committed to them,

[28] But of course, wrenching from context is not the only way to commit a straw man fallacy. And since wrenching from context can be used to support one's own argument as well as to refute another party's' argument, it is theoretically distinct from straw man as a fallacy.

because the burden of proof belongs to the quoted person. The commitments that quotations incur in a discussion are not necessarily attributed to the speaker by his own words. The quoted person is the one who has incurred the commitments. In every discussion the participants are committed to their explicit statements and to the commitments that arise from dialogical moves. When a sequence of dialogue is quoted, the discussion in which the quotation is used must be seen as a new dialogue. In this new dialogue, the participants set new commitments and the previous ones in the prior dialogue are not necessarily carried forward. However, old commitments from the previous dialogue can still remain in the memory of a participant as implicit commitments. As long as they can be cited, they can still be exploited as commitments that can play a role in a new dialogue once they are mentioned again. For this reason, implicit commitments can be set aside as commitments that are not useful for the purpose of a discussion, but they can be left aside until they turn out to be relevant. The relevance of quotes lies in the strategy adopted for their use.

We can classify the uses of quotations in argumentation into two main kinds of strategy: pro strategy, used to support the speaker's argument, and contra strategy, directed against the opponent who is quoted.

6.1. Pro-strategies

First, let's consider pro-strategies of quotation. A speaker can use quotes in order to strengthen his own position, or his own argument. Decorative quotes and cultural quotes embellish respectively the text and the words of the speaker. The first type of pro-strategy is the most ancient purpose of quotation. Statements by famous authors have been used since the ancient times as brilliant decorations of their speeches or writings. Plato and Cicero, for instance, used many quotations in their works. Quotations may be used to demonstrate one's own culture. So employed, quotes are not merely speech decorations, but rather embellishments used to support and enhance the strength of an argument. For example, quotations from a classic or authoritative authors are often used to support or put forward an appeal to authority argument.

Case 18

The words of the Roman historian Sallust, "It is always easy to begin a war, but very difficult to stop one, since the beginning and the end are not under the control of the same man", has been used many times to support anti-war arguments.

The strength of this argument, and comparable ones, lies in its association of antiquity with wisdom or insight. Quotations can shift esteem (gained by means of personal merit or scientific knowledge) from the quoted person to the argument. Moreover, quotes from authorities are used to support an argument by means of an appeal to expert opinion. However, this pattern of argument must satisfy some critical features. The source, in fact, must be a real expert, competent in the particular field the

quotation is meant to support. The source's words must be correctly quoted and consistent with what other experts say. Frequently, in order to conceal the failure of fulfilling all these requirements, the strategy of deploying an anonymous quotation in the fallacious *argumentum ad verecundiam* is used. The author is concealed and simply defined as "an official source", "a knowledgeable source", or referred to with other epithets and attributes that can strengthen the argument. Here the appeal to authority is stated, not implicit in the source quoted.

Another pro-strategy to support one's own position is the use of quotations from the opposition. The words of a speaker's attackers, or the partisan views of the attacker's standpoint, are used to support the speaker's position. One of the best examples can be found in a discussion between the liberal Arthur Schlesinger and some conservatives about the welfare state.

Case 19

Schlesinger, accused of socialism, replied by quoting Winston Churchill and a Republican senator. Their statements showed a position that clearly supported the welfare program.[29]

For this reason, concluded Schlesinger, the opponent of socialism must be thrown back to apparently disagreeing with Churchill and the Republican senator, who are in agreement with one of the basic socialist positions.

6.2. Contra-strategies

Now we turn to contra-strategies. Quotation can be used to attack the other party when the party's own words are used against them by confronting its old statements with its present position, or by showing the similarities between its words and a condemned authority. The strategies are different according to the kind of attack the speaker wants to conduct. The attack may be led against the opponent's competency as an expert, her integrity, her correctness, or her morality. Alleging false analysis and false prediction by quotation can be used to attack the opponent's capacity in evaluating a situation and this argument can be used in other strategies like hasty generalization and straw man. The following example (Boller, 1967: 136-138) illustrates the strategy of attacking competency by citing erroneous opinions.

Case 20

29 The first said: "the scheme of society for which we stand is the establishment and maintenance of a basic standard of life and labor below which a man or woman, however old or weak, shall not be allowed to fall. The food they receive, the prices they have to pay for basic necessities, the homes they live in, their employment must be the first care of the state, and must have the priority over all other peacetime needs" (Boller, 1967: 85).

In the 1929, during the Great Depression, president Hoover emphasised the prosperity-is-just-round-the-corner theme. In his effort to discredit the prosperity motif of the Hoover administration, Edward Angly threw in the teeth of public officials a series of wildly absurd predictions they had made about the economy during the preceding two years. For example: As weather conditions moderate we are likely to find the country as a whole enjoying its wonted state of prosperity. Business will be normal in two months (Secretary of Commerce Lamont, March 3, 1930).

There undoubtedly will be an appreciable decrease in the number of unemployed by mid-summer (Secretary Lamont, March 22, 1931).

This example illustrates the use of selective quotation according to Boller, but it also shows how it can be used to set up an *ad hominem* argument to discredit a political opponent's argumentation by making his view look ridiculous, and making him look incompetent.

A similar strategy was used by Macdonald (Boller, 1967: 145) to rake the New York Times over the coals in the winter issue of Politics for 1948 because of inconsistent views on the Japan war.

Case 21

Under the heading, "The changing "Times"", Macdonald raked the New York Times over the coals in the winter issue of Politics for 1948 because of inconsistent views on the Hiroshima bomb:

The Japanese would like the world to believe that had it not been for the atomic bomb, they could have fought indefinitely…Revelations by their surrender provide the answer to this fallacy. They were well licked before the first atomic bomb exploded over Hiroshima. (Editorial, August 23, 1945)

The Japanese had been greatly weakened but they were still determined to fight to the death…That is the justification for the bomb's use (Editorial, January 28, 1947).

Another similar example of this kind of quotation strategy is summarized below (Boller, 1967: 132-133).

Case 22

During the Vietnam War, Professor Hans Morgenthau was confronted with his previous opinions about Laos, that turned out to be wrong, and these quoted opinions were used to attack his credibility as an expert in matter of the current war.

The last strategy we take into consideration is the confrontation with words used in the past, which in current times sound awkward, or scandalous. For example, during the Cold War, anti-Stalinists brought up Soviet sympathizers' quotations from the period of German-Russian alliance of 1939. Some statements from Stalin or Ribbentrop, asserting the mutual admiration between the two nations, were quoted in order to attack Soviet sympathizers' credibility. Stalin's champagne toast of 1939 was cited (Boller, 1967: 167).

Case 23

"I know how much the German people love its Fuehrer; I should like, therefore, to drink to his health."

Previous commitments that were retracted can be wrenched out of context, and the quotation used to set up an innuendo.

6.3. Wrenching from context and argumentative strategies

In this section we showed how strategic and selective use of quotation can be used as clever argumentation strategies, even though such arguments may be not fallacious. There can be pro- or contra- quotation strategies. The first pro-quotation strategy consists in the use of decorative quotations and embellishments to support and enhance the strength of an argument. The appeal to authority is often involved in this technique. In the second pro-strategy one's own position is supported through the use of quotations drawn from the opposition. The first contra strategy is the use of quotation to attack the other party by using its own words against itself. A second contra-strategy is the use of deliberate misquotation to set up a personal attack argument to discredit the opponent's argumentation, even making his view look ridiculous, and making him look incompetent. A third contra-strategy is the use of confrontation with words used by the opponent in the past that sounds awkward or inappropriate in the present context.

These strategies can be exploited in the distortion of a quotation. For this reason, misrepresentation of an arguer's position in argumentation can be closely associated with fallacious appeals to expert opinion, fallacious *ad hominem* arguments, and straw man fallacies. The strict relation between a distortion of a quote, the linguistic phenomena and strategies of meaning alteration, and the use of the altered quotation in dialogue makes the fallacy of wrenching from context in many cases extremely difficult to distinguish from the related fallacies. In the section below the cases analyzed in the paper will be judged according to the categories introduced.

7. Application of the Commitment Analysis to Cases

In case 4, concerning Jefferson's religious views, the quotation is a misrepresentation of Jefferson's real commitment, because it has been selectively extracted from the text of what he said. This is a classic case of wrenching from context because the omission of the surrounding text suggests a different interpretation to the reader. Case 5, the case of Mr. Kok' speech, is a different one. He suggested a sort of national service in social welfare. But as far as we can tell from the description, the wording of what he said has been entirely changed, and he is reported as wanting forced labor. These examples show the

key difference between straw man and wrenching from context from a viewpoint of commitment theory. Kok's wording was changed. He is committed to national service in social welfare, but it does not follow that he is committed to forced labor, either as an explicit or dark-side commitment. Thus it is relatively easy to show, using the commitment approach, that a straw- man has been committed in this case. The Jefferson example, case 4, a true case of wrenching from context, is harder to pin down as a fallacy. The reason is that Jefferson's words were quoted exactly. Still, his quoted words do not commit him to the view they appear to commit him to, as we can see once the context has been filled in. What is shown is that wrenching from context is different from straw man, and is harder a fallacy to pin down, because it depends on context.

The examples of the selective quotations used by book and movie reviewers also commit the fallacy of wrenching from context, once again achieved by omitting text around the passages selected. Because of the shift of context the original meaning is distorted. Wrenching from context also appears in case 8, concerning the quotation from the television interview of Gore, where the selective quotation made a suggestion or extremely qualified implication appear as an arrogant statement. This kind of case, although it depends on context, is fairly easy to diagnose, once the work of collecting the original text has been carried out.

Case 9, where Quayle was quoted as saying that he wished he had studied Latin harder in school is more difficult, because it depends on humor. The original statement was meant to be a joke, but when taken out of context it was used as a nasty personal attack on Quayle, unfairly making him look illiterate. The fallacy, in this case, is obvious once we've done the homework of collecting the text from which the quotation was taken. But the example presents a difficulty because this kind of humor is heavily based on ambiguity, suggestion, and Gricean implicature. Although this case can be analyzed using the notion of commitment, the problem is to reconstruct the discourse and its context in such a way that the joke that is supposed to be conveyed can be explained.

The other example concerning the media reporting of Gore, case 10, is a more difficult case to analyze. What he actually said was that he took the initiative in creating the Internet. This way of making the claim is evidently meant to give him some credit for the creation of the Internet. What Gore said is ambiguous, and perhaps could be reasonably taken to imply making a claim to have invented the Internet. The fallacy here seems to be partly one of ambiguity, and thus it may be difficult theoretically to differentiate between wrenching from context and the fallacy of accent in this kind of case. However the fallacy in this case also does relate to misquotation, because the attack on Gore, that was much publicized, was based on the claim that he had said that he had invented the Internet. Clearly this is a misrepresentation of what he actually said, so once again once we've done the work of collecting the text of what he actually said, the fallacy can be seen as one of wrenching from context.

As shown in section 2, misquotation is different from wrenching from context, but case 14, the Chirac case, showed that there are overlaps between the two fallacies. Chirac's statement on French foreign policy was reported in a way that amended crucial words, suggesting by selective use of quotation that his policy was more rigid and absolute than the right wording supported. This case, as we argued in section 2, falls under the category of wrenching from context because the quotation omitted the reason

that Chirac gave for his position, and thereby made it seem more dogmatic. This case involves the three fallacies of wrenching from context, selective use of quotation, and neglect of qualifications, but we argued in section 2 that our classification of misquotation as distinct from wrenching from context can still be defended.

Another case that shows a comparable lesson is the argument in case 16 in which Fred stated that poverty is one factor that causes crime. The implication drawn from this premise was the universal generalization that all poor people are criminals. This example certainly is a case of distortion of another party's commitment, and it could therefore fairly enough be said to be an instance of the straw man fallacy. But clearly it also involves neglect of qualifications. Strategies of this kind are fairly common. A common form of attack is to try to make one's opponent look more dogmatic by neglecting qualifications that he has expressed, in an attempt to make his position a lot more extreme than it really is. This type of attack combines neglect of qualifications with straw man, and it also involves misquotation and wrenching from context. There is no deep classification problem with such cases, however, as long as we have a clear analysis of the fallacies involved, like the straw man fallacy and wrenching from context, and we can pinpoint how each fallacy is specifically involved in a different aspect of the case.

In many cases the analysis of fallaciousness of the move is complex, since there are a great many strategies of quotemanship that can be used. Cases of philosophical argument are even harder to analyze, as case 11, concerning the quotation from Thomas Huxley, showed. Although this is a more complex and subtle case of argumentation, which required quite a bit of work of analyzing the original text, the basic fallacy is comparable. The selective quotation is used as a way of attributing commitment to Huxley that is not consistent with what he said. Thus in this case the use of selective quotation can also be classified under the heading of wrenching from context. Wrenching from context is only one of the most common among several different strategies of misquotation or misrepresentation of commitment that can be used in argumentation, and such strategies can be misleading in various ways. Often the words of the opponent are literally reported, without any manipulation. They are simply selected and collected without any comment or only commented on by a sarcastic or ironic title. The main problem with these selective quotations is that the reporter quoted the words literally, and it is the reader who draws the conclusion by innuendo. The conclusion in many of the cases of hasty generalization and *ad hominem* we examined is only suggested, not stated. The reader infers the conclusion, but no accusation of having made an incorrect move can be thrown on the writer, at least without analysing the case very carefully.

8. Conclusions

Wrenching from context has been classified in the literature as essentially a linguistic fallacy, arising from ambiguity. In our view, however, wrenching from context has to be considered as a fallacy of commitment and for this reason the dialectical strategies proceeding from a quotation have to be

considered. The use of quotation in a pro-strategy can be directed towards strengthening an arguer's own argument with the support of an authority or in a contra-strategy of attacking the opponent's *persona* or point of view. In the first case the use of quotation may be fallacious if the authority's words are wrenched from their context and their meaning distorted by a new contextualization. The other kinds of moves are not fallacious, even if in some cases they may suggest related fallacies. One frequent tactic is quoting the adversary's words in order to strengthen one's own position. The dialectical model we have used to analyze such cases is a simple one in which only two parties are involved in the dialogue. In many of the cases addressed however, there are several parties involved. For example suppose that a speaker quotes a history book out of context to support a false claim of historical interpretation used as evidence for an international policy dispute. The historian's commitments have been manipulated by the quoter. But it is not just these two parties that are involved. There is a secondary dialogue in which the attributed commitments of the historian are used to present third party arguments in the international policy dispute. In such a case, we would say that there has been a dialectical shift from one context of argument use to another. Such cases take us to a consideration of multiple dialogues beyond the scope of this paper. Still, we would argue that our analysis, despite its theoretical simplicity in viewing dialogue as a two-person exchange of argumentation, can be applied to more complex cases of this sort.

We can classify these moves as forms of fallacies of suggested inference, and the use of quotation follows different strategies according to the particular implicit attack.

The quotations may be "confrontation quotes" when the opponent's statements are selected, gathered and confronted with each other or with the present circumstances. This strategy is aimed at showing contradictions in his position, incapacity in analysing or predicting facts and events, unreliability concerning promises, and/or instability in maintaining an opinion. These tactics are means to attack the opponent directly and often involve the *ad hominem* or the hasty generalization fallacy, or, in some cases, both. In fact, often not only is the opponent's credibility about a particular circumstance weakened by his own words, but by means of an implicit inference his credibility is further attacked. By selecting only a few sentences it is possible to argue for a general negative judgment against an opponent's whole line of argument or position on an issue.

Our proposal is to describe the fallacy of wrenching from context as a fallacy of commitment. Not only have some of the structural aspects of the fallacy itself been exposed, but its employment in wider strategies as well. In the first group of cases, we pointed out the similarity between wrenching from context and straw man. In all these cases, we can recognize that this fallacy committed in the pattern of a complex move aimed at attributing to another person commitments he never held in order to build an attack or defense. A misquotation does not commit one of these fallacies unless the argument is used for a specific goal in a dialectical change in which the interlocutor's position has been modified. Misquotations should be analyzed in the light of the dialectical goal the argument was aimed at, together with the manipulation of commitment brought about. An omission of context may not be fallacious at all if it does not bring about a distortion in meaning used to attack an arguer or draw a wrong conclusion from what was supposedly said. Nor is bias always fallacious. Nor is selective quotation always fallacious. Nor is paraphrase always fallacious. Such factors may be fallacious, if

additional conditions are met. For example, they might be fallacious as part of a straw man argument. Or they might be fallacious if the bias is of a hardened type that that is not open to questioning or critical counter-argumentation.

In our analysis, the fallacy of wrenching from the context needs to be defined as a specific type of strategy, a pro or contra strategy of the kind described in section 6 that exploits Gricean implicature as described in section 4. Although it is associated with many other fallacies and argumentation phenomena, like ambiguity, accent, straw man fallacy, misquotation, selective quotation, and *argumentum ad hominem*, our analysis, based on the notion of commitment in dialogue, is precise enough so that we can better clarify the borderlines dividing wrenching from context as a fallacy from these other fallacies and related phenomena. At the same time, we have tried to provide guidance on how these other fallacies and phenomena are related to each other. For example, we showed how the straw man fallacy is different from misquotation and the fallacy of wrenching from context. Straw man always refers to the other's point of view in a discussion, whereas wrenching from context can refer to a point of view of a third party. Straw man is also very different from quotation and wrenching from context, because it is generally based on a paraphrase and is always used to attack the commitment of the other party by distorting it to make it easier to attack. However, we have observed that straw man can sometimes be based at least partly on misquotation, and it could equally well be based on wrenching from context. Therefore there are cases of arguments in which both of these fallacies are committed. But the three fallacies are conceptually distinct. The other two can be used as means to the end of committing the straw-man fallacy. By explaining the underlying strategies on which these fallacies are built, and by clarifying the notions of commitment and implicature on which the strategies in turn depend, we have provided the analytical tools for drawing the needed distinctions among this group of fallacies in a much clearer and more precise way than has previously been possible.

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