

4. POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND ARGUMENTATION IN THE PUBLIC SPACE

4.1. Doxastic logic – the foundation of persuasion

The mechanism of persuasion is referred to by Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca as “an action which always tends to modify a preexisting state of affairs” (Perelman et al.74). Furthermore, what might be considered an argumentative problem “is to be solved in a dialogical or rhetorical manner, in other words, through dispute” (Mihai 236).

Despite the various shifts in perspective as well as aspects of daily life or of interpersonal communication, the solution to conflicting opinions can only be found by starting from the logical analysis of language. Although there is a shift in focus from the content of argumentation to the necessity to adapt to the features of the public – who becomes a participant in the act of communication and, therefore, needs being convinced – the abovementioned authors go beyond the Kantian perspective, according to which it is the mechanisms of reason that ultimately lie at the foundation of persuasion, and return to the Aristotelian idea of persuasion based on opinion (doxastic logic), i.e. the opinion of an interlocutor or of a large scale receiver; or, more precisely, on the idea of generating personal convictions at such a level.

The two authors take the Aristotelian works as a starting point in advancing and laying the foundation of a new type of rhetoric. The novelty of their approach lies in the higher consideration to the person who needs persuading. One may consider that Aristotle himself, even though not explicitly, foresaw the necessity of having, in the early stage of an argumentation, an agreement between the interlocutors which may include or refer to facts, truths, presuppositions, values, or hierarchies. This agreement between interlocutors represents, at least in principle, the fundamental basis for the construction of any argumentation, regardless of its being dialectic or dialogic in nature. Even the idea of discursive performance reflects in the Aristotelian rhetoric. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle adapts the dialectics adopted in *The Organon* and deals with it alongside the orator’s features and the audience’s passions.

Nevertheless, what intervenes at present in generating a common opinion is the impressive dimension that the audience of a certain discourse may acquire due to the mutations that have occurred in the field of information and communication technologies and, implicitly, the extremely diverse characteristics that individuals ultimately possess and display