WHAT WE HIDE IN WORDS: EMOTIVE WORDS AND PERSUASIVE DEFINITIONS

In this paper we throw further light on four questions on the argumentative use of emotive words studied in the recent literature on persuasive definitions. (1) What is the semantic and argumentative structure of an emotive word? (2) Why are emotive words so powerful when used as argumentative instruments? (3) Why and (4) under what conditions are persuasive definitions (based on emotive words) legitimate? After introducing leading accounts of the argumentative effects of words, we approach these questions from a pragmatic perspective, presenting an analysis of persuasive definition based on argumentation schemes. Persuasive definitions, we maintain, are persuasive because their goal is to modify the emotive meaning denotation of a persuasive term in a way that contains an implicit argument from values. Our theory is also based on the concept of presupposition, often used in linguistics but here applied for the first time to these four questions about emotive words and persuasive definitions.

Definitions are crucial instruments in argumentation. As we will show in this paper, they are crucial for distinguishing between the different possible meanings of terms and direct arguments towards what is really at stake. Definitions are means for showing what the meaning of a word is, and for making its hidden content explicit. Words, however, hide much more than their definition. They can be used to lead to conclusions by trading on their "emotional" meanings. For instance, the statement 'This person is a blackguard' is not usually used to simply mean that the person is unfaithful, but to elicit a value judgment on the subject. Stevenson (1938; 1944) noticed the fact that words, in addition to referring to reality, also carry an emotive judgment on it. In his view, the meaning of a term is a dispositional property, that is, a relation between a stimulus and a reaction, which can be cognitive and emotive (1944, p. 54). His account of meaning is therefore based on the theory of definition. On Stevenson's view, defining a term means modifying the extension, the descriptive meaning of a term (persuasive definition), or its emotive meaning (quasi-definition). In quasi-definitions, the emotive meaning of a word is changed without affecting its extension: for instance, a derogatory term, such as 'blackguard' can be quasi-defined in a positive fashion, and used to praise a person, or persuasively defined to be attributed to people who are not morally reprehensible, but for instance are simply lazy. On the other hand, a positively evaluated word, such as 'culture', can be persuasively defined as 'originality' and attributed to entities that do not have high levels of education, or quasi-defined as 'the legacy of an oppressive educational system'. Independently of the type of the evaluation of words, their extension or their evaluation can be modified by means of redefinitions. The theory we will present is different from Stevenson's, a positivistic view that sees emotive meaning as subjective, and defines it as a behavioral effect. Our proposal is to treat the persuasiveness produced by the use of emotive words and persuasive definitions as due to implicit arguments that an interlocutor may not be aware of (Bench-Capon and Dunne, 2007).

In this paper we aim to throw some further light on some questions on the argumentative use of emotive words studied in the recent literature on persuasive definitions. One is the crucial question of what the semantic and argumentative structure of an emotive word is, while another is why they are so powerful when used as argumentative instruments. These questions are related to the underlying ones of why and under what conditions persuasive definitions can be legitimate. In (Walton, 2003), persuasive definitions have been shown to be sometimes reasonable, even though they can be tricky and deceptive in several important ways. In (Walton, 2005) it was argued that a definition should be evaluated in light of its purpose as a speech act, as part of a dialectical analysis of persuasive definitions. In this paper we will show how persuasive definitions need to be

evaluated in relation to a type of argument called argument from values (Bench-Capon and Atkinson, 2009) used in a persuasion dialogue.
After introducing the different accounts of and approaches to the argumentative effects of words, and showing how the argumentation and semantics (namely definitions) are related, we approach the issue from a pragmatic perspective. Developing Ducrot's theory on the act of presupposing and his notion of connective, we show how words, reality, and common knowledge are strictly related, and how the act of presupposing can be fallacious. We apply this account to the analysis of persuasive definitions and persuasive quasi-definitions, and analyze the use of redefinitions and loaded words as reasonable or fallacious acts of presupposition.

Argumentation and words: Implicit meaning and definitions

Studies on persuasive definitions have provided useful approaches to the analysis of the persuasive use of emotive words. The argumentative force of emotive words has been explained on some theories in terms of a particular type of content, called the emotive content of a word. On Stevenson's behavioristic account, emotive content is explained as a dimension of meaning, while on Ducrot's perspective the meaning of a term itself amounts to the possible conclusions it may trigger. On the other hand, the argumentative power of words has been shown by other approaches to be dependent on background information presupposed.

Emotive words and emotive content

For Stevenson, the meaning of a term is a particular dispositional property of the term (1944 p. 54), that is, a stable correlation between the sign, a stimulus, and a psychological reaction of the addressee. On Stevenson's view of ethics and language, two kinds of meaning have different functions by give rise to two kinds of reactions: cognitive meaning contributes to the attitude of the agent towards the action, while emotive meaning evokes a feeling or an emotion. Some terms have a negative emotional meaning because the community of speakers negatively assesses their referent. In other cases, the difference between two terms (such as "elderly spinster" and "old maid" (see Stevenson 1937, p. 23)) is only emotive. As a consequence of his views on emotivism in ethics, ethical terms can be explained using the categories of emotive and descriptive meaning. The descriptive meaning of ethical terms, such as 'good', corresponds to their emotive one (p. 206). For instance, 'x is good' can be reformulated as "x has the properties X, Y, Z", that emotively express the approval of the speaker and evoke a positive attitude in the hearer. Redefining ethical terms means changing the attitudes of the interlocutors towards a fragment of reality. For this reason, the definition of an ethical term carries a persuasive intent. In other words, putting forward a definition always defends a viewpoint. Stevenson's account of persuasive and quasi-definitions is based on this approach to meaning. Persuasive definitions can be considered a particular case of redefinition in which the descriptive meaning of a word is modified without altering the emotive meaning, but still re-directs the attitudes of the interlocutors towards a new object. For instance, somebody might offer a re-definition of culture as originality. On the offered definition, an original, but illiterate person can now be classified as "cultured" by this

means, invoking in the interlocutor an attitude of praise towards this person. The mirror-image of persuasive definition is persuasive quasi-definition, a particular case of quasi-definition (see also Aberdein 2006). In persuasive quasi-definitions of this sort, the descriptive meaning remains unaltered, while the emotive meaning is modified. For instance, a word such as 'blackguard' could be quasi-defined, by describing the reality it refers to as praiseworthy. The emotive meaning in this fashion is changed, modifying the original attitude evoked by the term. Re-definitions can also be applied to non-ethical terms with a persuasive effect. For instance, the re-definition of the legal-medical term 'insanity' can affect the evaluation of the classification of persons held to be insane.

Emotive words and argumentative content

Oswald Ducrot, developing his theses on argumentative structuralism, claims that the meaning of sentences corresponds to their argumentative effects, that is, the conclusion they lead to. Ducrot notices how sentences can be described as having two different types of content: a stated content, and a presupposed content. For instance, the sentence 'I have quit smoking' states that 'I no longer smoke' and presupposes that 'I used to smoke before'. The combination of the two types of contents can explain some types of argumentative conclusions that can be drawn from the sentences (see Ducrot 1993). He develops this account by introducing an argumentative content in the sentence description. For instance we can notice how the sentence 'Bob and Tom have the same height' is rhetorically different from 'Bob is as tall as Tom'. Grice would have explained this difference in terms of maxims external to the linguistic structure; Ducrot instead includes the principles of inference within the sentence meaning. The second sentence has an argumentative content that can be described as 'there is a content *r* (in this case, Bob is tall) that the asserted content supports' (see Anscombre & Ducrot 1978: 352). This rule is a presupposition of the sentence. In this fashion, the Gricean implicature maxims, conceived as rules of discourse, become presupposed contents.
Ducrot extends this principle to introduce the argumentative power of sentences within the words themselves. This integration of the argumentativity in the word structure can be explained by means of an example (Ducrot, 1983, p. 159). If we consider the sentence "the glass is full", we can notice that it has an effect on the interlocutor (for instance, satisfaction), that we can represent as *r*. This effect depends on a quality, *R*, which is in this case 'fullness'. The link between *R* and *r* is represented by a *topos*, a path of inference of the kind "the more a glass is full, the more the satisfaction". *Topoi*, namely argumentative inferences from a premise (or premises) to a conclusion, become part of the meaning of words. The meaning of words corresponds to the possible conclusions to which they can lead the interlocutor. Ducrot defines words as bundles of *topoi* or modifiers of *topoi*[1]: words, i.e., that have as meaning a set of *topoi* and words (like the connectives such as "but", "and", and adjectives and adverbs) that select among these

[1] A predicate, such as the verb 'to work', is described by Ducrot as a bundle of *topoi*. Linguistic competence consists in establishing a relation between scales corresponding to areas of activities. For instance, the statement 'I worked hard today' is connected to the conclusion 'I am very tired'. The relation between the scale 'to work' (hard, normal, a bit...) and the scale 'to be tired' (much, not very much...) is a *topos*, 'the more work, the more tired'. Every correspondence between different paradigms of activities is a *topos*. The predicate 'to work' is therefore described as the bundle of all its possible correspondences. (Ducrot and Anscombre,1986: p.89).

topoi, or enhance or weaken the strength of the *topos*. For instance, a word such as "to work" is seen as a set of *topoi*, such as "the more work, the more remuneration", or "the more work, the more fatigue". If a person asserts, "Bob worked hard", the conclusion "he must be tired" is in the structure of the language, or better, in the meaning of "to work". We can illustrate the structure of Ducrot's system as follows:

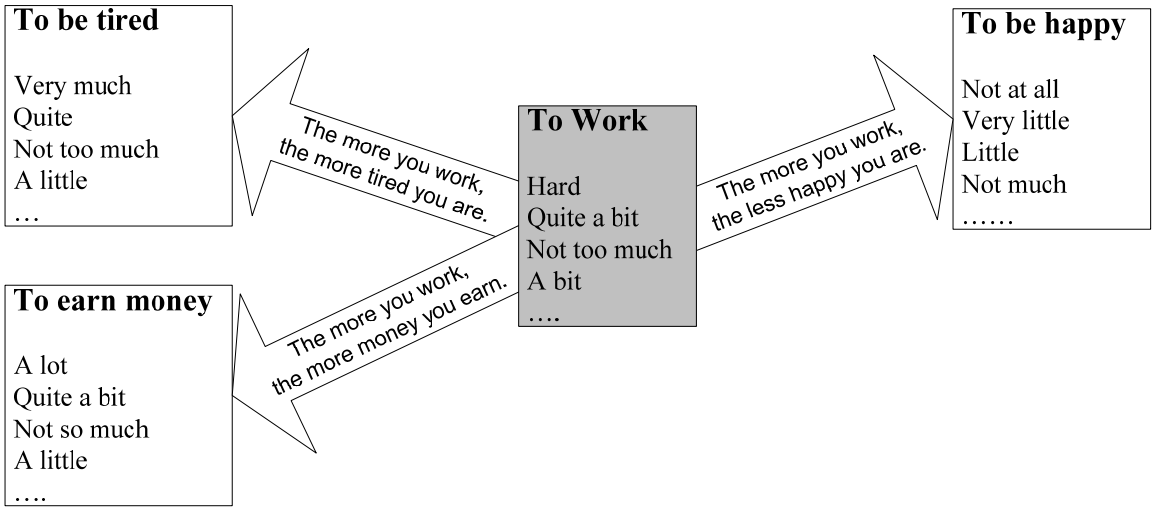

Figure 1: Topoi in the semantic structure

In this perspective, de-codification is extended to all possible argumentative uses of language.

Emotive words and acts of persuasion

Schiappa and Burgess-Jackson focus their analyses on the relationship between common ground and words. A definition, in this perspective, is always grounded on a theory, and the theory in its turn defends a system of values. According to this perspective, words are always persuasive because they carry with them a whole system of values, and the use of a word and a definition of a word is always an implicit argument to attain certain goals by means of the system of evaluation the definition of the word defends.
In his analysis of the definition of the term 'rape', Burgess-Jackson (1995, pp. 426-427) noticed how the definition of the word 'rape' is based on a particular theory, a perspective on the role of women in marriage and society. Defining 'rape' as a 'violent sexual act against a woman who is not the aggressor's spouse', or as 'sexual abuse of a woman', means defending two particular conceptions of marriage. The different definitions, in other words, are relative to different contexts of background information and different views about the nature of marriage.
Schiappa (2003) clarified some aspects of the argumentative relationship between theory and definition. Definitions, for Schiappa, have nothing to do with essences of things, but only with perception of reality. Language, for Schiappa, depends on learning, that is, on the persuasive process leading a person to organize reality in a certain fashion. In his view, the act of definition is an act aimed at imposing a particular perception of the world, indeed a particular theory, on the recipients of the definition. When a person accepts a definition, he accepts also the evaluation and perspective it imposes on reality,

and the course of actions and decisions it implies. For this reason, definitions should always be seen as aimed at attaining certain goals by means of altering or framing our evaluation of reality. As the evaluation of a situation depends on the theory presupposed by the definition, the definer will choose the definition that better supports his goal. On Schiappa's view, the use of a word with a determinate definition means framing reality in a certain way, leading to determinate conclusions by means of the values the word presupposes. Schiappa describes this form of argument as argumentation by definition. Argumentation by definition, namely the simple act of classifying reality, is seen by him as an implicit argument leading to a certain conclusion. For instance, the use of the term 'quarantine' to describe sanctions against Cuba defends the perspective that this action is a justified therapeutic intervention instead of an act of war, and is therefore justified. Words and definitions frame the situation in a particular way by adopting and advocating a certain system of values, and encouraging a particular attitude and evaluation. The same situation can be described as "a tree has been murdered" or "an organic object has been rotated from a vertical to a horizontal position". The difference lies in the argumentative goals that the speaker want to pursue by uttering such statements.
These views on emotive meaning and persuasive definitions bring out three different levels of analysis: the semantic, the argumentative, and the pragmatic level. Emotive words are persuasive instruments because they can be used to support a specific conclusion. However, the relation between their use and their structure remains unclear in these accounts. Our proposal is to analyze the argumentativity of those words starting from their pragmatic role, and thereby to show how a system of values can be related to their argumentative function.

What words hide: the argumentativity of words

Words have been considered argumentative because of their "connotation", or hidden emotive meaning, or because of a system of values somehow implied by the word. However, analyzing the argumentative power of words in terms of hidden contents raises the questions of determining how and why emotive words can be such powerful argumentative instruments, and what the relations between words, argumentation, and definitions are. Moreover, an analysis of the structure of argumentation by argumentative words is needed in order to provide a method for distinguishing between fallacious and reasonable uses of emotive words. If emotive words are closely related to values, it is not clear how values and words are linked, and how the implied values may change by simply modifying the definition of a word,
The relationship between the common ground and the semantics of a word[2] can be explained using the concept of frame. The notion of frame has been introduced by Fillmore to explain some semantic aspects of a word that are not contained in its definition (Fillmore 2003: 269):

> The definition [rotting meat of a dead animal] does not inform me that I can't legitimately use the word carrion to refer to meat that had been left out of the refrigerator while the family was vacationing, nor can I use it to refer to dead animal parts that I accidentally

[2] This relationship includes values and hierarchies, in addition to all kinds of factual information (see Perelman 1963: 170),

> stepped on while walking in the woods. Carrion is the word used for the food of scavengers, that is, animals that are opportunistic, non-hunting carnivores: their diet is evolutionarily specialized to include the meat of animals that they find dying or already dead. The word belongs to a larger conceptual framework of the ethology of this group of animals

This relation between a noun or a predicate, and the entity they can be attributed to, can be explained in terms of presuppositions. The core of the congruity theory (Rigotti 2005) is a semantic analysis grounded on the necessary conditions a predicate needs to be fulfilled in order to be correctly predicated of an entity. On this theory, a predicate presupposes a number of arguments having certain qualities. These qualities are conditions for its correct and meaningful attribution to certain entities. We can represent the abstract structure of a predicate as follows (Rigotti 2005: 79):

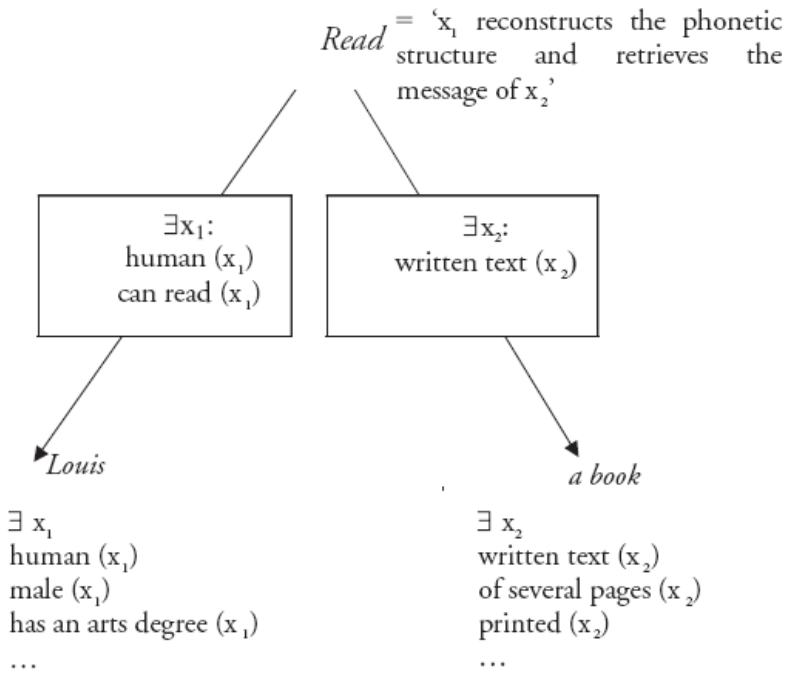

Figure 2: The abstract structure of a predicate

The conditions need to be fulfilled in order for the predicate to be reasonably attributed to the entity. For instance, a person cannot read the table, or the air. Similarly, nouns, which are monadic predicates, presuppose types of predicates with which they can be associated. For instance, "journal" can be an argument of predicates presupposing a solid entity (for instance "to take"), a good (such as "to buy"), something that can break (such as "to tear"), or something that is written, ("to read") (for a first account of the relation between nouns (or arguments) and predicates, see Aristotle, *Topics* 134a 20-24). Arguments, therefore, presuppose some categories they belong to, such as "solid entity" or "written surface". Like "journal", the word "carrion" admits some predicates, and excludes others. For instance, it can be the argument of the predicate "to eat", as it falls under the category of "food", and in particular "food of scavengers":

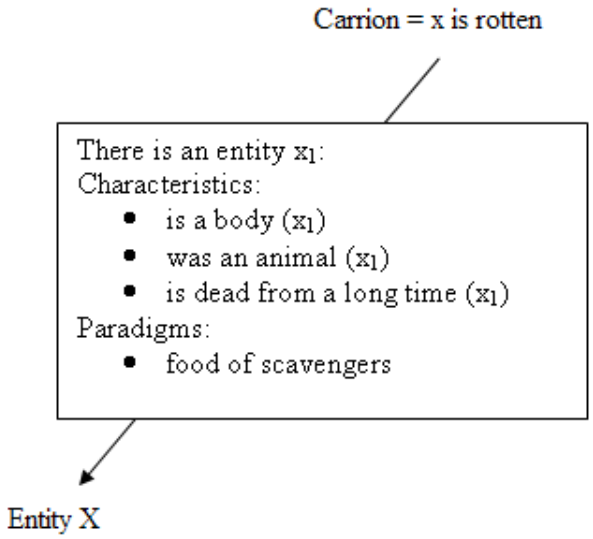

Figure 3: Arguments presupposing categories

The semantic structure of a word often involves values. For instance, the concepts of 'scavenger' or 'dead body' are not concepts that are positively evaluated in our society. Other predicates involve values as presuppositions. For instance, the predicate 'to accuse' presupposes that the action of which the person is accused is illegal, or immoral, or is somehow an offense to some rules. As Lakoff puts it (see Lakoff 2004: 30), "The verb 'accuse' is decomposed into two statements, one declared and one presupposed. The badness (illegality or immorality) of the offense is presupposed by the accuser, who is declaring that the accused did perform the offense". For instance in the sentence

> The Democrats accused Bush of spying on U.S. citizens.

the negativity of the action of spying is presupposed by the predicate 'to accuse' (see Lakoff 2004: 30).
However, this simple semantic structure cannot fully explain the complex system of shared knowledge and implicit values taken for granted when using a semantic item. Every word implicitly takes for granted a fragment of culture, which becomes an integral part of the language itself. Fillmore called a "frame" (2003: 267) the background information every word presupposes (see also Lakoff 1999):

> every definition consist of two parts: a frame-setting part, which characterizes the frame or conceptual background to each word sense, and a word-specific meaning. By *frame* I mean a structure of knowledge or conceptualization that underlies the meaning of a set of lexical items that in some ways appeal to that same structure.

For instance, in order to understand the concept of bachelor which can be defined as 'a man who has never been married', we need some basic background conceptual

information, such as the notion of marriage, and some shared values, such as “a man should marry when he is x years old” (see Fillmore 1982). No one could understand the concept of bachelor without knowing what marriage is, and it would be unreasonable to predicate ‘bachelor’ of a child. In a comparable way, the concept of contract in law can be defined as having four elements: parties competent to contract; a consideration; a subject-matter; and agreement, or meeting of the minds, by offer on the one hand and acceptance on the other (Page 1919, section 49). However, this definition by essential parts can be only understood given the concepts of agreement and consideration, and presupposes certain legal values, such as the notion of what is “sufficient” for consideration, what can be a subject matter in a contract. What counts as sufficient regarding consideration is determined by what is regarded as a value (see Gano 2008: 29; Bishop on Contracts, Second Enlarged Edition, Sec. 38, p. 14).
The concept of frame encompasses semantic features of words, and shared knowledge and values needed to understand the meaning of certain concepts presupposed by the definiendum itself. On this perspective, values, along with factual information, constitute an integral part of the semantics of a word. Words and values threfore become indissoluble, and redefinitions of ethical, or emotive, words can be considered renegotiations of the shared values. The redefinition of ‘marriage’ is an example. Instead of defining it in terms of the gender of the agents, namely heterosexual humans, the word ‘marriage’ has been redefined as an ideal, as “the realization of love through a lifelong public commitment” (Lakoff 2004: 46). This redefinition is aimed at changing the system of values behind the concept of marriage, and homosexual unions. Denying the possibility of same-sex marriages implies excluding the possibility of the realization of love by partners of the opposite sex.

Acts in a word: the act of presupposing

Words are not simple linguistic units, divided from the culture of a speech community (Hymes 1974: 49). A speech community is a community sharing knowledge of rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech (Hymes 1974: 51). Interpreting and extending Hymes’ account to the semantics of words, we can say that cultural values, hierarchies, beliefs, and factual knowledge are integral parts of our semantic system. The semantic presuppositions and the cultural knowledge, integral parts of our semantic system, are often taken for granted in our speech. For instance, if we state that “Bob stole a wallet”, we do not usually need to say, “Bob took the wallet without the owner’s consent” to put the message across. However, this semantic presupposition is not the only information taken for granted. In our community, mainly constituted of honest people, stealing is taken to be wrong, illegal, and condemnable. This value, normally taken for granted, is necessary in order to make it possible for the audience to understand the implications of the utterance. This information is left unexpressed, but is needed for supporting inferences like the following example:

(1) Bob stole a wallet. Therefore, he is a bad person

The presupposed information represents the conditions of meaningfulness of higher predicates, commonly named "connectives". These predicates can be either expressed or implicit, and like normal predicates, they are characterized by some conditions that have

to be fulfilled. If we conceive the relation between sentences as a relation between predicates and arguments, we could represent the abstract structure of connectives as shown in figure 4 (Rigotti 2005: 83).

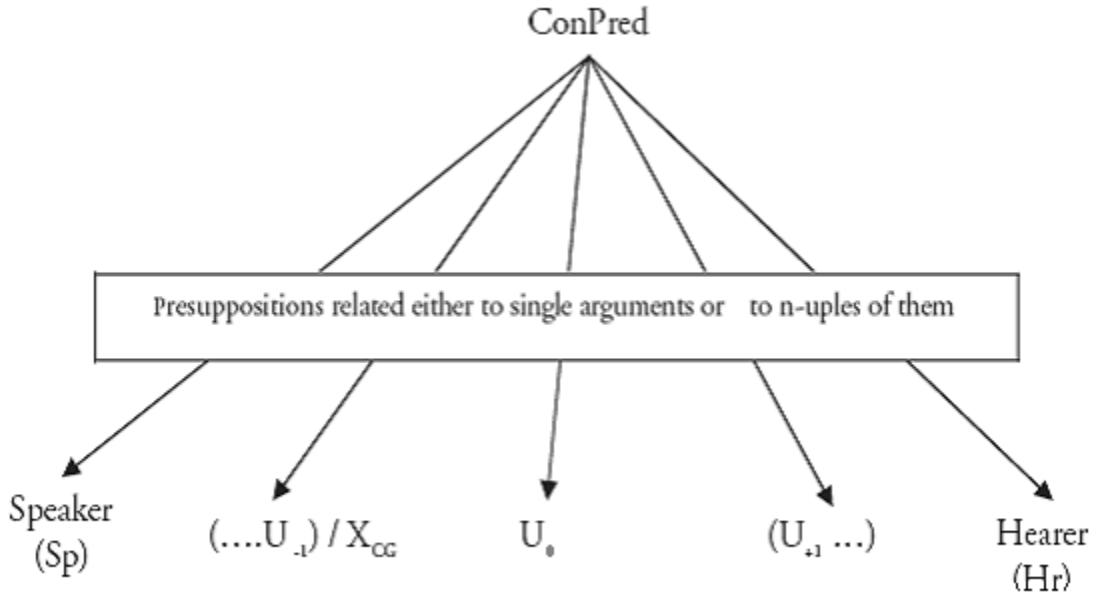

Figure 4: The abstract structure of connectives

The connective relates the speaker and the hearer, and their knowledge, with the utterances. The connective predicate imposes specific requirements on its arguments, and some of them are usually implicit, because commonly known. In the example above, the sequence, “Bob stole a wallet" must be a reason for accepting the second sequence, namely “Bob is a bad person". In order for the first sequence to fit the category of ‘reasons to believe that a person is bad’, further information is needed, which can be retrieved from the common ground and the semantic information associated with the word ‘steal’.

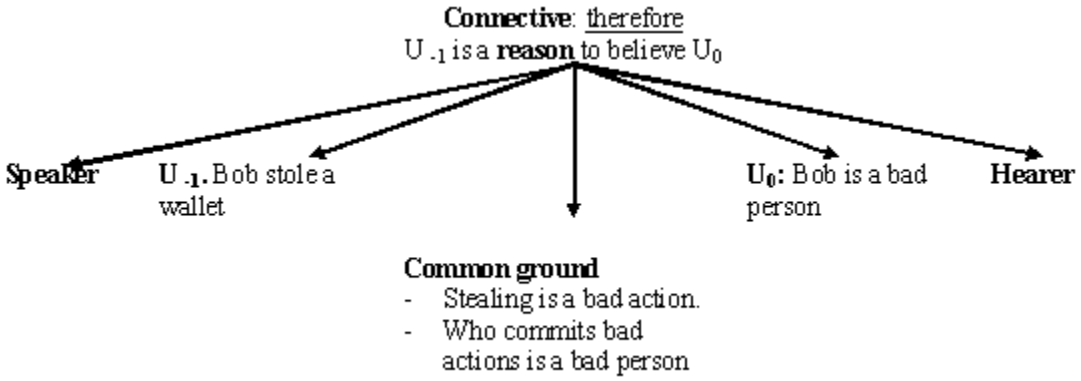

Figure 5: Information retrieved form the common ground

On our account, the background information needed to understand a word becomes presupposed when it is a requirement for the correct attribution of a predicate. Words need background information to be understood, but not all this information is always linguistically relevant. In what Fillmore calls a “frame”, the linguistic and the cultural levels seem to overlap, whereas if we distinguish between the conditions of a predicate and the cultural information words carry in a specific community, the two levels can be separated. However, this distinction leads to the theoretical question of what a presupposition is.

On Strawson’s view, (Strawson 1952) sentences are distinguished from statements from the point of view of the possibility of verification. Sentences may have a meaning, but they cannot be verified. Only the utterance of a sentence, namely a statement, can have a truth-value. Strawson claims that presuppositions are conditions for the verification of a statement, and are therefore conditions for statements, but maintains that presuppositions are only existential (such as “The king of France exists" in the sentence “The king of France is bald”). This account, even though limited only to a specific type of presupposition needed by certain types of predicates, shows the fundamental relationship between the speaker and the presupposition. Statements are speech acts expressing beliefs (see Searle 1969), and presuppositions are the conditions the speaker has to fulfil to make a verifiable statement. They are conditions for a speech act. Before introducing the notion of presupposition within sentences and words, Ducrot developed Strawson’s theory and extended the notion of presupposition to the conditions of meaningfulness of a statement. He noticed that the conditions of a statement depend on the speaker, and can be considered a particular type of act he performs. Presuppositions are considered the intellectual context that a statement needs to be part of a normal dialogue (Ducrot 1968: 86), and therefore the speaker, by uttering a statement requiring some such conditions, carries out the act of setting the conditions in a dialogical context. The act of displacing such conditions is called the act of presupposing (Ducrot 1968: 87):

> Comme le joueur d’échecs doit accepter le champ de possibilités que crée pour lui la manœuvre de son adversaire, le participant d’un dialogue doit reprendre à son compte certains au moins des présupposés introduits par les phrases auxquelles il répond.

For instance, by uttering that “The Russian czar is meeting the American president on Friday”, the speaker presupposes that the Russian head of state is a king, and that Russia is not a republic. These conditions are created by the speaker’s utterance, and set out a specific dialogical situation characterized by those fragments of knowledge. Extending the existential presupposition to the other types of presuppositions mentioned above, we might notice that the statement “Bob is a bad person. He killed a wasp” introduces a particular dialogical setting in which the value judgment “who kills wasps is a bad person” holds true, or at least is accepted. On Ducrot’s view, presupposing becomes an essential communicative act, which establishes a new world, namely the dialogical world, created by the interlocutors. Presuppositions modify the interlocutor’s dialogical situation, as he has to act within the boundaries set by the speaker’s implicit act (Ducrot

1972)[3]. Presuppositions set the conditions of the communication game; the game can proceed only if the hearer accepts those conditions, otherwise the dialogical game stops. On this view, presupposing becomes the speech act that sets the conditions of a dialogue game (Ducrot 1991: 91):

> Présupposer un certain contenu, c'est placer l'acceptation de ce contenu comme la condition du dialogue ultérieur. On voit alors pourquoi le choix des présupposés nous apparaît comme un acte de parole particulier (que nous appelons acte de présupposer), acte à valeur juridique et donc illocutoire […] : en accomplissant, on transforme du même coup les possibilités de parole de l'interlocuteur. […] Lorsqu'on introduit des présupposés dans un énoncé, on fixe, pour ainsi dire, le prix à payer pour que la conversation puisse continuer

Developing Ducrot's account, we can notice how the act of presupposition is linked to shared knowledge. Sometimes the presupposed content is actually part of the knowledge shared by the interlocutors, sometimes not. In the former case, presuppositions are simply conditions fulfilled by information already known, namely part of the interlocutors' commitments. For instance, in the example above, the speaker by uttering the statement "Bob is a bad person. He stole a wallet" presupposes that "stealing is bad" which is a commonly accepted proposition. This proposition has no particular argumentative role, as it simply fulfils a necessary condition for the understanding of the argument. In the second case, presupposing becomes a potentially manipulative dialogical speech act. For instance, we can consider the following statement, uttered in a normal context:

(2) Bob is a nice person. He stole a wallet

The proposition "who steals is a nice person" would hardly be accepted in our culture. The presupposition becomes an argumentative act, as through this move the speaker takes for granted that the proposition is accepted by the speech community. However, sometimes the act of presupposing is subtler, as it manipulates deeper commitments. For instance, we can consider the following statement:

(3) Bob is creative and original. Therefore, he is a man of culture.

In this case, the speaker presupposes that the definition of "culture" is "creativity and originality". In other words, in this case, the shared semantic structure has been implicitly manipulated. "Culture", like several other terms, is vague, as it is hard to define, or perhaps its definition is not completely shared by the community of speakers. The act of

[3] On Ducrot's view, the communicative game resembles a chess game, in which the possibilities are set by means of presuppositions: "dans ce combat simulé –qui substitue aux possibilités réelles, dues à la force, les possibilités morales dues aux conventions- les règles permettent aux joueurs de se contraindre mutuellement à certaines actions, et de s'en interdire certaines autres" (Ducrot 1968 : 83) ; "pour trouver une description sémantique satisfaisante d'un phénomène comme la présupposition, phénomène qui est repérable selon des critères syntaxiques précis, il nous a été nécessaire de la relier aux règles qui définissent conventionnellement le jeu du langage, et de décrire la présupposition par rapport aux manœuvres dont elle fournit le thème : sa réalité, comme celle d'une règle des échecs, consiste seulement à rendre possible un jeu" (Ducrot 1972 : 27).

presupposing in this case takes for granted a definition that in our community, at least, cannot be considered to be opposed to what is generally accepted.

Presuppositions in argumentation: Arguing by definition

In the section above, we outlined the characteristics of the act of presupposing. As mentioned above, the connective predicate requires some conditions to be fulfilled in order for the sequences to be meaningful. However, the conditions set forth in the previous example were rather generic. The connective “therefore” indicates a simple relation of explanation, which can be specified in several different fashions according to the type of sequences it connects. “Therefore” is an argumentative connective, as it imposes on the first sequence the function of providing the reason to accept the second one. In this section, we will inquire in depth into the specific requirements of this connective in relation to a particular argument, the argument from verbal classification. The requirements of the connective become more specific according to the meaning of the connected sequences. This relation can be explained through the traditional concept of topical difference. In the Terminist tradition (XII century), the relation between a term in an argument and its conclusion was conceived as a relation between concepts. Abelard represented an enthymeme, an imperfect inference in his view, as an inference holding in virtue of a relation between two extramental things (Stump 1989: 93; see also Green-Pedersen 1984:166). For instance, the conditional “if it is a man, it is an animal” holds true in virtue of the relation (*habitudo*), from species to genus, between “man” and “animal”. This relation is represented as a *maxima*, i.e. a generalization of the form “whatever the species is predicated of, the genus is also predicated of”. Terminists later called the relation between the terms the Differentia. In Abelard’s example, the differentia would be “from genus to species”. The *differentiae* can be considered the genera of the *maximae propositiones* warranting the conclusion of the argument (see also Stump 1989, p. 146). If we hold that the presuppositions are elicited by the speaker’s use of the connective, the specific presupposed proposition is the result of the relation between the terms and their semantic content. For instance, we can analyze statement (3) above as a relation holding in virtue of a classification from the definition to the *definiendum* (see for the notion of topical inference Stump 1989: 36; Rigotti 2006).

Premise:	Bob is creative and original.
Relationship:	From classification (from definition to *definiendum*).
Maxima proposition 1:	What the definition is predicated of, the *definiendum* is predicated of as well.
Endoxon:	“Being creative and original" means "being a man of culture".
Implicit conclusion:	Bob is a man of culture.

Table 1: Classification from definition by topical inference

This type of reasoning is grounded on the notion of *endoxon*, or proposition accepted by everybody, or the most, or the wise. The connective imposes the condition that the first

sequence should be a justification of the second. As in the second sequence the subject is classified based on a classification shown in the first sequence, the justification is the relationship from definition to *definitum*. The only presupposed proposition of this abstract paradigm fulfilling the requirements of the statement is "Being creative and original" means "being a man of culture".
The definitional proposition is presupposed as commonly known and shared by the audience; however, this could be hardly accepted in our community in which 'culture', even if vaguely defined, is associated with education. This example shows how definitions can be the source of potential presuppositions. However, sometimes classifications are subtler, as they are not based on descriptions of the semantic content of a term, but are related to the shared values. Let's consider the following example.

(4) She made a good catch. Bob, her boyfriend, is poor, short, and depressed.

In this case, the predicates "poor, short, and depressed" constitute the reasons for classifying Bob as a good person with whom one can share her life. The goal of the second sequence can be interpreted as "give reasons to support the fact that x is good (desirable) as boyfriend". We can analyze in particular the last predicate, depressed.

Premise:	Bob is depressed.
Maxima proposition:	Good is that whose presence brings anything into a satisfactory and self-sufficing condition; or as what produces, maintains, or entails characteristics of this kind, while preventing and destroying their opposites (Rhetoric I 7).
Endoxon:	Depression of a boyfriend leads to his girlfriend's happiness.
Conclusion 1:	One's boyfriend's depression is good.
Conclusion 2:	Bob is good as a boyfriend.

Table 2: Example of an argument from classification

The argumentation from classification, in this case, is highly complex and is grounded on the topics of the preferable (*Topics* III). This example is ironic as it presupposes values that cannot be acceptable in our community; however, it is useful for understanding how values are crucial for the classification, and how the manipulation of shared values can affect the process of reasoning.
In this section, we inquired into the role of implicitness in classification. Presuppositions play a crucial role in human discourse: they can be communicative acts aimed at retrieving shared information, or manipulative moves whose goal is to change the interlocutor's commitments. In this latter case, the interlocutor is led to accept the controversial presupposed content as granted in order to continue the dialogue game. In the previous accounts of "emotive" meaning of a term, no explanation has been provided regarding the process of reasoning underlying the use of the term and its linguistic function. In our view, the argumentativity of words can be shown using the notions of function of words and the concept of *differentia*. On our view, words have an argumentative power because they are the semantic instruments we use to retrieve background information related to fragments of reality, which is used to support a

conclusion of an argument. Emotive words are words used to support a specific conclusion by retrieving value judgments. The principles stated above can be applied to argumentation schemes, which represent common patterns of inference in argumentation. In particular, the argumentative use of emotive words is usually grounded on arguments from classification and values. On our view, the intrinsic emotive meaning of words can be explained from the definitional meaning of the word and the common knowledge about the object the word refers to.

Argumentation from Definition

Argumentation schemes are forms of argument that represent structures of common types of arguments used in everyday discourse, as well as in special contexts like those of legal argumentation or scientific argumentation (see Walton 1996). As well as representing forms of argument that are either deductive or inductive, schemes also represent arguments that fall into a third category, including defeasible or presumptive inferences, stemming from types of reasoning like the abductive or defaultive (Walton, Reed and Macagno 2008). This type of arguments is based on defeasible generalizations that are subject to exceptions (Toulmin 1958). Our claim is that it is possible to conceive the complex argumentation represented by the topics from desirable, or from good, or from definition, as argumentation schemes from classification and from values. This account allows one to analyze not only the classificatory use of terms, but also the critical relation between classification, values, and action, conceived as commitment.
The scheme from classification represents different types of argumentation that in the topical tradition were considered as deriving from genus, definition, and property and, in some cases, from accident (see Macagno and Walton 2009). The argument from classification consists in the attribution of a property *G* in virtue of a property *F*. In other words, if an *x* has the property *F*, x has property *G* as well. The scheme for the argument from verbal classification can be found in (Walton 2006, p. 129):

ARGUMENT FROM VERBAL CLASSIFICATION

INDIVIDUAL PREMISE:	*a* has property *F*.
CLASSIFICATION PREMISE:	For all *x*, if *x* has property *F*, then *x* can be classified as having property *G*.
CONCLUSION:	*a* has property *G*.

Critical questions

CQ_1: What evidence is there that *a* definitely has property *F*, as opposed to evidence indicating room for doubt on whether it should be so classified?
CQ_2: Is the verbal classification in the classification premise based merely on an assumption about word usage that is subject to doubt?

In this scheme, the relation between premises and conclusion is simply defined as a "classification". In the ancient tradition, the notion of classification as used in this scheme was usually referred to as "definition". On the Aristotelian account, the only

definition considered as such was essential definition, namely definition by genus and species. As shown in (Macagno and Walton 2009), on Aristotle's account, the possible relations of predication were divided into four predicables: genus, definition, accident and property. We can represent the four predicables in the following fashion (see Rigotti, 2006):

Showing the essence of the thing		**Not showing the essence of the thing**	
Definition	*Genus*	*Property*	*Accident*
Convertible with the thing. Expresses the essence.	Not convertible with the thing. Expresses the essence.	Convertible with the thing. Does not express the essence.	Not convertible with the thing. Does not express the essence.
Ex: Man is a **reasonable animal**.	Ex: Man is an **animal.**	Ex: Man is **talkative.**	Ex: Man is **strong.**

Table 3: The four predicables

An accident is a simple predication, the attribution to a subject of a predicate not showing what the subject is, nor is it convertible with it. What a man is, in other terms, is not "strong", and a strong thing is not necessarily a man. On the contrary, something that is "talkative" is necessarily a "man", "animal" represents part of what "man" is, and "reasonable animal" is necessarily a man and represents what "man" is. Aristotle formulated a set of topics for each predicable which make the possible syntagmatic relations of the predicable explicit (see also Rigotti 2006). For instance, what the definition is predicated of, the *definiendum* is also predicated of (if Bob is highly educated, he is a man of culture), whereas the genus is predicated of what the species is, not vice versa (Bob and Jenny are married; therefore they are together. Bob and Jenny are together; therefore they are married). However, this system of definitions cannot fully explain the complex structure of classification we commonly use (see Victorinus 1997). In particular, arguments like "Bob is extremely organized and precise. He must be German", or "Bob scored 140 in the IQ test. Therefore he is extremely intelligent" are common forms of classification that do not fall within the ancient account of definition. The heuristic forms of classification from stereotype, parts, or operations are however plausible classification structures, which constitute the general patterns for retrieving the presupposed classificatory proposition (see Macagno and Walton, to appear). We can represent the structure of the argumentation from classification as shown in figure 6.

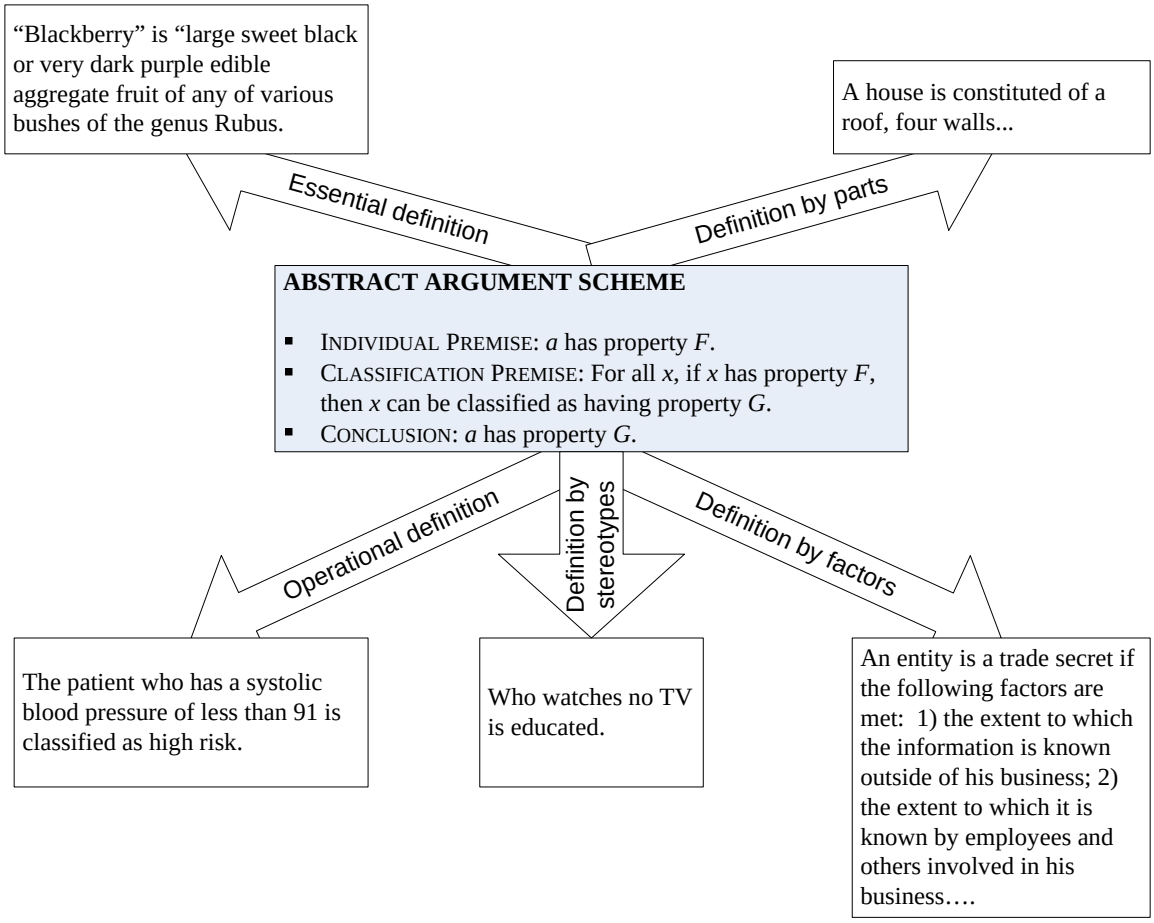

Figure 6: Abstract pattern of inference and different types of definition

Arguments can presuppose various types of definition, whose strength or acceptability may be noticeably different (see Macagno and Walton, to appear). The abstract pattern of inference allows one to retrieve the presupposed classificatory proposition.

Argumentation from values

In the *Rhetoric* and in the *Topics* Aristotle also presented some topics allowing one to classify an object as "good" or "desirable". These topics can be conceived as possible different ways of defining "good", according to possible situations and points of view. Since the meaning of "good" is partially determined by the object of its predication, these topics are useful to determine prediction. For instance, some of these topics can be reported as follows (*Rhetoric* 1363b 13-16):

> Now we call 'good' what is desirable for its own sake and not for the sake of something else; that at which all things aim; what they would choose if they could acquire understanding and practical wisdom; and which tends to produce or preserve such goods, or is always accompanied by them;

We can consider these topics as different types of a unique argument, whose purpose is to classify an *x* according to different criteria. The topics instantiate particular criteria of

classification dependent on the object so qualified. Argument from classification can be used to categorize something as good or bad. For instance, how could we represent the argumentative force of the use of an emotive word in (5)?

(5) I admire Bob. He is man of culture

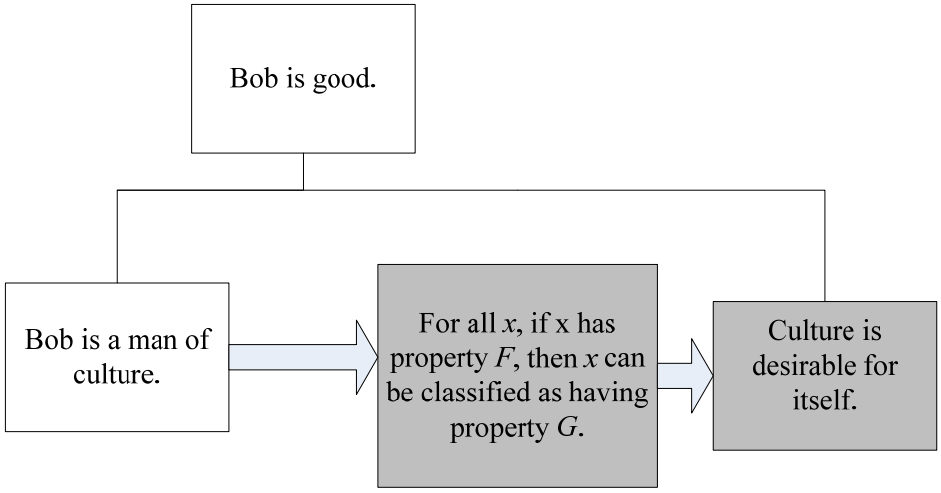

Figure 7: Classification by values

Our way to represent the argumentative force of (5) is shown in figure 7. Notice in figure 7 how the communicative role of the statement can be reconstructed through the abstract premise of the argument from classification. This rule allows one to retrieve the presupposed proposition 'culture is desirable for itself', namely the definition of 'good'. However, we can observe that, from an argumentative point of view, argument from classification is not fully explanatory of cases that are more complex. Often emotive words are used to elicit behaviors and not simply judgments.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle explains the role of the will in an action. On his view, a decision is always relative to a goal, and the goal can be what is good, or what appears to be good (*Nicomachean Ethics* III, 4, 1113a15); in fact, "everything aims at the good" (*Topics* III, 1, 116a 18). The verbal classification of something as good or bad can explain only a part of the goal of a persuasion dialogue, whose purpose is ultimately to persuade another party to accept one's own view by changing the other party's commitments. In order for such argumentation to be successful, the interlocutor has often to commit himself to a viewpoint he might be doubtful about (see Prakken 2006). In other types of dialogue, the interlocutor is led to make a decision about how to act. The Aristotelian principles are fundamental for explaining how a choice is made and what the pattern of reasoning underlying it is.

In a theory of argumentation schemes, the connection between evaluation and action can be represented by the concept of value. Value is what makes something desirable, and can be conceived as the reason leading somebody to desire something. Reasoning from values can be conceived as a type of argumentation leading an interlocutor to consider something desirable for him, and, therefore, to accept it as an object of action. The

process of reasoning can be described as follows: *x* (an action, an object, or a viewpoint) can be judged positively or negatively according to a value V; according to the desirability of *x*, *x* can become an action worthy for the agent or not. The fact that the action is or is not a goal determines whether the agent maintains or retracts his commitment to *x*. The core of this scheme is the value, that is, the reason for desirability. We can represent the scheme as follows (Walton, Reed and Macagno, chapter 9):

ARGUMENT FROM VALUES

Variant 1: Positive Value

PREMISE 1:	Value *V* is *positive* as judged by agent *A* (judgment value).
PREMISE 2:	The fact that value *V* is *positive* affects the interpretation and therefore the evaluation of goal *G* of agent *A* (If value *V* is *good*, it supports commitment to goal *G*).
CONCLUSION:	*V* is a reason for retaining commitment to goal *G*.

19.2 Variant 2: Negative Value.

PREMISE 1:	Value *V* is *negative* as judged by agent *A* (judgment value).
PREMISE 2:	The fact that value *V* is *negative* affects the interpretation and therefore the evaluation of goal *G* of agent *A* (If value *V* is *bad*, it goes against commitment to goal *G*).
CONCLUSION:	*V* is a reason for retracting commitment to goal *G*.

Argument from values was first clearly identified as a distinctive argumentation scheme by Bench-Capon (2003, 2003a), and was later developed in (Bench-Capon and Atkinson 2009: 48) as a type of practical reasoning. On their view, values are what make an action desirable. For instance, we can examine the Douglas-Lincoln debate on the abolition of slavery in the USA (Bench-Capon and Atkinson 2009: 48). Whereas Douglas refused to accept the uniformity of the abolition in all states, defending the legislative freedom of the states, Lincoln supported that decision on the grounds of inviolable human rights. The two arguments can be represented by the following statements (Basler 1946: 436; Hammond, Hardwick, and Howard 2007: 1052):

Douglas:

> [U]niformity in the local laws and institutions of the different States is neither possible or desirable. If uniformity had been adopted when the Government was established, it must inevitably have been the uniformity of slavery everywhere, or else the uniformity of negro citizenship and negro equality everywhere. ... I ask you, are you in favor of conferring upon the negro the rights and privileges of citizenship? ("No, no.") Do you desire to strike out of our State Constitution that clause which keeps slaves and free negroes out of the State, and allow the free negroes to flow in, ("never,") and cover your prairies with black settlements?

Lincoln:

> This declared indifference, but, as I must think, covert real zeal for the spread of slavery, I cannot but hate. I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself. I hate it because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world-enables the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us as hypocrites-causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity, and especially because it forces so many really good men amongst ourselves into an open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty-criticizing the Declaration of Independence, and insisting that there is no right principle of action but self-interest

We can represent the argumentation as shown in figure 8.

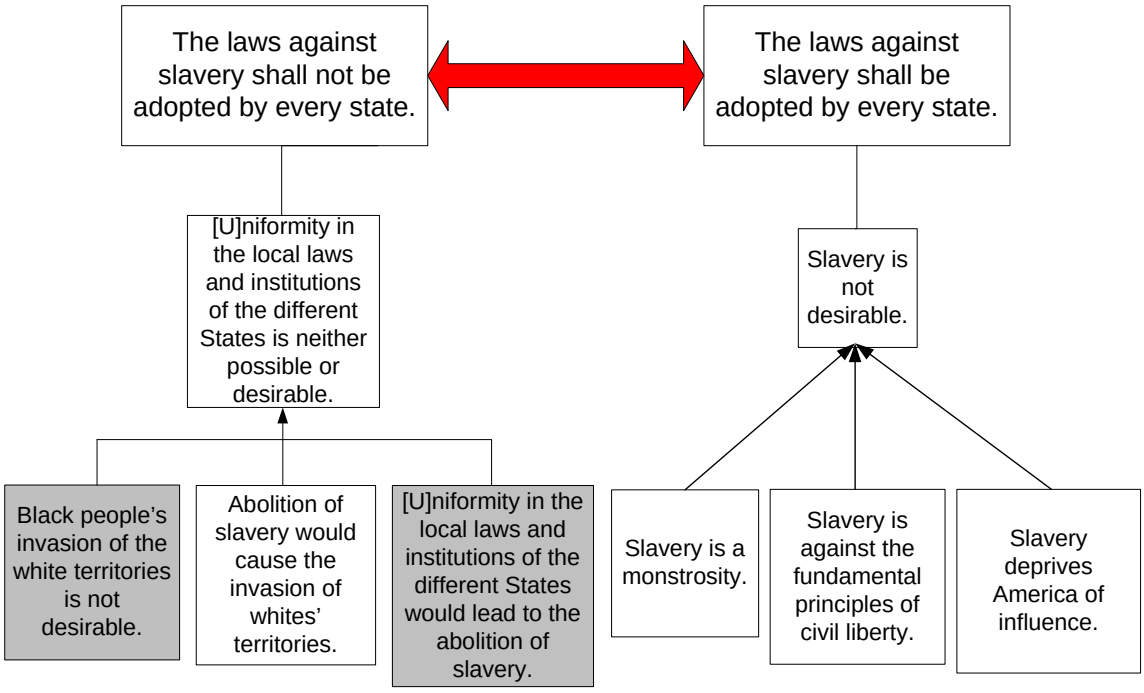

Figure 8: Conflict of values

In this example, it emerges how different values support different positions. However, in this case the basic values are all explicit. In the following section a particular strategy of arguing from values will be analyzed, that of using a persuasive definition.

Persuasive definitions: Values presupposed and manipulations

Stevenson analyzed the strategy of redefinition in two different persuasive tactics, persuasive definition and quasi-definition. We will refer to both these two techniques as species of persuasive definition. Stevenson did not distinguish between fallacious or reasonable uses of redefinitions, as they were considered simply forms of persuasion. On our view, the distinction can be analyzed at the level of speech acts of presupposition. We will show how the phenomenon of presupposition works at two levels of the strategy of persuasive definition.

Quasi-definitions

Use of a persuasive definition can affect an argument in two ways. In quasi-definitions, the definition of the term is maintained, but the system of values associated with the fragment of reality it refers to is implicitly modified. In contrast, when a persuasive definition is used, the definition itself is implicitly changed. We can use the following case of quasi-definition (Stevenson, 1944, 280, 281, from Artsybashev 1907: 27):

> Blackguards are the most fascinating people.
> You don't say so? Exclaimed Sarudine, smiling.
> Of course they are. There's nothing so boring in all the world as your so-called honest man. … With the programme of honesty and virtue everybody is long familiar; and so it contains nothing that is new. Such antiquated rubbish robs a man of all individuality, and his life is lived within the narrow, tedious limits of virtue… Yes, blackguards are the most sincere and interesting people imaginable, for they have no conception of the bounds of human baseness.

This argument can be described as a double attack to the traditional system of values. A new hierarchy dominated by the couple boringness-originality substitutes for the traditional hierarchy of values, at the top of which there was the dichotomy virtue-vice. The original argumentation from values (virtue is desirable, therefore it should be achieved) is substituted with a new one (vice is original and fun, originality and fun are desirable, therefore vice should be praised). However, this alteration of hierarchies of values is not made explicit, nor is it supported by arguments. The speaker simply presupposes the new hierarchy as granted by the whole community of speakers, and tries to get his thesis accepted on these grounds. We can represent these two patterns of argumentation as shown in figure 9.

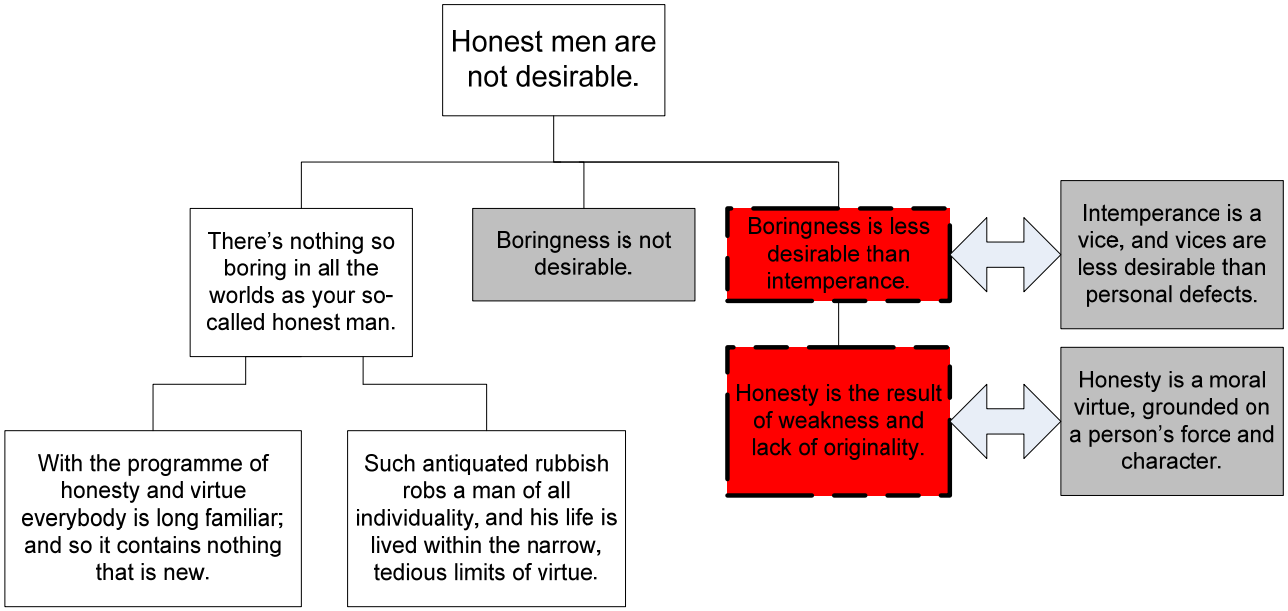

Figure 9: Presupposing unshared values

In figure 10, the red boxes represented presupposed propositions contrary to commonly shared values, represented as grey boxes connected to them with a double arrow.

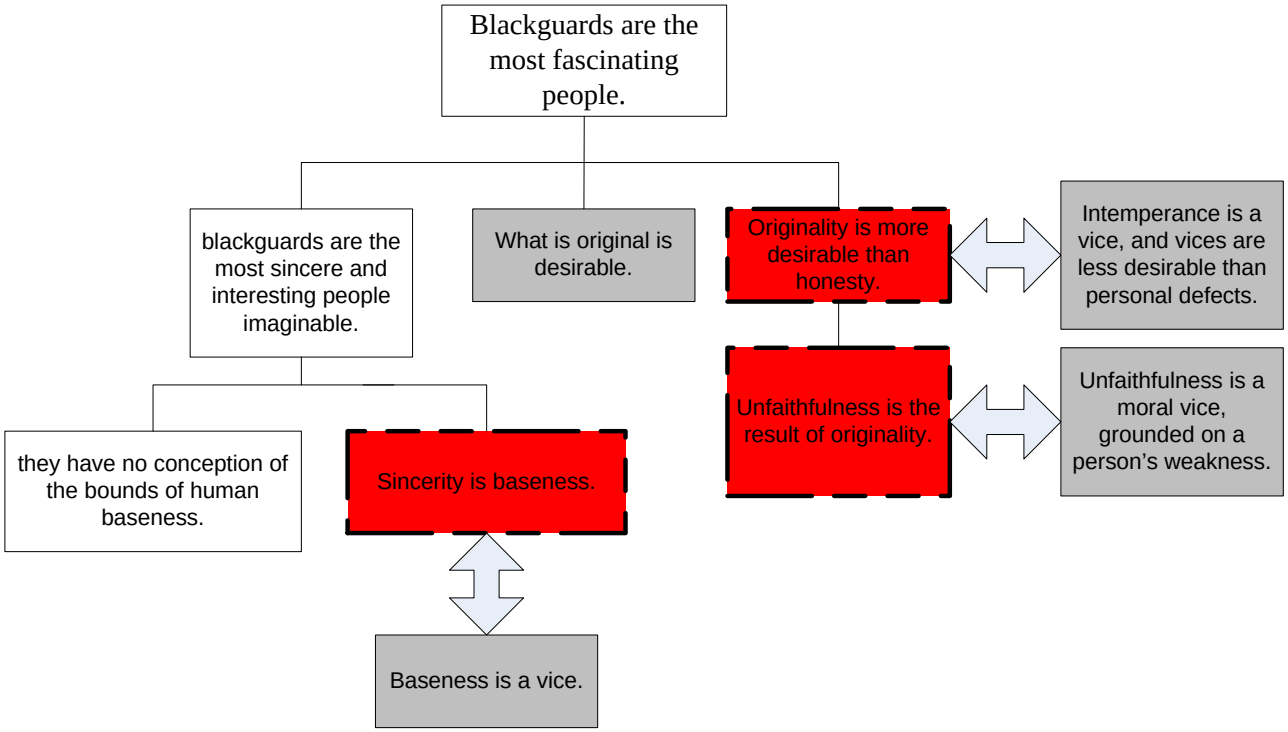

Figure 10: Presupposed unshared hierarchies of values and definitions

In the analysis shown in figure 10, we can notice how the speaker presupposes hierarchies and definitions of key concepts such as "unfaithfulness" and "honesty" as commonly accepted. In fact, the presupposed propositions are in conflict with the accepted common knowledge. There would have been nothing wrong in quasi-defining the concepts at stake explicitly, and supporting the view with arguments. However, in this case the controversial propositions are objects of acts of presupposition, and are therefore improperly inserted in the hearer's commitment store. If those values had been accepted or acceptable, the redefinition would have been a reasonable persuasive move. In this case, in the novel at least, the presupposition is a manipulative act, aimed at introducing unaccepted *endoxa* without defending them.

Persuasive definitions

Persuasive definitions, on Stevenson's account, are redefinitions of emotive terms, namely terms used to support a conclusion. They are redefinitions of terms used in an argument to retrieve presupposed propositions needed to support a conclusion. While quasi-definitions alter the hierarchies of values shared by a community, persuasive definitions modify the values in another fashion. As values refer to a fragment of reality, persuasive definitions alter the relation between word and denotation to lead the interlocutor to change his assessment of a state of affairs previously otherwise

designated. We can observe the following example to explain this type of strategy (Stevenson1944: 211):

> A: He has had but little formal education, as is plainly evident from his conversation. His sentences are often roughly cast, his historical and literary references rather obvious, and his thinking is wanting in that subtlety and sophistication which mark a trained intellect. He is definitely lacking in culture.
> B: Much of what you say is true, but I should call him a man of culture notwithstanding.
> A: Aren't the characteristics I mention the antithesis of culture, contrary to the very meaning of the term?
> B: By no means. You are stressing the outward forms, simply the empty shell of culture. In the true and full sense of the term, "culture" means imaginative sensitivity and originality. These qualities he has; and so I say, and indeed with no little humility, that he is a man of far deeper culture than many of us who have had superior advantages in education.

Both the terms "culture" and "originality" are commonly considered as positive and desirable; however, "originality" is not commonly considered as a cause of "sophistication" or "subtlety", which is the conclusion of this argument. In this case, B does not challenge the relation between culture and sophistication, but the definition of "culture" itself. He redefines the term "culture" in order to predicate it of a fragment of reality that could not be classified as such.

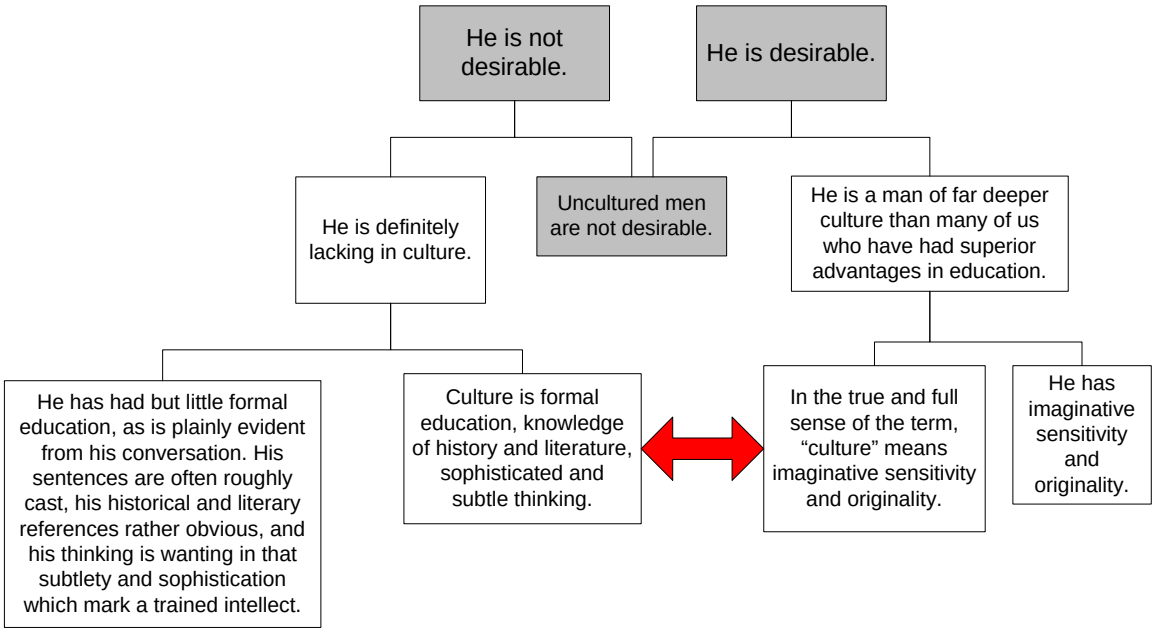

Figure 11: Persuasive definitions as explicit alteration of the background

In this analysis, we can notice how the focus of the persuasive definition is the definitional premise of the argument from classification, whereas the values associated with the concept of "education" are not altered. Both parties validly presuppose them, without modifying the other party's commitments. Dialectically speaking, B challenges A's definition explicitly introducing a dissociation in the definition of culture (see Van

Rees 2009). Dissociation, introduced in Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric*, can be described as an explicit argumentative strategy in which the original meaning of a term is split into two concepts by means of a definition. For instance (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p. 418), "true" equity is opposed to "apparent" equity, thereby introducing a polysemic use of the term "equity"[4].
Even though no reasons are provided supporting the fact that B's definition has to be considered as the true one, B's move allows the interlocutor to open a discussion on what should be considered the definition of 'culture'. In this case, as we can notice, the act of presupposing values is simply a communicative act needed to make the communication proceed more expeditiously. This act is not aimed at introducing new values or fragments of shared knowledge without supporting it with arguments.
The case would have been different if B had presupposed the definition of 'culture' without making it explicit, as in the following statement:

> (6) He is a man of culture, as he is original and sensitive.

In this statement, the definition is simply presupposed as granted, even though this move risks being fallacious if it is intended to manipulate the other party's commitments by taking for granted a proposition that is unacceptable to the interlocutor. In this latter case, the persuasive definition would be a fallacious tactic.
A related fallacious technique would be the act of stating only the features fitting the definition of a predicate, in order to attribute the attribute to an entity, presupposing that all the relevant information regarding the subject is what is stated. For instance, we can consider the following:

> (7) Hitler has been a great political leader. He conquered the whole of Europe, and restored Germany's economy

This statement, uttered in a context in which the hearer does not know anything about the subject, would not manipulate any definition, as the commonly shared meaning of 'political leader' is 'a man who is a respected leader in national or international affairs'. However, it would be an act of omission, as the speaker would presuppose that 'all the relevant information for the classification has been stated'. Hitler's crimes are simply not mentioned: they are presupposed as non-existent. Uttered in a context in which the hearer shares the background about Hitler, this statement could also implicitly manipulate what has to be considered as 'a great political leader'. Is a political leader someone who realizes the good of his country's people or one who just achieves some success?
The act of presupposing seen in this way is related to fallacies of omission (*Rhetoric* 1401, 1-2) like argument from ignorance, as the speaker fails to say what is needed to be known, and in this fashion presupposes that the unsaid information does not exist.

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[4] This new meaning usually bears a certain connotation or value judgment. The persuasive (or propagandistic) effect depends upon the fact that in the essence statement "True A is B" B can add an evaluation to A, or select, emphasizing or deleting, the evaluation it already had, or emphasize the importance of A (Halldén 1960). For instance, "true religion is love" adds a positive evaluation to "religion" by means of the positive meaning of "love".

Conclusions

The problems solved in this paper are to provide a better theoretical framework to explain why certain words are persuasive, and to show how they work as concealed arguments based on presuppositions that can be revealed, and that should be subject to critical questioning. We have used congruence theory to provide the linguistic framework for connecting a term with the function it is supposed to fulfill in an argument. Our account allows us to distinguish between conflicts of values and conflicts of classifications. Our account has been built on Stevenson's, but as stated in the introductory section, our theory is different from his positivistic view that defines emotive meaning as a behavioral effect. In contrast, our theory treats the persuasiveness of emotive words and persuasive definitions as due to implicit arguments that an uncritical interlocutor may not question, or even be aware of. Hence our analysis shows how the use of emotive terms is a powerful tool that is often employed to lead an interlocutor to a desired conclusion or action without her being aware that a strategy of persuasion is even being used. The previous literature has helped explain how persuasive words work, but our analysis has examined their linguistic and argumentative structure at a deeper level.

Our pragmatic approach is grounded on the linguistic pragmatic notion of presupposition, and the notion of an argumentation scheme, especially the one for argument from values. We maintain that persuasion can be a process of rational adherence to a thesis, and by means of argumentation schemes, we make the possible types of rational support of a conclusion explicit. Argumentation schemes can be considered as the application of logical patterns to natural language. Pragmatics becomes for this reason a fundamental aspect for evaluating the reasonableness of arguments. Emotive words, on our theory, can be analyzed at three interrelated levels: the semantic, the pragmatic, and the argumentation scheme level. The semantic content of the term specifies its argumentative role. The argumentative role of a statement is based on a series of inferences that can be explicit or implicit. We have shown how the relationship between presupposed and explicit content provides a way to distinguish between fallacious and reasonable uses of emotive words. We have shown how arguments from values and classification are sound arguments when certain conditions are respected, and how, in the case of emotive words, concealed and questionable assumptions are presupposed.

Emotive words are sometimes used in a fallacious fashion, and in such cases they involve the alteration of the interlocutor's values or definitional system. For this reason, emotive words have to be analyzed as similar in key respects to implicit redefinitions, examined by Stevenson as persuasive definitions. On our view, PDs are redefinitions of terms in order to support an implicit conclusion through arguments from classification and from values. Depending on which scheme is the target of the re-definer, redefinitions can be labeled as quasi-definitions or persuasive definitions. These tactics can be reasonable or fallacious strategies, depending on what the speaker presupposes. We have shown that the justified or unjustified use of emotive words can be evaluated on a case-by-case basis using the reasonableness conditions of persuasive definitions.

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