Argumentation in Context 16

Strategic Maneuvering for Political Change

Ahmed Abdulhameed Omar

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Strategic Maneuvering for Political Change

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Volume 16

Strategic Maneuvering for Political Change
A pragma-dialectical analysis of Egyptian anti-regime columns
by Ahmed Abdulhameed Omar

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A pragma-dialectical analysis of Egyptian anti-regime columns

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Foreword

Strategic Maneuvering for Political Change is dedicated to all the participants in the revolutionary uprising of 25 January 2011, and more specifically to the souls of the martyrs who struggled for a free and democratic Egypt. Their sacrifices inspired my travel to Amsterdam in October 2012 as a PhD student in order to better understand how and why this new Arab generation could change the history of the Middle East.

Originally, this monograph was a doctoral dissertation entitled *Strategic Maneuvering in Supporting the Feasibility of Political Change,* funded by the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education, Cultural Affairs and Missions Sector and submitted to the Faculty of Humanities at University of Amsterdam. It was promoted by Frans van Eemeren and co-promoted by Francisca Snoeck Henkemans. For four years, Frans and Francisca exerted sincere and exceptional efforts to help me walk through the realm of argumentation theory. Their understanding and encouragement made my stay in Amsterdam a great experience.

Thanks go to T. van Haaften, G.J. Steen, A. Gâţă, I.M. van der Poel, and C. Andone, the defense committee members. Their comments and critical questions helped me develop the content of my dissertation for almost two years after the defense.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Object of research

Most research on the Arab Spring in Egypt has concentrated on the speech events that accompanied the revolutionary actions taking place from January 25th to February 11th 2011, which resulted in bringing Mubarak and his regime down. Less attention was paid to the texts and discourses that paved the way for a radical political change. Of the latter category of texts, posts on Facebook, blogs, and other types of texts circulated through the internet were considered the most effective speech events in causing the minds of the masses to change and contribute to radical political change. The fact that other texts and discourses paving the way for political change received less attention might be a consequence of the common belief that the revolutionary uprising of January 25th was fortuitous and not an outcome of a cumulative process of engaging in the public debate.[1]

This study is dedicated to analyzing and evaluating the argumentative aspects of the Egyptian anti-regime columns that aimed at convincing the audience that a radical political change in Egypt should occur. These columns provided good reasons for participating in the realization of the promoted change, and justified its feasibility. In order to get the people concerned convinced that bringing about a radical political change is desirable, it is not enough to convince them that ousting the dictator and his regime will be beneficial. The people must also be convinced that their participation will indeed lead to the intended change taking place.

As illustrative cases of anti-regime political columns adopting the call for a radical political change before 2011, this study concentrates on the columns of Alaa Al Aswany published in *Al Shorouk*, a Cairene daily quality (or elite) newspaper. Al

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1. Juan Cole, the author of *The New Arabs: How the Millennial Generation is changing the Middle East*, argues that much of the success of the new Arab generations in the Arab spring is due to the use of social media. Lawrence Rosen who reviewed the book in the Guardian (14 August 2014) notes that "Cole's illustrations of the importance of social media also do not point in a single direction. He calls use of the internet 'formational' but notes that 'the rise of the internet may not have been as central to these social movements as some western press coverage assumed'. Indeed, his own description shows that information disseminated by pamphlet and word of mouth was usually more important". The editor puts an emphasis in the lead on this point "Was Facebook responsible for the Arab Spring?" The current study shares Cole's view that more "traditional" media played the greatest role in paving the way for the Arab Spring.

Aswany is a novelist of international fame and a political activist. His public stature gave his political columns the necessary boost for being read on a wide scale. What is distinctive about Al Aswany's columns in *Al Shorouk* is that they all end with the slogan "Democracy is the Solution". Thus a call for democratization was the key concept that linked all the columns together.[2]

Al Aswany devoted some of his columns to a discussion of the feasibility of political change. In his view, Mubarak's regime could not be brought down unless massive demonstrations took place. The protesters, however, no matter how big their number would be harshly repressed by the police. Convincing his audience that political change was feasible, therefore, entailed justifying that the Egyptian police could be defeated. It also entailed supporting the view that other relevant factors, such as the positions taken by other state apparatuses and the pillars of the regime, would work in favor of a victory of the protesters and not of the regime.

1.2 Approach

The theoretical framework I will use to study Al Aswany's discussion of the feasibility of political change is the extended pragma-dialectical theory. The standard theory was developed by Frans van Eemeren and others at the University of Amsterdam. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, 2004) developed a model of a critical discussion aimed at resolving a difference of opinion. The model is an abstraction describing how arguers ideally exchange speech acts attempting to resolve the difference of opinion.

The resolution process starts with the confrontation stage, in which the discussants make it clear that they adopt different positions regarding a proposition. One of the parties adopts a positive or a negative standpoint and the other casts doubt on it. It may also be the case that the other party additionally adopts the opposing standpoint. In the opening stage, both parties agree on the distribution of the dialectical roles of protagonist and antagonist, and on the procedural and material starting points. In the argumentation stage, the protagonist advances argumentation in support of the standpoint at issue, and the antagonist puts forward criticisms to refute it. In the concluding stage, the parties jointly determine the result of the discussion: either the protagonist has to retract his or her standpoint, or the antagonist has to retract his or her doubt. The empirical reality of argumentative texts and discourses

2. The columns analyzed in this book are all translated into English by Jonathan Wright (Aswany, 2011) and and published in *On the state of Egypt*, except the second illustrative case entitled "the Coming Civil Disobedience on April 6th." which is translated by Ahmed Omar. These columns are included in five appendices.

diverges in varying degrees from this model. The model of a critical discussion plays the role of a heuristic, analytic, and critical framework that is instrumental in reconstructing, explaining, and evaluating real argumentative practices.

The standard pragma-dialectical theory was in need to be enriched in order to get a better grip on argumentative reality. Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2002; 2005a; 2006) and van Eemeren (2010) extended the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation through the inclusion of a rhetorical perspective in addition to the pragmatic and dialectical perspectives. They developed the analytical concept of strategic maneuvering. Arguers are assumed to not only commit to norms of reasonableness when engaging in an argumentative discourse, but also to aim for winning the discussion. Three inseparable aspects can be distinguished in their strategic maneuvering: topical choices, presentational devices, and the adaptation to audience demand. Arguers maneuver strategically by selecting the topical choices and presentational devices that are best adapted to audience demand. In every argumentative move, they attempt to balance a commitment to the dialectical norms of reasonableness and achieving rhetorical effectiveness. A fallacy is thus redefined as a derailment of this equilibrium by giving the pursuit of achieving effectiveness a priority on the expense of the pursuit of maintaining reasonableness.

In order to account for the analysis of the maneuvers made in argumentative discourse, the different levels of context in which the discourse takes place should be taken into consideration. Van Eemeren (2010, 2011) distinguishes between four levels of context: the linguistic context of the speech event, the situation in which the speech event occurs, the communicative activity type of the speech event, and the intertextual or interdiscursive context constituted by other speech events connected to the speech event at issue. In addition, logical and pragmatic inferences and background information should be taken into account.

The space for maneuvering available to arguers is determined by the intrinsic and extrinsic constraints imposed on the argumentative practice at issue. The intrinsic constraints are the specific dialectical and rhetorical goals the arguers aim to achieve by means of engaging in a critical discussion. The extrinsic constraints consist of the limitations imposed on the argumentative discourse by the institutional preconditions of the macro-context in which the arguer's contributions are made.

In this study, Al Aswany, as an anti-regime columnist, is viewed as a protagonist who aims to convince his audience, the antagonist, in a critical discussion expressed in a political column of the acceptability of certain propositions conveying that a radical political change in Egypt would be feasible. In every argumentative move, Al Aswany may be assumed to make an effort to both maintain the norms of reasonableness and achieve rhetorical effectiveness, taking in consideration the intrinsic and extrinsic constraints imposed on his argumentative practices.

1.3 Aims and research questions

Analyzing and evaluating the strategic maneuvers made by an Egyptian anti-regime columnist in supporting the feasibility of political change requires a good understanding of the political situation in which these columns were written. Characterizing this political situation involves identifying the main political actors in the Egyptian political situation before 2011, explaining the evolution of the regime and its opposition in Mubarak's era, and illustrating the main ideas about political change entertained before 2011. By providing this characterization, the necessary background information concerning the texts at issue will be given.

Selecting Al Aswany's columns as illustrative cases of anti-regime columns can be accounted for by highlighting his public stature. Having been a prominent public figure, Al Aswany gained the interest of a great many readers in his writings. As a consequence, his columns became increasingly popular. I attempt to make it clear that selecting Al Aswany as a pre-eminent anti-regime columnist is justifiable.

Analyzing and evaluating the strategic maneuvers made by an arguer requires an investigation of how the arguer's topical choices and presentational devices are adapted to the audience demand. To make such an investigation feasible, it is essential that the audience of the illustrative cases is not too heterogeneous. Al Aswany wrote for 15 years for many private newspapers and also for official newspapers of opposition parties. Yet, the only period in which his columns appeared periodically was the time when he wrote for the *Al Shorouk* newspaper (February 2009–October 2010). So, his 82 columns published in *Al Shorouk* were selected as cases of interest.

Al Aswany's columns all end with the slogan "Democracy is the Solution". Hypothetically, they can all be seen as constituents of a general call for democratization. In order to give a systematic explanation of how Al Aswany supports this call in his columns, an analysis of the types of issues that Al Aswany addresses, including the feasibility issue, should be given. To this end, I will provide an analysis of how the types of issues involved in the defense of a call for democratization emerge and how they are defined.

Having given an analysis of the way of defending a call for democratization, and the role the issue of feasibility plays in this defense, the columns in which the feasibility is tackled need to be identified. Each of these columns addresses the feasibility issue by discussing how a certain obstacle on the road to political change can be overcome. A column (or a group of columns) therefore tackles a topic or a theme that constitutes a part of the feasibility discussion.

The argumentative predicament, including dialectical commitments and rhetorical exigency, Al Aswany confronts in addressing each of these topics should be elucidated in order to explain the intrinsic constraints imposed on the maneuvers he makes in the columns. Such a predicament can be made clear by specifying the demands of the potential audience Al Aswany may reach. For this purpose, two

questions must be answered: What constitutes the politically relevant frame of reference of Al Aswany's audience? And how does each group view each topic of the feasibility issue in view of their frame of reference? The answers are distributed over the introductions of the application chapters with respect to each topic subsumed to the feasibility issue.

In addition to these intrinsic constraints, extrinsic constraints imposed on Al Aswany's argumentation also determine the space for strategic maneuvering. This type of constraints is specified by identifying the institutional preconditions of the communicative activity type at issue. An argumentative characterization of Egyptian political columns is therefore needed, taking into consideration the particularities of the domain of journalism in Egypt. Such a characterization is implemented by identifying the institutional goals the Egyptian political columns are designed to achieve, and the genre(s) implemented in the Egyptian political columns to achieve these goals.

In the communicative activity type of a political column, four focal points corresponding to the four stages of the resolution process can be distinguished: the initial situation, the starting points, the argumentative means and criticisms, and the possible outcomes. The task of characterization is complemented by clearly describing each focal point in order to to define the limitations and possibilities of the argumentative practice in political columns. These limitations and possibilities demarcate the space of maneuvering available to Al Aswany in addressing the standpoints at issue.

Having identified the intrinsic and extrinsic constraints imposed on Al Aswany in the strategic maneuvers he makes in supporting the feasibility of political change, I thus aim to analyze the specific strategic maneuvers he makes in each of the columns at issue.

Utilizing his talent as a novelist and short stories writer, Al Aswany conveys his views on the feasibility of radical political change, making use of some literary and quasi-literary means, attempting to maintain the delicate balance between committing to the norms of dialectical reasonableness and achieving rhetorical effectiveness. In analyzing the maneuvers made by Al Aswany to address each topic, how a specific literary or quasi-literary means argumentatively functions will be addressed. The analyses are thus focused on showing how argumentation, narration and fiction relate to each other.

Al Aswany discusses three topics subsumed to the feasibility of radical political change. Briefly, Al Aswany argues that the Egyptian people were no longer submissive, inactive or politically indifferent (the "active people" topic), the Egyptian police can be defeated by the protesters (the "defeatable police" topic), and the protesters will succeed in bringing Mubarak's regime down taking into consideration the different reactions of its main pillars. Each topic is addressed by Al Aswany in a somewhat different way, i.e. by selecting specific topical choices, employing

specific presentational devices, and adopting a specific perspective adjusted to audience demand.

With regard to the "active people" topic, I concentrate on analyzing and evaluating how selecting and framing actions of a few number of persons can be strategically utilized in conveying a generalization pertaining to the activity of the Egyptian people as a whole. I will raise the following questions:

1. How can an arguer maneuver strategically by argumentation from examples in supporting a positive evaluation of a political group?
2. How can Al Aswany's use of his narrative skills be instrumental in maintaining the balance between dialectical reasonableness and rhetorical effectiveness when discussing the activity of the Egyptian people?

In addressing the "defeatable police" and "victorious protesters" topics, Al Aswany makes use of more explicit and articulate narrative and fictional forms and techniques. I aim to explain how opinions (in the form of assertives) can be inferred from narrative and fictional texts, and how Al Aswany as an arguer can be held committed to the propositional contents inferred. This means that I will be raising the following research questions:

3. How can a narrative text be analytically reconstructed as (part of) a critical discussion aimed at resolving a difference of opinion?
4. How can fictional elements be analytically reconstructed as (part of) a critical discussion aimed at resolving a difference of opinion?

A question needs to be raised of whether the narrative perspective adopted by Al Aswany in his columns can be seen as a strategic maneuver aimed at effectively convincing the audience of a contestable standpoint. This amounts to raising the following research question:

5. Can Al Aswany's use of a narrative perspective be analyzed as a strategic maneuver aimed at maintaining the balance between dialectical reasonableness and rhetorical effectiveness in discussing a topic of feasibility? And what are the strategic functions of such a move in view of the argumentative predicament at issue?

With regard to the fictional elements, a similar question can be raised concerning the argumentative use of a fictional form:

6. Can Al Aswany's use of a fictional form be analyzed as a strategic maneuver aimed at maintaining the balance between dialectical reasonableness and rhetorical effectiveness in discussing a topic of feasibility? And what are the strategic functions of such a move in view of the argumentative predicament at issue?

1.4 Organization of the study

Chapter 2 will be dedicated to providing the sufficient information pertinent to the elements constituting the communicative context of the columns at issue: the historical and political context, the columnist, the *Al Shorouk*'s columns, Al Aswany's audience, and its frame of reference.

In this chapter, I will shed light on the various social roles Al Aswany plays in the Egyptian public sphere, focusing on his famous novel *The Yacoubian Building* which helped in positioning Al Aswany as an anti-regime writer par-excellence.

I will also view Al Aswany's call for democratization as a call for a change of policy at the national level. By making use of a stock-issues and policy-change-advocacy approach, I shall analyze the systematic aspects of making a call for democratization.

By conducting a quantitative analysis of the content of the *Al Shorouk*'s front pages in Chapter 2, I will identify the elements of the newspaper's political agenda. These elements will be instrumental in elaborating the frame of reference of Al Aswany's audience in general. More detailed answers concerning how his audience viewed the three topics at issue will be given in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 when introducing the illustrative cases at issue.

Chapter 3 will be devoted to providing an argumentative characterization of Egyptian political columns as an argumentative activity type with the help of some illustrative columns written by several Egyptian political columnists.

In Chapter 4, I will answer research questions 1 and 2 by showing how a columnist may strategically select examples that are instrumental in avoiding a hasty generalization related to a whole political group. Some insights into arguments from example will be discussed in order to point out what it means to maintain the norms of reasonableness when using examples as arguments in this specific situation.

Research questions 3 and 5 will be answered in Chapter 5 with the help of the speech-act-based approach to narrative perspective developed by Lanser (1981), and the model of narrative point of view developed by Schmid (2010).

I will answer research questions 4 and 6 in Chapter 6 by drawing on the conceptual metaphor theory and a speech-act-based approach to fiction.

CHAPTER 2

Al Aswany's call for democracy in the *Al Shorouk* columns

2.1 Introduction

An appropriate analytic reconstruction of the columns at issue requires taking into account the relevant background knowledge. This chapter is devoted to providing this background that will shed light on the three main components of the communicative process involved: the addresser (Al Aswany), the message (the columns) and the addressee (the audience). In addition, I shall briefly discuss the political situation in Egypt before 2011 as the setting of the communication, in terms of the historical evolution of Mubarak's regime over 30 years, and the views of the main political parties and groups. The selection of Al Aswany's columns as illustrative cases of the current study will be then justified by showing how Al Aswany's public stature was established to make him one of the most read anti-regime columnists in Egypt before 2011.

Afterwards, Al Aswany's columns published in *Al Shorouk* will be characterized as pro-democratization texts. The columns will be positioned as interconnected texts aimed at arguing in favor of replacing a status quo, autocratic (despotic) political system with a new, democratic one. Viewing the columns in such a way helps in systematically identifying the columns addressing the feasibility of political change.

Before going further in the analysis of the feasibility columns concerned in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, the topic discussed in each need to be introduced first. I shall also briefly present the rhetorical predicaments Al Aswany as an arguer faces when addressing these topics.

Arguers strategically maneuver by selecting topical choices and presentational devices in adaptation to the audience demand. Adaptation to the audience demand means taking into account the views and preferences of the audience targeted, i.e. its frame of reference. In order to identify this frame with regard to Al Aswany's audience as clearly as possible, I shall divide his readers into two distinctive groups with two potentially different views and preferences: *Al Shorouk*'s *inscribed reader*, and *the followers of* Al Aswany. The frame of reference of the first group will be identified by performing a quantitative content analysis of the media texts that appear on the front pages of *Al Shorouk*. In this way, the main points on the newspaper's political agenda can be determined. The frame of reference of the second group will be specified by explaining the set of values Al Aswany represents for his followers.

2.2 The political situation in Egypt before 2011

In 1981, Sadat, the third Egyptian president, was assassinated by radical Islamists while attending a parade. His deputy, Mubarak (b. 1928), became president in a smooth shift of power. In order to secure his rule, Mubarak attempted to strengthen the wide social alliance supporting him. This alliance consisted of the security apparatuses, the civil bureaucracy, and the wealthy, traditional stakeholders living in peasant territories.

Mubarak had learnt the lesson of Sadat's assassination well and kept Islamists under pressure. Grim campaigns were launched against the Islamist radical groups. Furthermore, the regime now and then even cracked down on the moderate Islamists by detaining them, sending them to military courts, and forging parliamentary and syndicate elections.[3]

Some democratic margin was first allowed, but it was narrowed down year by year. The democratic processes were limited to allowing new ineffective parties to emerge, and launching a few partisan newspapers. The terroristic attacks carried out by Jihadists in the 1990s put war on terrorism at the top of the state priorities' list. Calling for democratic developments was viewed as a risk in state-run media (which monopolized nearly the whole domain of journalism before the new millennium). Mubarak's regime consistently claimed that taking considerable measures on the road to real democracy would help fanatics take to power.

By the 2000s, the state initiated a neo-liberal evolution: an accelerated privatization process was launched, and considerable foreign investments were attracted. This evolution resulted in a significant change in the social alliance supporting Mubarak. On the one hand, a powerful class of businessmen emerged and expressed its power by influencing the official policy-making. Instead of the prominent state bureaucratic staff, businessmen became the most prominent members of the ruling party, the National Democratic Party (NDP). On the other hand, the regime gradually lost the support of the public sector workers and state incumbents, who were harmed by the regime's policies. This harm was fiscal by a decrease in the purchasing power of their income, and moral by an increase in their feeling of class differences. Highlighting the gaps of welfare between social classes in the private media and through different forms of drama contributed to enhancing the feelings of inequality.[4]

Steadily, Mubarak's regime became ideologically meaningless. The ruling party raised the slogan "keeping in power for stability", which implicitly conveyed

3. For more information on the conditions of Islamists in Mubarak's era, see Kassem (2004: pp. 133–166).

4. For more information on the emergence of a new businessmen class in Mubarak's era, see Tarouty (2015: pp. 85–112).

that the regime had nothing significant to do. In spite of the enmity against the Islamists expressed in the official discourse, the regime left vast societal spaces for the Islamist views. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Muslim Brotherhood were quite tolerated because they were less radical than the *jihadists*. Salafism was encouraged as a rival of the Muslim Brotherhood because Salafism was generally against politicizing Islam. Slowly, the Islamic awakening crept into the state-run media and public discourses. In parliamentary debates on cases of expression of freedom, for example, members of the ruling party showed a conservative tendency that was not so much different from the Islamists' (Younis, 2014: p. 51, 52).

Meanwhile, Mubarak changed as well. The young hard-working man became an aged man. Some national and international media claimed that by then Mubarak left most of his duties to his son, Gamal. The self-made officer who had declared in his early reign that "a coffin has no pockets" turned into an allegedly 70 billion dollar dictator. As a response to the American pro-democratic pressures starting after the 9/11 attacks, or perhaps in an attempt to rejuvenate the regime, Mubarak amended the constitution in February 2005 to allow for pluralistic presidential elections. He won the 2005 elections, and thereby the guarantee to remain in office for another six years. However, the issue of post-Mubarak Egypt was widely discussed, and was placed at the top of the public agenda[5] (Ghabra, 2015: pp. 200–201).

Different answers were given to the question of what would happen in the 'post-Mubarak' era. On the pro-regime side, two answers prevailed: one was that the power would be shifted smoothly, even before the 2011 elections, to Gamal. The other answer was that Mubarak would run for election in 2011.[6] These two answers were not officially stated. Some events gave the impression that Gamal was the *de facto* ruler of Egypt. Other events gave the impression that Mubarak was still controlling everything.[7] Influential figures in the NDP were keen to avoid giving an explicit answer to the "post-Mubarak" question.

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5. The public agenda is the public's hierarchy of issues at a certain point in time. Two types of agenda-setting research have been conducted on the public agenda: (a) hierarchy studies, in which all of the main issues on the public agenda at a certain point in time are investigated, and (b) longitudinal studies, in which an agenda-setting scholar investigates the rise and fall of one or a few issues over time. The public agenda is usually measured by public opinion surveys in which a sample of individuals is requested to identify the most important problem facing a country during a certain era (Dearing & Rogers, 1996: pp. 17, 40–41).

6. These two answers are observations by the writer.

7. For example, in his speech before the people's assembly in 19 November 2006, Mubarak said: "I will continue with you the process of crossing into the future, shouldering the responsibility, as long as my heart is beating". *AlMasry Alyoum*, a well-known private Cairene newspaper, reported on what Mubarak said viewing it as an implication that he will not step down or inherit the power to Gamal since he is alive. See: https://djoj84p4hjtri.cloudfront.net/article2.aspx?ArticleID=37848

Opposition groups and parties offered different answers of their own, but they had one commonality: the rejection of both Mubarak and Gamal, as well as the clique supporting them. In order to achieve this goal, the Egyptian opposition groups carried out several activities, such as launching campaigns, establishing assemblies, issuing statements, and calling for protest. The aims of these activities in the long run were to amend the constitution to allow for real pluralistic elections, increase judiciary independence, ensure free and fair elections, and end notorious laws and regulations (e.g. the emergency law). Although some of these activities involved raising slogans related to social justice, the pillar of them was supporting the call for initiating a democratic transition as a method of political change.[8]

2.3 Al Aswany's public stature

The relevant background knowledge about Al Aswany can be provided by highlighting the main reasons for which he became a public figure whose columns are read on a wide scale. In this section, I shall concentrate on two facets of Al Aswany's public stature: his prominence as an anti-regime columnist, and the impact of his outstanding political novel, *The Yacoubian Building*.

2.3.1 Fifteen years of anti-regime writing

In April 1998, Al Aswany started writing non-periodical political columns for the *Al Ahaly* newspaper, the mouthpiece of the *Al Tagammu'* party, the most prominent leftist party in Egypt since the 1970s. During the period of writing for *Al Ahaly*, Al Aswany irregularly also wrote a few columns for the *Al Sha'b* newspaper, the mouthpiece of the *Al 'Amal* party, an Islamic political party with a socialist history. From 2001 to 2007, he wrote a monthly column for the *Al 'Araby* newspaper, which is the mouthpiece of the Nasserite party.

In fact, the circulation of these three newspapers is small, because of their ideologically limited perspective and poor funding. During 2008, Al Aswany wrote, with many interruptions, a weekly column for the *Al Dostor* newspaper. *Al Dostor* had a considerable circulation, perhaps because it could attract groups of readers that adopt different ideological views. The newspaper concentrated on attacking Mubarak and his family from different ideological perspectives.

8. For more information on the protest activities of the non-partisan opposition in the last decade of Mubarak's era, see Mahdi (2009: pp. 87–102).

The term "anti-regime" as it was used in the Egyptian context before 2011 did not only apply to a number of columnists, but also to some thinkers, TV programmers, journalists, and others who were active in the public sphere. The term also applied to some opposition figures who criticized the three successive regimes that were established after the 1952 *coup d'état*: Nasser's, Sadat's and Mubarak's. Radical pro-regime columnists and radical anti-regime columnists represented two poles, with a spectrum of points in between. Some columnists could thus be positioned in a grey area.

Radical pro-regime columnists adopted the regime's general views and supported its policies, even when they reflected contradicted ideologies. Even when they criticized a policy or a member of the regime's clique, pro-regime columnists would not attack the basic principles upon which the regime was based: the dominance of the security apparatuses, the immunization of the president against accountability, and the state's guardianship over the society. In the specific case of Mubarak's regime (1981–2011), pro-regime columnists never called for a radical democratic transition. A number of pro-regime columnists sometimes called for more space for democracy, in parallel with praising Mubarak's efforts to establish an unprecedented democratic environment. Pro-regime columnists never explicitly criticized the extraordinary roles played by any of the president's family, the younger son, Gamal, and Mubarak's wife, Suzan. Some of them would not harshly attack opposition groups, but none of them viewed any of these groups as an appropriate political alternative.

Pro-regime columnists did not explicitly criticize the police state or any of its representations. They might focus on a torture incident, especially if it turned into a human tragedy that became the focus of the international public opinion. However, more often than not they depicted these violations as exceptional cases that could not be generalized.

Contrary to pro-regime columnists, anti-regime columnist viewed, in varying degrees of explicitness, Egypt as a state in decay because of the way in which Mubarak and his clique ruled the country. Consequently, anti-regime columnists were of the opinion that bringing Mubarak's regime down would be a solution for this decay.

Based on the distinction just made, Al Aswany can be posited at the extreme end of the anti-regime pole, and therefore described as a radical anti-regime columnist par excellence. Not only does he uncover and criticize the despotic basis of the regime, but he also calls for a radical political change resulting in ousting Mubarak and his clique and initiating a democratic transition. He criticizes the succession plan as a non-democratic shift of power, showing Gamal's rising political role to be illegitimate. In addition, he exposes the police violations of human rights and law, considering these violations as representations of an official policy, and

not just as exceptional cases. He also sheds light on varying opposition groups and figures praising them. Many of his columns are devoted to supporting El Baradei as a pro-democratization leader and possible alternative to Mubarak.

Radical anti-regime columnists (such as Al Aswany) and moderate one shared the same critical views regarding the deteriorations Egypt witnessed in the last decade of Mubarak's rule. Still, the formers argue that Mubarak (or even the Mubaraks) shouldered the responsibility for corruption, poverty and injustice. Many of Al Aswany's columns published before 2011 were strategically designed to argue that the vast majority of Egyptians lived in very bad conditions, and that Mubarak's regime is responsible for that, in terms of the personal responsibility of Mubarak for selecting unqualified state staff or maintaining the autocratic and despotic nature of the regime that allowed such people to hold public posts. Columns with such a design are classified under the category "Harm – Inherency" (see Section 2.3).

Al Aswany was of undoubtedly not the only columnist who adopted in his texts such a radical view for political change in Egypt before 2011. What applies to him applies to others like, to name a few, Belal Fadl, Ibraheem Eissa and Abdulhaleem Qandeel. However, performing various public activities (as a novelist, an activist, and a commentator) might contribute to establishing the prominence of Al Aswany, and therefore attracting the attention of a bigger audience. *Al Shorouk* showed an appreciation of such a prominence in various ways: the indexes[9] announcing his columns appearing on the front page (sometimes on the third page as well), and the news coverage on his activities.

Additionally, Al Aswany's stylistic choices contributed to increasing the popularity of his columns. In all of his writings, Al Aswany makes use of a style that is effortlessly understood by the vast majority of the Egyptian readership. He employs an understandable variety of modern standard Arabic, using, if necessary, Egyptian colloquial vocabulary and idioms. His sentences are generally short with simple syntactic structures. Hardly any technical terms are used, and if they are used, they are explained in advance. Most of the metaphoric tropes he uses are familiar to the average Arabic reader. Al Aswany optimally exploits his narrative faculties and literary background in expressing his opinions, as will be explained in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

For the specific purpose of this study, Al Aswany's columns are considered the most appropriate cases. Three reasons may justify this claim:

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9. An index tells the reader on which pages news stories, articles, interviews or reports can be found. For more information about other newspaper elements, see: http://ellsworthamerican.com/nie/teachers_guide_lesson2_mh.pdf

1. **Problem-solving orientation.** Al Aswany's columns can be viewed as an interrelated series of texts. They do not only give a clear view of what the political deteriorations in Egypt are, but they also delineate a kind of road-map for solving these problems. The issue of feasibility thereby becomes central to his columns. The solution proposed is to take all kinds of peaceful actions that would lead to forcing Mubarak to step down, and initiating a process of democratization. It is clear, according to Al Aswany, that the Egyptian people is the political actor who can bring about the desired political change, by taking measures such as supporting judiciary independence, boycotting rigged elections, and standing up for opposition figures.
2. **Consistency of explanations.** Although Al Aswany sometimes tackles seemingly non-political topics related to Islamic extremism or the freedom of speech, he consistently provides a political explanation of such phenomena; an explanation that is related to a lack of democracy. This consistency makes it possible for an analyst to concentrate on the argumentative use of specific techniques and not to be distracted by the content of different explanations and opinions. For example, in "Dr. Basma's crime" (Al Shorouk, 27 April 2009), Al Aswany tells the story of a Baha'i doctor who is subjected to various kinds of discrimination and persecution because of her belief. In the conclusion, he argues that these practices will not stop unless a new civil, democratic state is established. Such a state will enable all Egyptians to enjoy equal rights before the law regardless of their religion.
3. **Attracting audience attention.** A pro-democratization call that is conveyed through columns can be effective in the sense that it can take part in making a political change, insofar as it is accessible to many readers. The accessibility of these texts is a necessary condition for effectiveness, though not a sufficient one. Opinion pages published in the printed press supposedly create an open forum for everyone. In practice, however, the editors are well aware of the fact that opinions and comments of ordinary people are unlikely to be of interest to most readers. The more outstanding their positions are, the more opportunities citizens have to publish their opinions. It goes without saying that for a research project paying attention to a more effective call for democratization is more justifiable.

2.3.2 The impact of *The Yacoubian Building*: A revival of the political novel

Relevant to establishing a prominent public stature of Al Aswany is his first novel, *The Yacoubian Building*, published in 2002. The book was made into a film with the same title [*'Imarat Ya'qubiyan*; Director: Marwan Hamed, 2006], and then into a TV series [*'ImaratYa'qubiyan*; Director: Ahmed Sakr, 2007]. Although he was

not the scenarist of these two works of drama, both the film and the series were associated with Al Aswany's name. Launching them was a sign of the revival of an old Egyptian drama tradition; novel adaptation. This tradition flourished in the 1950s and 1960s. In this sub-Section I discuss the novel, the film and the TV series as if they were a unity.

The Yacoubian Building was the best-selling Arabic novel in 2002 and 2003. It was voted Best Novel of 2003 by listeners to Egypt's Middle East Broadcasting Service. It has been translated into 23 languages worldwide. Al Aswany himself said in a TV talk show (January 2009) that the novel has sold one million copies worldwide in translation.[10] Three publishing houses published the novel in Egypt: *Madboly, Merit,* and *Al Shorouk* (apart from forger copies and electronic versions). There is an acute lack of reliable figures about book production and sales, but it can be estimated that over 50,000 copies were sold in Egypt. The *Al Shorouk* publishing house alone distributed (until now) 17 editions, consisting of 3,000 copies each.[11] If compared to analogous numbers in the West, this number may seem low. Yet, given the relative weakness of the book market in Egypt, it is actually huge. The average print run of a new literary book is 1,000 copies, and a second edition is not a regular occurrence.[12]

The book, ostensibly set in the 1990s at about the time of the first Gulf War, is a scathing portrayal of modern Egyptian society since the coup d'état of 1952. The location of the novel is downtown Cairo, with the apartment building from the title (which actually exists) serving as both an allegory for contemporary Egypt and a unifying location in which most of the primary characters live or work and in which much of the novel's action takes place.[13]

The novel narrates how Egypt has been transformed into a community ruled by a corrupt leadership, and how it maintains a hierarchy of social classes that are mostly obedient to the leadership. The only exception is Taha, who transforms into a terrorist and kills the state security officer who ordered one of his employees to rape him. The novel portrays society as composed of those who possess power and those who do not. The reaction to class differences it foresees is one of violent attacks by the lower classes on representatives of the government, whom they

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10. *Al 'Asherah Masa'an* on Dream2 TV channel, presented by Mona El Shazly. To watch the video, see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OE7g8J5VN18

11. I got this piece of information in a meeting with Mostafa ElFaramawy, a purchasing manager in *Al Shorouk* publishing house (Cairo, 22/10/2014).

12. For more information, see: http://www.buchmesse.de/images/fbm/dokumente-ua-pdfs/2014/buchmarkt_arabische_welt_engl_2014_43687.pdf

13. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Yacoubian_Building

perceive as responsible for preserving the system that reproduces their underprivileged status (Tabishat, 2012: pp. 387–388).

According to Tartoussieh (2012), the film is a prime example of a cinematic cry preceding the 2011 revolutionary uprising. It rebuts the wide spread assumption that social media is the original or the sole means by which the Arab media addressed concerns about repression. Instead, Tartoussieh believes that, even via old media formats (e.g. independent newspapers and talk shows), discontent had been brewing for quite some time. He argues that the film, produced by a company owned by a family close to Mubarak's regime, can be considered as a strategic move on behalf of a regime that is hard-pressed to implement political reforms and open windows to freedom of speech and expression, even if only cosmetically or through foreign pressure. The tactical calculation that the film could provide a harmless safety valve for a frustrated populace, while serving as proof of the government's commitment to protecting and enhancing freedom, has backfired. Ironically, the scenes of police brutality and excesses can be read as precursors of YouTube videos of torture that mobilized people toward the January 25 uprising (Tartoussieh, 2012: pp. 156–159).

Without going further into the details of its plot, the prominence of *The Yacoubian Building* can be viewed from two basic angles. The first is related to the contribution that the novel made in developing the relation between the literary audience and novels in Egypt. In almost three decades, reading novels (and literature in general) had turned into an elite practice abandoned by ordinary readers. This change in readership was caused by the use of complex linguistic techniques, an over-use of symbols, a dominance of autobiographical-like narration and a tendency towards abstraction. All these features turned the reading of literary works into an activity that suits more well-trained and skillful readers. *The Yacoubian Building* marks the return of the ordinary audience, those who cannot be categorized as elites, to reading literature. It revived the realistic trend in novel-writing and could regain the attention of young generations to the social role of art by using a simpler variety of modern standard Arabic and a plot closer to the daily-lived reality.

The second angle from which the novel's prominence can be viewed is its political significance. The content of *The Yacoubian Building* scandalized the readers, as it showed the manifestations of the decay that had been hitting Mubarak's Egypt: sexual abuse as a result of poverty, wealth in its relation to political power and corruption, Islamic fanaticism as a consequence of police repression and social inequality, and, last but not least, features of new pharisaic religiosity. *The Yacoubian Building* attempts to expose the rapid growing of corruption practiced by government officials, and the dire economic poverty of the lower classes. It also exposes the rampant Islamic radicalization of disenfranchised Egyptian youths. The entire Egyptian society is viewed as plagued by sexual frustration. When the novel was first published, independent and private media were still rare and insignificant in

general. Accordingly, the signs of deterioration depicted were not included in the public sphere debates. The novel thus established Al Aswany's fame as a radical anti-regime novelist. For this reason, Al Aswany was never a guest of any state-run TV or radio program in spite of his world fame. In addition, the producers of *The Yacoubian Building* film, carrying out certain security instructions, allegedly prevented him in 2006 from attending the celebration of the first run of the film.

2.4 Al Aswany's political columns in *Al Shorouk* from a stock issues perspective

In the previous section, I have explained why Al Aswany's columns are representative of the anti-regime columns published before 2011, and for which reasons they attracted the attention of the readers. In this section I concentrate on the columns published in the *Al Shorouk* daily quality newspaper. I shall explain how the key slogan "Democracy is the Solution" may be seen as the theme that turns the columns into an interconnected series of texts. I shall analyze the columns as a collection of texts that together aim to convince readers of the necessity of political change. As I shall show, this view is instrumental in identifying the exact role that each column plays in the call for democratization.

Between 11 February 2009 and 19 October 2010, Al Aswany wrote 82 weekly columns in the *Al Shorouk* newspaper. Different topics were tackled in that period. As a rule, each column came into being as a comment on a story. Most of these stories were widely known news stories because the media circulated them. A few other stories told about Al Aswany's own experiences as a post graduate student in America, or later as a novelist of worldwide fame.

Of all his published columns, the *Al Shorouk*'s columns remain the most important. In 2009 and 2010, Al Aswany's fame as a public figure reached its peak. This resulted in the attraction of more readers. In addition, over the period in which he wrote for *Al Shorouk,* interruptions were rare. The release of an electronic version of The *Al Shorouk* newspaper possibly contributed to enhancing the interaction between Al Aswany and his readers over this period.

The slogan with which all of Al Aswany's columns end, "Democracy is the Solution", justifies viewing each column as a potentially argumentative discourse supporting the call for democratization. Arguing in favor of democratization entails supporting the replacement of the political *status-quo* system (totalitarian, autocratic, authoritarian, etc.) by a new democratic one. This replacement can be considered as a change of policy at the national level.

In debates on changes of a policy, an advocate must convince his or her audience that taking an action to bring about this change is indispensable, or at least

more desirable than maintaining the existing policy or system. In the literature on debate and advocacy, the call for an action is known as a *proposition of policy*. The dispute over policy change is then analyzed from a "stock issues" perspective:

> Very simply, stock issues are hunting grounds for arguments. They provide a general phrasing of potential issues which correspond to the inherent logical obligations of the advocate of change. Since each of the stock issue categories corresponds to a logical obligation of the advocate of policy change, each of these categories constitutes a vital area of concern – an area in which the advocate of change may logically lose his case. (Ziegelmuller & Dause, 1975: p. 33)

Theoretical (and empirical) studies identify and use different groups of stock issues. For example, Freeley and Steinberg (2005: pp. 72–79) mentions only three stock issues: harm, inherency and solvency. Ziegelmuller and Dause (1975: pp. 32–39); and Hollihan and Baaske (1994: pp. 82–86) use a different category including four issues: ill, blame, cure and cost. Putnam et al. (1990: p. 134) use six categories of stock issues: harm, inherency, feasibility, implementation, alternative causality and disadvantage. Although the stock issues approach is useful and applicable in its different versions, a more systematic view of the argumentative situation of policy change is needed to explain where these "inherent logical obligations" come from.

I shall present a pragma-dialectical view of this type of discussions that can be instrumental in understanding a call for democratization supported by argumentation in the most appropriate way. In an ideal situation, where an arguer attempts to convince his or her audience of the desirability of replacing one system by another, two differences of opinion are at stake. They pertain to the acceptability of the following standpoints:

1. The *status-quo* system is no longer effective.
2. An alternative system should be installed instead.

The acceptability of the first proposition is defended by making a causal connection between maintaining the system and significant problems that result from it. Arguers who support this proposition should anticipate the critical questions their opponents may ask to evaluate the relation between each standpoint and the argumentation advanced. Unless an arguer answers these questions sufficiently, the standpoint is considered by the opponents as unacceptable. The opponent may ask a preliminary critical question:

a. Do these problems really exist?
b. In addition, the opponent may test the causal relation between the cause and the consequences by asking the following two questions:
c. Does maintaining the existing system really lead to the occurrence of these significant problems?

d. The antagonist can also refute the causal connection used in the protagonist's argument by giving an affirmative answer to the following question:
e. Are there any other causes for the occurrence of these problems?

The phrasing of these three questions (a,b and c) can be adapted to the case of supporting the standpoint that a political regime is no longer effective. For the sake of clarity, I call this group the *status-quo group of critical questions*:

1. Do significant problems with living conditions at a national level really exist?
2. Does maintaining the existing political regime really lead to the occurrence of these significant problems?
3. Are there any other causes for the occurrence of these problems?

The second difference of opinion concerns the acceptability of a practical proposition (or policy statement) that calls for carrying out an action. According to van Eemeren (2016), this type of propositions is often justified by pragmatic argumentation. In the pragma-dialectical view, pragmatic argumentation is a subtype of causal argumentation in which an arguer puts forward the standpoint that an action (X) should be carried out or should not be carried out. This standpoint is defended by pointing out that the result (Y) of carrying out this action is desirable or that the result of carrying out this action is undesirable. Two variants of pragmatic argumentation are to be distinguished:

a. a "positive" variant in defence of a positive standpoint ("Action X' should be carried out")
b. a "negative" variant in defence of a negative standpoint ("Action X' should not be carried out") (van Eemeren, 2016: p. 17)

Pragmatic argumentation is evaluated in accordance with the critical questions pertinent to the argument scheme of causal argumentation. The implementation of the critical questions depends, as in all other cases, on which specification is pertinent to the context of the communicative activity type in which this argument scheme is used. If in argumentative discourse critical questions are anticipated or responded to when pragmatic argumentation has been advanced, more complex argumentation will come into being, with a more complicated argumentation structure (van Eemeren, 2016: p. 17).

The following critical questions are associated with the argument scheme of pragmatic argumentation. Van Eemeren presents questions a, c and e as the main critical questions and questions b, d and f as possible sequels of each of these main questions:

a. Do actions of type X lead to results of type Y?
b. Could result Y not be achieved more easily/economically by other actions?

c. Is result Y really positive (i.e., desirable)/negative (i.e., undesirable)?
d. Would another result (of type Z) not be even more positive (i.e., more desirable) than results of type Y?
e. Does action X not have any major negative (i.e., undesirable)/positive (i.e., desirable) side-effects?
f. Can the negative (i.e., undesirable) side-effects be prevented or suppressed?

(van Eemeren, 2016: p. 17, 18)[14]

These six questions are amendable. Van Eemeren emphasizes that in using these critical questions they always need to be adapted to the actual circumstances of the argumentative discourse at issue. When the general critical questions are implemented in the specific macro-context of a particular activity type, they have to be specified, amended and supplemented in accordance with the institutional requirements of the macro-context concerned (van Eemeren, 2016: p. 18). In my view, the specific type of discussion may also entail some kind of implementation of the critical questions asked.

Another possible amendment is the addition of other critical questions. In cases of arguing in favor of a policy change, the question of feasibility must be asked as a supplementary critical question. This kind of disputes is over practical matters related to taking actions. Even if the new system is proved to theoretically solve the problems concerned, there is always a need to examine whether this system is feasible or not. Walton, following Aristotle's remark upon practical reason, asserts that another critical question should be raised in the dispute over practical issues in general: (g) Is the proposed means feasible or practical? (Walton, 1990: p. 14)

In policy change discussions, critical question (d) seems superfluous. This is because a discussion of that kind comes into being to solve certain problems. In the case of pro-democratization discussions that occur in the domain of political communication, eliminating significant problems (or improving the living conditions) at a national level is taken as a starting point. Consequently, searching for other results than improving people's lives is irrelevant.

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14. In an earlier pragma-dialectical version of the critical questions associated with pragmatic (or instrumental) argumentation, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992) identify only four critical questions that must be answered satisfactorily when evaluating pragmatic argumentation that serves in favor of the desirability of a proposed measure, a course of action, a policy or a system:

1. Is the announced effect of the proposed measure really so desirable?
2. Will this effect indeed follow?
3. Could it be achieved more easily by way of another measure?
4. Does the proposed measure not have any serious negative side-effects? (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992: p. 102)

Questions (e) and (f) can be combined as another adaptation of the critical questions to the particular kind of argumentative practice at issue. This is because by itself answering question (e) affirmatively does not necessitate a withdrawal of the proposal to implement the new political system. In addition, if question (f) is answered negatively, this also necessitates a withdrawal of the proposal. The implementation of any new policy (or political system in particular) undoubtedly creates problems or disadvantages. What is decisive is the comparison of disadvantages of the *status-quo* political system to those of the new one. For this to be the case, it must be argued that the disadvantages of the new policy outweigh the advantages of the status-quo one.

These three changes (adding the feasibility question, omitting question d, and combining questions e and f) result in a new formulation of this group of critical questions (I call them the *alternative group of critical questions*). When adapted to pro-democratization discussions, they can be phrased as follows:

1. Will eliminating these problems (improving the living conditions) indeed follow when democratic measures have been taken?
2. Could the improvement of living conditions not be achieved more easily/economically by another set of measures?
3. Is eliminating these problems/improving living conditions really so desirable?
4. Are the proposed democratic measures feasible?
5. Does taking the proposed democratic measures not have any serious negative side-effects that cannot be prevented or that are worse than the disadvantages of maintaining a despotic political system?

The status-quo and alternative groups of critical questions can be combined and rearranged starting from the most preliminary. I call the resulting group of questions the *pro-democratization group of critical questions*:

1. Do significant problems with living conditions at a national level really exist?
2. Is eliminating these problems (improving living conditions) really so desirable?
3. Does maintaining the existing political regime really lead to the occurrence of these significant problems?
4. Are there any other causes for the occurrence of these living problems?
5. Will eliminating these problems (improving the living conditions) indeed follow when democratic measures have been taken?
6. Could the improvement of the living conditions not be achieved more easily and economically by another set of measures?
7. Does applying the proposed pro-democratic measures not have any serious negative side-effects that cannot be prevented?
8. Are the proposed pro-democratic measures feasible?

These questions can be divided into categories that correspond to common stock issues of policy change. The *first* question corresponds to the *Harm* or *Ill* issue. A pro-democratization arguer must advance arguments in support of the presence of problems that require taking action. It is expected that this question is always answered affirmatively, since there is no country that has no problems. These problems may vary from materialistic problems (e.g. decay in state services) to more abstract problems (e.g. violating human rights). In answering the **second** question, the significance of the problems is examined, and the harm issue is completed. If an arguer fails to defend the significance of these problems, his call for taking action is weakened.

The *third* question corresponds to the *Inherency* issue. A pro-democratization arguer must answer this question affirmatively proving that the causes of these problems are built into the structure of despotic regimes and/or the attitudes of its powerful figures. The strongest form of inherency is structural inherency. Structural inherency demonstrates that the harm is permanently built into the status-quo and that major revisions of the status-quo are needed in order to eliminate the harm. Structural inherency concerns matters of law, court decisions that have the force of law, and societal structures (Freeley & Steinberg, 2005: p. 222).

The *fourth* question must be answered negatively by a pro-democratization arguer. It corresponds to what I call the *Alternative Inherency* issue. The importance of this stock issue in debates on the desirability of democratic transition stems from how despotic regimes usually justify deteriorations and problems. Using their propaganda machines, autocratic governments promote political myths that blame the citizens or foreign powers for deteriorating living conditions.[15] A pro-democratization arguer should refute the pro-regime claims pertinent to non-autocratic justifications of problems, especially those claims that are most widely circulated among citizens.

The *fifth* question addresses the stock issue of *Solvency* or *Cure*. An arguer must convince his or her audience that taking democratic measures (or public actions that would lead to initiate a process of democratization) will fix the problems and make people's lives better. Solvency can be shown on the basis of comparative advantages: a democratic system may only be seen as decreasing the significance of problems if it is compared to the situation under autocratic ruling. For example, if a pro-democratization proponent argues that the unemployment rate will decrease from 30% under an autocratic ruling to 20% because of applying democratization measures, then the solvency issue is affirmed although the unemployment problem will not be entirely solved.

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15. Some examples will be provided in Chapter 4.

The *sixth* question corresponds to a counterpart of the *Alternative Inherency* issue, which I call *Alternative Solvency*. Arguing that autocracy is causing the problems referred to in the harm issue does not necessarily mean that radical democratization is the solution. One can claim that, for instance, establishing a mixed political system might improve living conditions more easily or with fewer negative side-effects.[16]

The *seventh* question corresponds to the *Cost* issue. In order to evaluate a proposed democratic system appropriately, disadvantages should be taken in consideration as well as advantages. Taking democratic measures can, for instance, enhance freedom, but it may heat political conflicts up to the extent of bringing about a state of chaos or a civil war. In the Egyptian case for example, it was deliberately circulated (especially amongst secularists and sectarian minorities) that initiating a real democratic transition would shift power to the Muslim Brotherhood, which would establish a theocratic political system, worse even than Mubarak's.

The *eighth* question is related to a stock issue that is the most practical one: *Feasibility*. Pro-democratization advocates must convince their audiences that their suggested actions to initiate the democratic transition will work in the real world. Advocates must argue that the proposed measures "may not invent magical technologies or create funding out of thin air" (Freeley & Steinberg, 2005: p. 223).

The identification of the critical questions that may be asked in this kind of difference of opinion results in producing the seven stock issues mentioned above: harm, inherency, alternative inherency, solvency, alternative solvency, cost and feasibility. Al Aswany's columns can be categorized according to the stock issue(s) addressed in each. Viewed as a critical discussion aimed at resolving a difference of opinion, the argumentation put forward in each column can be analytically reconstructed. The identification of the standpoint(s) put forward in each is a result of the analytic reconstruction. If the proposition expressed in a standpoint fits as an answer to one of the eight critical questions, the column is classified under the category of the corresponding stock issue.

Seven of Al Aswany's columns are excluded from consideration because the standpoints put forward in them are irrelevant to the stock issues included in the call for democratization. The rest of the columns (75) are categorized according to the stock issue(s) that have been discussed. Following a stock-issue-based principle of classification, some columns have a *simple* form addressing only one issue by

16. One of the political myths that were widely circulated before 2011 as a solution for the nationally deteriorating conditions was the "individual salvation". Pro-regime advocates, and even some independent clergy, claimed that our conditions would never get better unless everyone started by improving himself or herself. This myth was based on an assumption that the collective status of a nation is the mathematical sum up of the statuses of its citizens.

means of argumentation. Others have a complex form discussing more than one issue (maximally 4 stock issues). Table 2.1 illustrates the number of columns in which an aggregation of stock issues discussed.

Table 2.1 the number of Al Aswany's columns in which a stock issue/aggregation of issues is discussed

The stock issue/aggregation of issues discussed	Number of columns
Harm	3
Inherency	7
Solvency	13
Feasibility	7
Alternative solvency	2
Harm – inherency	26
Harm – solvency	2
Inherency – solvency	2
Inherency – alternative solvency	2
Solvency – Cost	2
Harm – inherency – solvency	7
Inherency – solvency – alternative solvency	1
Harm – Inherency – Solvency – Alternative Solvency	1

This book focuses on analyzing seven columns included in the feasibility category. In the next section, I shall briefly review these columns, identifying the main topics discussed in them.

2.5 The topics discussed in the columns addressing the feasibility issue

The first four columns included in the feasibility category discuss the passivity and activism of the Egyptian people in modern history, focusing on the new evolutions under Mubarak's ruling. For the sake of brevity, I shall call the topic discussed in these columns the *"active people"* topic. In "Are Egyptians Tyrannizable by Nature?", Al Aswany notices how different peoples all over the world react furiously to the violations by their governments. By contrast, the Egyptian people hardly react to the violations of Mubarak's regime. He gives two reasons for the political passivity of the Egyptian people: the harsh, unprecedented repression practiced against the Egyptians since the 1952 *coup d'état*, and the Wahhabi version of Islam that regards revolting against rulers a sin. In this column, Al Aswany puts forward the standpoint "The Egyptians are not passive by nature", supported by the argument "Historical causes led to the passivity of the Egyptians". This standpoint is an indirect answer

of the eighth critical question. If taking to the streets to bring Mubarak down is the measure needed to be taken on order to make democratization possible, this measure can work if, and only if, the Egyptian people are not passive by nature.

In the second column, entitled "The Coming Civil Disobedience at April 6", Al Aswany tells the story of a female Swedish journalist who met a labor leader. In spite of his poverty, this labor leader refused to receive money from the journalist. Al Aswany, agreeing with the journalist, infers that such poor people who can keep their dignity will win at the end of the day. The positive reactions to the call for civil disobedience on 6 April 2009, the courage and struggle of the members of the April 6th Youth Movement, and the story cited are the arguments Al Aswany advances to support the standpoint "the Egyptians have become politically active". Being politically active is attempted to be a satisfying answer of the critical question pertaining to the feasibility of political change.

The third column, entitled "When do We Learn from the People?" justifies the political apathy of most Egyptians. Al Aswany advances three arguments to justify this phenomenon: the Egyptians do not trust their government, they did not see any opposition figure as a political alternative, and their energy is depleted in the daily struggle to earn a living. The columnist lists some events that are signs indicating that the Egyptians are not passive or cowardly by nature.

In the fourth column, "Egypt Awakened", Al Aswany reports on different proceedings he witnessed at the reception of ElBaradei at Cairo international airport. Although the government circulated rumors about its intention to arrest the citizens who would welcome ElBaradei, thousands of young people and public figures gathered to welcome ElBaradei. This warm welcoming is advanced by Al Aswany as an argument justifying the standpoint "the Egyptians have become politically active".

The second topic discussed in addressing the feasibility issue is what I call the *"defeatable police"* topic. Al Aswany devotes two columns in full to convince his readers that the police staff can be defeated in spite of their big numbers and the brutal repression they practice. The first, entitled "An Unfortunate Incident Befalling a State Security Officer", is a symbolic story depicting how a state security officer may psychologically suffer because of his oppression of innocent, political activists. His suffering forces him to resign at the end of the story.

The second column entitled "Why was the General Screaming?" is a report on a demonstration Al Aswany witnessed himself in downtown Cairo. The screaming of the general responsible for repressing the protesters was a sign, Al Aswany argues, of psychological suffering on the part of the general. Starting out from this notice, Al Aswany fictionally speculates on the possible reasons for which the general screams. These reasons are contradictory feelings any police officer involved in repressive action may experience. The psychological suffering causally supports the standpoint that the protesters will win.

The third topic tackles the feasibility issue from a broader perspective beyond the expected response of the Egyptian police. In "A Story for Children and Adults", Al Aswany uses the fictional form of an allegorical beast fable to present his view of how a rebellion scene would possibly be: how Mubarak, the pillars of his regime, and the police staff would act if massive protests erupted. I call this topic *"the victorious protesters"* as the column conveys the expectation that the protesters will succeed in ousting Mubarak.

In the columns discussing these three topics, Al Aswany makes use of fictional and narrative forms and techniques. These columns, thus, share two commonalities:

1. They represent challenging rhetorical predicaments that Al Aswany attempted to overcome.
2. They make use of specific narrative and fictional elements in their presentation of the argumentation adduced.

In the next section, I will identify the audience Al Aswany attempts to reach and convince through *Al Shorouk*'s columns. Such an identification is instrumental in sketching the frame of reference his readers have: the views, preferences, and prejudices Al Aswany as an arguer should consider when strategically maneuvering in adaptation to the readers' demand.

2.6 Al Aswany's audience and its frame of reference

Studies in the area of audience research are considerably large in number and varied in methods. They are carried out from various theoretical perspectives.[17] For argumentation scholars, audience research is helpful in finding out who the antagonist or opponent may be. Identifying the antagonist as one of the parties involved in a critical discussion is productive in different ways. In cases of implicit discussion for instance (e.g. a political column), identifying the audience is instrumental in anticipating, in an approximate way, whether the argumentation advanced will be acceptable or not based on its shared starting points.

In *Strategic Maneuvering in Argumentative Discussions*, van Eemeren (2010: pp. 108–113) discusses some useful insights and distinctions in his presentation of the second aspect of strategic maneuvering, adaptation to the audience's demand:

> The expression 'audience demand' refers to the requirements that must be fulfilled in the strategic maneuvering to secure communion, at the point in the exchange, with the people the argumentative discourse is aimed at. In order to be not only

17. For a good review of different typologies of audience research, see Mcquail (1997: pp. 25–42)

> reasonable but also effective, the strategic moves a party makes must at each stage of the resolution process connect well with the views and preferences of the people they are directed at, so that they agree with these people's frame of reference and will be optimally acceptable [...Therefore,] a serious effort must always be made to identify the views and preferences of the audience which can be regarded as being part of the point of departure established in the opening stage of the resolution process. (108–110)

A political column, when it is reconstructed as an argumentative discourse, represents an implicit discussion in which the reader (the antagonist) does not manifestly through verbal communication put forward doubt or reject the columnist's (the protagonist's) standpoint. An analyst cannot therefore identify any of the readers' explicit concessions, but only their contextual or pragmatic commitments. These commitments define the audience's frame of reference that consists of the descriptive commitments (related to "the real" as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca call them) and the normative commitments (pertaining to what they call "the preferable") (van Eemeren, 2010: p. 111).

The audience of Al Aswany's columns can be divided into two basic groups, with a (potentially) distinctive frame of reference for each.[18] The first group consists of all possible readers of *Al Shorouk*: every literate man or woman that is likely to buy the paper or read it electronically, and is thus likely to come across any of Al Aswany's columns. The second group consists of the followers of Al Aswany: the readers who are interested in being acquainted with his views wherever they appear, in political columns, press or TV interviews. Some of these followers can be described as fans, in the sense that they will search for news concerning him, even if it is about personal matters like his travels and health condition. The fans participate in the artistic and political activities that he participates in. For the sake of brevity, I shall call the former group *the Al Shorouk audience*, and the latter *Al Aswany's followers*.

The difference between these two groups is reflected in the methods that need to be applied to identify each group's frame of reference. The effort that must be made to identify the frame of reference of the *Al Shorouk*'s audience (specifically, the politically relevant part of it) amounts to specifying the views, leanings and

18. Al Aswany's audience consists of those people who most likely to get an access to the columns at issue, either because they are readers of *Al Shorouk* or because of their interest in Al Aswany as a public figure, whether they are intentionally targeted or not. The involved concept of "accessible audience", as it were, is in my view the closest to the real audience and differs from other kindred concepts of audience, such as Bitzer's which consists of "those persons who are *capable of being influenced* by discourse and of being mediators of change" and other theoretically constructed concepts. For a detailed discussion of the most prominent concepts of audience in rhetorical studies, see: Kjeldsen (2017: pp. 19–39).

interests which are likely to make the *Al Shorouk* newspaper attractive to this group. It is in fact very difficult to exactly identify the real *Al Shorouk*'s audience: the people who buy or read the paper. Such a task requires sociological research tools which are not available in the course of this book. Indeed, Lynch (2008) considers determining the audience for Arab media in general as challenging:

> Nothing comparable to the American Nielsen ratings exists for the Arab market that would allow for reliable tracking of media consumption patterns over time. In short, even if there is more information available today than in the past, existing audience market data is of limited utility for academic research except for broad generalization. (Lynch, 2008: p. 19)

Instead of identifying the real audience on a sociological basis, analyzing the features of *Al Shorouk's* content may result in approximately demarcating its *inscribed reader*. According to Sparks and Campbell, the inscribed reader is not an actually existing reader, or an editor's idea of the average or typical reader, but purely that set of concerns which the text presents (Sparks & Campell, 1987: pp. 458–460). This set can be identified through a qualitative or quantitative analysis that specifies quantities, types and organization of the information provided by a newspaper at issue.[19] Mcquail (1997) adds that "the inscribed audience can be identified from media texts which usually contain clues to the tastes, interests, and capabilities of intended recipients, not to mention the stereotypes held by media providers" (Mcquail, 1997: p. 50).[20]

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19. 'Information' in this context amounts to all kinds of media messages. The quantities of a specific type of information (news items on foreign affairs, opinion texts, employment advertisements, etc.) are measured by number of items or total space of items by cm^2.

20. Relevant to the concept of "inscribed reader" in this context is the "second persona" or "implied auditor" (Black, 1970). Being interested in morally judging discourses, Black's main hypothesis is that such judgment is reachable insofar as the saliently human dimensions of a discourse are proficiently explicated. The implied auditor is the counterpart of the author implied by the discourse which is an artificial creation, an image, or a persona. Rhetorical criticism thus does not focus on a relationship between a discourse and an actual auditor. Rather, it focuses on the discourse alone, and derives from it the sort of audience that would be appropriate for it. Black's hypothesis is that the avowed claims and, more importantly, the stylistic forms (e.g. metaphors) of the discourse can reveal the ideology (in a Marxist sense) of the implied auditor. Although Black theoretically attempts to connect the implied auditor to ideologies and convictions, his analysis of the communism-as-cancer metaphor frequently used by the Radical Right at that time results in a basically speculation-based *psychological* description of the auditor implied by the discourse. The concept of "inscribed reader", as far as I am concerned here at least, is by contrast more disciplined and aimed at extracting a clear-cut political agenda (in terms of propositions, pragmatic commitments) adopted by the potential audience of *Al Shorouk*.

In Sub-Section 2.6.1, I shall conduct a content analysis of some selected front pages of the *Al Shorouk* newspaper. This analysis is aimed at designating some particularities of the political agenda of the *Al Shorouk* newspaper which are instrumental in giving a clearer picture of its inscribed reader, the potential *Al Shorouk*'s audience.

2.6.1 The *Al Shorouk* audience: Supporters of an alternative political path

Two widespread explanations are given for the emergence of the private (or independent) media in the Arab world after many decades of over-regulated licensing, imprisonment of journalists, and banning of media outlets. The first is related to new developments in the economies of some Arab countries. Richter is of the opinion that "internal pressure from business lobby groups in most of the Arab and Islamic world has resulted in a guided deregulation of the media sector, opening up spaces for non-regime actors" (Richter, 2008: p. 48).

The second explanation has to do with the specific predicament that several Arab regimes face. Having been in power for a long time without democratic reform or considerable economic achievements, some Arab ruling cliques, especially under foreign pressure, carried out a tactic maneuver. They deliberately provided more media space for opposition actors and groups in order to breathe new life into their regimes by giving the impression of being democratic and supportive of public freedoms.

One or both of these explanations may be correct. More importantly, whatever their *raison d'être* is, private media emerged against an established state-run media which had dominated the press the 1950s. In order to attract audiences that were historically dependent on state-run media, each of the new media attempted to find a distinctive area of interest that would be attractive. New areas could be particular topics which were not covered before (e.g. independent cinema, blogs, and cultures of minorities).

A content analysis of the *Al Shorouk* texts is useful to identify, in a broader sense, which groups of audience are at stake. A general model for content analysis suggested by Riffe et al. (1998: pp. 46–48) consists of three successive phases: *conceptualization, purpose and design* or planning of what will be done to achieve that purpose, and *data collection* and *analysis*.

The first phase is aimed at finding out as much as possible about the phenomenon examined, and identifying the specific research questions or hypotheses. The content analysis I shall conduct is limited to the politically relevant items that appear on *Al Shorouk*'s front pages. The front page's items are the most salient ones. They occupy a site that makes items appearing on them the most easily accessible to readers. Items appearing on the front page may therefore be considered to be

the most important and worthy of reading from the perspective of the newspaper's political agenda. Those readers who regularly read a newspaper are groups of the audience that adopt views in accordance with the political agenda of the newspaper as revealed by content analysis. The research question of this analysis can be formulated as follows: what are the main points on the political agenda of the *Al Shorouk* newspaper as they manifest themselves on its front pages? How are they to be translated in terms of the audience's frame of reference?

In the second phase, the analyst determines what will be needed to answer the research question or test the hypothesis. In the case study at issue, answering the research question requires determining the dominant issues and framings that are relevant to the political agenda of *Al Shorouk*. Three types of items appear on *Al Shorouk*'s front pages: news stories, indexes and advertisements.

As to news stories, I aim to answer the question: what do the politically relevant news stories that appear on front pages tell us? Politically relevant news stories are items which deal with how the main political actors – the regime, the Muslim Brotherhood, the non-Islamic opposition (licensed parties and prominent public figures like ElBaradei, Ayman Nour and Amr Mousa) and protest movements – act in the public domain. The Muslim Brotherhood can be viewed as the traditional opposition vis-a-vis the non-Islamic opposition and youth protest movements as the alternative opposition.

For the sake of clarity, and because the governmental performance manifested itself in a wide range of actions, I divided the stories related to the regime into two categories: domestic stories that cover state services and economic matters, and political elite stories that are pertinent to the higher level of political performance (e.g. foreign affairs, diplomatic issues, the succession of Mubarak and the regime's attitude towards political reform).

The stories included in each category can be sub-categorized into positive, negative and neutral stories, according to the messages conveyed by their content. The stories that foreground the deteriorations in public services, for instance, are categorized as negative. By contrast, stories that cover new national projects or shed light on a governmental success in solving problems with the living conditions are categorized as positive. Positive stories about the opposition convey, for instance, a successful coordination between different groups that are aimed at making the succession plan (i.e. the arrangements for the shift of power from Mubarak to Gamal) fail. A negative story may, for example, narrate the news of splits in one of the opposition parties.

The characterization of a news story as positive, neutral or negative is based on evaluating the story as a whole taking into consideration all of its elements (text, headline, lead and accompanying photo) together. Sometimes the content of a text is neutral in the sense that it mixes positive and negative aspects, yet the headline

Figure 2.1 A print screen of a news story on the *Al Shorouk*'s front page (issue published on 5 May 2010)

and lead make one aspect more salient than the other, and vice versa. In Figure 2.1, for example, a front page's news story is on the *Kefaya* conference on the occasion of Mubarak's 82nd birthday.[21] The headline states: "*Kefaya* repeats the call for boycotting elections and demands for a 'parallel' parliament and an 'alternative' president". The headline confers a positive value on the item as it highlights the initiative of a non-Islamic opposition movement. However, the salient photo (in a space bigger than the space of text) accompanying the text attributes a negative value to the item. It implies a decline of the movement's popularity because the photo is taken from a perspective that underlines several empty chairs facing the

21. *Kefaya*, or the national movement for change, was established in 2004 as a grassroots coalition which drew its support from across Egypt's political spectrum. It was a platform for protest against Hosni Mubarak's presidency and the possibility he might seek to transfer power directly to his son Gamal, political corruption, the blurring of the lines between power and wealth, the regime's cruelty, coercion and disregard for human rights See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kefaya.

podium. In addition, the story's editor states that the conference was held "in the absence of the political parties' leaders and the representatives of various political factions". This segment confirms the negative value implied by the photo. In combination, the elements on the item at issue reflect a negative position of one of the non-Islamic opposition groups.

I shall classify the content of the front pages of the issues published in two randomly selected months: October 2009 and May 2010. The selection of two separate months is a means of specifying in which respects the political agenda of the newspaper is constant over a considerable period (in light of the 21 months during which Al Aswany had been writing for the *Al Shorouk* newspaper). In Table 2.2, the numbers and ratios of news stories under each category are listed.

Table 2.2 A content analysis of news stories appearing on front pages of *Al Shorouk* published in October 2009 and May 2010

October 2009	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Total**	
Domestic	20 (27%)	44 (60%)	9 (13%)	73 (55%)	**78%**
Elite	1 (3%)	18 (60%)	11 (37%)	30 (23%)	
The Muslim Brotherhood	1 (6%)	13 (76%)	3 (18%)	**17 (13%)**	
Non-Islamic opposition	5 (45%)	4 (36%)	2 (19%)	11 (8%)	**9%**
Protest movements	2 (100%)	0	0	2 (1%)	
				133 (100%)	
May 2010	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Total**	
Domestic	14 (34%)	23 (56%)	4 (10%)	41 (28%)	**75%**
Elite	15 (22%)	39 (57%)	14 (21%)	68 (47%)	
The Muslim Brotherhood	4 (50%)	2 (25%)	2 (25%)	**8 (5%)**	
Non-Islamic opposition	10 (50%)	3 (15%)	7 (35%)	20 (14%)	**20%**
Protest activists	8 (89%)	1 (11%)	0	9 (6%)	
				146 (100%)	

The ratio of regime-related news coverage (including domestic and elite items) is constant over this period and it is considerably high when compared to opposition-related news coverage. What is more significant is the constant high ratio of negative content, whether at a domestic-economic level or an elite-diplomatic level. From October to May, news stories covering elite-diplomatic affairs outweigh the news coverage at other levels. This perhaps resulted from the fact that the public issue of the post-Mubarak era occupied a prime place on the *public agenda*.

The news coverage of the alternative opposition increased considerably over time compared to that of the Muslim Brotherhood: from 9% for alternative opposition and 13% for traditional opposition to 20% for alternative opposition to 5% for traditional opposition.

When taken together, the analyses of figures that I have given reflect the intention of the newspaper of constituting an inscribed reader who adopts the following framing of the Egyptian political situation before 2011: the regime's performance in general is not satisfying. Egypt is a state in crisis, but looking forward to or expecting change. The new opposition is a sign of some kind of vigor. Accordingly, a regular reader of *Al Shorouk* is likely to accept material starting points of the kind of "Egypt has hit rock bottom" which Al Aswany uses so much. The material starting points that revolve around the notion that the new opposition would be able to function effectively are likely to be acceptable too.

An index is another method of making an item salient that can view the preferences of the inscribed reader. More often than not, the indexes appearing on the front pages of *Al Shorouk* are used for announcing columns. The columns foregrounded by using indexes can also be categorized according to the classification of their writers, in the sense of their attitudes towards to the regime. Within the pro-regime vs. anti-regime distinction, four categories can be distinguished: moderate pro-regime columns, left pro-regime columns, moderate anti-regime columns, radical anti-regime columns.

The first category includes the columns written by supporters of the regime who usually maintain a balance between commending the regime's clique for their achievements on the one hand, and criticizing them on the other hand. The second category includes the columns written by columnists who established their fame and prominence by critically addressing aspects of the regime through state-run media. This criticism, however, does not exceed political taboos (e.g. criticizing the president or a member of his family) set by the regime. The third category consists of the columns written by columnists who established their fame by being critical about the regime but in an implicit or elusive way. They usually criticize the clique but not the president himself. The fourth and last category includes the columns written by columnists to whom all the characteristics laid down in Section 2.3 apply.

Table 2.3 shows which category of columnists is announced more frequently in front-page indexes in October 2009 and May 2010.

Table 2.3 Indexes of columns categorized according to the attitude towards the regime

	Pro-regime		**Anti-regime**	
	Moderate pro-regime	**Left pro-regime**	**Moderate anti-regime**	**Radical anti-regime**
October 2009	0	7 (24%)	18 (62%)	4 (14%)
	24%		76%	
May 2010	5 (13%)	4 (10%)	19 (50%)	10 (27%)
	23%		77%	

Although the ratios of sub-categories included in pro- and anti-regime categories changed slightly from October 2009 to May 2010, this change does not affect the ratios of the main two categories very much. This result strengthens the results obtained by the analysis of the news coverage. The inscribed reader the *Al Shorouk* newspaper attempted to constitute is, broadly speaking, anti-regime in a moderate manner.

Other indexes reflect the main characteristics mentioned above: Some indexes are for internal news stories covering the negative service performance of Mubarak's government; others announce interviews with independent elite figures (thinkers, chancellors, ambassadors, scientists, preachers, etc.) belonging to various leanings and discussing the post-Mubarak era and other issues.[22] A group of other indexes announce articles on the anniversary of great national events. From 4 October 2010 to 7 October 2010, *Al Shorouk* published a folder of articles in four successive issues on the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. This war constitutes an important part of the national memory. It also gives a source of legitimacy for Mubarak who was one of its prominent commands. The content of these articles revolves around presenting the heroic deeds of the Egyptian soldiers and the tight planning of the sovereign apparatuses during and before this war. These articles did not narrate the war as an achievement of Mubarak (which was the prevailing view of the state-run media). It can be concluded that the political agenda of *Al Shorouk* shows respect for the Egyptian national memory, but not from the same perspective as the pro-regime discourses.

To give an integral picture of the inscribed reader, the types of the topics covered by the media texts at issue should be taken in account. Like all quality newspapers in Egypt, the *Al Shorouk* satisfies a varied set of concerns as it opens its pages for various topics: politics, arts, sports, opinions, intellect, business, etc. The number of pages devoted to each topic, which topics are not (or rarely) addressed, and in what way these topics are generally addressed are clues of the inscribed reader at stake.

The most noteworthy point in this regard is that at least one page (of usually 20 pages) is designated daily for intellectual issues. These issues vary from elite literature and book reviews to historical polemics and free spaces for trans-genre writings.[23] Combined with the fact that the opinion pages are accessible to a balanced mix of experts and public figures, this justifies the conclusion that the inscribed reader of *Al Shorouk* is situated in the grey area between mass culture and elite culture.

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22. What I mean here by 'independent' is having no explicit membership of any political party, organization or movement. Being independent does not certainly imply that one cannot be politically classified.

23. What I mean by a trans-genre writing is a type of literary writing in which the stylistic features of more than one literary genre (e.g. poetry and narratives) are put together.

The analysis shows that the inscribed reader of *Al Shorouk* who adopts its political agenda is enthusiastic about a 'moderate' political change led by trustworthy elites. This reader evaluates the regime's performance with different degrees of negativity. The inscribed reader trusts the new opposition groups as possible political alternatives to varying degrees. In spite of a relatively high amount of Muslim Brotherhood-related news coverage that reflects the weightiness of this group in the Egyptian political situation at that time, the inscribed reader views political figures like ElBaradei and Amr Mousa as more promising in achieving political change. The reader may be interested in protest movements but is not so sure of their capability alone to launch a process of change.

In the next sub-section, I shall explain the (sub-)stereotype that Al Aswany is attached to. By finding out the values which construct this sub-stereotype, the followers of Al Aswany can be identified by specifying which values, from their point of view, are trustworthy and ratified. These values constitute, at least partially, the pragmatic commitments of his followers. Taking them in consideration is crucial in evaluating to what extent Al Aswany could adapt his argumentative moves to the audience demand.

2.6.2 Al Aswany's followers: Respondents to a second wave of committed literature

Al Aswany's followers are interested in all of his columns, wherever they are published. These readers may express their interest not only by reading his texts, but also by other kinds of action such as following news about Al Aswany's, sharing his writings on Facebook and other social media, or participating in profound discussions on his production. However, it cannot be automatically guaranteed that the readers following Al Aswany accept all the (explicit and implicit) starting points and unexpressed premises he puts forward. The (politically relevant) frame of reference of this group of readers can be established by taking into account the values represented by Al Aswany as a public figure acting in the public domain. An analyst can identify this set of values by answering the following questions: which stereotype do Al Aswany's followers connect with him? What are the values included in this stereotype?

In the course of her repositioning the concept of ethos at the crossroads of rhetoric, pragmatics, and sociology, Amossy (2001) integrates both the prior ethos, created at a sociological level, and the discursive ethos that is established artistically, in an interactional sense. Amossy presents the notion of a stereotype as a correlative of the sociological level.

> Stereotyping consists of perceiving and understanding the real through a preexistent cultural representation, a fixed collective schema. A concrete individual is thus perceived and evaluated as a function of the pre-constructed model discussed by the community of the category in which they place that individual. If the man or the woman is a well-known personality, he or she will be perceived through the public image created by the media. Sociological and semiological practices generally define the stereotype in terms of attribution: one attaches to a category – the Scotsman, the bourgeois, the housewife – a set of ready-made predicates.
>
> (Amossy, 2001: p. 7)

Amossy makes use of the notion of stereotyping in explaining how orators adapt their self-representations to collective schemas which they believe to be ratified and valued by the target audience. The audience is persuaded when addressed by an orator who reflects the version of a stereotype his or her audience appreciates. A president, politician or thinker who seeks to be persuasive should act (verbally and non-verbally) in a way that is in accordance with the representations and values included in the stereotype of a 'president'.

I shall limit my usage of Amossy's insights to employing her notion of stereotyping as a means of connecting Al Aswany with one concrete (sub-)stereotype that suggests a clear set of values.

Al Aswany is of course readily associated with the stereotype of the 'writer'. But more telling is a specific sub-stereotype that is attached to him. To explain this sub-stereotype, a brief overview of the so-called 'commitment literature' and its evolutions in modern Egypt must be provided.

During the 1950s and 1960s, in parallel with the rise of the progressive and socialist ideas in arts and politics, the first wave of 'committed literature' appeared, accompanied by harsh disputes. The notion of committed literature manifested itself in two different trends: an existentialist one, which concentrated on committing to the morals of freedom and individual responsibility, and a Marxist trend, which viewed literary writing (and writing in general), at the end of the day, as aimed at provoking the laboring classes to take revolutionary socialist actions.

These two trends reflected the belief in the social function of literature. Even to those who did not explicitly adopt either trend, the view that writings should be employed to achieve a higher aim other than aesthetic pleasure was attractive. The sub-stereotype of the 'committed writer' was that of an intellectual who shoulders the responsibility of conveying ethical and political messages. These writers were concerned with the problems of the society. Most of them were sentenced to jail for defending their ideas.

After the six days defeat in 1967 and the decline of progressive ideologies in Egypt, literature turns again into an elite activity. In the 1980s and 1990s, all debates

on the social functions of literature were considered unfruitful and outmoded. This evolution coincided with some kind of a "nationalization" of the intellect. Rather than silencing them, the regime contained the writers, in particular those with Nasserist-Leftist leanings. These writers were given various privileges such as more space for publishing their works. Farouk Hosny, the minister of culture during most of Mubarak's reign, was allegedly proud of "taming the intellectuals".[24] Although many of these 'tame' intellectuals kept expressing their progressive views, these views were isolated from the public domain. It seemed that these intellectuals no more practice or even believed in a social and political function of arts and thought.

The neo-liberal developments that took place at the end of the 1990s resulted indirectly in a parallel change in the institutions producing culture and thought. This change became crystallized in the first few years of the new millennium. The neo-liberal reforms led to establishing a competent, private book market. This new market well utilized the free spaces left by the official institutions, and gave an opportunity for a second wave of commitment literature to appear. Unlike those of the first wave, the writers involved in the second one cannot be easily classified on an ideological basis. They prefer to be perceived by their readers as more or less independent. This group of writers adopts mitigated versions of grand doctrines, perhaps because they witnessed the fall of grand narrations (communism in the USSR and Eastern Europe, Arab Nationalism after the invasion of Kuwait and secularism after the rise of the petro-dollar Islamic awakening in the 1970s). As a consequence, the second wave of committed writers might therefore be supporters of social justice but not to the extent of calling, for instance, for nationalization procedures. They might be secular but not to the extent of refusing religious texts as a source of legislation. They might express solidarity with the Palestinian tragedy but not to the extent of calling for executing a military action against Israel. Unlike the writers of the first wave – affected perhaps by the polarization caused by the Cold War – who viewed the West (specifically the liberal democratic West) as an enemy and exploiter, the second wave's writers maintained a complicated balance between refusing subordination to the West on the one hand, and accepting (sometimes even promoting) the set of modernist values.

Al Aswany is considered as an obvious example of the sub-stereotype of a writer of the second-wave commitment. As discussed in Section 2.3.2, his most prominent novel, *The Yacoubian Building*, is a representative instance of a type of writing that is mirroring socio-political reality, without inserting any kind of explicit political propaganda. Unlike the first wave's writing, it cannot be claimed that the novel advances a solution for Egypt's problems from a certain ideological perspective. Al Aswany himself cannot be ideologically classified in a clear-cut manner (unless we consider

24. Mr. Farouk Hosny was claimed to literally say that he "put the intellectuals in the stockyard"

democracy an ideology). Although he expresses on many occasions his regard for Nasser's historical experience, he repeatedly calls for implementing a democratic transition (in a liberal-democratic style that Nasserism obviously refused).

The first wave commitment writers had an anti-Western attitude. This attitude manifested itself in adopting political views condemning the Western (especially American) hegemony and criticizing the Western set of values as a whole (mostly from an anti-capitalist perspective). Al Aswany, as a second wave commitment writer, always declares his anti-American attitudes and condemns the Western "double standard" policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict for instance. At the same time, his prominence as a writer was established, at least partly, by a worldwide recognition in the form of translations of his books into several languages and his receiving many awards.[25] His acceptance (and estimation) of these awards reflects his acceptance of the criteria applied by the grant foundations.

The followers of Al Aswany are those who ratify the set of values embodied in Al Aswany's sub-stereotype as a source of interest and appreciation. These readers have an instrumental vision of writing as a means of achieving a higher aim without being adhered to a solid ideological agenda. For them, writers are appreciated insofar as they participate actively in developing their societies. This 'practical' perspective, if transferred to the political level, might manifest itself in a preference for widening the scope of activism in the public sphere. Politics in their view is thus not the business of politicians alone, but the business of all citizens (the empowerment of people).

Broadly speaking, this group of followers adopts trans-ideological views (or even ideologically loose ones).[26] Their following a writer who is appreciated by Western institutions reflects their acceptance of the criteria applied by these institutions: appreciating writings that promote the principles of human rights, democracy and freedom. These readers do not believe in the way in which official national discourse interprets the appreciation that international institutions confer on dissident writers. This appreciation is often, explicitly or implicitly, seen as conspiratorial behavior. Generally, these readers have no hostility towards the Western set of values, but (perhaps) towards the way in which Western governments sometimes apply them.

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25. Here are some of the awards he received: the International Cavafi Award (Greece, 2005); The Great Novel Award from Toulon Festival (France, 2006); the Culture Award from The Foundation of The Mediterranean (Italy, 2007); Grinzane Cavour Award (Italy, 2007); Austria Bruno-Kriesky Award (Austria, 2008); Friedrich Award (Germany, 2008); University Of Illinois Achievement Award (USA, 2010); Blue Metropolis Award for Arabic Literature (Canada, 2011). For more information, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alaa_Al_Aswany

26. I use the term "trans-ideological" to denote a discourse or a political agenda that reflects different ideologies at the same time.

2.7 Conclusion

The brief overview given in 2.2 of the political situation in Egypt before 2011 will make the propositional contents put forward in Al Aswany's columns (of standpoints, material starting points, unexpressed premises, or even irrelevant propositions to the reconstructive analysis) more understandable when analyzing some of his texts in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. It has also become clear how Al Aswany's view of political change was distinctively democratization-centered if compared to other views of political change adopted by the opposition parties and groups before 2011: Islamist, anti-Muabark, or ostensible political change.

The prominence of Al Aswany that justifies the interest in his columns as preeminent examples of anti-regime political columns before 2011 results from his insistently consistent anti-regime writing that went on for around 15 years. Al Aswany entered the space of opinion writing as a novelist. He maintained this status by deliberately using literary and quasi-literary techniques in his columns, especially the feasibility columns discussing different topics.

In my reliance on a stock-issue perspective for classifying Al Aswany's columns published in *Al Shorouk*, I saw it necessary for the purpose of theoretical coherence to re-conceptualize the doctrine of stock issues pragma-dialectically. A Stock issue has been shown to be an arena for discussing one of the critical questions an advocate of policy change anticipates. The macro-context and the particular meso-context in which the discussion takes place can lead to omitting or amending a critical question or combining two of them, and in turn the stock issues potentially addressed may change.

Although the classification of Al Aswany's columns according to the issue(s) discussed in each shows that the feasibility columns are small in number (6 of 82), this small number allows for a detailed analysis of the strategic maneuvering taking place in these texts.

This analysis would not be dully conducted unless the pragmatic commitments of Al Aswany's audience constituting its frame of reference are taken into consideration. Al Aswany's accessible audience has been shown to consist of two distinctive groups: *the Al Shorouk's audience* and *Al Aswany's followers*. When combined together, the two sets of pragmatic commitments demonstrate some commonalities. They include a belief in the ineffectiveness of the regime and therefore the urgency of a (Westernized, democratized) political change led by new opposition figures and factions. However, this analysis could not show a clear position regarding the feasibility of such a change. In other words, it is certain that "Yes, we must", but it may be doubted that "Yes, we can"!

CHAPTER 3

An argumentative characterization of Egyptian political columns

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 has been devoted to providing the required background knowledge about Al Aswany, systematically viewing his columns in *Al Shorouk* as constituting a coherent call for democratization, outlining the frame of reference of his readers, and briefly explaining the rhetorical exigencies he is confronted with in addressing the feasibility issue. This information is instrumental in identifying the intrinsic constraints imposed on Al Aswany in his argumentative practice when the feasibility of political discussion is discussed. In this chapter, I aim to provide an argumentative characterization of the communicative activity type of a political column that will be instrumental in analytically reconstructing political columns and determining the space of maneuvering available to columnists. This characterization also applies, with slight exceptions, to other types of opinion articles published in quality newspapers which share basic properties with columns.

I shall give the characterization of political columns in two steps. First, I will indicate the domains of communication in which political columns function, and the needs columns serve in realizing its institutional point. Second, I will explain how political columns are conventionalized in order to achieve the specific goals associated with the institutional points. The institutional conventionalization takes the form of constraints imposed on the argumentative practices in political columns. To explain these constraints, I shall provide a characterization of the initial situation, the procedural and material starting points, the argumentative means and criticisms and the possible outcomes of political columns. These elements form the empirical counterparts of the four dialectical stages of the model of a critical discussion: the confrontation stage, the opening stage, the argumentation stage and the concluding stage. In the conclusion of this chapter, I will outline the argumentative characterization of political columns in terms of the four empirical counterparts in Table 3.1.

The examples that I will give in this chapter are all excerpts from political columns published in private Egyptian newspapers in the last decade. This does not imply that the proposed characterization is confined to this category of columns. The examples are in accordance with the research material of this book and may be helpful in understanding its historical context better.

3.2 Opinions in printed newspapers

In my view, texts in printed quality newspaper can be divided into three main categories. The first category consists of texts which are mainly designed to achieve an informative goal, such as news stories and investigative reports. In general, informative texts published in printed newspapers are basically aimed at making readers more informed of what is happening nationally and internationally. The second category are opinion articles published to provide readers with analyses and evaluations regarding current events and affairs. The third category consists of essentially advertising texts aimed at promoting goods and products. Some texts types are hybrid such as the advertorial report in which the informative and advertising functions are implemented.

The second category includes various sub-categories. In both the literature on media texts and in everyday life conversations a plethora of terms like editorials, op-eds, opinions, columns, comment articles, commentaries, essays and articles are used to denote texts published in the press that are neither news stories nor advertisements but belong to the category of opinion articles. These kinds of opinion articles can be distinguished from each other on the basis of different kinds of criteria.

The most general distinction which can be made within opinion articles is between official and unofficial opinions. The official opinions express the positions of an institution (an editorial board, the owners of a newspaper, a political party, or even a specific social group of which a newspaper is a mouthpiece), as is the case with editorials and columns written by syndicated columnists where the style is rather informational than involved. The unofficial opinions basically express the viewpoints of the writers themselves; this may happen in a wide variety of ways such as in opinion articles written by guest columnists, in op-eds and in commentaries (Alonso, 2007: p. 2; van Dijk, 1995).

Jacobs and Townsley (2011) historically trace the emergence and evolution of different types of opinion articles published in printed newspapers. The historical development reflected an increasing orientation of the press toward separating objective and subjective types of texts on the one hand, and more impartiality on the other hand. This orientation was a response to different anxieties expressed in the public debate on the role of the press. During World War One, news stories were exploited for political propaganda. Amplified, biased and even fabricated news stories were circulated on a large scale. A growing distrust of simple facts therefore emerged out of this experience.[27] As a response, motivated by the wish to establish sharp lines between subjective and objective texts, journalists separated fact-based journalism

27. For more information on the propaganda during World War One and how it affected news coverage, see Laswell (1927: pp. 14–46).

from editorials in order to underline the differences between the journalists and the capitalist owners of the media and other influential groups. In the 1920s, this idea of objectivity was used by professional journalists to distinguish themselves from the emerging public relations field in particular, where the goal was to promote a particular point of view. Newspapers responded by introducing affiliated columnists to provide analyses which would help readers better understand the meaning, context, and significance of the day's events (Jacobs & Townsley, 2011: p. 74).

Public debates were also devoted to discussing the claims that media shape the public opinion instead of merely reflecting it and that objectivity is not achieved. In the 1970s, the press responded to such criticisms by publishing Op-Ed pages to provide a vehicle for opinions divergent from those normally expressed in the newspapers and for editorial comments (Salisbury, 1988: p. 317).

The differences between the various types of opinion articles published in printed newspapers can be investigated from various perspectives (e.g. stylistic or aesthetic). From the perspective selected in this book, it is aimed to scrutinize how different types of opinion texts function communicatively and argumentatively. The following sections will show that the argumentative characterization of columns applies, more or less, to other types of opinion articles. For the sake of brevity, I shall use the term *columns* to refer to the different types of opinion articles published in newspapers.

3.3 The pragma-dialectical approach to the contextualization of argumentative practices

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984: pp. 85–86; 2004: pp. 42–68) developed a model of a critical discussion aimed to resolve a difference of opinion. The model is an abstraction describing how arguers ideally act when addressing their disputes. The resolution process starts with the confrontation stage in which the parties involved in a difference of opinion make it clear that they do not share the same standpoint regarding a proposition. One of the parties adopts a positive or negative standpoint and the other casts doubt on it. It may also be the case that the other party additionally adopts the opposing standpoint. In the opening stage, both parties agree on the distribution of the dialectical roles of protagonist and antagonist, and on the procedural and material starting points. In the argumentation stage, the protagonist advances argumentation in support of the standpoint at issue, and the antagonist may put forward criticisms to refute it. In the concluding stage, the parties jointly determine the result of the discussion: either the protagonist has to retract his or her standpoint, or the antagonist has to retract his or her doubts. The empirical reality of argumentative texts and discourse diverges in varying degrees from this model. The

model of a critical discussion plays the role of a heuristic and analytic framework that is instrumental in reconstructing and explaining real practices.

Taking a critical-rationalistic perspective on reasonableness, van Eemeren and Grootendorst listed rules for a critical discussion that proceeds according to the model. These rules help a rational critic to evaluate an argumentative text or discourse by identifying whether the arguers act in accordance with (or violate) these rules, and thus abide to (or deviate from) the norms of reasonableness (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: pp. 123–157). Motivated by their pursuit of an encompassing insight into argumentative reality through the inclusion of a rhetorical angle, van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2002; 2005a; 2006) extended the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation by developing the analytical concept of strategic maneuvering. According to this extended theory, arguers are assumed to not only test the dialectical validity of the argumentation they advance, but also to aim for winning the discussion. To this end, they maneuver strategically by selecting the topical choices and presentational devices that are best adapted to audience demands. In every argumentative move, they attempt at balancing a commitment to the norms of reasonableness and achieving rhetorical effectiveness.

The space for maneuvering available for arguers is determined by intrinsic and extrinsic constraints imposed on the argumentative practice at issue. The intrinsic constraints are the specific dialectical and rhetorical aims that arguers aim to achieve by means of engaging in a critical discussion. The extrinsic constraints consist of the limitations imposed by the macro context in which the arguer's contributions are situated.

Contextualization is viewed by pragma-dialecticians as a prerequisite for an appropriate treatment of argumentative discourse and an adequate evaluation of strategic maneuvers. Optimal identification of the context in which an argumentative practice takes place is instrumental in understanding, analyzing and evaluating argumentative reality as fully as possible. Van Eemeren distinguishes between four types of contexts of a speech event: the *micro-context,* also referred to as the linguistic context, the *meso-context* or the situation in which the speech event occurs, the *macro-context,* the communicative activity type of a speech event, and the *intertextual or interdiscursive context,* which is constituted by the content of other speech events connected to the speech event at issue (van Eemeren, 2010: pp. 17–19; 2011: pp. 144–145).

Inspired by Levinson's concept of activity types (1992: p. 69), van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2005b: p. 76) developed the concept of communicative activity types to characterize the third type of context, the macro-context, of a text or discourse. In *Strategic Maneuvering in Argumentative Discourse*, van Eemeren defines communicative activity types as:

> communicative practices that are generally connected with specific kinds of institutional contexts in which they serve certain purposes that are pertinent to the *raison d'être* of the institution– i.e. purposes relevant to realizing the 'institutional point' or rationale of the communicative practices concerned. [Consequently, communicative practices] have become conventionalized in accordance with different kinds of requirements. [...] When analyzing particular specimens of communicative activity it is necessary, in order to be able to take the different ways of conventionalization in the various communicative practices into account, to connect each token of communicative activity with the communicative activity type it is a specimen of. (van Eemeren, 2010: pp. 129–131)

The institutional mission that a communicative activity type is meant to fulfill in a certain communicative domain is accomplished by realizing the relevant institutional point through the use of the appropriate genre(s) of communicative activity. For example, the genres of adjudication, mediation, and negotiation are the genres implemented in the domains of legal communication, problem-solving communication, and diplomatic communication respectively (van Eemeren, 2010: pp. 139–143).

A great many communicative activity types are hybrids in the sense that their conventionalization involves the use of a combination of several genres of communicative activity. In the political domain, for instance, political interviews prototypically stimulate opinion-forming by combining two genres: information-dissemination and deliberation (van Eemeren & Garssen, 2013: p. 3).

In order to identify how political columns published in newspapers are conventionalized, I shall determine in the following Section in which communicative domain they come into being and what institutional point (and subsequent goals) they are to realize. I shall also identify by means of which genres these goals are implemented.

3.4 The institutional point of political columns

Agreeing with Searle (1995), van Eemeren uses the term *institution* to refer to any socially and culturally established macro-context, such as the contexts of administration, commerce and entertainment, in which certain conventionalized communicative practices have, formally and informally, developed (van Eemeren, 2010: p. 129). Political columns are communicative practices occurring in the communicative domains of journalism and politics.

The institution of journalism usually starts to emerge in a society when it steps toward modernity. In times of transformation to modernity, citizens become aware that their lives are affected by various interactions occurring between religious,

economic and political elites. The need for being acquainted with public affairs then arises. As a consequence, the public sphere is formed as an arena where citizens can be informed about public affairs and discuss them. The macro-context of journalism emerges as a sector of the public sphere designed to serve these societal needs. This general sketch of the emergence of journalism leaves aside how particular various historical contexts create different versions of the story of journalism. This sketch also leaves aside indicating which elements of society (classes, institutions, etc.) benefit most from journalism.

With regard to different historical contexts, in most Western countries, for example, journalism is instrumental in maintaining and enhancing the democratic system. In autocratic and totalitarian countries, by contrast, journalism is motivated by the state's desire to control the social activities of citizens. As for benefiting from journalism, the institution of journalism establishes a link between religious, economic and political powers on the one hand, and the citizens on the other hand. It is arguable, however, whether informing citizens necessarily serves the goals of these powers. Journalism may also play the role of the so-called Fourth Estate and represent the interests of ordinary people.[28]

Regardless of the different historical circumstances in which journalism emerges and operates, and of which social groups mostly benefit from it, serious press (vs. tabloid press which is much lighter) has always been engaging citizens in the public sphere by means of informing them. In a few cases, however, such an engagement is achieved by integrating information-providing with other means; with entertaining for example as is the case of political satire shows.

Engaging citizens in the public sphere by informing them is the *raison d'être* of journalism. Different activity types situated in this institutional macro-context of journalism serve different institutional goals pertinent to realizing this *raison d'être*. The institutional goal of news stories (and other types of news-providing texts, such as reports) is to provide readers with factual information on current affairs. Political columns (and other types of political opinion articles) realize the institutional point by serving the goal of providing readers with factual information that is instrumental in giving an analysis and evaluations of public affairs. Political columns thus implement the genre of information-dissemination. The nature of information given in news stories is different from that given in political columns. Although news stories may imply some kind of analysis by linking news to previous events or to certain motives of the figures concerned, news stories are dominated by giving "rough" factual information which does not go very much beyond mere descriptions. By contrast, in political columns value-based information is primarily

28. For more historical illustration of the appearance of the concept of Fourth Estate, see Conboy (2004: pp. 109–127).

used for explaining views on current events.[29] Both kinds of information equip citizens with sufficient knowledge to help them become aware of the proceedings of the public sphere.

The domain of political communication not only includes formal activities related to decision-making at higher levels of the state, but also informal activities that may affect politics indirectly. Political columns, which are communicative practices that take place in the macro-context of political communication as well as the domain of journalism, affect politics in different ways. Essentially, political columns contribute to establishing a well-informed and critical public opinion and can therefore affect public actions like voting and protesting. They also have a powerful impact on the political elites and policy makers, and so it is important from the perspective of media research to focus on studying opinion articles (Jacobs & Townsley, 2011: pp. 4–5). Members of parliament or Congress, cabinet ministers, corporate managers, and other leaders take note of the opinions of the most respected newspapers. Indeed, much critical media research suggests that dominant opinions of leading newspapers cannot be fully inconsistent with those of leading elite institutions, and that the processes of influencing are mutual (van Dijk, 1995).

In the light of analyzing how communication functions in the political domain, the genre implemented in political columns can be identified. Such an identification is given by first indicating the institutional point of political communicative activity types. I agree with van Eemeren (2010: pp. 140–141) that the general institutional point a great deal of the communicative activity types in the political domain have in common is preserving a democratic political culture by means of deliberation. Van Eemeren's definition of deliberation corresponds roughly with Auer's definition of a debate: a confrontation in equal and adequate time of matched contestants on a stated proposition to gain an audience decision (Auer, 1962: p. 146 cited in van Eemeren, 2010: p. 142 f. 30). Yet, van Eemeren agrees with Martel that deliberation in this sense allows for the possibility of debates such as television debates which do not always start from a stated proposition and an explicitly decisive audience (Martel, 1983: p. 3 in van Eemeren, 2010: p. 142 f. 30). The definition approved by van Eemeren is quite narrow because it applies only to the formally institutionalized activity types that take place in the domain of political communication. However, van Eemeren sees it possible to modify it making it less restricted.

Political columnists as communicators acting in the domain of political communication do not deliberate according to this definition. In a political column, there is no such explicit confrontation of matched contestants. Political columnists may argue in favor of the acceptability of any proposition they state. In most

29. Following van Dijk, I use the term *value-based* to denote information that is inherently judgmental Vs. neutral knowledge. See van Dijk (1995).

political columns, there is no specific counter-contestant who is given an equal time to refute the argumentation advanced in a political column.

Still, I believe that the conception of deliberation, as advanced by van Eemeren, can be modified to include other activity types that occur in the domain of political communication, for nothing but to maintain consistency in our view of the domains of communication: all activity types occurring in a communicative domain should ideally implement the same genre, solely or combined with other genres. If the point of departure that a political column does function in the domain of political communication is acceptable, it is a rational quest to find a room for deliberation in this specific communicative practice.

I suggest broadening the (narrow) definition aforementioned. In political columns, the confrontation does happen, but it is, more often than not, implicit.[30] A political view of a columnist does not exist in a vacuum. Rather, especially in democratic societies where political conflict allows for all kinds of views and ideologies, there are always counter views and claims. The Left entails the Right; the Conservatives entail the Liberals; the Pro-regime entails the Anti-regime.

For a regular reader of newspaper opinion articles, it is clear that an implicit confrontation can be reconstructed by identifying other opinion authors who are in disagreement with the columnist. The equivalence of equal and adequate time (presumed in the definition of deliberation) might manifest itself, even in a less disciplined manner, in a newspaper's decision to provide a (roughly) equal space to a contestant (another columnist, an editor, an Op-Ed writer, etc.) who advances the opposed standpoint regarding the same proposition(s). More importantly, since the institution of journalism is characteristically competitive, it is expected that if a newspaper allows for a political view (x) to be propounded, another newspaper will allow for (–x) to be propounded too. The principle of equality (equal and adequate time) still manifests itself but not in formal, highly-regimented procedures.

A political columnist attempts to change an audience's mind, and this is why it is inherently argumentative. Unlike the more formally institutionalized communicative practices taking place in the domain of political communication, this change does not necessarily take the form of an immediate decision to take an action. Consider a political columnist who writes a series of texts supporting affirmative action. It is not necessarily the case that he aims to urge his or her audience to vote immediately for (or against) the representatives who support (or object to) affirmative action. Nevertheless, the argumentation advanced by this columnist will play a role when any decisions regarding this issue will be taken in the future.

30. A confrontation can also be explicit if a columnist prefers to use a polemic style. This is the case when columnists mention that their opinion articles are written as a response to other columns. This point is discussed in Section 3.5.2.

I suggest calling the narrower variant of deliberation mentioned earlier *direct deliberation* as it is directly aimed to take an immediate decision, and the broader one *indirect deliberation* as it is indirectly aimed to act in a longer run. Accordingly, the communicative activity types occurring in the domain of political communication can be divided into two main categories depending on the variant of deliberation that is predominantly implemented in each.

Broadly speaking, the direct variant of deliberation is often used by decision-makers and politicians in highly formal activity types, whereas the indirect variant is often employed by professional communicators and ordinary citizens in less formalized practices or even informally conventionalized ones. Yet, exceptions to this pattern may occur. Indirect deliberation can, for instance, be implemented in a presidential speech. Consider a presidential speech delivered in the commemoration of a national event in which an elected president argues that "the nation is on the right way". Indeed, whether the audience accepts the president's claim or not, but the audience is not invited to take an immediate decision in response to the speech. This president is thus not in an explicit confrontation with other contestants who are asked to argue, constrained by the time the president spends, that "the nation is on the wrong way". Conversely, a professional communicator may implement the direct variant of deliberation in his communicative practice. Consider two columnists who are the guests of a TV talk show. One of them puts forward a positive standpoint with respects to a certain proposition, and the other the negative standpoint related to the same proposition. In such a situation, the viewers of the program, who plays the rule of the primary audience, are requested to give a judgment concerning who of the two gains their acceptance. By engaging in such a speech event, these two professional communicators realize the institutional point of political communication by implementing the direct variant of deliberation.

The distinction (direct deliberation vs. indirect deliberation) should not be mixed with the distinction (practical deliberation vs. theoretical deliberation). "Theoretical deliberation is aimed at figuring out what to believe, and practical deliberation is aimed at figuring out what to do. […] When we practically deliberate, we do so with the aim of bringing the world into conformity with our ends; when we engage in theoretical deliberation, we aspire to bring our beliefs into conformity with the world" (Talisse, 2012: pp. 204–205). Argumentatively speaking, the latter distinction is based upon the type of standpoint at issue; theoretical deliberation is implemented when the standpoint put forward is descriptive, whereas practical deliberation is implemented when the standpoint put forward is prescriptive. The former distinction is based upon the intended outcome of the communication and accordingly the way in which language is used.

3.5 Political columns as an argumentative activity type

The next sections are dedicated to a discussion of the main characteristics of the macro-context of Egyptian political columns by identifying a political column as an argumentative activity type. In argumentation research, the term *argumentative activity type* is used when a communicative activity type is analyzed for its argumentative dimensions (van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2005b). A communicative activity type can be coincidentally, predominantly or inherently argumentative (van Eemeren, 2010: p. 154). Providing a general characterization of a political column as an argumentative activity type makes it possible to illustrate how a political columnist's argumentation is constrained by the particular institutional features of this activity type. In analyzing and evaluating argumentative discourse, it is necessary to take account not only of the balancing of the dialectical and rhetorical aims – the *intrinsic constraints* of strategic maneuvering – but also of the *extrinsic constraints*; the institutional goals and conventions of the communicative activity type in which the argumentative discourse takes place (van Eemeren, 2010: p. 159).

The theoretical model of a critical discussion can be instrumental in giving an argumentative characterization of a communicative activity type. In the following section, I shall explain more on the argumentativeness of a political column. In doing so, I shall answer two questions related to the argumentative characterization of a political column from the perspective of the model. First, I shall determine to which degree a political column as a communicative activity type is argumentative: inherently, predominantly or coincidentally. Without showing political columns as argumentative practices, there is no sense in studying the strategic maneuvers of political columnists. Identifying the degree of argumentativeness is essential because it can justify the treatment of political columns in some cases as non-argumentative discourse. Second, I will identify how the dialectical stages are represented in the empirical reality of Egyptian political columns in order to articulate the extrinsic constraints imposed on the maneuvers made by columnists.

3.5.1 The argumentativeness of a political column

Newspaper opinion texts that address political issues seem to be inherently or essentially argumentative. In his critical discourse approach to opinions and ideologies, van Dijk not only clearly states that the activity type of opinion texts is essentially argumentative, but even views its argumentativeness as the most prominent characteristic of this sort of texts:

> Opinion discourse is usually not merely a list of variable expressions of underlying opinions. Such opinion expressions tend to be structured in specific ways. The most prominent feature of opinion discourses is that opinions are supported by sequences of arguments: Opinion discourse is argumentative. (van Dijk, 1995)

This characterization provides a starting point for the reconstruction of cases in which the textual surface does not contain indicators of putting forward points of view or advancing arguments. In such cases, the characterization of a political column as inherently argumentative in combination with contextual knowledge can be used as a justification by the analyst to go beyond the seemingly non-argumentative surface to reconstruct the argumentative deep structure of a political column.

There is a broad agreement that opinion authors in general have a relatively high freedom in structuring their texts argumentatively, perhaps as a consequence of the fact that these texts are of a more individualistic than institutional character. However, some researchers, such as van Dijk (1995) and González Rodríguez (2007), have given overviews of how different argumentative elements (standpoints, starting points, arguments, and conclusions) are typically linked to each other in opinion articles. The way in which each of these authors characterizes how columns are structured can be systematized by looking at their characterization from the perspective of the dialectical stages of the ideal model of a critical discussion.

Given their institutional functions as editorial comments on today's news events, van Dijk expects that an editorial *may* include the following schematic categories in order:

1. Summary of the event in which editors remind the readers what the event was as it is more fully described in concurrent or earlier news reports.
2. Evaluation of the event in which editors evaluate the actions and the political actors who performed them. The evaluation involves values and underlying ideologies employed to support the evaluation presented.
3. Conclusion in which recommendations, advice, or warnings are given concerning what should be done in the future. (van Dijk, 1995)

Although van Dijk's proposal concentrates on editorials, it can be generalized to apply to other opinion text formats. Viewed through the lens of the ideal model of a critical discussion, these categories correspond to the dialectical stages of the model, albeit in a different order: The brief summary includes some of the material starting points that parties agree on in the opening stage and that may be used later as arguments in the argumentation stage. The evaluation and the argumentation stage coincide since in the evaluative category, explicitly or implicitly, judgments (bad or good), values and ideologies justifying the author's position function as arguments. These arguments often constitute a pragmatic argumentation supporting

the prescriptive standpoint (warning, recommendation, advice, etc.). Finally, the conclusion in which the main standpoint concerning what is to be done is put forward matches both the confrontation and concluding stages. This schematic category not only reflects the issue of dispute, but it also includes the result of the difference of opinion.

Despite the fact that van Dijk describes his proposal as generalized, it still includes a limitation that does not do justice to the empirical reality of editorials, let alone other types of opinion articles. According to the description of the third schematic category, standpoints propounded are (mainly or as a rule) practical statements that are justified by pragmatic argumentation. Empirical observations (though not based on systematic sampling) show that this limitation is not really applicable, because standpoints put forward may be descriptive or evaluative and may be justified by other types of argumentation than pragmatic argumentation.

González Rodríguez presents a quite different proposal from that of van Dijk on how argumentative elements are linked to each other in opinion articles:

> [W]e may at least expect comments to carry a headline and address an issue which may or may not require some background information occurring either before or after it. It then starts off an argumentation for or against the addressed issue by an initiation statement that is optional. It makes the arguments, and finally takes a position about the issue discussed. This latter process may reoccur. This to say, an argumentation process begins with a series of arguments and ends with the articulation of a position. This process can then be repeated until the planned conclusion is drawn. (González Rodríguez, 2007: p. 51)

This proposed description matches how the process of resolving the difference of opinion proceeds from the perspective of the ideal model of a critical discussion, but in a slightly different order. Providing some background information on an addressed issue in the outset of an opinion text corresponds to the opening stage in which material starting points are given. Advancing an (optional) standpoint regarding the addressed issue then corresponds to the confrontation stage in which it is made clear that there is a difference of opinion. Argumentation is advanced as corresponding to the argumentation stage. Finally, taking a position corresponds to the concluding stage in which the difference of opinion is resolved.

The difference between how opinion texts are argumentatively organized according to the latter two proposals and the idealized order may be seen as reflecting the specific position of political columns in domains of communication. Columnists are usually classified mainly as journalists, opinion authors, or professional communicators, not as politicians, albeit their writings do lead to political consequences. Political columns are primarily a journalistic activity type implementing the genre of information-dissemination, and secondarily a political one implementing the indirect variant of deliberation. Consequently, the format

of a political column is highly affected by the dominant informative activity type in press: news stories. Columns, like news stories, not only include introductory information, but they also give them a priority by advancing them first. It should be noted, however, that the introductory information given in political columns is often not identical to the type of information given in other informative types of journalistic texts. Information contained in columns is typically more biased, that is, formulated in a value-based way and presented from an ideological perspective that is not necessarily shared by all readers.

Having determined the degree of argumentativeness of a communicative activity type, and having explained how, generally, the empirical format of a political column diverges from the ideal order of dialectical stages, I shall complete the argumentative characterization of a political column in the following four sections by describing the empirical counterparts of the four stages of a critical discussion. Four focal points can be distinguished in the resolution process in the argumentative discourse involved in a communicative activity type: the *initial situation* when the discourse takes off, the *starting points* shared by the participants, the *argumentative means and criticisms* used in the discourse, and the *possible outcomes*. Starting from these empirical counterparts of the four stages of a critical discussion, it is made clear in an argumentative characterization how the consecutive stages of the resolution process are realized in a particular communicative activity type (van Eemeren, 2010: pp. 146–151).

My following identification of these empirical counterparts is based on my experience as a reader of Egyptian political columns and a native speaker of Arabic. There is no claim of exhaustiveness, and it goes without saying that another analyst might characterize these counterparts in a more or less different way with respect to the political columns published in the American, British, Dutch, etc. press.

3.5.2 The initial situation

The initial situation is an analogue of the confrontation stage in which it becomes clear that the protagonist claims that a standpoint is acceptable while an antagonist casts doubt on it or puts forward the opposite standpoint. The difference of opinion established is non-mixed in the former case and 'mixed' in the latter. The difference of opinion can also pertain to more than one standpoint, and is then to be characterized as 'multiple' (van Eemeren, 2004: p. 60).

I shall briefly discuss only one issue associated with the initial situation and is relevance to Al Aswany's columns at issue: the type of difference of opinion in political columns with regard to the antagonist's stance on the proposition at stake.

A political column is an implicit discussion in which an antagonist does not manifestly through verbal communication put forward doubt or reject the

protagonist's standpoint. There is therefore no compelling evidence that the reader only casts doubt on the acceptability of the standpoint advanced (as in a non-mixed difference of opinion), or also puts forward an opposite standpoint (as in a mixed difference of opinion). Even if a columnist, based on his or her intuition or experience, addresses an audience assuming it will take the opposite standpoint, this does not necessarily guarantee that the difference of opinion established is a mixed one. Similarly, if a columnist addresses an audience assuming it will only cast doubt on the advanced standpoint, this does not necessarily guarantee that the difference of opinion is a non-mixed one. However, an analyst can take account of two variables to identify, in an approximate manner, the type of difference of opinion at stake (mixed or non-mixed). These variables are the type of newspaper and the previous views of the columnist.

There are different typologies for newspapers depending on different variables: target audience, geographic distribution, topics of interest, etc. The typology affecting the type of difference of opinion established in political columns is related to the superior goals of the newspaper as an institution: the commercial goal or the political goal.

A political-party-related newspaper as an institution primarily takes the responsibility of maintaining the ideological consistency between the party and its proponents. The editorial board of such a newspaper often decides to publish columns of writers who are in agreement with the ideological line of the party. A reader of a party-related newspaper, who is in turn expected to adopt the political views of the party, often assumes the role of an antagonist who may only cast doubt on the standpoints propounded by opinion authors publishing their texts in this newspaper.

This is not the case in most national quality newspapers in which the commercial characteristic is more decisive than the ideological or political agenda for constructing news discourse or inviting opinion authors. Some present-day newspapers are largely non-ideological and commercial, but still retain a loose affiliation to a political party or an ideology. Editorial support is given at elections, but there is otherwise little influence from politics on the general content of the newspaper (McQuail, 1997: p. 27).

In order to achieve diversity in commercial newspapers, columnists reflecting a relatively wide spectrum of political views are invited to write on opinion pages. A well-funded newspaper that is distributed at a wide national level is usually interested in inviting as many public figures as possible to write their opinions on their pages. This is instrumental in maintaining the interest of its readers in buying the newspaper issues. Readers may then be interested in knowing what these opinions are, but do not necessarily engage in non-mixed differences of opinion when reading the different texts. The possibility that the difference of opinion arising in a newspaper opinion text is non-mixed is thus potentially equal to the possibility that it is mixed.

The columns published on the pages of the *Al Dostor* newspaper are good examples of how commercial newspapers with a loose political agenda may create initial situations that are indeed diverse and unpredictable with respect to the type of difference of opinion. Before January 2011, *Al Dostor* was an anti-Mubarak newspaper par excellence. The political line ruling its news discourse was focusing mainly on the Mubaraks' scandals and their disastrous mistakes as a quasi-royal family undermining the republican traditions of Egypt. The target audience was very large and adopted various political agendas, even contradictory ones. Opinion authors from all opposition factions were welcomed to write their opinion texts on the *Al Dostor* pages. They consisted of liberals, Islamists, socialists and Arab nationalists, all of whom were criticizing the Mubaraks radically. Most of them were known public figures coming from different fields: literature, journalism, politics, academia, etc. A regular reader of this newspaper may be expected to be interested in knowing opinions of these opinion authors but not to agree with such a very wide range of standpoints. Therefore, initial situations generated from such conditions are more likely to be mixed rather than non-mixed disputes.

The second variable is that the columnist's previous views affect the type of difference of opinion expressed in one of his or her texts. These views consist of the propositions a columnist has claimed to be acceptable as standpoints, arguments or material starting points in his previous texts. In some cases, a columnist may commit himself or herself to a propositional content that apparently contradicts what follows from his or her previously advocated positions. This inconsistency may cause his or her regular followers to be antagonists in a mixed difference of opinion in which they implicitly advance the opposite standpoint. Columns written when their authors undergo radical intellectual or political transformations are examples of this type of cases in which justifications of inconsistency are needed.

Al Shoruok, in which Al Aswany published the columns at issue, is a commercial newspaper not a party-related one, and it is therefore expected that all positions are taken with respect to the standpoints Al Aswany presents: accepting them without any need of advancing argumentation, casting doubt on them, or even rejecting them by advancing opposite standpoints. The detailed introductions of Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will help in explaining why it is highly expected that the Al Aswany's audience will be skeptical about the acceptability of the feasibility-related propositions he advances.

3.5.3 Procedural starting points

In the opening stage, parties involved in a difference of opinion jointly identify the discussion rules according to which they will act. These rules function as procedural starting points that rule their contributions in terms of what is admissible and what is

not. The rules for a critical discussion must indicate when a discussant is entitled to challenge the other, when the latter is obliged to take up this challenge, who assumes the role of the protagonist, who assumes the role of the antagonist, what the shared premises are, which rules apply in the argumentation stage, and how the discussion is to be concluded in the concluding stage (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: p. 137).

In institutional contexts, some rules for discussion are explicitly laid down while others remain implicit and acquire the status of conventions. In the domain of journalism, press charters list rights and obligations that regulate how journalists formulate news stories and how opinion authors express their views. These regulations usually emphasize that journalists must commit to general principles such as the absolute right of disseminating information and human rights.

Some of the regulations included in press charters function as procedural starting points of critical discussions taking place in political columns. In the Egyptian press charter, for instance, it is stated that the charter "is released acknowledging the right of readers to get an access to a press which [...] supports the right of all citizens to comment on what journalists published" (Jones, 1980: p. 50). The quoted statement implies that all readers are entitled to respond to the content of columns. Argumentatively speaking, a reader as an antagonist may not be prohibited from contributing to the argumentative exchange that is initiated by the columnist. However, the constraint of limited printed space in newspapers makes this right only partially applicable. As a rule, the editorial board of a newspaper receives many responses to a column, but publishes only one or two that the board views as worth publishing. This means that in political columns the institutional context, and not any of the parties engaged in the critical procedure, imposes limitations on the contributions of the antagonist.

In the past years, publishing newspapers electronically has mitigated these constraints. The website of a newspaper gives readers a space, varying from one newspaper to another, to leave comments on opinion articles. This new development produces new conventions of discussion that are in consistency with the rules for a critical discussion proposed by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: pp. 136–157). According to these rules, the antagonist has the unlimited right to cast doubts on the standpoint(s) at issue. The new development affects when and how the readers may advance their contributions to the discussion. The readers of the electronic version of a newspaper may explicitly advance any opposite standpoints and/or counter-arguments whenever they want. Columnists are free to respond to their readers' contributions in their columns, but in most cases they do not. They will prefer to initiate new discussions regarding new events.

Like explicit rules, shared conventions function as procedural starting points. One of the most prominent conventions that regulate a political column is related to the fact that columns come into being as comments on current events. As a rule,

details (or brief references) are given in a column regarding a recent news story (or a connected series of news stories). These details are propositions that help the argumentative discourse proceed. They may function as material starting points defining the zone of agreement between columnists and readers or as arguments supporting the standpoints advanced.

Multitude of antagonists

The procedural starting points indicate who assumes the role of a protagonist and who assumes the role of an antagonist. Usually, a difference of opinion takes place between two parties: one protagonist and one antagonist. Van Eemeren (2010: p. 109) discusses complex initial situations in which a difference of opinion occurs between one protagonist and two antagonists. In a presidential debate, for instance, a candidate directly addresses the other candidate as his or her secondary audience who assumes the role of an official antagonist. Yet, the real target audience, or *primary audience*, that is aimed to be convinced consists of the viewers who this candidate seeks to get to vote for him or her. In fact, this primary audience's verdict is more important than that of the official antagonist.

Generally, a columnist puts forward a standpoint (or more than one) to convince one particular audience of its acceptability, namely, the readers. In polemic texts, columnists have two audiences. In such cases, columnists refute a positive standpoint previously advanced by another columnist (a politician or even one of the readers). In more complex situations, a columnist may refute the positive standpoint of another columnist or politician by advancing the negative standpoint related to the same proposition. In this type of argumentative situations, the other opinion author is the official antagonist and secondary audience, who is addressed as a means of reaching a primary audience. Columnists in such cases implement the direct variant of deliberation because what is at stake is an immediate decision of the audience concerning who wins this implicit discussion.

Columnists engaging in polemic confrontations may be seen as a reflection of one property of what Jacobs and Townsley (2011: pp. 12–14) call the *space of opinion*.[31] The space of opinion is characterized by a great diversity of activity types and

31. Jacobs and Townsley delineate the space of opinion as an especially influential part of the elite political public sphere in which the elites of modern huge, complex societies debate serious matters of common concern. Although it is centrally concerned with serious matters of politics and journalism, it is observed that the space of opinion is a space through which virtually all matters of common social concern pass, or should pass. The space of opinion might be understood as the "democratic attention space" of the society at large, as it reflects, analyzes, and parses the events of the day. It is central site of the communicative process in which public opinion is formed and a critical element of the communicative network that comprises the public sphere (Jacobs & Townsley, 2011: pp. 13–14).

formats linked together in a nested series of multimedia conversations and citational references. In the type of situations elaborated, political columnists provide views on current events by means of responding to each other; by positioning their texts in a nested series of speech events.

3.5.4 Material starting points

The parties engaged in a difference of opinion try to find out in the opening stage how much relevant common ground they share (regarding the discussion format, background knowledge, values, and so on) in order to be able to determine whether their procedural and substantive 'zone of agreement' is sufficiently broad to conduct a fruitful discussion (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: p. 60).

In the case of a political column, which is an implicit discussion, it is impossible for both a columnist (as a protagonist) and an audience (as an antagonist) to agree publicly on such shared substantive starting points. A columnist cannot exactly identify the concessions that a reader may make in this implicit discussion. Columnists strive to identify, in an approximate manner, the values and knowledge they may share with readers.

I have explained in Chapter 2 that the audience of a political columnist can be divided into two basic groups. Each group may share with the columnist a relatively distinct list of shared starting points. The first group consists of all possible readers of the newspaper in which the columnist's texts are published. It includes every person who is likely to buy the newspaper or read it electronically and is likely to come across any of these columns. With the help of some indicators, a columnist can estimate the starting points which regular readers of the newspapers share. Among these indicators is the political agenda of a newspaper which is identified by examining the focal points of its news discourse. The political agenda indicates the preferences and tendencies of the audience. Another indicator is constituted by the prevailing views of columnists publishing their texts in the same newspaper.

The second group consists of the followers of a columnist. These readers are "followers" or even "fans" in the sense that they are interested in reading a columnist's texts no matter where they are published. Following a columnist is a sign of appreciating the values, biases and views he or she represents. The followers may, in addition to reading the columnist's texts, watch their TV interviews, search for news related to them, or even participate in the artistic and political activities that the columnists are engaged in. Scrutinized investigation of the political positions and views of columnists can indicate which values and biases they represent, and thus an approximate zone of agreement between columnists and their followers can be identified. The starting points that a columnist and this group may share

are often easier to identify than the starting points shared by the inscribed reader of the newspaper.

The two distinct groups can overlap. They can also be highly different from each other. A problem arises when these two groups adopt two lists of material starting points that are, more or less, in contradiction with each other. Consider a virtual situation in which a Marxist activist writes political columns for a right-wing newspaper that attempts to give the impression that it reinforces plurality and diversity by inviting writers from different ideologies. In such a case, a Marxist activist shares a large zone of agreement with his followers and a much smaller one with the medium-based group of audience. Such a columnist will maneuver strategically by making concessions selected from the common list of starting points both groups adopt. These starting points would be very general or even universal.

The analysis of the two groups constituting Al Aswany's audience and their frame of reference shows that the Egyptian people's trust in ElBaradei is most likely accepted as a shared starting point. The inscribed reader of *Al Shorouk* is proven to be interested in alternate opposition figures like ElBaradei and Amr Mousa. A follower of Al Aswany is expected to feel admiration for ElBaradei who represents the set of values of bemocratic liberalism. In two of Al Aswany's columns that will be analyzed in the current study, the Egyptian people's trust in ElBaradei is used as a shared starting point and taken for granted. In the analyses of Chapters 4 and 6, I will explain this point more elaborately.

3.5.5 Means of argumentation and criticisms

In the argumentation stage, protagonists advance arguments for their standpoints that are intended to systematically overcome the antagonist's doubts or refute the critical reactions of the antagonist. The antagonists investigate whether they consider the argumentation that is advanced acceptable. If they consider the argumentation, or parts of it, as not completely convincing, they provide further reactions, which are followed by further argumentation by the protagonist, and so on.

Generally, all types of arguments are available to a columnist. Not only political statistics, news stories and historical events are advanced in political columns as arguments, but personal experiences, readings, and literary plots as well. A columnist enjoys a relatively high freedom to invoke different types of arguments (when compared, for instance, to types of arguments presidents usually advance in presidential speeches). This is due to the more individualistic rather than institutional character of political columns.

A striking example of the large freedom in selecting arguments is advancing the interactional responses of readers as arguments. For example, in a column

published in the *Al Shorouk* entitled "I will not Immigrate to Israel nor Work as a Mechanic Either" (30 May 2011), Wael Qandil justifies his fear of a probable Islamic ruling of Egypt by the exclusionary contents of his Islamist readers' contributions that are published on the electronic website of *Al Shorouk*. He mentions their full names and quotes their full contributions (including linguistic errors), perhaps to help his reader verify these texts. The electronic format is thus instrumental in verifying this type of arguments.

As elaborated in Section 3.5.3, columnists, in the vast majority of cases, use news as material starting points and arguments. They usually advance news events as arguments from example supporting evaluative standpoints with regard to the performance of politicians or the sufficiency of policies. Because columnists are constrained by space, they have to use brief versions of news stories. Which details are included or excluded determines the space for strategic maneuvering. The way in which a news story is presented (e.g. using an emotional style) is strategic as well. In exceptional cases, however, columnists may advance detailed versions of news stories, especially if these stories are not widely-spread.

Due to the constraints of space, the argumentation structure of a column cannot be so complex in terms of the number of arguments connected. The electronic format of some newspapers helps columnists overcome the constraints of space. By virtue of the property of attaching links to the text, columnists can use arguments that have extended or complicated presentations. A web link to a YouTube video for an interview or any other type of document can be invoked as a hypertext. Such links are also instrumental in strengthening the acceptability of news-related arguments (and thus affect the result of a discussion). By opening a link, a reader can verify that these news stories are true.[32]

3.5.6 Possible outcomes

In their introduction to the 14th rule of a critical discussion, van Eemeren and Grootendorst state that the discussant who has carried out the role of protagonist in the argumentation stage either does or does not retract the initial standpoint in the concluding stage, and the discussant who has carried out the role of antagonist in the argumentation stage either does or does not maintain his doubt with regard to the initial standpoint, The discussants close off the discussion together by determining the final outcome that may or may not lead to the start of a new discussion (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: p. 154).

In implicit discussions, however, antagonists are not present to contribute to establishing the outcome of discussions. It is not known in political columns how

32. See, for example: http://www.almasryalyoum.com/node/1817316

an antagonist will evaluate the argumentation advanced by a protagonist who considers it conclusive.

However, a columnist can carry out the role of a rational critic who judges reasonably and determines the result of the discussion. This is the case when a columnist makes a prediction justified by arguments. If this prediction comes true in the future, a columnist can imply that the difference of opinion is solved in favor of him or her by reminding the readers of the previous column in which this prediction was made. This possibility results from an intertextual characteristic of the activity type of political columns. As texts by the same writers periodically published in the same newspaper, they are linked to each other somehow.

Although a political column is a separated speech event that readers can understand in isolation from other kindred speech events, columnists can employ the intertextual potential of the activity type to enhance the acceptability of their views.

The social position and status of columnists affect the acceptability of some types of arguments that are advanced in their texts and thus contribute to determining the result of the discussion. Syndicated columnists and editors-in-chief, especially when they are highly experienced with a long history of profession, advance arguments supported by the information received from their 'sources'. This information is in turn backed, almost implicitly, by the existing or acquired *ethos* of columnists. Readers view such columnists as credible "hands-on" experts who know more than others.[33]

Abdulhaleem Qandil was the editor-in-chief of the *Sawt Al Ummah* newspaper (July 2008– March 2009), and a political activist in the anti-Mubarak movement of *Kefaya*. These two positions partially constructed his existing *ethos*. In many of his editorials (and columns published in other newspapers than the *Sawt Al Ummah*), he advances stories that take place behind the scenes of political drama as arguments. This type of arguments is more likely to be acceptable by readers who value Qandil's *ethos* as a credible source of information in the light of his outstanding experiences.

The electronic format of newspapers provides new possibilities for the concluding stage of critical discussions taking place in political columns. Readers on

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33. Pilgram (2015), following van Eemeren, makes a distinction between the term "acquired *ethos*" referring to *ethos* that is built in the discourse, and the term "existing *ethos*" referring to *ethos* that is already in place at the start of the discourse. This distinction is similar to Aristotle's ideas on persuasive means in oratory. He distinguishes between artistic proofs (*entechnoipisteis*; sometimes also translated as 'intrinsic proofs' or 'technical proofs') and inartistic ones (*atechnoipisteis*; also 'extrinsic proofs' or 'non-technical proofs'). The artistic proofs are the verbal persuasive means that the speaker uses within the discourse, while the inartistic proofs are the persuasive means that exist independently of the speaker. Acquired *ethos* corresponds to Aristotle's concept of artistic proofs, while existing *ethos* with his concept of inartistic proofs (Pilgram, 2015: pp. 29–34).

a newspaper's website can contribute to explicitly determining the outcome of the discussion. Readers may leave comments expressing their acceptance of the standpoint advanced. They may also advance an opposite standpoint justified by counter-arguments and thus the discussion is settled (available to others to play the role of a rational judge). Instead of the printed format of a newspaper which allows only for a few comments selected by the editorial board, the electronic format helps the implicit discussion included in political columns to turn into a *quasi-explicit* discussion in which an actual exchange takes place. I call it quasi-explicit because it is not conventionally possible for a columnist to respond to all counter-claims and counter-arguments advanced by readers.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has showed that the diversity of types of opinion articles was a consequence of several orientations developed in press institutions: an orientation toward separating subjective and objective information, the orientation toward separating journalists from the capitalist owners of the media, and an orientation toward more thoroughness and diversity in published opinions. Still, what is distinctive in columns is that they are more individualistic than institutional with a richer variety of styles. Though interesting from the perspective of media and linguistic research, differences between types of opinion articles are not so crucial when scrutinizing how these types function argumentatively. An argumentative characterization of political columns applies, with slight exceptions, to other kindred activity types that are published on a periodical basis such as editorials, and to commentaries as well.

I have made it clear that political columns communicatively function in both the domains of journalism and politics. In the domain of journalism, a political column realizes the institutional point of engaging citizens in the public sphere, implementing the genre of information-dissemination; while in the domain of political communication, political columns realize the institutional point of preserving the democratic culture by means of maintaining a well-informed and critical public opinion that enables readers to act politically in a rational way. Since they are hybrid communicative activity type, political columns realize their institutional point by implementing two genres. In addition to the genre of information-dissemination, columnists implement the indirect variant of the genre of deliberation aiming at convincing their readers of their evaluations and analyses with regard to current events, and therefore at changing their minds. Unlike the implementation of a direct variant of deliberation, this change does not necessarily take the form of

an immediate decision to take an action like voting or protesting. What is at stake in columns is to realize a process of cumulative change of minds in the long run.

Agreeing with other scholars, I have emphasized that opinion articles in general are inherently or essentially argumentative. When analysts of a political column find no verbal clues indicating that a difference of opinion takes place, they can make use of this part of characterization in combination with contextual knowledge for reconstructing such a column as a critical discussion aimed at resolving a difference of opinion.

I have briefly characterized the empirical counterparts of the dialectical stages in political columns: the initial situation, the procedural and material starting points, the argumentative means and criticisms and the possible outcomes. Giving illustrations from political columns published in Egyptian newspapers. This characterization is briefly overviewed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 The four focal points of political columns

Initial situation	A difference of opinion that is expressed in a political column published in commercial, lightly ideological newspapers is more likely to be mixed than non-mixed.
Starting points	Rights and regulations in press charters may function as procedural starting points. The ultimate freedom of paying attention to the readers' contributions as antagonists is limited by constraints of space (in the printed version). Conventionally, the propositional content consisting of details of a current event plays the role of a material starting point or serves as a complex of arguments. The assumed views of the inscribed readers of a newspaper and the followers of a columnist constitute two distinct lists of material starting points.
Argumentative means and criticisms	A wide variety of types of arguments are used. News-related details are used as arguments from example. The argumentation structure is simple.
Possible outcomes	When "source" information is used as arguments, the outcome is affected by the columnist's *ethos*.

New developments in the domain of press should be taken into consideration. Launching an electronic version of a newspaper affects when and how the readers advance their contributions to the discussion. The readers of the electronic version of a newspaper may explicitly advance whatever opposite standpoints and/or counter-arguments whenever they want. Columnists are free to respond to their readers' contributions in their columns, but in most cases they do not. Columnists prefer to initiate new discussions regarding new events.

The electronic format of some newspapers helps columnists overcome the constraints of space. By virtue of the property of attaching links to the text, columnists can use arguments that have extended or complicated presentations. The electronic format also provides new possibilities for the concluding stage of critical discussions taking place in political columns. Readers on a newspaper's website can contribute to explicitly determining the outcome of the discussion. Readers may leave comments expressing their acceptance of the standpoint advanced. They may also advance an opposite standpoint justified by counter-arguments and thus the discussion is settled (available for others to play the role of a rational judge).

CHAPTER 4

Strategic maneuvering with arguments from example

The "active people" topic

4.1 Introduction

In the last few years of Mubarak's rule, it became clear to many pro-democratization advocates that a political change is not possible unless Mubarak and his regime are brought down. Al Aswany was one of those who argued that only by means of massive demonstrations democratization can be reachable. Accordingly, a political change towards democracy cannot be made unless the people are convinced that they themselves are politically powerful enough to take an action against a despotic regime (henceforth, the "active people" topic).[34]

This chapter will show that Al Aswany in this endeavor was challenged by the negative image of the Egyptians of themselves as being passive, inactive and submissive. I shall briefly illustrate how in Mubarak's era pro-regime media and popular arts attempted to create and maintain a negative image of the people. To overcome this rhetorical predicament, Al Aswany maneuvers strategically by advancing examples taken from current events that show how much the Egyptians have changed towards becoming a politically active people. In order to analyze Al Aswany's strategic maneuvers aimed at convincing his readers of the acceptability of the "active people", the argumentative use of examples in different theoretical approaches will be first elaborated. The particularity of Al Aswany's cases at issue is that examples are provided to bestow a positive evaluation of a very huge political actor (a people as a whole). Therefore, I will explain how a columnist can potentially maneuver with arguments from example in response to such an argumentative predicament. Finally, I shall analyze how in "Egypt Awakened" and "The Coming Civil Disobedience on April 6th." Al Aswany maneuvers strategically in favor of the "active people" topic.[35]

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34. An earlier version of this chapter (Omar, 2018) was presented as a regular paper to the Second European Conference on Argumentation (ECA2) held in Fribourg, Switzerland. Later, a slightly different version of this chapter (in press) was accepted for publication in the Journal of Argumentation in Context (JAIC).

35. For the full texts of these two columns, see Appendices A and B.

4.2 The circulated image of the Egyptian people in Mubarak's era

According to Gramsci (1971), the state exercises its hegemony as a combination of coercion and consent which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent. Consent may manifest itself in promoting propagandized ideas on the "greatness" of a people, and accordingly convince them that it is a must to obey their "great" dictator in his imperialist adventures (e.g. in the Nazi Germany). Yet, it might also be used by other regimes in a different fashion: they are partially successful in maintaining themselves insofar as they can persuade the peoples they rule that they – the peoples – are severely bad, and it is fair enough that their rulers are acting inefficiently; the peoples do not simply deserve better regimes.

As a developing country, Mubarak's Egypt depended so much on consent since the cost of using coercion only would be unbearable for the state budget. Mubarak's regime did not only attempt at convincing the people that their leader is great or exceptionally qualified, but also that they will never be able to make a change because they are helpless and inactive, and more importantly, innately bad. The greatness of Mubarak and the littleness of the people were two sides of the same coin in Egypt.

The Yacoubian Building, Al Aswany's outstanding novel, echoes how such a bad image of the people is established in the minds of the ruling political elite themselves as an ideology. In a remarkable dialogue between Hagg Azzam, a *nouveau riche* seeking for the support of the ruling party in parliamentary elections, and Kamal El Fouli, a prominent figure of the party, the latter clearly states how the regime views the submissiveness of the Egyptian people to the government:

> Our Lord created the Egyptians to accept government authority. No Egyptian can go against his government. Some people are excitable and rebellious by nature, but the Egyptian keeps his head down his whole life long so he can eat. It says so in the history books. The Egyptians are the easiest people in the world to rule. The moment you take power, they submit to you and grovel to you and you can do what you want with them. Any party in Egypt, when it makes elections and is in power, is bound to win, because the Egyptian is bound to support the government. It's just the way God made him.

These words may be seen as merely fictive and do not necessarily reflect the real views of Mubarak's regime on the compliance of the Egyptian people. Yet, the regime was actually keen on stimulating such ideas, directly and indirectly, in order to project a negative image of the Egyptian people onto themselves.

In his speeches and interviews, Mubarak was repeating his commitment to take into account the interests of low-income people. The phrase "low-income citizens will not be touched" became a cliché widely used by ministers and officers during

Mubarak's regime. Mubarak's regime tried to maintain the status of a rentier/caretaker state which is responsible for providing food subsidies, health care, education and employment in spite of the accelerated privatization in the last decade of his era. However, the fiscal capacity of the state did not enable Mubarak to fulfill these continuous commitments made in his speeches. Mubarak's strategy to avoid being blamed for failure to meet his regime's commitments was to create a bad image of the Egyptians and accordingly blame them for their miserable conditions.

The pro-regime media and popular arts painstakingly blamed the people, and more specifically the youth, for their over-dependence on the government. The unemployment problems, for example, were depicted as a result of the youth's insisting on working in the public sector, not the private one, in fields closely related to their education, not others. The stories of young people who graduated from the university and chose not to work in their fields but preferred to earn a living from crafts were celebrated. Film plots were praising the success of young people who travel abroad starting from point zero until becoming rich.[36]

How pro-regime discourses tackled the problem of price rise gives another example of blaming the Egyptians due to their negative characteristics. This problem was not discussed in relation with inflation and economic deficit. On the contrary, the people were blamed for over-consumption. They were considerably reminded that prices in Egypt were much lower than their counterparts in Europe and America (ignoring that the Egyptians' wages are not comparable to those of the Americans and Europeans). Traders were blamed too for causing the problem by their greediness.

Another technique of sparing the government of the responsibility for failure was to amplify individual negligence as a cause of deterioration in the public sectors (education, health, etc.). Pro-regime media and popular arts positioned the deficiency of the government as caused by the negligence of some state staff members who lacked conscience. A striking example of dramatizing this theme is the famous radio program *A Whisper of Reproach*. This program depends on the letters sent to the programmers by the audience telling stories about their suffering from intransigence of state employees. The content of a letter was being presented in a well-performed quasi-dramatized form. Actors are playing the roles of a complaining citizen and an inflexible employee (the latter role being performed by the same actor). Being broadcasted more than thirty years ago in a peak hour on the official radio channel caused the program to be widely followed. Instead of highlighting the structural deficiency of the state administration, an ethical point of view was

36. The most two prominent examples in my view were "El-Nimr El-Aswad" [The blak tiger] and "Hammam Fi Amsterdam" [Hammam in Amsterdam].

adopted that depicted the crises and problems as consequences of personal failure of the individuals concerned to work.[37]

More importantly, creating a negative image of the people was certainly extended to encompass political aspects. Concurrently with election times, the Egyptian people were typically blamed for their abstention from political participation. Instead of exposing the unfair conditions of voting as the cause of indifference to such political activities, the people, more specifically the youth, were blamed for not being aware enough of the effect of active participation in voting on the improvement of their lives.

In the relatively quiet decades of 1980s and 1990s, this negative image of a passive and indifferent people could easily be accepted. Although protests, strikes and sit-ins were not so rare in these two decades, they could not establish an alternative, positive image.[38] This is probably because of two reasons. First, these protest activities were limited to blue-collar struggle in industrial centers outside Cairo on which media did not focus so much.[39] For those who were interested in political affairs, so little was known about these activities. Second, this struggle was framed by what Beinin calls a 'moral economy' consciousness (2009: p. 71). Broadly speaking, workers were looking back to a caretaker state period when their wages were higher and social status was better. Their chants expressed a plea to the government to re-take care of them as Nasser did, not a vigorous challenge to the imbalanced capital-workers relationships at that time (Beinin, 2009: p. 71). A rhetoric of pleading might have been instrumental in maintaining the image of inactive people, rather than replacing it with a more positive and initiating one.

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37. In an interesting article written in Arabic, Leila Arman tracks state TV ad campaigns from the 80s until recently. She wittingly notices that "comparing burdensome citizens with good citizens who cause the state no trouble has long been one of the government's favored themes […] Accusing people of laziness and apathy, and urging them to work and produce, is one of the state's favorite defense mechanisms against attack. "It's your fault," said a 1980s campaign […] The order to just do something is in fact the mainstay of Egyptian state propaganda. What thing? It doesn't matter. What's important is that you find a way to deal with it yourself, because the state can't afford to worry about you".

See:https://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/08/04/feature/culture/state-tv-ad-campaigns-and-the-natural-evolution-of-the-good-citizen/ (Trans. Amira Elmasry).

38. Some events of the working class struggle were even hot. A protest action led by some 19,000 of Helwan Iron and Steel Company workers in July–August 1989, culminated in riot-police forcefully suppressing the industrial action. This crackdown resulted in the death of one worker, dozens of arrests, and subsequent allegations of torture and abuse in police custody. See: http://www.madamasr.com/news/partial-strike-expands-helwan-iron-and-steel

39. In the 1980s, only governmental and party-related newspapers were licensed. As an exception, *Al Ahaly*, the mouthpiece of the Marxist *Tagammu'* party always covered the workers' struggle in those years.

Things started to change drastically in the 2000s. The neo-liberal transformation forced many of the white- and blue-collar workers, in the private and public sectors to express their rage. Since 2004, the People's Assembly was often surrounded by protesters who were harmed by cuts in salaries, unfair dismissal, or layoffs. The private (so-called independent) media focused on such activities attempting to attract readers who were neither satisfied nor convinced by the pro-regime poor media coverage. The pro-regime media responded to this shift in the behavior of masses in two ways. The first was to systematically view such activities as 'special interest' protests. The systematic use of this expression was an attempt to discredit the protesters as selfish and greedy people who are only after their own interests, not the interests of the country or the people as a whole. At the same time, it was an attempt to de-politicize the activities. The second way of responding to the change towards more activity was to reframe these activities in favor of the regime: as examples supporting the claim that the regime was democratic and tolerant. The pro-regime claim was not that the people had become active and courageous. Rather, it was suggested that the regime "allowed" these activities to take place because of its belief in freedom and democracy.

4.3 Al Aswany's discussion of the "active people" topic

Al Aswany refutes the pro-regime claim that the Egyptian people are politically passive in two steps. The first step is to argue that this passivity is not inherent in the people, but historically established by different factors.[40] Al Aswany indirectly enhances the idea that the Egyptian people will make a positive change toward political engagement if circumstances change.

In "Are Egyptians Tyrannizable by Nature?", Al Aswany justifies the political passivity of the Egyptian people by two reasons: the repression people were subjected to after the coup d'état of July 1952 by the Free Officers, and the *Salafi* interpretations of Islam which considers uprisings, rebellions, and revolutions major sin.

In "When do We Learn from the People?", Al Aswany justifies the political apathy of the Egyptians by more reasons. First, they do not trust the regime, and accordingly any of its calls for participation in politics. Second, the Egyptians find no political alternatives in the opposition parties or prominent figures. Third, their enthusiasm for political participation is depleted in their daily struggle to earn a

40. The above-mentioned words of Kamal El Fouli in *The Yacoubian Building* elucidates that this submissive nature is viewed as inherent: "Our Lord *created* the Egyptians to accept government authority … It says so in the *history books*" [My italics, Ahmed Omar].

living. However, Al Aswany numbers some signs from daily ordinary behaviors indicating that the Egyptians are not passive or cowardly by nature.

The second step in refuting the claims of passivity is to comment on current events and presenting them as proofs of the people's change towards more activity. In "The Coming Civil Disobedience at April 6th." (30 March 2009), Al Aswany tells the story of a female Swedish journalist who met a labor activist of El Mahallah. In spite of his poverty, the leader refused to receive money from the journalist. This story and the exceptional courage of the members of the April 6th. Youth Movement[41] are the arguments Al Aswany advances to support "active people" topic.

In "Egypt Awakened" (23 February 2010), Al Aswany reports on the reception of ElBaradei at Cairo international airport. In spite of the governmental intentions of arresting those who would welcome ElBaradei, crowds of anti-regime activists gathered to welcome him. Al Aswany uses this warm welcoming as evidence enhancing the "active people" claim.

I aim to investigate how Al Aswany strategically maneuvers with examples in the last two columns. Whether they are taken from personal experiences, anecdotes told to the columnist, or current events, examples are used as arguments supporting the claim that the Egyptian people had changed towards political activity.

4.4 The argumentative predicament of evaluating a political group by means of examples

Considering the argumentative role of the example (or *exemplum*) usually starts with Aristotle, who classified examples as instances in support of a general principle, which are used to convince the audience of the acceptability of a thesis, or inducing it to imitate a role model. He regarded the use of example as a species of inductive proof that stands in the service of a rule which, although not absolute, shadows the principles of formal logic (Demon, 1997: pp. 129–130; Arthos, 2003: pp. 321–322). According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca in *The New Rhetoric*, argumentation from example is one of the relations that establish the structure of reality by resort to the particular case. The particular case can play a wide variety of roles: as an example, it makes generalization possible; as an illustration, it provides support for an already established regularity; as a model, it encourages imitation (Perelman & Olbrechts Tyteca, 1969/1971: pp. 350–351).

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41. The April 6th. Youth Movement is an Egyptian activist group established in spring 2008 to support the workers in El-Mahalla El-Kubra, an industrial town, who were planning to strike on that date. The Movement was allegedly very effective in calling for protests of January 25th. using Blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and other new media tools. For more information, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/April_6_Youth_Movement

Pragma-dialecticians distinguish, depending on the kind of the relationship that links the standpoint to the argument(s), three main types of argumentation, that each has its own argument scheme: argumentation by comparison, causal argumentation, and symptomatic argumentation (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992: pp. 96–102; van Eemeren et al., 2007: p. 137). In the third type, a property, class membership, distinctive characteristic, or essence of a particular thing, person, or situation referred to in the argumentation also applies to the thing, person, or situation referred to in the standpoint (van Eemeren, et al., 2007: p. 154). A basic subtype of symptomatic argumentation is argumentation from example in which "separate facts are represented as special cases of something general: on the basis of specific perceptions a generalization is made" (Garssen, 1997: p. 11).[42]

In order to test the validity of an argumentation from example, an antagonist should ask the following question: "Are the specific cases typical for the state of affairs?". The protagonist thus needs to anticipate that the antagonist may stir questions concerning the representativeness and sufficiency of the examples: are the separate cases indeed representativeness? And have sufficient separate cases been considered? If the antagonist considers that any of these two questions are not satisfactorily answered, the fallacy of hasty generalization is committed (van Eemeren, et al., 2007: p. 155).

Pragma-dialecticians were not the only argumentation theorists who suggest a list of critical questions that an antagonist would ask in order to test the validity of argumentation from example. In their critical-thinking-oriented approach, Freeley and Steinberg classify argumentation from example as a basic argument schemes ("reasoning" in their terminology). In order to test the "soundness" of argumentation from example, opponents may ask the following questions:

1. Is the example relevant?
2. Is there a reasonable number of examples?
3. Do the examples cover a critical period of time?
4. Are the examples typical?
5. Are negative examples noncritical? (Freeley & Steinberg, 2005: pp. 176,177)

In spite of what may seem as big difference between the pragma-dialectician list and Freely & Steinberg's one, the latter represents the articulation of the questions on representativeness and sufficiency. The first, third and fourth questions are different manifestations of the question concerning the representativeness of the examples cited. The second and fifth questions are complementing each other in testing the sufficiency of the examples used. The following example is illustrative.

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42. Garssen's description of argumentation from example is adopted by van Eemeren et al. (2007: p. 155).

Suppose a context of controversy in which a protagonist supports the standpoint "Rulers of a military background fail to develop their countries" by citing the examples of different third-world leaders who turned their countries into a mess. An antagonist may ask different questions concerning the representativeness of these examples, such as: was the military background of these leaders inherently relevant to the failure (e.g. the failure was caused by their personal traits)? Were these rulers in control of the whole situation in their countries (e.g. civil conflict or economic crisis was out of control)? Didn't these rulers leave their countries in better conditions in comparison to the conditions in which they started their rule (e.g. they succeeded in preventing civil wars)? These three questions are relevant to different parts of the proposition contested. They verify whether the exact meanings of "military", "rulers", and "develop" respectively apply to the examples cited or not. The more multi-faceted the standpoint is, the more critical questions related to the representativeness of examples can be expected to be raised.

In many cases, negative examples supporting the counter-conclusion exist. Advocates must prove that the positive examples are enough and considerably weigh the negative ones. In the dispute over the previous standpoint "Rulers of a military background fail to develop their countries", an antagonist may give the counter-examples (or negative examples) of Charles de Gaulle and Dwight Eisenhower as examples supporting the counter-standpoint. The protagonist must prove that these counter-examples are not enough to weigh the positive ones by, for instance, framing them as exceptional cases.[43]

The list of Freely and Steinberg is useful in showing that the critical questions of representativeness and sufficiency can be multi-faceted, and therefore a protagonist who makes use of argumentation from example should take this fact into consideration when responding to these anticipated critical questions.

To conclude, a protagonist in a critical discussion may advance a number of examples constituting an argumentation supporting the acceptability of a generalized standpoint. As a response, an antagonist should ask critical questions related to the representativeness and sufficiency of these examples. The protagonist in an implicit discussion should anticipate these questions and maneuver strategically by selecting and framing the examples cited in order to be considered as much representative and sufficient as possible.

A focus is now needed on how arguers in the domain of political communication, and political columnists for specific, as protagonists can maneuver strategically in

43. I agree with van Eemeren (2010: pp. 126–127) that "[f]raming always involves an interpretation of reality that puts the facts or events referred to in a certain perspective. Viewed rhetorically, it amounts to creating a context by verbal means in which what is put forward makes sense to the audience in a way that is in agreement with the speaker's or writer's intentions".

using examples for bestowing an evaluation on a political group as a whole. In political texts examples are frequently used to support a positive or negative evaluation of a political actor, e.g. to prove that a politician is well-informed, intelligent, deceptive, weak, etc. Excerpts of what a politician said or selections of what he or she did are advanced as a defense backing such a positive or negative evaluation. When it comes to evaluating a political group as a whole, the actions of members are provided as examples which are generalized to convey how this group typically acts or is.

The argumentative practices aimed at convincing an audience of the acceptability of an evaluation of a political group can be described as follows: the protagonist supports his standpoint "Evaluation Y is true of political group X" by putting forward arguments from example "Evaluation Y is true of group members $X_{1,2,3}$ …n". These examples together provide a coordinative support of the generalization included in the standpoint. The support is coordinative because "each argument by itself is too weak to conclusively support the standpoint" (van Eemeren et al., 2007: p. 65) as an evaluation of one group member cannot be commonsensically generalized to apply to a whole group, especially if it consists of a big number of people.

When examples are given to evaluate a group of people as a whole (e.g. the liberals, the conservatives, the Egyptian people, etc.), the question of representativeness becomes difficult to answer: to what extent can the antagonist consider the action(s) attributed to a group member representative of how a whole group may act? Let alone the concomitance relation between the action and the evaluation. It becomes more difficult when arguers are so limited by space or time that they have to select a few examples.

In order to answer the representativeness question appropriately, the protagonist may evoke actions of the typical group members as examples. In a difference of opinion in which, for instance, the standpoint "Republicans are racist" is contested, it can be more effective to cite racist positions of prominent and well-known republican figures (e.g. presidents) than to cite racist positions of infamous senators or spokesmen. This can successfully work in case of institutional groups of which some members can be accepted as representatives.

The protagonist may advance many examples in an attempt to answer the question of sufficiency appropriately. How many examples are sufficient is a debatable issue. Perelman and Olbrechts Tyteca pay attention to the role of variety in strengthening sufficiency: "when one wishes to clarify a rule with many different applications, it is good to provide examples that are as different as possible, as by doing so it can be shown that the differences are without importance on this occasion" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969/1971: p. 353). Resuming the example mentioned above, citing racist positions adopted in different situations, of republican figures that belong to different periods of history or expressing various personalities can help in strengthening the acceptability of the standpoint at issue.

Perelman and Olbrechts Tyteca also highlight the technique of "resort to the hierarchally arranged examples" as a possible response to the critical question of sufficiency: "Instead of merely cumulating a number of different examples, a speaker will sometimes strengthen the argumentation from example by restoring to the double hierarchy argument which makes *a fortiori* reasoning possible" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969/1971: p. 354). They quote from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: "[Everyone honours the wise.] Thus, the Parians have honoured Archillochus, in spite of the bitter tongue; the Chians Homer, though he was not their countryman; the Mytilenaeans Sappho, though she was a woman; the Lacedaemonians Chiton …, though they are the least literary of men" (11,23, 1398b). The technique of "resort to the hierachally arranged examples" can be instrumental in appropriately responding to the anticipated critical question of sufficiency in argumentative practices in which space or time is limited.

The aforementioned maneuvers functioning as possible responses to the anticipated critical questions on representativeness and sufficiency help in making the research question of this paper more articulated as follows:

a. How does an arguer select and frame specific actions of certain individuals in his or her attempt to make them viewed by the audience as optimally representative and sufficient examples which yield the evaluation concerned?

In the specific case of Al Aswany addressing the "active people" topic aiming at evaluating the Egyptian people positively, and in view of the contextualization of political columns as a macro-context (See: Sections 3.2 and 3.3), the research question A can be paraphrased as follows:

> How did Al Aswany select and frame specific aspects of certain current events on which he comments as argumentation from example in his attempt to make them viewed by the audience as optimally representative and sufficient?

The challenging argumentative predicament facing Al Aswany becomes clearer when the matter of space is taken into consideration. The limited space available to Al Aswany as a political columnist makes the argumentative predicament more challenging since he is not allowed to cite so many examples as he may wish. A small number of the most representative and sufficient examples should be therefore cited.

In the analysis, I shall view the selection of certain aspects which Al Aswany advances as arguments by example as topical choices, and how he frames them as presentational devices. Both are presumably adapted to the demand of his audience.

I shall start my analysis with the column that was published later in view of the thematic scope of both columns. "The Coming Civil Disobedience on April 6th." Which was published earlier does not only argue that Egyptians had changed

in the sense that they became no longer politically inactive. It also takes a further step claiming that the supporters of political change will triumph in their pursuit for freedom and democracy.

4.5 The "Egypt awakened" case

In many of his columns, Al Aswany expressed his support of ElBaradei as the promoter of political change and an alternative president of Egypt. "Egypt Awakened" is one of these columns which tackled the return of ElBaradei to Egypt and how he was warmly welcomed by thousands of Egyptians in Cairo airport. Al Aswany notices that, in spite of the threats of Mubarak's security agencies for those who intended to welcome ElBaradei, thousands of Egyptians gathered to welcome him. Al Aswany writes:

> The vast and impressive popular reception that Egyptians organized for Mohamed ElBaradei's return to Egypt conveys several important messages: First, from now on, no one can accuse Egyptians of being passive, submissive to injustice, disengaged from public affairs, or any other of those claims that no longer reflect the reality of Egypt.

In their attempt to identify the argumentative indicators for the use of argument schemes, van Eemeren *et al.* list some indicators for symptomatic relations in one direction. One of these indicators is "X tells us something about Y" (van Eemeren et al., 2007: pp. 156–157). The phrase that Al Aswany uses in the last fragment "conveys several important message" plays the same role. It makes a symptomatic link between the current event Al Aswany comments on, the impressive welcoming of ElBaradei, and a positive political evaluation of the Egyptian people implied in the phrase "no one can accuse Egyptians of being passive, submissive to injustice, disengaged from public affairs".

The literal meaning of this phrase might make it seem as a fallacious argumentative move made by Al Aswany in the confrontation stage. At first sight, Al Aswany may be considered violating the freedom rule (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992: p. 108). By stating that "no one can accuse …", he might seem preventing his reader from advancing a counter-standpoint. However, taking into consideration that a political column may be written in a quite emotionally 'hot' style, Al Aswany wants to convey that "it is not reasonable, in view of the information given in the opening stage, to accuse the Egyptian people of being …", but in an exaggerated manner. Resorting to exaggeration likely expresses his awareness of the claims against which he puts forward his thesis. Given that, as I have explained in Section 4.2, "being passive, submissive to injustice, disengaged from public affairs"

were widely spread accusations of the Egyptian people, by such a strong presentation of his standpoint Al Aswany paraphrased his disagreement on these claims.

The thousands of Egyptians who conquered their fear of suppression were presented by Al Aswany as a particular case that can be generalized to establish a rule concerning the Egyptian people as a whole. He writes: "Egyptians who stood all day to greet him are in fact representative of the millions of Egyptians who like him and trust him". The use of the word "representative" is an indicator for the use of argumentation from example.

As a protagonist who uses argumentation from example to support his standpoint, Al Aswany anticipates the critical questions of the antagonist regarding the representativeness and sufficiency of the cases he cites. Al Aswany utilizes his position as an eyewitness and a political activist who can well make a distinction between the "professional" political activists and other ordinary citizens to prove the representativeness of the case cited. He highlights different aspects of variety of the Egyptians who gathered at the airport:

> The thousands of Egyptians who conquered their fear and gathered at the airport to welcome ElBaradei were not professional politicians, and most of them did not belong to political parties. They were very ordinary Egyptians, like our neighbors or our colleagues at work, and they came from different provinces and different social classes. Some of them came in luxury cars and many came by public transport. They included university professors, professionals, students, farmers, writers, artists, and housewives, Muslims and Copts, women with and without veils and some wearing *niqab*. These Egyptians, different in every way, all agreed on change, on serious work to restore justice and freedom.

In order to strengthen his claim that those particular Egyptians are representative of the Egyptian people as a whole, Al Aswany makes use of what Perelman and Olbrechts Tyteca called "resort to the hierarchally arranged examples": "Instead of merely cumulating a number of different examples, a speaker will sometimes strengthen the argumentation by example by restoring to the double hierarchy argument which makes *a fortiori* reasoning possible" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969/1971: p. 354). They quote from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: "[Everyone honours the wise.] Thus, the Parians have honoured Archillochus, in spite of the bitter tongue; the Chians Homer, though he was not their countryman; the Mytilenaeans Sappho, though she was a woman; the Lacedaemonians Chiton …, though they are the least literary of men" (11, 23, 1398b).

Al Aswany employs the hierarchy of ordinary citizens vs. politicians or those who are politically active. The stereotypical image of a political activist manifested itself in a male university student who is shown by the media and popular arts as highly individualistic and slightly intellectual, more often than not a communist, leftist, or an Islamist. The prototypical expression of reaching the peak of activism

in (opposition) politics is the act of demonstrating, in which dozens of university male students are involved.[44] When members of the latter group are engaged in political events like the one Al Aswany comments on, it is plausible that the message conveyed is pertinent to the characteristics of this particular group. But when the writer foregrounds that ordinary Egyptians, who evoke the image of the "typical" Egyptian, participate in such an event, it becomes more plausible that the message conveyed is pertinent to the Egyptian people as a whole. The relevance of the following three fragments/scenes to the argumentation advanced can be thus grasped:

> … an old woman came up to me and asked to speak to me in private. I took her aside and in a low voice she asked me, 'Do you think the government will do anything to harm Dr. ElBaradei?' When I assured her that this was most unlikely, she sighed with relief and said, 'May God protect him.'
>
> … I will not forget the man who came with his wife and their pretty little girl with two plaits, who sat on his shoulders carrying a picture of ElBaradei.
>
> … I will not forget the dignified woman in the *hijab*, the good-hearted Egyptian mother who brought with her several packets of fine dates. She opened them one after the other and started to give them out to people standing around that she did not know. When someone said, 'No, thank you,' she gave them an angry look, then smiled and said, 'You must eat something. You've been on your feet all day and you must be hungry. Please have some'.

Al Aswany tells the first small anecdote in the course of his explanation of how much ElBaradei is trusted by the Egyptians, while the second and third are meant to convey the sincerity and enthusiasm Al Aswany experienced that day. Yet, they are all related to the anticipated critical questions concerning representativeness. By giving the examples of an old woman, a pair of parents, and a traditional mother, Al Aswany implies that those who were the most ordinary could conquer their fear. and *a fortiori* those who occupied higher nodes in the ordinary citizens Vs. politically active hierarchy would likely act in a similar way.

The same technique, i.e. "resort to the hierarchally arranged examples", is applied in presenting the action cited: welcoming ElBaradei at the airport. By framing the welcoming as unsafe and surrounded by threats, Al Aswany implies that the Egyptian people would be perhaps even more politically active when it comes to safer activities. Al Aswany benefits from the fact that a political column implements the genre of information-dissemination as well as that of deliberation to give sufficient information in order to view the action of welcoming as adventurous:

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44. The Egyptian cinema repeatedly depicted political activists (usually called in the Egyptian colloquial "those who are talking politics") exclusively as university students who are quite affluent and thereby have time and financial capacity to show interest in political activism.

> [The] Interior Ministry detained several young people simply for urging Egyptians to go out and welcome him. The security agencies also made it clear that they would not allow Egyptians to rally to greet ElBardei at the airport and announced they had mobilized eight thousand riot police to deal with anyone who gathered there. These unofficial statements were leaked and some 'independent' newspapers published them on their front pages in the same form on the morning ElBaradei arrived in Egypt.

Attempting to strengthen the representativeness and sufficiency of the examples he uses, Al Aswany carefully employs certain linguistic choices in framing this group of Egyptians. As for representativeness, they are referred to as merely "Egyptians" five times, and as "supporters" [of ElBaradei in this context] only once. Concerning sufficiency, they are referred to as "thousands" six times and as "hundreds" only once. To summarize, Al Aswany aims at viewing them as a big/sufficient number of ordinary/representative groups of Egyptians.

Al Aswany's antagonist may raise a critical question concerning the concomitance between the act and the evaluation: is welcoming ElBaradei in these unsafe circumstances really a reliable sign of the political activity of the people? This matter does not only relate to the security measures taken but it also relates to ElBaradei. For the target audience of Al Aswany, if ElBaradei was not a trustworthy democracy promoter, this relation of concomitance would be unlikely acceptable. This was by no means the case. The analysis of the frame of reference of both Al Shorouk's inscribed reader and Al Aswany's followers has shown that ElBaradei was highly appreciated by both groups (See: Section 2.6).

The answer to the question (B) (See: Section 4.3) can now be given. Al Aswany strategically selects particular aspects of a current event (the enthusiasm and courage of most ordinary Egyptians in welcoming ElBaradei at Cairo airport) to strengthen his thesis that the Egyptian people have changed to be no longer politically inactive. This process of selection is similar to what a novelist or a short stories writer does when designing one of the narrative scenes or drawing one of the characters: a novelist concentrates, not on all the possible details of a scene or traits of character, but mainly on the details relevant to his plot. As an arguer, and by highlighting some personal details implying typicality, Al Aswany attempts to make his advanced generalization incontestable. The details mentioned points out that the individual cases cited are typically inactive according to the historically established frame of reference of his audience, yet acted in an active way in an exceptionally unsafe situation. Al Aswany aims at implying that others who are less typical Egyptians would do even more, and hence answering the anticipated critical questions on sufficiency of the examples cited in a satisfactorily way.

4.6 "The coming civil disobedience on April 6th." case

It may seem at first sight that the analysis and evaluation of the strategic maneuvering in support of the standpoint advanced in this column (related to the triumph of the pro-change camp) is more suitable to be discussed in Chapter 6, where the "victorious protesters" topic is discussed. However, Chapter 6 will be dedicated to discuss how Al Aswany argues in favor of the triumph of the protesters by drawing a fully-fledged image of the conflict between pro-regime and anti-regime camps. "The Coming Civil Disobedience in April 6th." column is limited to discussing the claim that the supporters of political change are prepared to triumph in view of their own readiness, regardless of the capability or incapability of their opponents.

In his columns, Al Aswany did not support El Baradei only as a possibly effective anti-regime political actor, as is the case in "Egypt Awakened", but he also supported movements and platforms that worked in favor of a political change towards democracy, such as *Kefaya* and April 6th. Youth Movement. "The Coming Civil Disobedience on April 6th." column was written to promote for the coming civil disobedience and to convince the audience that its success is guaranteed. Instead of opening the column with giving some introductory information on the coming activity, Al Aswany, as it is often the case, tells an anecdote on one of the labor leaders which he heard from a female Swedish writer. The story shows that this worker could maintain his dignity and honor in spite of poverty as he refused to take money from the writer for hosting her in his house. She concludes the story:

> This Egyptian worker has taught me an unforgettable lesson. I have been thinking a lot of what he did, and came to a conclusion: *a man who suffers from this great extent of poverty, oppression, and injustice and nevertheless is still able to maintain his courage and dignity – this man will inevitably triumph.*
>
> [my italics, Ahmed Omar]

The italicized phrase repeats the conclusion of the column, summarizing how Al Aswany thinks of the future of Egypt:

> The civil disobedience of the coming April 6th. makes me optimistic about the future of Egypt, and as the Swedish writer said: *"A man who suffers from this great extent of poverty, oppression, and injustice and is still able to maintain his courage and dignity – this man will inevitably triumph"* [my italics, Ahmed Omar]

As an anti-regime columnist and activist, Al Aswany cannot be optimistic about the future of Egypt unless he feels optimistic about the progress of anti-regime activism in the sense that the anti-regime activities can be expected to be fruitful. His words convey his belief that the supporters of political change will triumph in the sense of forcing the regime to initiate a democratization process or even ousting

the regime itself. The Swedish writer's words relate to Al Aswany's optimism only if the meaning of her words is viewed as denoting the moral nature of all (or at least most) supporters of political change in Egypt. In view of the context concerned, her phrase can be rephrased as "These political activists who suffer from a great extent of poverty, oppression, and injustice and are still able to maintain their courage and dignity – these people will inevitably triumph".

Similarly, the column confers this moral value on the young activists of April 6th. Movement.[45] Al Aswany writes:

> I have met some of these young people [...] and found myself wondering: from where did they derive *their legendary courage*?! How could they take to the streets confronting the riot police (the Egyptian occupation army), be harshly beaten, dragged off, detained and tortured in state security premises, and then released more determined to change their country?! [my italics, Ahmed Omar]

Both the opening anecdote on El Mahallah's labor leader and the aforementioned comments on the youth of April 6th. Movement draw an image of the supporters of political change as free humans who are willing to determine their destiny in spite of the circumstances they are living in. This image goes against the presupposition that human behavior is always a result of the conditions in which a man lives. The Swedish writer, and Al Aswany in turn, presupposes that the hospitality of the labor leader cannot be an automatic result of the poverty he lives in. Similarly, the toughness, brevity, and awareness of these young people cannot be automatically explained from the circumstances because of the cruel abuse they are subjected to.

In terms of the ideal model of a critical discussion, Al Aswany, playing the role of a protagonist, puts forward an implicit standpoint with a propositional content related to a feasibility issue. This issue is concerning the ability of the supporters of political change to push forward democratization. The propositional content conveyed is presented with a highly strong force[46] "Supporters of political change will inevitably triumph". The standpoint at issue is supported by an implicit argument concerning the exceptional moral character of these supporters as people who maintain their own choices in spite of hindering circumstances. This argument is in turn supported as a sub-standpoint by two examples: of a labor leader (told by the female Swedish writer) and of the youth of the April 6th. Movement. The audience of Al Aswany, playing the role of an antagonist, views these two cases as only examples. The readers know well that the supporters of political change in

45. cf. fn. 40.

46. "The *force* of a standpoint can vary [...]. An opinion can be stated with total conviction or, at the other extreme, it can be cautiously expressed as a suggestion" (van Eemeren et al., 2002: p. 6).

Egypt include other groups and individuals than this labor leader and the youth of April 6th. Movement. Al Aswany does not explicitly state whether each of these two cases can stand on its own to support the sub-standpoint at issue. However, it is more reasonable to assume that the columnist intends to advance these two cases as coordinatively supporting the sub-standpoint since only one case is hard to be expected to be acceptable conclusive evidence. Neither a labor leader alone nor a small group of young activists alone can be expected to be acceptable as a generalizable case.

The sub-standpoint 1.1 cannot be considered acceptable unless the audience views these two examples as generalizable cases. Anticipating the critical questions related to the representativeness and sufficiency of the examples cited, Al Aswany must attempt to answer these questions as much satisfactorily as possible. Taking account of the way in which the (sub-)standpoint(s) and arguments are presented, the argumentation structure of the critical discussion conveyed by the column at issue can be schematized as follows:

1 Supporters of political change will inevitably triumph
  1.1 Supporters of political change still keep their dignity in spite of sufferings
  And 1.1′ It is symptomatic of those who keep their dignity and courage in spite of suffering to triumph
    1.1.1a A labor leader of El Mahallah refused to take money from the Swedish journalist in spite of his poverty
    1.1.1b The youth of the April 6th. movement insist on protesting in spite of being subjected to cruel abuse

In accordance with the case study, the research question of this chapter can be rephrased as follows: how does Al Aswany frame the anecdote about the labor leader and the comments on the April 6th. Movement youth in his attempt to make the examples cited representative and sufficient?

With regard to the anecdote, it may be noted first that despite the anecdote being narrated by a Swedish writer, Al Aswany does not give any comment that might leave the impression of being objecting or even suspicious regarding the content or the point of view adopted. On the contrary, in the conclusion of the column he repeats her words literally as a sign of sharing her view. Therefore, Al Aswany can be held committed to the propositional content of the story and its framing. Hence, the formulation of the anecdote both as content and expression can be a part of the analysis as topical choices and presentational devices adapted to the audience demand.

This does not imply that telling this anecdote via the Swedish writer, using the first person narrative style, does not play any role in Al Aswany's attempt at raising

the acceptability of his argumentation. He may be attempting to enhance the credibility of the anecdote and its meaning. That is, Al Aswany, an activist belonging to the anti-regime camp, might be seen by some readers as biased when telling a story glorifying the acts of another activist belonging to the same camp. Therefore, these readers might cast doubt on the anecdote resulting in weakening the acceptability of the proposition 1.1.1a.

The Swedish writer tells the story in an emotive and surprised tone. This effect results from the use of phrases such as "I have never imagined", "it was amazing that", "a weird thing happened" and "her eyes glittered with emotions". The details mentioned concerning this worker's living conditions are not expected to be considered weird or exceptional by Al Aswany's audience. The image depicted is one of a "typical" Egyptian worker employed in the public sector. It is not exceptional for such a worker to be responsible for quite a big family. This is normal for the poorer and less educated group of Egyptians. It is also known to the vast majority of readers that "the monthly wage that [these workers were] paid was not enough for only one person to live a decent life".

Al Aswany phrases the anecdote aiming to strengthen the representativeness of the case highlighted in the anecdote by bestowing typicality and anonymity on its protagonist. Although the Swedish writer says she was hired to make a lengthy interview with one of the labor "leaders", the word "leader" is emptied of any potential connotations of empowerment. By referring to the protagonist of the anecdote as "this worker" twice, "the worker's [daughter]" once, and "this Egyptian worker" once, he is positioned as an ordinary worker not a labor leader. In addition, his name is not mentioned.

What is foregrounded in the anecdote as its core message is the contradiction between the circumstances and the resulting behavior: poverty and showing hospitality to others; poverty and keeping an aspiration for freedom. The details narrated are an attempt to hyperbole both: in spite of the enormous poverty, hospitality is unexpectedly showed *immediately* to a *foreign stranger*; in spite of the urgent need for money, this worker *insistently* refused a relatively *big* amount of money (given that the euro is a hard currency in Egypt). Furthermore, the worker did not refuse the money in fear of feeling ashamed or embarrassed as the Swedish writer has already hided the money surreptitiously before she leaves. He was motivated only by keeping his dignity.

If a typical worker who is poorer, less empowered and only modestly educated can keep his dignity and aspiration for freedom, it is expected that the richer, more empowered and well-educated will do *a fortiori* the same, or even more. Similar to what we have seen in the "Egypt awakened" case, the technique of "resorting to hierarchally arranged examples" is applied. In an attempt to strengthen the sufficiency of the example cited, and therefore raising the acceptability of the standpoint put

forward, a detailed example, carefully selected, is cited to imply that other examples supporting the same claim do exist.

Another small detail mentioned in the content of the story can be viewed as instrumental in strengthening the sufficiency of the example cited. After being hired by a Swedish newspaper to make the interview, the Swedish writer "went to a factory where [she] got to know one of them". It is noteworthy that the newspaper did not specify a certain leader, or give her a heuristic list of names. The use of the indefinite article "a" and the use of "one of them" to refer to the labor leader/worker perhaps implies that it was not difficult to find a labor activist because there were many of them and they and could be found in a great many factories. The stylistic choices made can be viewed as presentational devices aimed at strengthening the sufficiency of the example cited by implying that other sufficient examples do exist.

Knowing that the audience will evaluate the example of the labor leader as an argument that is by itself too weak to conclusively support sub-standpoint 1.1, Al Aswany provides another example: the youth of the April 6th. Movement. He writes:

> Whoever would have believed that young people in twenties would call for a civil disobedience through Facebook and Egypt would positively respond end to end?! I have met some of these young people and was impressed by them indeed. I saw in them the great Egypt, and found myself wondering: what inspires these boys and girls of their legendary courage?! How could they take to the streets confronting the riot police (the Egyptian occupation army), be harshly beaten, dragged off, detained and tortured in state security premises, and then released more determined to change their country?! How and when do these sons and daughters feel the love of Egypt?! They were born in the era of Camp David, comprehensive corruption, decayed education, and superficial media; the era of contempt of national issues and ridiculing the notion of dignity. They, however, could maintain their national awareness and moral rigidity which of a higher age.

Instead of citing examples of more individuals attempting to answer the critical question on sufficiency satisfactorily, the columnist gives an example of a minor group as a whole representing the wider group of political change supporters. In the previous section of this chapter, I have explained that mass media and popular arts established the stereotype of the opposition political activist as "a male university student highly individualistic and slightly intellectual, more often than not a communist, leftist, or an Islamist". The members of the April 6th. Movement may be considered as matching this stereotype. Yet, this is only partially true. Indeed, the members are "mostly young and educated Egyptians", but "most of them had never been involved with politics before joining the [Facbook] group".[47] Therefore,

47. Samantha M Shapiro wrote a lengthy commentary about the movement in the *New York Times* on 22 January 2009. For more, see: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/25/magazine/25bloggers-t.html

it was hard to categorize the movement decisively (before 2011 and even afterwards); it was considered trans-ideological.[48] "In its official statement, the April 6th movement takes pains to emphasize that it isn't a political party. But the movement has provided a structure for a new generation of Egyptians, who aren't part of the nation's small coterie of activists and opinion-makers". In addition, the movement is not predominantly masculine. It is remarkable that two of its most famous and prominent figures were female: Israa Abdul Fattah and Asmaa Mahfouz.[49]

Al Aswany also tells the movement's "story" in an emotive and surprised tone, in the same vein as the Swedish writer did when telling the story of the labor leader of El Mahallah. This effect resulted from using phrases such as "was impressed" and "found myself wondering", the conjunction "however", and phrasing the paragraph commenting on their "legendary courage" as a sequence of rhetorical questions: "whoever would have believed …?", "what inspires these boys and girls of …?", "how could they take …?", and "how and when do these sons and daughters …?"

Al Aswany positions these supporters of political change as *young family members* making use of linguistic means, i.e. repeating the adjective "young people" twice, mentioning their age rate "in the twenties", and referring to them as "boys and girls" and "sons and daughters". The connotation is perhaps that they are still needy or weak. He also puts an emphasis on the social conditions they were raised in by listing the factors that could have automatically led to indifference concerning politics and national dignity: Camp David, comprehensive corruption, decayed education, and superficial media. In addition, they are subjected to high degree of abuse that could have automatically led to feeling afraid of participating in opposition political activities. It is an attempt to frame these actions as free and exceptional choices and thus stress the contrast between the circumstances and the resulting behavior.

Al Aswany utilizes the image of youth established in the Middle Eastern countries in general. According to Swedenburg, youth are imagined as a threat because they are "vulnerable innocents". Middle Eastern regimes maintained and enhanced this imagination because it justifies different kinds of patriarchal guardianship over

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48. I have used "trans-ideological" also to describe the political frame of reference of Al Aswany's followers (See: Section 2.6.2).

49. The first one was arrested by the Egyptian security after El Mahallah's April 6th. massive demonstration as one of its main promoters. A few Egyptian newspapers challenging the state's censorship policy turned her overnight into a symbol for resistance and resilience against corruption and injustice. For more information, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5pKlnFLjcY

The second one was widely known for her help in sparking the 2011 revolutionary uprising through her video blog posted one week before its start. The link of the video on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgjIgMdsEuk. For more information, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asmaa_Mahfouz

young people. Youth are not portrayed as inherently bad guys, but as so weak and naïve that they can be easily deceived and utilized by evil and dangerous forces. In Mubarak's Egypt in particular, the threatening forces were all included in a "cultural invasion" package, coming mainly from the West (in addition to the invasion coming from the extremist Islamists of Pakistan and Afghanistan, etc.). The Western "cultural invasion" included a wide variety of topics, lifestyles and ideologies: premarital sex, drugs, Macarena, Zionism and Satanism. It is remarkable that the term "cultural invasion" and other related notions were used in the government and pro-regime discourses, and sometimes by independent and anti-regime thinkers (Swedenburg, 2012: p. 287).

Viewed by readers as "vulnerable" innocents, young people are much less expected to resist the impact of external conditions on their behavior. To sum up, Al Aswany, again, applies the technique of "resorting to hierarchally arranged examples" evoked in presenting the case of the labor leader's anecdote. He attempts to imply that if the younger, care-needy and highly vulnerable people can act by resisting the circumstances they are living in, the less vulnerable are *a fortiori* expected to do so, or even more. Therefore, the sufficiency of the example cited will be strengthened by mentioning a small number of examples that imply the existence of much more.

In his attempt at enhancing the sufficiency of the examples cited, Al Aswany selects two widely different examples in order to illustrate their diversity. Several couples of opposites can be distinguished when comparing the two examples to each other. Table 4.1 summarizes these opposites. Not all the details included in the Table 4.1 are mentioned in the column. Some of them are known to the readers by their knowledge of how public sector workers live and through independent media coverage (including the *Al Shorouk* newspaper itself. See: Section 2.6.2) of the April 6th. Movement and other protest platforms.

Table 4.1 Couples of opposites between the two examples cited

The labor leader of El Mahallah	The youth of April 6th. Movement
Quite old (this can be concluded from being a father of a ten years old daughter)	Young people in the twenties
A father who is responsible for a family	Unmarried
Less educated (or even uneducated)	Mostly university students and newly graduated
Proletariat living in Delta	Mostly middle class living in Cairo
Using traditional methods of political networking (leaflets, public speeches in factories, etc.)	Using the Internet and social media

4.7 Conclusion

Studying the strategic use of argumentation from example with the help of strategic maneuvering as a theoretical concept and a set of analytical tools was the research object of other papers. Plug (2017), for instance, was interested in investigating how argumentation from example may be used to maneuver strategically in plenary legislative debates in the European parliament. She identified some of the techniques that the Members of the European Parliament may use to prove that a (social, legal, or economical) problem exists without committing the fallacy of hasty generalization, or at least with giving the impression that they wish to avoid doing so.

Similarly, I have aimed to analyze how an arguer may maneuver strategically with argumentation from example in the domain of political communication, but within a less regulated communicative activity type (political columns) and in addressing a different, more contestable standpoint (related to evaluating a political group as a whole).

I have showed that it is crucial for an arguer who attempts to increase the acceptability of his arguments from example to properly answer the critical questions concerning representativeness and sufficiency. Although other insights into this specific type of argument scheme list more questions than these two, I have analytically explained that these other questions can be shown to be different aspects of the questions of representativeness and sufficiency.

When arguments from example are used to evaluate a political group as a whole, an advocate, I have argued, is confronted by a complex predicament. It is challenging to prove that the few examples cited, given that space and time are always limited, will be considered sufficient by the antagonist. Answering the representativeness question appropriately is also challenging: who can be considered a "typical" member of a political group?

In Al Aswany's strategic maneuvering as an anti-regime advocate attempting to argue that the Egyptian people as a whole are no longer politically inactive, the predicament is more complex. Primarily, Al Aswany has to work against a prolonged process of creating a bad image of the people in the prevailing pro-regime mass media and popular arts. This image consists of a stereotypical isolated political activist and a majority of typical Egyptians as being passive and inactive. Al Aswany overcomes this predicament by rooting his arguments in the same established bad image he works against. By applying the technique of "resorting to hierarchally arranged examples" showing that the people least expected to be actively practicing in politics have changed, he implies that it is likely that the others would act even more actively in favor of political change toward democratization in Egypt.

I viewed the appropriate framing of the examples cited as a presentational device strategically employed in adaptation to the audience demand. As a political columnist

who is conventionally implementing the genre of information-dissemination (See: Section 3.4), Al Aswany selectively mentions many details of the current events commented on. These details are used to show the cases cited as representative by viewing them as typical and ordinary, and sufficient by viewing them as diverse and big in number.

In the column entitled "Egypt Awakened", the participants in an unsafe political activity are framed to be as much "typically" Egyptians as possible in order to strengthen the representativeness of the examples cited.

In "The Coming Civil Disobedience on April 6th." case, a labor leader of El Mehallah is framed to be just a "typical" worker, and the members of April 6th. Movement are framed as *young family members* to amplify their courage in challenging the repression of the regime, thus enhancing the acceptability of the standpoint advanced.

In an attempt to answer the question of sufficiency appropriately, Al Aswany is shown to be aiming to illustrate the diversity of examples cited. In the first column, it is clearly indicated that Egyptians from all classes, professions, religions, and genders participated in the welcoming of El Baradei. In the second column, Al Aswany strategically selects two examples including couples of opposites highlighting their diversity.

CHAPTER 5

Strategic maneuvering by means of a narrative perspective

The "defeatable police" topic

5.1 Introduction

If Al Aswany's audience is convinced that the people have changed and are willing to rebel, this does not automatically mean that political change can be reached. The audience must also be convinced that Mubarak's extraordinary ability to use repression has its limits. In other words, Al Aswany needs to convince his readers that the police repression will someday come to an end. In this chapter, I will focus on how he maneuvers strategically in arguing that the Egyptian police can be defeated (henceforth, the "defeatable police" topic).

Al Aswany sometimes discusses the "defeatable police" topic as a sidetrack of a related discussion, and at other times as the main topic of the column. In "The Coming Civil Obedience on April 6th.", discussed in Chapter 4, he writes:

> Whatever the repression practiced by the regime against the participants in the civil obedience protests might be, and even if the regime would mobilize tens of thousands of riot police to beat and drag them, and even if the regime would jail the patriots accusing them of fabricated cases, whatever the regime would do, its ability to use repression will disappoint it soon. This is because the State Security Investigations, no matter how savage they might be, cannot torture all Egyptians. And jails, though so many, would not be able to accommodate all Egyptians.

In this case, the prediction that the police will be defeated is supported by mentioning the fact that a great number of Egyptians will rebel against the regime so that the police will not have the means to repress all of them. Al Aswany argues that the cause of the defeat of the police will be an 'extrinsic' one unrelated to the characteristics of the police apparatus itself.

In another column, entitled "A talk with a State Security officer" (7 April 2009), Al Aswany recites a conversation in which a State Security officer explains why this group of officers does not feel guilty in spite of their involvement in torturing and abusing innocents. At the end of the column, he quickly discusses the "defeatable police" topic and mentions an 'intrinsic' cause for the possibility of defeat. Al Aswany supports the "defeatable police" topic by advancing the argument that the officers will not be able to maintain the use of repression. He writes:

> The political system that depends for its survival only on repression always misses the fact that repressive apparatuses, no matter how massive they are, essentially consist of citizens integrated in the society having interests and views which are often identical to those of other citizens. As repression will increase, the day shall come in which they will not be able to cope with the crimes they commit against the people. Whereupon the regime will lose its repressive capacities and meet the end it deserves. I believe we in Egypt are approaching that day.

The reason advanced in support of the "defeatable police" proposition here is a socio-psychological one as it conveys how some persons would act as a consequence of the pressure resulting from their social positions. The standpoints and arguments advanced are briefly presented in a direct manner.

Al Aswany devotes two other complete columns to discussing the "defeatable police" topic. The first is entitled "An Unfortunate Incident Befalling a State Security Officer" (9 March 2010), and the other "Why was the General Screaming?" (13 April 2010). In the former, Al Aswany uses low fantasy to invent a fictional correlative of the same case: how police staff may feel when using repression, and how they may subsequently act. In the latter column, Al Aswany uses his talent as a novelist to account for the nervous behavior of a general during his attempt at tackling a protest in Cairo.[50] To this end, Al Aswany speculates on the General's unconscious state.[51]

What these two columns have in common, in addition to the topic, is the use of literary and quasi-literary techniques in presenting the argumentation adduced. The rhetorical value added to these columns by means of the use of these techniques, I argue, results from selecting specific narrative points of view or perspectives.[52]

In this chapter, I aim to analyze how Al Aswany maneuvers strategically by selecting specific narrative perspectives to convey that the Egyptian police is defeatable. To

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50. Low fantasy is a subgenre of fantasy fiction involving non-rational happenings that are without causality or rationality because they occur in the rational world where such things are not supposed to occur. Low fantasy stories are set either in the real world or a fictional but rational world, and are contrasted with high fantasy stories which take place in a completely fictional fantasy world setting with its own set of rules and physical laws (Stableford, 2009: p. 256).

51. For the full texts of these two columns, see Appendices C and D.

52. While the term "point of view" (however translated) is used in Romance and Slavic literary study, German studies have preferred to use the largely analogous term "narrative perspective" [Erzàhlperspective] (Schmid, 2010: p. 89). I prefer to use the latter term "narrative perspective" in the title, and I will use it more frequently in the text. For the sake of clarity, I use the term "point of view" to convey a concept related to argumentative reality: the opinion explicitly or implicitly expressed in a difference of opinion, and "narrative perspective" to denote a specific camera angle selected by the author of a story.

this end, I will explain how a narrative perspective can contribute to establishing an argumentative discourse aimed at resolving a difference of opinion: in formulating material starting points and standpoints, and in enhancing the effectiveness of the argumentative moves made. I will later analyze the maneuvers Al Aswany makes by means of selecting specific narrative perspectives in "An Unfortunate Incident Befalling a State Security Officer" and "Why is the General screaming?" respectively.

In the next section, I will illustrate the public image of the Egyptian police that belong to the frame of reference of Al Aswany's audience, and I shall describe how these images were established. Identifying this part of the frame of reference will elucidate the exact rhetorical exigency Al Aswany confronts.

5.2 The public image of the Egyptian police before 2011

One of the longest sitting dictators in the region, Mubarak, realized the importance of establishing a brutal and massive police apparatus. Mubarak had learned the lesson of Sadat's assassination well. Sadat started his era with releasing the Islamists from Nasser's prisons and showing some tolerance toward opposition parties. Sadat also allowed for a multiparty political system. However, Sadat was shot dead by a group of extremist Islamists paradoxically during a military parade. Mubarak opened his era with showing some tolerance toward opposition parties and opposition figures. The regime administered limited "doses" of democracy, e.g. by allowing the Muslim Brotherhood to dominate syndicates and Al Wafd political party to win some seats in the Parliament. But soon, by the 1990s, the prospects for further political reform started to deteriorate sharply. Mubarak reversed Egypt's course and began to "deliberalize"–renewing controls on opposition parties, elections, Islamist activity, civil society organizations, and the press (Brownlee, 2002: p. 7).

Consequently, Mubarak had to employ more personnel as soldiers and officers in the police (more than one million, about 21% of the state staff, in 2002, in addition to 450 thousand soldiers performing their compulsory military service). The riot police (known in Egypt as "Central Security Forces" – CSF) was unleashed to suppress political protests with the help of thugs and secret informers. The State Security Investigations Agency extended monitoring to include, in addition to radical Islamists, all political activists. Torture was rampantly used during interrogation. Sexual penetration was used as a form of torture against detainees. They were regularly beaten to death.

The police was also Mubarak's main tool to achieve high degrees of social control. The regime implicitly allowed the police to use violence even for non-political reasons. Law enforcement officials used torture and deliberate ill-treatment on a widespread scale and in a systematic manner over the last two decades of Mubarak's

era to glean confessions and information, or to punish detainees. Criminal Investigations officers and State Security Investigations (SSI) officers, under the authority of the minister of interior, were most often responsible for such abuse. Torture was also used for intimidating or recruiting police informers, punishing at the behest of a third party, forcing citizens to renounce an apartment or plot of land, and even punishing those who dared to challenge policemen's absolute authority or ask for judicial warrants when being arrested.[53] As a result of expanding its political and social tasks, the ministry of interior affairs ate up around 4.5% of the yearly general budget.

The regime's support of the police was both financial and moral. Mubarak and the state-run media took every opportunity to express their appreciation of the police efforts in the war against terrorism. The police staff killed by radical Islamists were called "martyrs" as an expression of glorification. Mubarak's regime avoided any serious criticism of the police's violations against the people. Torture was framed in the state-run media as an exceptional phenomenon caused by individuals, not as a convention approved by the institution. As an expression of gratitude, the new police academy built on the outskirts of Cairo in 1999 was named after Mubarak. The latter's annual speech on National Police Day (the 25th of January) became a yearly ceremony of interest. In the late years of Mubarak's era, it was significant that the slogan of the police "The police is in the service of the people" was replaced by "The police and the people are in the service of the nation". The Egyptians interpreted this substitution as reflecting how the police viewed itself vis-à-vis the Egyptians: we are too noble to be in service of the people (Soliman, 2011: pp. 136–142).

This sketch of the historical background consists of objective facts that were not necessarily in every detail available to all Egyptians, including Al Aswany's audience. For example, many Egyptians did not know that the yearly spending on police was steadily increasing. Victims of torture or ill-treatment in Mubarak's era were often low-class citizens or residents of slums, and the stories telling their sufferings in custody were circulated by the media in a very restricted manner. Due to ancestral experiences, the vast majority of Egyptians opted for evading visiting police stations except for getting official papers.[54] Yet, the Egyptians were

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53. For more information on the systematic nature of using torture by the police in Mubarak's era, see the reports prepared by Human Rights Watch on the organization's website. For example: https://www.hrw.org/report/2011/01/30/work-him-until-he-confesses/impunity-torture-egypt

54. I claim that the public opinion on torture and police repression in general drastically changed after the death of Khaled Saeed, a 28-year-old Egyptian young man who was pulled from an Internet cafe in Alexandria on 6 June 2010 by two plainclothes police officers. Witnesses said they beat him to death in the lobby of a residential building. Human rights advocates emphasized

able to observe at least some major signs of the strong relation between Mubarak's regime and the police, such as the replacement of slogans and the state-run media concentration on glorifying the police.

The frame of reference of Al Aswany's audience does not only consist of the objective facts and real experiences, but also of the shared images circulated in popular culture. The basic images of police are created in an area that is often overlooked in the study of mediated images of politics in the Arab world: films (Khatib, 2010: p. 316).[55] Fictional worlds portrayed in films are supposedly reflecting what happens in the reality. However, films rather create fictional worlds that are more or less not identified with reality. They do not exactly mirror reality. Reviewers use these imagined worlds to understand, interpret, and evaluate their daily life (Tabishat, 383). If applied to the public images of police, Tabishat's notion means that the stereotypical way in which policemen behave in the cinema is instrumental for the audience in understanding how the police as an institution works and according to which values, and perhaps also in expecting how the police staff might act in the future.

Films before Mubarak presented an ideal image of the police. Policemen were depicted in a distanced manner as a tool for imposing social discipline. They always came on time to protect innocents and arrest outlaws. Policemen were rarely the focus of film plots as protagonists or co-protagonists. In Mubarak's era, however, drastic changes took place in the representation of police officers. They were presented as protagonists with distinct characters. By the first decade of the new millennium, negative models of policemen started to find a place on the screen: the corrupt, the psychopathic, the profiteer, etc. in addition to the pre-millennium positive models of the disciplined, the successful, the adventurer, etc. To facilitate the approval of censorship of films where the negative models of policemen were presented as protagonists, film producers were keen on presenting opposite positive models of policemen as well, though most of these positive models played secondary roles.

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that he was killed because he had evidence of police corruption. Saeed was an upper middle class young man who had nothing to do with politics or Islamic fundamentalism. Saeed's case was widely circulated in both state-run and private media. The tragic death of Saeed showed that the scope of police repression expanded to include innocent, non-politicized citizens and even those who benefited from Mubarak's economic reforms. The two columns I analyze in this chapter were both published before the death of Khaled Saeed.

55. Lina Khatib is of the opinion that much attention has been given to the role played by the press, radio and television in political processes in the Arab world. Arab film, however, is comparatively relegated to the margin despite the fact that in the Arab world film is a political arena that is engaged in representing Arab politics in direct and oblique ways (Khatib, 2010: pp. 316–334).

Two main commonalities can be identified in a large number of films that represented police characters in Mubarak's era. First, most policemen use varying degrees of repression. Abuse and torture are always presented as effective when practiced against political activists and Islamists: confessions are easily extracted, escapees are arrested, etc. Even good models of policemen, i.e. those who are after justice and the rule of law, use ill-treatment, albeit for good reasons, e.g. extracting confessions that are instrumental in the dramatic resolution in favor of the good (noble, oppressed, etc.) characters. Scenes of repression are casually presented, while suggesting that ill-treatment is an effective tool. The second commonality is that the higher levels of police administration (the minister of interior affairs and high-ranking officers) are represented in a distanced and/or ideal way.[56] The police officers are depicted as individuals enjoying high degrees of freedom to do their jobs in the way they like. By contrast, how the institution at the highest level is administrated and according to which values was a significantly marginal story. The audience of these films could easily judge the behavior of the represented policemen, but the story of how the institution is administrated stayed untold. In a few cases, films included a scene in which an official meeting is held between high-ranking officers. After a nuanced discussion, they make decisions that are in accordance with the ideal role of the police. Such typical scenes, in my view, had no effect on the audience because they were routine and repetitive, and it was believed that they were inserted in films just to facilitate the censorship approval.

In short, the objective facts (available for in-depth readers) and daily observations (accessible to most Egyptians) established an image of the police as Mubarak's own army. Al Aswany's audience believed that the Egyptian police as a political institution would use as much effective repression as possible to harshly respond to any imminent danger and foil any prospective rebels against the regime, however massive their numbers. Films added a complementary part to the image: the use of abuse and its effectiveness were emphasized, but policemen were presented as highly free individuals likely to behave uncommitted to the rules of the institution.

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56. An exception might be highlighted. The film entitled "This is Chaos" (*Heya Fawda*), produced in 2007, ends with an outraged demonstration; the crowds attack a police station and kill a corrupt sergeant who is believed to be behind various forms of corruption and abuse. In this film, the two commonalities mentioned here are absent. First, it is apparent that police stations are administrated in an entirely illegal way. Torture and ill-treatment are systematically practiced in custody places. All staff collude to hide the crimes committed from general prosecutors. The police institution paralleled by the represented station is evidently corrupt. Second, repression is no more effective. High degrees of brutality did not prevent inhabitants of the neighborhood (suggesting Egypt at a symbolical level) from attacking the police station. On the contrary, all those subjected to mistreatment were insisting on taking revenge. It is noteworthy to add that this is the last film directed by Youssif Chahine, a prominent, albeit elitist, filmmaker who is not representative of the mass culture.

Film images led the audience to think of the police as an institution that consists of free individuals with diverse psychological features, not as an overwhelming institution that automatically controls its employees.

To argue, as Al Aswany does, against the shared images of the audience, that the police can be defeated is a challenge. If it is widely believed that the Egyptian police is Mubarak's loyal army and policemen are mostly bad people using torture systematically, then convincing the audience that the police would be defeatable is very difficult.

It is therefore likely that the use of specific narrative perspectives in the two columns that discuss the "defeatable police" topic has been strategically selected as a maneuver. In order to identify whether this choice is strategic or not, an analyst should explain how narrative perspective contributes to the resolution of a difference of opinion. To this end, I shall devote the coming section to define what a narrative perspective is and what its components or aspects are. I shall also show how certain approaches to narrative perspective can be instrumental in reconstructing the argumentative discourse and identifying the rhetorical values added to the discourse by virtue of adopting specific narrative perspectives.

5.3 The argumentative functions of a narrative perspective

Before identifying how a narrative perspective can be a strategic choice, I will explain how a narrative text can be reconstructed as an argumentative discourse. In the present chapter, the focus is on realistic narratives: fictional texts portraying events that are similar to those occurring in the real world.[57] For any text to be reconstructed as an argumentative discourse, the writer must be viewed as a protagonist who is committed to a constellation of propositions aimed at supporting or refuting a specific standpoint. Two problems can, thus, emerge when reconstructing a narrative text as an argumentative discourse. The first is related to how we can derive propositions from the narrative text. I call this problem the *derivation problem*. If it becomes clear how these propositions are systematically derived, another problem should be dealt with. The problem is related to which position can be attributed to the author of the text: how can an author (as an arguer) be held committed to the derived propositions on objective grounds? I call this problem the *attribution problem*. I will start with tackling the latter problem, and then discuss the former one.

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57. The guidelines that I propose here for reconstructing a narrative text as an argumentative discourse are general. In Chapter 5, I will explain in detail how a specific narrative and fictional form, the allegorical beast fable, is reconstructed as an argumentative discourse.

Narrative texts, in general, confront an analyst with the problem of narrative voice: who speaks through the text? If the readers of the narrative text can derive propositions from the utterances constituting the text, who can be held committed to these propositions? Is it the author (or writer)? Is it the implied author?[58] Is it the narrator or narrators? Or is it one or more of the fictional characters? To what extent can readers attribute the propositions derived from the text to the author?

A narrative text consists of what the narrator tells and what the characters tell. The characters are not always identified with the author. The narrator does not necessarily coincide with the author either. If a narrator explicitly expresses specific views or supports certain values, these views and values cannot be immediately attributed to the author. In other words, neither the narrator's discourse nor the character's discourse can be automatically attributed to the author.[59] In *The Narrative Act*, Lanser adopts a presumption regarding the narrator-author relationship that can be helpful in answering the attribution problem:

> I believe there are certain fictional structures that conventionally presume an equivalence in authority between the extrafictional voice – the textual counterpart for the historical author – and the public narrator. This position departs from a New Critical tenet best summarized by the stance of Monroe Beardsley, for whom "the speaker of a literary work cannot be identified with the author … unless the author has provided a pragmatic context, or a claim of one, that connects the speaker with himself." I would maintain that certain fictional situations do themselves conventionally provide such a "pragmatic context," and that this context is a degree zero rather than an exception for a certain type of narrative situation … [I]n the absence of direct markings which separate the public narrator from the extrafictional voice, so long as it is possible to give meaning to the text within the equation author = narrator, readers will conventionally make this equation.[60]
>
> (Lanser, 1981: pp. 150–151)

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58. The *implied author* is a concept introduced by Wayne Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction.* The implied author is distinct from the author and the narrator. The term refers to the character which the readers attribute to the author based on how a literary work is written. This character may differ considerably from the true character of the author (Booth, 1961/1983: p. 431).

59. Lubomir Dolezel defines the narrative text with the formula: T = DN + DC, where T represents the text and DN and DC stand for the narrator's and the character's discourse respectively. A given text may have any number of N's and C's whose discourse combine to create T, and the proportions of DN and DC can vary considerably (Lanser, 1981: p. 185)

60. According to Lanser, a speech act concept of discourse allows to escape the ontological dilemma of the author-narrator relationship. The task then shifts from resolving philosophical abstractions regarding who is speaking in the narrative text, to locating and defining the conventions that govern the reading of the narrative voice(s) vis-à-vis the authorial presence in the reality.

The characterization of a communicative activity type as a macro-context provides an indicator of how the narrator = author equation in the stories told within this context can be justified. Within some communicative activity types, the stories told are not mainly intended by the speakers or writers to achieve literary purposes, i.e. to draw the listeners or readers' attention to their aesthetic values. Rather, such stories are essentially intended to carry messages. The institutional point of political columns is the formation of an informed and critical public opinion by providing personal analyses and evaluations of current events. In the macro-context of a political column, readers expect columnists to convey their political views on the current events. When political columns are designed as stories, the readers attempt to abstract a political view from the stories told without presuming a gap between the narrator of a story and the author/columnist. Presuming such a gap would hinder the readers' efforts to grasp the intended political view of a columnist. This presumption attributes the political view extracted from the column to two personae.

In all the stories/columns written by Al Aswany, such as "An Unfortunate Incident Befalling a State Security Officer", the readers will conventionally equate the narrator with the author. The audience of Al Aswany's columns published in the form of stories would not make a difference between the textual voice narrating the story and Al Aswany as a columnist, because a column is not a predominantly fictional or narrative form.[61]

The communicative activity type is not the only indicator that helps readers in making the narrator = author equation. In some stories, the narrator is omniscient and has no name; the narrator may show clear commonalities with the real character of the author as he or she actually acts in the real world (or as the audience believes he or she does). Then, it is more likely that the readers will establish the narrator = author equation.

The derivation problem can be solved by employing methods that are instrumental in deriving propositions from the narrative texts.[62] Propositions can be derived

61. The same equation applies, with some reservation, to autobiographical novels.

62. In an interesting article entitled "Logic, parables and arguments", Govier and Ayers (2012) raise different questions on how fictional and narrative texts, and parables in particular, relate to argumentation. These questions pertain to the notion that "rationally compelling arguments can be *derived* from narratives". The first problem is related to the scope of conclusion: if the case within the narrative is to represent further cases, we need to ask what those further cases are, and how (if at all) the narrative can acquire the needed representative quality. The second question is related to the matter of fictive assertion. In an argument, premises are asserted and when the argument is evaluated, one checks whether those premises are true or rationally acceptable. If the narrative is about a fictional case, that epistemic approach seems inappropriate. The third problem is related to the issue of representation. The consideration of parables by Govier and Ayers suggest three relationships of how the story of a parable represents something else:

from the narrator's discourse and from the characters' discourse. If the narrator = author equation is established because of the macro-context or some textual clues, the narrator's discourse as a whole can be attributed to the author. The norms, values, prejudices of the narrator, explicitly or implicitly expressed, can be formulated as propositions to which the author can be held committed.

The way in which events are connected to each other is a part of the narrator's discourse. Fiction creates imaginative worlds that are designed according to the will of the authors, and authors are wholly free to tell what they want to tell. Propositions can be derived from the plot of a story. For example, suppose a story in which many pessimistic characters and one sole optimistic character are struggling to get something done. If the story ends with the optimistic character achieving his or her goal, the message conveyed is that "optimistic people readily achieve their goals" or something like that. There may be other clues than the plot which imply that the views a character adopts are supported by the narrator/author. These clues include the textual space reserved for telling about the character and the way in which the character is presented, e.g. as glorifying.[63]

Capturing the narrative perspective of a story helps an analyst to derive the propositions of which a narrative message consists. It is also instrumental in explaining how some narrative elements or aspects can be viewed as topical choices and how other elements can be viewed as presentational devices.

The term "point of view" was introduced in literary studies by Henry James in his essay "The Art of Fiction" (1884/1948: pp. 3–23). [64] It was then systematized by Percy Lubbock as denoting "the relation in which the narrator stands to the story" (Lubbock, 1921 [1957: p. 83]).

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(1) Analogy: a concrete phenomenon in the parable represents a more abstract one, and the latter is relevantly similar to the former. (2) Symbolism: like when a "master" in a parable symbolizes God. (3) Instantiation: the items and events in the parable are instances, or cases of something. A figure in a teaching role is an instance of "the teacher" (Govier & Ayers, 2012: pp. 167–168). The relationship between the narrative cases in the columns discussed in this chapter and what they represent in the reality is very close to the third one distinguished by Govier and Ayers.

63. According to Lanser, speech act analysis opens a pathway through the surface acts of narration to the narrating personality. A narrator's personality includes his or her norms and values according to social image types. Because speech acts themselves are complex acts, an analyst needs to analyze not only the propositions included in the narrator's discourse, but also modalization and register, illocutionary acts and their conventional locutionary effects, and whatever messages are implicated according to the conventions of linguistic use (Lanser, 1981: pp. 223–224).

64. The term point of view in James' use usually refers to a writer's temperament and outlook on life. When James discusses narrative method, he uses such related spatio-visual metaphors as "center of consciousness", "window", "reflector", or "mirror", all of which refer to a character whose experience governs the presentation of the story. (See The living handbook of narratology [online source] http://wikis.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Perspective_-_Point_of_View)

Lanser (1981) developed a speech-act-based vision of "narrative perspective" or "point of view". Her work is intended to offer an alternative to the structuralist approach to literature that pays too much attention to the textual surface of the literary text and ignores the different levels of context. This approach manifests itself partially in the focus on narrators, characters and fictional plots in stories, ignoring authors, readers and the social realities that correspond to the invented elements. Her speech-act-based approach to narratives allows for expanding the boundaries of narrative analysis. Instead of being limited to the text, the analysis is then expanded to investigate different levels of context as well (Lanser, 1981: pp. 73–77).

Lanser's vision of narrative analysis is in accordance with the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation. A narrative analyst must view the literary work at both the textual and the contextual levels. An argumentation theorist must also take into consideration the text and its contexts when reconstructing the argumentative discourse. In order to explain how narrative texts are used to resolving a difference of opinion, an analyst must view this kind of texts as contextualized speech events. The contextualization of narrative texts is clear when the relationships between the author, the readers, the act of writing and the fictional content are articulated.

Lanser views a narrative perspective as the medium *par excellence* for regulating interpersonal relationships and communicating values and attitudes. The manner in which the narrative message as a whole is received, interpreted, and valued, depends on a complex of factors involving the speaker's relationship to the verbal act, the reader and the message. Lanser calls these factors *status, contact,* and *stance* respectively (1981: p. 85).

Status concerns the relationship of the author to the act of narrative writing. Status includes the authority, attribution of competence, and credibility which the author conventionally and personally enjoys. Contact manifests itself in the relation an author establishes with the audience in terms of deference, contempt, formality, intimacy, and so on. Relationships between communicators are part of any verbal performance, including literary performance, and affect the meaning and significance of the discourse. The contact relationships are established through the text and/or in the real world. The stance the author adopts is a relationship to the message he or she is uttering: what he or she wants to convey, and in which manner it is conveyed. Four aspects of the stance are identified by Lanser: the phraseological, spatial-temporal, psychological, and the ideological stance (1981: pp. 86–107).[65]

Lanser thinks that the analysis of a narrative perspective must not only deal with the questions and issues that encompass a poetics of narrative perspective and

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65. The four aspects of stance that Lanser suggests are in accordance with the view of Uspensky, the Russian philologist. In his model, a narrative point of view consists of four planes or semantic spheres. Uspensky applies his model to great literary works, such as *War and Peace* and *The Karamazov Brothers*, and to paintings as well (Uspensky, 1973: p. 6).

voice, but must also provide tools for describing the way in which these elements are retrieved in the conventional reading of literary discourse, and how they achieve the rhetorical goals at stake (1981: p. 226).

When status, contact and stance as the three elements constituting the perspective of a narrative text are captured or retrieved, the message of a narrative text is captured. When the *purport* of such a message is captured, what the author wants to convey about the reality becomes clear. When the *form* or *presentation* of this message is captured, the way in which this message is designed and then delivered to the readers becomes obvious.[66] If a narrative text is intended to resolve a difference of opinion, the propositions that play the role of material starting points and standpoint are inferred from the intended meaning of the message of the text. The message as a form corresponds to the presentation of the argumentation.

The ideological stance, as an attitude towards the story content, consists of propositions, some of which are the material starting points and the standpoint. From the strategic maneuvering perspective, the ideological stance can be viewed as a topical choice strategically selected in adaptation to the audience's demand.

As will be explained in Section 5.4, contact and status can affect the acceptability of the argumentation advanced. Some of the aspects constituting the status and contact that Lanser suggests will be illustrated in the analysis of the texts at issue. These aspects will be used to explain how specific articulations of contact and status can contribute to the effectiveness of argumentation in the form of accepting the argumentation advanced by means of a narrative text. The selected aspects will be analyzed and evaluated as strategic maneuvers.

I will make use of Schmid's model of a narrative perspective in analyzing the second case at issue in Section 5.5. Schmid (2010) identifies some inconsistencies in Uspensky's model regarding the difference between an external and internal point of view. Schmid, however, emphasizes that Uspensky's model was innovative. Its innovation lies in "in the delineation of a stratified model of perspective, i.e. a model that allows for different levels of the manifestation of point of view … [The model] represented a decisive advance insofar as it portrayed perspective as a phenomenon existing on multiple planes. His theory provided the impetus for the elaboration of other stratified models" (Schmid, 2010: pp. 95, 98).

Instead of the ideological, phraseological, spatial-temporal and psychological planes of which Uspensky's model consists, Schmid states that there are five

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66. Lanser views a narrative perspective as both content and form. As content, perspective communicates attitudes between personae – author, narrator, readers, characters – a set of responses to a represented world, a representation that is itself an ideological construct. As an aesthetic method, a narrative perspective reflects a system of artistic and literary conventions through which the culture permits the translation of social reality to artistic text.

parameters (or aspects) that simultaneously contribute to articulating the narrative perspective: the perceptual, ideological, spatial, temporal and linguistic parameters. These parameters are placed not in order of their significance in the experiment, but of their relevance for the constitution of narrative perspective in literary works (2010: pp. 99–105).

It may seem that Schmid's parameters do not differ much from Uspensky's planes. Schmid divides the spatial-temporal plane of Uspensky into a separate spatial and temporal parameter, in addition to replacing the psychological plane with the perceptual parameter, and calling Uspensky's phraseological plane a linguistic parameter. Still, Schmid's contribution is valuable since he makes clear that every parameter or aspect of the narrative perspective can be figural or narratorial. That is, the ideological evaluations, the linguistic choices, the perception responsible for selecting narrative happenings and their composition, the location from which the happenings are perceived with the restrictions of the field of vision, and the interval between the original comprehension and the latter acts of comprehension and representations -- can be attributed to the character narrated about or the selections of the narrator. Schmid calls a narrative perspective which uses in all the five parameters the same type of perspective, narratorial or figural, a compact perspective. If some parameters are figural and others are narrotorial, Schmid speaks of a diffuse perspective. It is possible that the opposition of narratorial and figural perspective is neutralized in one parameter (or simultaneously in more than one), either because there are no indications whatsoever, or because they can be related to either entity (Schmid, 2010: p. 116).

5.4 The "An unfortunate incident befalling a state security officer" case

Like several other columns of Al Aswany, "An Unfortunate Incident Befalling a State Security Officer" is a short story which readers of literature can interpret and enjoy regardless of the fact that it is published as a column in a daily newspaper. The column tells the story of a State Security Officer, Amr, whose right hand bleeds for no medical reason. Trying to find the reason, Amr Bey thinks of how his day was. He believes it was like any other day in spite of several practices of violence, abuse and torture committed by him and his colleagues against labor and political activists. In the final scene, Amr Bey resigns after a sleepless night. When his director expresses surprise, Amr only raises his bloody hand.

The equation narrator = author is readily established in this case because the story at issue is communicated within the macro-context of a political column. Accordingly, there is no possibility for the narrator-author gap to appear. Therefore, the attribution problem is solved. The story is undoubtedly a presentation (though

literary and symbolic) of a political view that Al Aswany adopts. Pragma-dialectically speaking, Al Aswany, as a protagonist in a critical discussion, is held committed to the propositional content that the readers, as antagonists, can derive or infer from the story at issue.

The macro-context of political columns also affects the scope of the propositions derived, i.e. to whom exactly in the real world the fictional content applies. The communicative activity type is thus crucial in identifying the propositions inferred from the story. Because it is a story published as a political column, the message should be a specific political message Al Aswany attempts to convey. This message is necessarily related to the current political reality (at that time) according to Al Aswany's views. The readers of the column will interpret the story of a State Security officer practicing torture as a political message that is in accordance with Al Aswany's criticism of the torture and ill-treatment by Mubarak's police. They also know that this criticism is contextualized by his call for democratization and political change. Various types of violence practiced by the police against political activists are obstacles to political change. "An Unfortunate Incident Befalling a State Security Officer" is thus interpreted by Al Aswany's audience not as a fictional vision of an individual State Security Officer, but as an analysis of how (at least some) officers involved in torture would likely act.

The derivation problem is solved with the help of considering the plot. The *complication event* of the story at issue is the mysterious bleeding of officer Amr's right hand, and the *resolution event* is Amr's resignation.[67] The plot linking these two events suggests that the bleeding, the *incident*, is caused by Amr's work as a *State Security officer*. What the story tells about Amr's work is concentrated in scenes depicting how brutal and abusive three State Security officers, including Amr, interrogate political and labor activists. The story is aimed to portray brutality and the over-use of repression as possible causes of the inability of officers to continue their work. Like all his columns published in *Al Shorouk*, Al Aswany ends his text with the slogan "democracy is the solution". The slogan must be relevant to the content of the column. Thus, readers should link the psychological suffering of (some) officers involved in repression to a relevant issue of Al Aswany's call for democratization and political change. The inability of some officers to continue repressing anti-regime activists will make the work of protesters easier in the end, and thus lead to bringing Mubarak's regime down and initiating a democratic transition. Therefore, the content of the column at issue relates to the issue of feasibility since it conveys that defeating the police is possible.

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67. I follow (Chatman, 1978) in using the terms "complication" and "resolution" events to denote, respectively, the event which conveys the crisis or the problem of the character(s), and the event in which the problem is over and the plot meets its end.

From an argumentative perspective, by means of the story/column at issue Al Aswany puts forward the implicit standpoint "Mubarak's police can be defeated", supported by the argument "Some officers will stop using violence against activists," which is in turn supported by the argument "Some officers will not psychologically endure practicing severe repression". The unexpressed premise transferring the acceptability of the argument to the standpoint is supported by the implicit argument "Stopping the use of violence by some officers leads to hindering the effectiveness of the apparatus's capacity of repression". This implicit argument implies that policemen have the freedom to take the decision of stopping repression. The argument schemes used are causal. The argumentation structure of the argumentation is subordinative.

(1) Mubarak's police can be defeated
  1.1 Some officers will stop practicing repression against activists
    And 1.1′ Stopping the practice of repression by some officers will lead to the defeat of Mubarak's police
    1.1′.1 Stopping the practice of repression by some officers will lead to hindering the effectiveness of the apparatus's capacity of repression
    1.1.1 Some officers will not psychologically endure practicing repression
      And 1.1.1′ Being psychologically unable to endure some behavior leads to stopping this behavior[68]

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68. In her review of the dissertation on which this book is based (Omar, 2016b), Anca Gâţă (2017: p. 258) suggests that the column/story may be reconstructed in a quite different way. In her view, "It would be perhaps necessary, for analytical purposes, to take into account in the former category, that of '*Al Shorouk* audience', a smaller group, namely the representatives of the regime (generals, police officers, people close to the regime)". The corresponding reconstructed standpoints, she continues, "may be something like 'you, State officers, should be part of the change (or else you will have blood on your hands)". In this view, the narratives […] introduce an emotional appeal doubled by a type of *ad baculum* to make such people contribute to the political change too". What I see missing in Gâţă's reflection is taking into account my reconstruction of the inscribed reader of *Al Shorouk* in Section 2.6.1. The inscribed reader of the newspaper is viewed to evaluate the performance of Mubarak's regime as generally negative and to be therefore enthusiastic about a moderate political change. This change is led by trustworthy 'independent' political figures like ElBaradei and Amr Mousa. Accordingly, it is almost impossible that the representatives of the regime would be possible readers of Al Aswany's columns. The political agenda of the newspaper simply goes against their interests. Gâţă states that these representatives "could also be readers of the analyzed columns, no matter their reasons". In fact, their reasons really "matter". If these people read the stories/columns, for instance, to write reports on the public opinion, or just because they are curious about what the other "camp" thinks of the political situation, they would be thus not ready to play the role of a reasonable judge in a critical discussion from the pragma-dialectical prespective.

If the unexpressed proposition 1.1′.1 or the sub-argument 1.1.1 is unacceptable, the argument 1.1 and in turn the standpoint will be unacceptable too. The acceptability of the proposition 1.1′.1 "Stopping the use of violence by some officers will lead to hindering the effectiveness of the apparatus's capacity of repression" is caused by the public image of the police explained in Section 4.2. Al Aswany does not analyze how the police apparatus as a whole would react according to political accounts if a rebellion took place. This is because the objective and historical facts suggest that the institution would support Mubarak. Instead, he makes use of the gap between the police as an apparatus and the police as pseudo-independent individuals; the gap that is established in the public image of a policeman displayed in films. By implicitly advancing the proposition 1.1′.1, Al Aswany roots his argument in this gap, which is a part of his audience's frame of reference: the shared image of police officers as individuals acting quite freely.

The sub-argument "Some officers will not psychologically endure practicing repression" is contestable (or perhaps unacceptable) in the light of the public image of the police explained in Section 5.2. The policemen who use torture in a natural and effective way as a common tool to achieve their aims are not expected to consequently feel guilty. Fictional narratives give authors an opportunity to highlight different psychological processes taking place in characters, and, most importantly, present these processes vividly. Accordingly, fictional narratives can help in conferring reliability (plausibility) on contestable messages if they – the fictional narratives – are well-designed. Al Aswany, I shall argue, carefully selects the narrative perspective of the story as a presentational device in order to make the suffering of a policeman plausible, and consequently the sub-argument 1.1.1 acceptable. Hence, I aim to answer the question: how does Al Aswany in the story at issue establish a narrative perspective that makes the reality it reflects ultimately probable?

I have explained in Section 5.3 how Lanser delineates three relationships that operate in the structuring of a narrative perspective: status, contact, and stance. These three aspects of point of view are theoretically separated, though dialectically intertwined and working together to shape the message of the narrative text. If one aspect of the narrative perspective controversial, questionable or unpopular, the other two aspects can be established in a way that might help it be accepted. Lanser explains:

> If my relationship to the (real or perceived) audience is tense, for example, I might have difficulty communicating my stance: I might either understate it so that it is barely perceived, or overstate it and alienate my audience. […] If I wish to communicate a very strong stance, one I know will be unpopular, I might try hard particularly either to assure the audience of my status or to establish a warm and trusting contact with my listeners through humor, anecdote or even flattery.
>
> (Lanser, 1981: pp. 94–95)

The ideological stance Al Aswany adopts toward the reality portrayed in the story at issue is questionable in the light of the frame of reference of his audience elucidated in Section 5.2. In order to support this disputable ideological stance, Al Aswany depends on his pre-established *diegetic* authority and contact.[69]

The diegetic authority of a narrator consists of the authorization he or she is allowed to use and the social identity he has. The identity includes such aspects of social status as profession, gender, nationality, marital situation, sexual preference, and so on. Whatever the narrator chooses to reveal or conceal of his or her identity is significant because it affects the way in which readers interpret and evaluate the message conveyed (Lanser: pp. 165–168).

In "An Unfortunate Incident Befalling a State Security Officer", the narrator gives no clues from which the readers can infer anything about his identity. Because the narrator = author equation will be applied by the reader, the aspects of Al Aswany's identity related to Al Aswany as an author are automatically transferred to the narrator. The most relevant aspect of Al Aswany's identity that is evoked in this story is his public stature as a realistic novelist. Like Dickens, Gogol and other pioneers of literary realism, Al Aswany's success was based, partially at least, on his ability to present the psychological depths of considerably diverse characters. In his most prominent novel, *The Yacoubian Building*, the characters of a poor jihadist, a nouveau riche who has ambitions to political power, an ex-aristocratic wolf, a homosexual editor-in-chief, and others are all depicted in a way that makes sense of their psychological features (and thus their actions) given the evolution of their social conditions. The film adapted from *The Yacoubian Building* keeps the main lines of the novel's plot and the characters' traits. Therefore, even the readers of Al Aswany's columns who did not read the novel are aware of his novelistic talent in diving into the depth of characters.

To illustrate his skill of portraying characters, I take the character of Taha El Shazli as an example. In distinction with the stereotypical presentation of the Islamic fundamentalist in Egyptian film and fiction, Al Aswany does not present Taha El-Shazli, one of the protagonists of *The Yacoubian Building*, as primarily grim, introvert, and anti-women. Rather, Taha is a moderate Muslim who loves his neighbor, Bothaina, and who is very ambitious to join the Police Academy. Everything went well in the interview, but Taha was rejected when one of the jurors discovers he is the son of a doorman. Although Taha was then accepted in the faculty of political sciences and economy, he felt discarded by high class students.

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69. Lanser differentiates between two types of authority a writer may have as a part of his relationship to the speech activity. The first is generated by the text itself through skillful construction and called a *mimetic authority*. Opposed to it, a *diegetic authority* comes directly from the person of the author (90).

As a consequence of being frustrated and oppressed, Taha gradually turns into an extremist who believes that society is infidel and that innocent love affairs are sinful.

Al Aswany in the novel, and the screenwriter of the film as well, show, very smoothly, how a moderate, ambitious youth may become a jihadist seeking for martyrdom for the sake of God. They depict Taha's psychological development without any evaluative interventions. The skill of portraying characters objectively made Gardaz (2009), for example, think that "the film serves the cause of Egyptian Islamic fundamentalist movements; it is a call to raise the people against President Hosni Mubarak's regime in order to establish an Islamic state based on *Sharia*."

This evoked identity of Taha is a selection of Al Aswany because he could have designed the narrator of the story at issue in another way, which might have established other aspects of identity. Al Aswany preferred to make use of a narrator with no distinct aspects of identity, thereby maintaining his own social identity which is then attributed to the narrator. The social identity of Al Aswany as a skillful novelist acquainted with the psychological nature of humans supports the contestable ideological stance he adopts. Argumentatively speaking, the social identity evoked by means of the narrative, fictional presentation of the argumentative discourse plays the role of a presentational device aimed at supporting arguments that may be unacceptable to the audience.

In addition to the status, the contact, Al Aswany's textual relationship with the audience, supports the questionable ideological stance. In order to make acceptable the ideological stance he adopts, and thus increase the acceptability of the standpoint put forward by means of the story/column, Al Aswany strengthens this contact. Although he establishes no direct contact with the readers through the use of "I-you" dialogue, other more implicit means are used to create a covert contact.

The first means is related to how the readers arrive at the story's message. In the resolution scene, the State Security officer resigns without giving an explicit reason for his resignation except for raising his bloody right hand. The readers are expected to conclude that Amr Bey resigns because he could not endure feeling guilty for being involved in torture and abusive practices. Neither Amr Bey nor any other character states explicitly that the resignation is caused by practicing repression. Al Aswany encourages his readers to reconstruct the plot lines on their own by connecting the events of the story with each other. By doing so, Al Aswany refrains from making use of authorial knowledge to justify whatever he tells. What is implied therefore is his trust in the readers' shrewdness. For Al Aswany's audience that mainly consists of youth vulnerable to the use of absolute power, this technique may be an effective tool for establishing a relationship of trust.

The second means that Al Aswany uses to establish a strong covert contact is associated with the moderate use of linguistic taboos. To confer realism on the

characters' discourse in "An Unfortunate Incident Befalling a State Security Officer", Al Aswany uses Cairene colloquial Arabic, including obscene words and expressions that are considered as linguistic taboos. In the scenes depicting torture and ill-treatment practices, the expression "momma's boy" and the word "woman'" are used.[70]

> …The man was screaming in a horrifying way, while Tamer's voice boomed through the room. "You know what, momma's boy, if you don't confess, I will bring your wife, Bothaina, strip her naked, and have the soldiers do her in front of your eyes," he said.
> …Abdel Khalik started shouting at him, "So you are acting the militant and the hero, are you? Very well, momma's boy, I swear I'm going to make you kiss the soldiers' boots …"
> …At this point, Amr shouted at the man, "Say, 'I'm a woman.' Come on!"

The degree of using linguistic taboos is, however, moderate. Indeed, this moderate use of obscenity might be justified by fear of censorship. Yet, this is Al Aswany's common style of usage of linguistic taboo in all of his literary works. Dialogues are always written in Cairene colloquial with admission of a moderate use of obscene words. In spite of being a realistic novelist who is keen to provide a realistic report of reality, Al Aswany does not invent dialogues exactly as they might be in the reality.

In his discussion of the effect of convention and necessity in selecting words, Hudson (1996), adopting a sociolinguistic perspective, states that it is particularly clear in the case of linguistic taboos that the social value of a word is just a matter of convention, since other words with precisely the same meanings are not taboo.[71]

In other words, the words or expressions that society as a whole (or a specific linguistic community) considers as a linguistic taboo are a matter of convention. An obscene word as a signifier (at the level of phonology and morphology) does not denote obscenity in itself. Rather, the members of a linguistic community make restrictions on the use of some words because lower classes use them, or for some other reason. The authority of a class or a society over its members manifests itself in determining which words one is allowed to use, which words are forbidden, and even in which situations one may or may not use certain words.

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70. In the abuse scene, Amr Bey orders one of two young political activists to say "I am a woman". The Arabic word used [*marah*] is considered an obscene counterpart of the word [Imra'ah] in Standard Arabic or [*sit*] in Egyptian colloquial.

71. Hudson thinks that "[T]he whole area of taboo and semi-taboo language (slang, swearing, insults, etc.) merits serious research which should tell us about language usage in relation to society" (Hudson, 1996: pp. 52–53).

Al Aswany's audience consists mainly of youth affected by various ideological orientations. They are affected by a mixture of Western liberalism and individualism, the Islamic awakening, and the revived Arab nationalism. Affected by individualism, these youth are still vulnerable to the linguistic authority of society. They may tolerate the use of obscenity in story dialogues as an expression of rejecting the linguistic conventions imposed by society. Yet, this audience is still affected (though in a mitigated way) by the traditional conservative and religious set of values supported by the Islamic awakening since the 1970s. These values restrict the use of obscenity and linguistic taboos as signs of ethical deviation and religious vice. The outcome of these two opposite attitudes, tolerating linguistic taboos and committing to ethical and religious conventions, is the approval of a moderate use of obscenity. The contact between Al Aswany and his readers is strengthened by means of adopting a linguistic attitude that is in accordance with the audience's preferences.

By evoking the strongest aspect of his diegetic authority and establishing a strong contact with the audience, Al Aswany attempts to support the quite disputable stance he adopts, i.e. the contestable point of view he propounds. Therefore, both argument 1.1 and sub-argument 1.1.1 are likely to be plausible as a consequence of the way in which the audience would appreciate the specific aspect of status Al Aswany evokes, and the contact he establishes. From the perspective of strategic maneuvering, the status evoked and the contact established are presentational devices strategically selected in adaptation to the audience's demand as an attempt to raise the acceptability of the contestable standpoint.

Like status and contact, the ideological stance is designed in a way that is aimed to raise the acceptability of the argumentation advanced. According to Lanser, the ideological stance is to be evaluated by viewing three focal issues. The first focal issue is how its content relates to the culture text (pragma-dialectically speaking, how the content relates to the frame of reference).[72] The second focal issue is the way in which this content is expressed. The third is the position of power and authority held by the particular voice adopting the ideological stance (Lanser, 1981: p. 216).

Argumentatively speaking, the first focal issue corresponds to the extent to which the standpoint and the arguments advanced are acceptable to the audience

72. According to Lotman, the culture text is the world view operating in a given time and place. For accuracy, several "culture texts" exist in any given time and place, at least in our modern, pluralistic societies. The term "culture text" does not differ in essence from van Eemeren's 'frame of reference', except for the difference between fields of interest in which both terms are used: literature and argumentation. When literary forms are posited in contexts where they function as argumentative discourse, the two terms can be used interchangeably.

in view of their frame of reference. The second focal issue corresponds to the presentation of the argumentative discourse expressed as a narrative text. The third focal issue relates also to the presentation of the argumentative discourse: the more authority a fictional character has (in terms of the importance of this character within the plot, and the textual space given to it), the more acceptable the propositions derived from this character's actions and discourse are.

With regard to the first focal issue, it should be noted that the content of the ideological stance adopted by the narrator/author is not consistent with the culture text. I have explained that the arguments advanced are likely to be unacceptable in view of the audience's frame of reference. However, the way in which this ideological content is narratively expressed, the second focal issue, attempts to raise the acceptability of the arguments advanced. The ideological content is expressed in an implicit and symbolic manner. Neither the narrator nor any of the characters says that "some officers will not psychologically endure practicing repression", or even says something like "Amr Bey could not psychologically endure practicing torture and abuse against innocents". Rather, readers are made to infer this propositional content from the plot. This choice is significant because in literary narratives the ideological content may be presented implicitly. Literary works, generally speaking, avoid directness. Al Aswany acts as a short stories writer, not as a columnist who typically prefer clearness and directness, presenting the ideological content in the most implicit manner.

Lanser proposes to distinguish a spectrum of possibilities starting with the most explicit and literal expression of the ideological content in a story and ending with the most implicit and figural expression of it. Accordingly, the possibilities are as follows: literal and unambiguous content, literal but ambiguous content, implicated content, ironically presented content, content presented through metaphor content, and finally symbolized content (Lanser, 2010: p. 217).

According to Lanser, it is probable that the more deeply embodied an ideology is, the greater its chance of being apprehended subliminally (pp. 216–217). By using the most implicit presentation of ideological content as the symbolized contact, Al Aswany attempts to make the argumentation advanced uncontestable for his readers. Thus, the acceptability of the standpoint adduced should be enhanced.

5.5 The "Why was the general screaming?" case

In the previous section, I have explained how Al Aswany strategically selected the interrelated aspects of the narrative perspective adopted in "An Unfortunate Incident Befalling a State Security Officer" in order to enhance the acceptability of a contestable argumentation. In the present section, I aim to analyze the selection of a specific narrative perspective adopted in "Why was the General Screaming?" as a strategic maneuver. The fictionalization Al Aswany uses in some segments of the column makes the approaches to the narrative perspective discussed earlier still instrumental in grasping how a specific narrative perspective may be strategically employed.

Unlike "An infortunate Incident Befalling a State Security Officer", this column is not a fictional text, since it was written as a comment on an incident that Al Aswany witnessed himself in downtown Cairo. Yet, in some segments, he speculates on the General, the protagonist of the incident, by making use of his skill of fictionalization as a novelist and short stories writer. The perspective adopted in these segments is an external one. The events are told from the perspective of "an outside observer [...] who describes only the behavior which is visible to an onlooker" (Uspensky, 1973: p. 83).

Al Aswany tries to guess what the feelings of the general were when the general was beating and abusing one of the protesters. Thus, the behavior is described in an involved way.[73] An involved, external description is typically marked linguistically by the use of special modal expressions, such as "apparently", "evidently", "as if", "it seemed", and so forth to describe some internal state (thoughts, feelings, unconscious motives for action) that the narrator cannot be sure about (Uspensky, 1973: p. 85). In the case at issue, Al Aswany uses, in addition to the adverb "perhaps", rhetorical questions as linguistic indicators of this kind of description:

> Was he screaming in order to forget that this girl, whose hijab he had removed and whom he was dragging along the ground, was just like his own daughter, whom he no doubt loves and cherishes and whom he would never allow to be insulted or harmed? [...] Was he screaming because when he graduated from the police academy thirty years ago, he had dreams of upholding the law and justice and swore to protect the dignity, lives, and property of the Egyptians, and then little by

73. According to Uspensky, there are two ways in which the behavior of a character can be described externally. In what can be called a *non-involved* way, the narrator mentions only definite facts without dependence on the describing subject. For example, the narrator's report may take the form of a court recording in which the objectivity of the account and the lack of involvement of the author are deliberately emphasized. The second kind of external description is *involved*. The narrator refers to his or her opinions as an observer, through speculating on the character using phrases such as "it appeared that he thought", "he apparently knew", "he seemed to be ashamed".

> little he had been drawn into protecting the Mubarak regime, until in the end his mission was to abuse girls? [...] Perhaps he was screaming because he knows that he is over fifty and his death may come at any moment [...] On that day [Day of Judgement] God will ask him, "Why did you assault a poor Egyptian girl who could not defend herself? Why did you hit her in public? Would you like it if someone did that to your daughter?"

The column is thus a discussion of the way in which a specific general behaves while repressing a female, young protester. Al Aswany tries to give reasons for the General's screaming, which he considers to be a sign of suffering because of feeling guilt, even though the general is the most powerful man who controls everyone involved in the protest scene: protesters, soldiers, and the Karate units. The column might be read as a psychological analysis (though not in an academic sense) of a certain person. But the macro-context of the text falsifies this reading. In political columns, an indirect variant of deliberation is implemented in order to realize the institutional point of political communication, which is taking decisions on a rational basis (See: Chapter 3). In order to take such decisions, citizens may need certain psychology- based information or other groups of citizens or on the staff serving in a state apparatus. For example, citizens may be well-informed about the bad psychological state of factory workers because of their low income that may lead to negatively affecting their production of the work. As a consequence, citizens may vote in favor of increasing the minimum wage of factory workers.

Analyses of individual behavior are relevant to political communication only if this behavior can be seen as a characteristic of certain groups or classes constituting society.[74] The analysis of the general's behavior is relevant insofar as it can be generalized to apply to other officers. The screaming of the general is a sign of psychological suffering, and this suffering should be seen as an example of the suffering of others who are engaged in the same sort of practices. The following scheme explains how the argumentation is structured:

1 Engaging in repressive behavior causes some police staff to feel guilty
  1.1 The general feels guilty
  And 1.1′ The feelings of the general are symptomatic of the feelings of other police staff
    1.1.1 The general is screaming
    And 1.1.1′ Screaming is a symptom of feeling guilty

74. Certainly, analyzing the behavior of a political figure is an exception. This kind of analysis may be useful in taking serious political actions, such as voting for or against a specific political figure.

It is, however, not to be expected that the readers of Al Aswany will consider the example of this specific general as representative or sufficient. Therefore, the argumentation is unlikely to be acceptable. The segments that fictionalize about the general by telling some details about his life (e.g. his daughter, his past as a young officer, and his piety) cannot be viewed as an attempt to convince his readers that the general is a representative model of all police officers. This is simply because these pieces of information are not necessarily true. They are mere fiction or speculation. This specific general may have a son instead of a daughter. He may not be married at all. He might recite the oath automatically, thinking of nothing, and so forth. The psychological analysis of the behavior of the unknown general is meant to be a psychological analysis of the virtual behavior of a typical policeman involved in practicing repression and abuse.

The conclusion of the column can thus be seen a generalized description of the psychological response of a typical policeman practicing torture and abuse, although it is presented as a comment on a specific general. By contrast, the strength of the young protesters is exemplified by the strong will of the young protester that is beaten and abused by the general:

> In spite of all this overwhelming power, the general felt deep inside as he assaulted the girl that he was weak and wretched and unable to control himself and that little by little he was being drawn into committing horrendous crimes in order to protect President Hosni Mubarak and his family.
>
> The general felt that the girl he was beating was stronger than him because she was defending truth and justice, because she was innocent, noble, pure, and brave, and because she loved her country and would defend it with all her strength? … He realized that he could kill this girl, tear her body apart if he wanted, but he could never defeat her, or humiliate her, or break her will. He felt that despite all his power he was defeated and that it was this poor abused and violated girl who would triumph. At that point all the general could do was scream.

Taken together, the psychological wretchedness of the policemen and the psychological strength of the protesters provide coordinative support for the implicit standpoint "Protesters will triumph in their endeavour for political change". The concise, imagined scenarios Al Aswany presents are particular manifestations of generic contradictions that other policemen than the general may experience between their morals and their behavior; between piety and the oppression of innocent people; between being kind fathers and abusing young protesters and activists; between their past dreams to protect the people and violating the people's freedom. These generic contradictions formulated as propositions are causal support for the feeling of guilt some policemen may suffer from, and for them feeling wretched and weak. Based on this view, the argumentation structure of the column could be schematized as follows:

1 In the end, protesters will triumph in their endeavor for political change
1.1 They are psychologically stronger than the police
And 1.1′ And Those who are psychologically stronger will triumph in the end
1.1.1a The police staff feel wretched
1.1.1a.1 The police staff engage in repressive behavior
And 1.1.1a.1′ Engaging in repressive behavior makes police staff to feel weak and wretched
1.1.1a.1′.1 Engaging in repressive behavior causes police staff to feel guilty
1.1.1a.1′.1.1a Engaging in repressive actions causes the general to feel guilty
1.1.1a.1′.1.1a.1 The general screams
1.1.1a.1′.1.1b *Engaging in repressive behavior contradicts their religious beliefs*
1.1.1a.1′.1.1c *Engaging in repressive behavior contradicts their commitment to the protection of citizens*
1.1.1a.1′.1.1d *Engaging in repressive behavior contradictions their feelings of human compassion*
1.1.1b The protesters feel very strong
1.1.1b.1a They support truth and justice
1.1.1b.1b They are innocent, pure and brave
1.1.1b.1c They love their country

As it is illustrated in the structure I schematized above, the proposition "Engaging in repressive behavior causes police staff to feel guilty" is supported by two different types of argumentation: symptomatic (argument from example) and causal argumentation. The feeling of guilt policemen suffer from is justified by a specific general's behavior as an example of policemen, and by the three contradictions between actions and morals an average policeman may experience. The symptomatic argument about the general could have been left out. However, applying the *maximally reconstruction strategy* (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: pp. 115–116), a mximal credit is given to Al Aswany by reconstructing the utterances about the general's suffering and screaming as speech acts that make a contribution to the resolution of the difference of opinion concerned.

The proposition 1.1.1a.1′.1.1a cannot stand on its own in support of 1.1.1a.1′.1 because readers can readily considers it a hasty generalization, and thus a fallacious move. Therefore, Al Aswany as an arguer adds more arguments (1.1.1a.1′.1.1b–1.1.1a.1′.1.1c–1.1.1a.1′.1.1d) in a coordinative structure supporting the proposition "Engaging in repressive behavior causes police staff to feel guilty". The three propositions in italics are presented as fictional speculations on the specific general

of the column. Insofar as the scenarios portraying these three contradictions are plausible to readers, the three propositions are acceptable to Al Aswany's audience. In other words, if these contradictions are depicted as applying to the typical policeman, the acceptability of the three propositions (and thus the whole argumentation) is raised.

The selected narrative perspective, I argue, affects the plausibility of these three manifestations of the contradiction a typical policeman may experience between repressive actions and his morals. In order to investigate to what extent the narrative perspective adopted is instrumental in enhancing the plausibility of these contradiction, I make use of Schmid's model of narrative perspective explained earlier in Section 4.3.

Because a thorough scrutinizing of all five parameters of a narrative perspective Schmid suggests may be cumbersome, he recommends using a simplified method. For the analysis of shorter segments of narrative texts, answering three central questions that concern the fundamental acts of narration is sufficient: the selection of events, the evaluation of the narrated elements, and the naming of these elements. These are the acts that respectively correspond to the parameters of perception, ideology and language. Schmid's recommended method consists of answering the following three sets of questions:

1. Who is responsible for the selection of elements in the given textual section? To which entity does the author transfer the act of selecting the elements contained in the story; the narrator or the character? If the selection of narrative units corresponds with the horizon of the character, the question that must be asked is: are these units the actual contents of the character's consciousness? Or is the narrator merely rendering them according to the character's modes of comprehension and thought?
2. Which is the evaluating entity in the relevant section?
3. Whose language (lexis, syntax, expression) shapes the section?

(Schmid, 2010: p. 117)[75]

The propositions (1.1.1a.1′.1.1b–1.1.1a.1′.1.1c–1.1.1a.1′.1.1d) are derived from the perceptual and ideological aspects of the narrative perspective adopted. The proposition "engaging in repressive behavior contradicts their feelings of human

75. The concentration on the perceptual, ideological and linguistic aspects of narrative perspective does not imply that the spatial and temporal aspects are not significant. Yet, the significance of these two aspects is more obvious in wholly fictional and elitist literature. In novels, for example, authors usually violate the linear sequence of events by using flashbacks and flash-forwards. By means of imagination, narrators in the one scene can move from one place to another without justifying their motion on a realistic basis.

compassion" is inferred from the imagined scenario about how the general may compare the brutality that he practices against the young protesters, to the tender treatment of his own daughter. The perceptual aspect manifests itself in evoking these small scenes as narrative happenings through free association. The ideological aspect manifests itself in the evaluation of the comparison. It is not unlikely that a general in this situation thinks of these details, but still believes that his own daughter, son, or young relative is not comparable to this young protester. The evaluation of the general may be that his polite, decent, disciplined daughter is much better than all those impolite, anarchist protesters.

By answering the first set of questions and the second question, it becomes clear whether the perceptual and ideological aspects of the perspective in the segments at issue are figural or narratorial. In other words, it becomes clear whether the narrated scenarios fictionalizing the three contradictions are plausible to be attributed to a typical policeman as the audience recognizes him, or attributed to the consciousness of the narrator/author. The propositions (1.1.1a.1′.1.1b–1.1.1a.1′.1.1c–1.1.1a.1′.1.1d) are supposed to be acceptable if the audience believes that the ideological and perceptual perspectives are figural. In order to be relevant to evaluating the process of resolving the difference of opinion at issue, the answers should be audience-oriented. What is decisive, in other words, is to what extent the audience views the perceptual and ideological aspects evoked as narratorial or figural. If the audience of Al Aswany is convinced that the perceptual and ideological aspects of the adopted narrative perspective are figural, it will view the imagined scenarios as plausible, in the sense that they truly apply to the typical or average policeman. The question, thus, is: how does the audience view the typical policeman's real attitude toward protesters or political activists?

No precise answer can be given. Yet, some clues for this view can be provided. Historically, the official attitude of the Egyptian state toward politics and politicians since the revolutionary coup of 1952 was negative. Plurality and conflicts of political parties before 1952 were claimed by the new power to be a cause of the corruption and underdevelopment in the Royal Reign of the Muhammad Ali dynasty. Being led by military with fascist tendencies, not pro-democracy politicians, the 1952 coup glorified the mottos of work and achievement. By contrast, the concepts of pluralism, civil society, political disagreement, and even intellectual thought were denounced.[76] The enmity of politics was a pillar of the Egyptian national discourse, which was absorbed, more or less, by all state staff, including police staff. Consequently, opposition politicians and activities were mostly depicted by this

76. It is significant that the motto of the Liberation Rally, the first political organization established after the 1952 coup as the state's one party, was "unity, discipline, and work".

discourse as tendentious and motivated by hidden agendas.[77] Moreover, ethical scandals were, implicitly or explicitly, attached to opposition politicians.[78]

Films since the 1970s presented a different image of politicians. Motivated in Sadat's era (1970–1981) by the desire of criticizing Nasser's era (1954–1970), the Egyptian cinema produced films portraying the violations practiced against innocents and political activists in Nasser's prisons. Starting with a film entitled "Karnak" [*al-Karnak*, Ali Badrakhan, 1975], many films portrayed politicians, mostly communists and Islamists, as innocent and patriotic youth who were illegally arrested, abused, and even tortured to death.[79] Policemen practicing abuse were presented as eager to extract confessions even if they were not real. Yet how these policemen felt toward dissidents was quite vague. Whether policemen, deep in themselves, really believed that political activists were traitors and conspirators, or whether they were just doing their job, was not clear.

Only based on the official discourse on politics and the film image, the audience cannot be expected to consider the perceptual and ideological perspective adopted in "Why was the General Screaming?" plausible. What is decisive, then, is the linguistic aspect of the narrative perspective. If the language of a typical general, not that of the narrator/author, shapes the segments at issue, it becomes more probable that the audience believes that the imagined feelings and thoughts are realistic.[80]

There are several differentiating keys that are instrumental in distinguishing the language of a typical general or policeman from the language of a novelist and columnist such as Al Aswany. As a rule, a typical general would use a less standard,

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77. During the January revolutionary uprising of 2011 in Egypt, the word "agenda" was highly repeated in the official discourse of Mubarak's regime to denote a hidden motive behind peaceful protests and accuses peaceful protesters of being agents to multiple opposing entities (e.g. Israeli Mossad, Hamas, Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, U.S., Iran, Qatar, etc.). Ever after, the word became a popular term used among Egyptian youth to signify freedom, pride and revolutionary spirit. An online urban dictionary included the term "Tahrir agenda". See http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Tahrir+Agenda

78. In an exceptional assembly of the Egyptian parliament in 1990, Zaki Badr, the minister of interior affairs at that time, read a transcription of secret recordings containing ethical scandals of prominent members of Al Wafd party, an opposition party. What Badr did was his response of an interrogation on security violations of opposition politicians.

79. Baker (1990) explains the campaign launched in Sadat's era to enhance Sadat's power by discrediting Nasser's era, calling it "de-Nasserization". For more information, see Baker (1990: pp. 83–85)

80. Schmid thinks that the difference between fictional and factual narration does not play a significant role when considering the linguistic aspect of narrative perspective. In any everyday non-diegetic narrative (telling a story about others not the self) situation, the narrator has to decide whether to narrate in his or her own language or with the terms and style of an involved third person (Schmid, 2010: p. 103). So, investigating the linguistic perspective of the column in which fiction and report are combined is justifiable.

classical or literary register of Arabic than Al Aswany would do. When it comes to talking religiously, a typical general would use religious terms, phrases, and expressions of the sort used by mosque preachers on Fridays, not that used by scholastic theologians. When it comes to talking about work situations, a typical general would use common terms that are used in everyday discussions with colleagues, not the legal terms usually used in official documents.

In Table 5.1, I list the linguistic items (words, phrases, expressions) which can be seen as narratorial vs. those which can be seen as figural according to the above mentioned differentiating keys. Dependence on my own linguistic experience is unavoidable, since Arabic dictionaries do not say much about sociolinguistic and historical differences between linguistic items. The numbers between brackets indicate the line numbers according to Appendix D, and the words at issue are in bold.

Table 5.1 The narratorial and figural linguistic choices in "why is the general screaming?"

Narratorial	Figural
While the poor girl ***had nothing*** (39) The expression is used in classical Arabic.	*He was attacking a* ***defenseless*** girl (43) The Arabic expression Al Aswany uses is inspired by the Islamic statement (*lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh*) meaning that "There is no might nor power except in Allah". This statement said by the average Muslim to express wonder, sorrow, or heartbreak.
His word was ***law*** (39) If literally translated, it would be: "He has an absolute will that cannot be rejected". The expression is inspired by classical Arabic.	*If his daughter had* ***a difficult exam*** *or just* ***had a simple cold*** (52) If a more eloquent Arabic was used, Al Aswany would write something like "getting ready to pass an exam" and "caught a cold". The verb 'to have' has a colloquial connotation here.
He was not ***facing*** *an armed enemy* (42 43) The verb fight or facing an armed enemy (*yunāzil*) is used in classical Arabic. The modern counterpart is (*yuḥarib*).	*… and will* ***stand before God*** (65) In a more classical register, one would use (bayn yaday Allah) literally translated into "stand before the hands of God".
…as he ***attacked the girl*** (44) *– his mission was to* ***abuse girls*** (56) Both phrases are two translation of an Arabic expression (*Yahtik 'ird El-Banāt*). Usually, this expression is used to denote a rape action. It is still acceptable to denote attacking or abusing, but it indicates a sense of exaggeration that can be considered as narratorial not figural.	*He cannot tell God he was carrying out* ***orders. Orders*** *will not absolve him* (76) The literal translation of (*ta'limāt*) is "instructions". The translator has a good sense of Arabic and chose to use "orders" because its Arabic counterpart (*'awāmir*) is typically used in policemen discussions.

(*continued*)

Table 5.1 (*continued*)

Narratorial	Figural
… *of his* ***subordinate*** *police officers* (45) A typical policeman in everyday discussion would use something like "my men" (*Rijālī*). The word "subordinate" is used in more formal contexts.	
…*and swore to protect the dignity, lives, and property of* ***Egyptians*** (55) A typical general would use the word "people" or "commune" instead of "Egyptians". The latter is frequently used in intellectual national discourses.	
Even performs the dawn prayer on time ***whenever he can*** (58–59) The syntax used "whenever + past simple" (*matā 'istatā*ʿ) is classical and much used in the Quran.	
… *and* ***has had*** *the prayer mark on his forehead* (59–60) Al Aswany uses a phrase literally meaning "the prayer mark settled over his forehead". His choice is more figural and seems literary.	
… *he is over fifty and his death* ***may come*** *at any moment* (61). Al Aswany did not simply write "may die". The expression he uses (*yaḥīnu ʿagaluh*) is classical. Instead of the modern standard word [*mawt*], he uses [ʿ*agal*].	
… *or he may* ***be struck down*** *by some serious disease* (62) As an alternative of "die". The expression (*yūdī bi ḥayātih*) is frequently used in news discourses, and has a classical connotation.	
.. *in the* ***best of*** *health* (63) To denote the meaning of "best of health", Al Aswany uses an Arabic classical word (*'awg*) meaning "zenith" or "climax".	
On the great ***Day of Judgment*** (68) The expression used by Al Aswany is a classical one (*yawm al-ʿard al- ʿaẓīm*) which literally means "the great day in which deeds of people are presented to God".	
… *everyone will abandon him –* ***the bodyguards****, the informers,* ***the riot police****, the officers …* (68–69) In their everyday discussions, policemen typically use three terms to denote the police staff: officers, soldiers, and high ranks. Al Aswany uses (*ḥaras*) instead of (*ʿasākir*) that was translated into "bodyguards", which is usually used in Egyptian colloquial to denote specialist and highly-trained staff who are employed to guard the prominent state officials. He also uses [*gunūd*] meaning "soldiers", while the Arabic word [*ʿasākir*] is much frequently used by policemen.	

Table 5.1 shows that the narratorial language is dominant. The audience is unlikely to recognize the linguistic perspective as figural. Consequently, the linguistic perspective is unlikely to bestow plausibility on the perceptual and ideological perspectives. Al Aswany is thus believed to conceive the world *through* the general but not *according to* the general. According to Schmid, the perspective adopted here is not internal. Schmid limits the meaning of internal perspective to cases in which narrators portray the self-perception of their character, that is, the perception of innermost thoughts and feelings by the protagonist him or herself.

Since the contradictions that are narratively depicted are received by the audience as implausible, the propositions inferred are rendered unacceptable. The unacceptability of the propositions (1.1.1a.1′.1.1b–1.1.1a.1′.1.1c–1.1.1a.1′.1.1d) considerably weakens the whole subordinate argumentation, and thus the sub-argument 1.1.1a.1′.1 is rendered unacceptable. What follows is that the acceptability of the initial standpoint subsequently is very much decreased. Al Aswany was not successful in adopting this specific narrative perspective in the case at issue as it did not help the argumentation to be effectively acceptable.

5.6 Conclusion

I have explained how selecting a narrative perspective can be analyzed as a strategic maneuver with the help of the insights suggested by two scholars who made prominent contributions to the study of narrative point of view: Lanser (1981) and Schmid (2010). In this endeavor, I have answered the primary question of how a narrative text contributes to resolving a difference of opinion by going through two steps: identifying the cases in which the story message may be attributed with certainty to the author as an arguer (and thus solving the *attribution* problem), and setting the rules that help an analyst to derive from the narrative text propositions that contribute to the resolution of a difference of opinions (and thus solving the *derivation* problem).

To solve the first problem, I have applied the narrator = author equation viewed by Lanser as the degree zero of the narrator-author relationship. This is the only way in which the narrator's discourse can be with certainty attributed to the author himself or herself, as well as the norms, values, and prejudices that are expressed by means of this discourse. The macro-context of the narrative text may determine the cases in which the application of this equation is justified as is the case in political columns. Therefore, the stories written by Al Aswany that are published as political columns convey messages that must be attributed to Al Aswany himself as an arguer in a critical discussion.

In addition to the propositions that can be derived from the narrator's discourse, I have suggested to solve the attribution problem that taking into account of the plot, the textual space and the way in which characters are presented is helpful in deriving propositions that can justifiably be attributed to the author.

The narrative perspective adopted by an author who plays the role of an arguer is a strategic choice if any of the aspects constituting such a perspective is seen as a topical choice or as a presentational device that is selected in adaptation to the audience demand. Following Lanser's theory, I proposed that from the strategic maneuvering perspective, the norms, evaluations, and prejudices constituting the ideological stance can be viewed as topical choices strategically selected in adaptation to the audience's demand. Their presentation as well as the other three aspects of the stance can be viewed as presentational devices strategically selected in adaptation to the audience's demand. In addition, the author's status and his contact with the audience, if well-established, can help increase the acceptability of the argumentation expressed by means of a narrative text.

Within Schmid's model of a narrative perspective, he differentiates between a narratorial and figural perspective. The perception, ideology, language, field of vision, and the temporal manifestations of a narrative text can be attributed to the selection of the narrator or to one of the characters. The plausibility of narratorial or figural perspectives can affect the acceptability of the argumentation advanced by means of a narrative text.

In my analysis of "An Unfortunate Incident Befalling a State Security Officer", I have explained how Al Aswany successfully made use of three aspects related to the narrative perspective to enhance the acceptability of the controversial ideological stance he adopts:

1. his pre-established status,
2. the strong contact he establishes with readers through encouraging readers to reconstruct the plot lines and the moderate use of linguistic taboos,
3. and the way in which the ideological content is presented. The ideological content is symbolically presented.

The analysis "Why was the General Screaming?" has explained why the narrative perspective Al Aswany adopted can unlikely be seen as a successful maneuver. The propositional content of the fictionalized scenarios is used to support the point of view that a typical policeman engaged in repressive actions may feel guilty as such actions contradict his morals. I have assumed that the audience would consider these fictionalized scenarios as plausible, and accordingly the three propositions concerned, if the audience recognizes the different aspects of the narrative perspective (suggested by Schmid) as figural not narratorial: as reflecting the real

consciousness of a typical policeman not that of Al Aswany. However, as I argued, the perceptual and ideological perspectives of the fictionalized segments of the column are considerably controversial in view of the frame of reference of the audience. Nevertheless, the linguistic choices made by Al Aswany in the segments at issue supported a narratorial interpretation of the linguistic perspective. Therefore, these choices did not contribute to achieving the aim of portraying the imagined content as plausible.

CHAPTER 6

Strategic maneuvering by means of an allegorical fable

The "victorious protesters" topic

6.1 Introduction

In order for Al Aswany's audience to be convinced of the feasibility of political change, it may seem that it is enough to consider both the "active people" and "defeatable police" as acceptable. Although both topics are central to the discussion of the feasibility issue, Al Aswany's success in arguing in favor of them does not mean that the feasibility of political change became indisputable. His audience does not necessarily view the outcome of a confrontation between protesters and a defeatable police in favor of the people. The police was, ostensibly at least, the most powerful institution during Mubarak's era, but certainly not the only one. In his attempt to convince his audience that the protesters will win and force Mubarak to leave, Al Aswany should take account of the whole prospective scene of protests by discussing how other pillars of the regime are expected to act in response to the protesters (henceforth, the "victorious protesters").[81]

The only column in which the author discusses the "victorious protesters" in an integrated manner is entitled "A Story for Children and Adults" (25 May 2010). The column is a fable in which some animals living in a jungle symbolically represent the main political actors in Egypt before 2011. An aged King elephant, a fox, a wolf, a pig, a donkey (together forming the team of the elephant's assistants), and a giraffe are personifying Mubarak, the intelligence agency, the police commanders, the pro-regime stakeholders, the pro-regime media hypocrites and El Baradei respectively.[82] The fable starts with a scene in which the King elephant and his assistants are presented while discussing how they will respond to the prospective marches by the animals of the jungle. It ends with the victory of the furious animals led by the giraffe over the aged elephant and his clique. In view of this interpretation, "A Story

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81. An earlier version of this chapter (Omar, 2016a) was presented to the first European Conference on Argumentation (ECA1) held in Lisbon, Portugal.

82. For the full text of the column, see Appendix E. The parallel between this story and the Egyptian political reality is not dependent only on my cultural experiences as an Egyptian citizen. In Sections 6.4 and 6.5, it will be explained in detail how an allegory is systematically interpreted.

for Children and Adults" is an example of a column dealing with the "victorious protesters" topic expressed in a narrative, fictional form.[83]

Al Aswany is confronted with a challenging rhetorical exigency in his attempt to convince his audience that Mubarak's regime will be brought down. It is challenging because of the prospective quality of the standpoint as an action expected to happen in the future. In addition, the socio-political reality in general is difficult to predict compared to the natural one. The difficulty of prediction is higher in the case concerned since the prediction is about a detailed event that is expected to occur in the near future, not an overall change that takes place in decades or years.

What makes the difficulty of the rhetorical exigency concerned higher is the particularity of the Egyptian political situation. A prediction of socio-political trajectories is more likely to be accepted when similar cases are provided as examples, especially if these cases cover historical events which occurred in the recent past (or even in the ancient past if these events constitute crucial parts of the collective memory). The modern Egyptian history did not witness a revolutionary shift of power by means of massive protests that is similar to what Al Aswany expects to happen in "A Story for Children and Adults".[84] The most recent instance of a revolutionary action were the 1977's so called "bread riots" which forced President Sadat (1918–1981) to withdraw his economic decisions regarding termination of state subsidies on basic foodstuffs.[85] In fact, the demonstrations of 1977 reflected an expression of anger at a specific political decision, and did not involve (at least in the sense of what these demonstration amounted to) a real ambition for radical political change.

This chapter is dedicated to analyzing how Al Aswany maneuvers strategically by means of the allegorical beast fable at issue in order to effectively convince his audience that Mubarak's regime will be overthrown by the protesters. If Chapter 5 was focused on discussing how a narrative perspective can relate to the reconstruction and analysis of argumentative discourse, this chapter is focused on understanding how a fictional text can relate to it. Seeking for realizing theoretical coherence, I

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83. The whole chapter is motivated by discovering how fiction and argumentation relate to each other. I agree with Govier and Ayers that "argumentative representation of a narrative may "kill" the original story. However, if we are reflecting on a narrative in contexts where one is supposed to *learn* from it, analysis in terms of reasoned support is appropriate" (Govier & Ayers, 2012: p. 186). Insofar as I am concerned in this chapter, I take 'learn' in their note to mean 'do other things than just be entertained'.

84. In July 1952, a group of young military officers entitled the 'Free Officers' took power and ousted King Farouq. Although their action was afterwards termed as a revolution, some political analysts strongly believe that it was merely a coup, since the masses did not initiate the shift of power, albeit it was later revolutionized by Nasser.

85. For more information, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1977_Egyptian_Bread_Riots

will discuss some of the relevant speech-act-based approaches to fiction that are intended to fit well in the pragma-dialectical concept of argumentation. I shall then explain how these speech-act-based approaches can systematically contribute to getting to a justifiable interpretation of an allegorical beast fable.

For any fictional text to function as an argumentative discourse, an analyst should duly tackle the derivation problem as discussed in Chapter 5. For the specific case of an allegorical beast fable as a particular genre of fiction, I will test the presumption that the propositions involved in an argumentative discourse can be derived from the conceptual metaphors and scenarios constituting an allegorical beast fable. An analytic reconstruction of the text at issue as a critical discussion will be then provided in view of the aforementioned conceptual and speech-act-theory notions. Finally, I will analyze how Al Aswany maneuvers strategically by means of an allegorical beast fable to overcome the specific rhetorical exigency he is confronted with in addressing the "victorious protesters" topic.

6.2 Beast fable, allegory, and allegorical beast fable

In order to be able to explain what I mean by the term "allegorical beast fable", it is necessary to separate the concept into two components: "beast fable" and "allegory". I do not attempt, of course, to provide an exhaustive list of the definitions given in the literature of these terms. Instead, I will mention some relevant definitions and clarifications that serve my research purpose.

In the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 'beast fable' is defined as follows:

> [T]he commonest type of fable, in which animals and birds speak and behave like human beings in a short tale usually illustrating some moral point. The fables attributed to Aesop in the sixth century B.C. and those written in verse by La Fontaine are the best known, along with the fables of Bier Rabbit adapted by the American journalist Joel Chandler Harris from black folklore.[86]

The word "usually" in the definition indicates that the goal intended to be achieved by means of a beast fable is not limited to moral points, although this is certainly the case in the average example. The only indispensable requirement for calling a narrative text a 'beast fable' is the fact that its characters are animals behaving like humans.

Blackham emphasizes that the main goal of telling a beast fable is to convey a moral point. He calls this point a 'truth' and a 'conceptual meaning':

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86. Other definitions of beast fable (or fable in general) and allegory do not differ considerably from that of the *Oxford Dictionary*. See, for example, Beckson & Ganz (1975).

> Since a fable as a fictitious story is an imagined action, and is a metaphor, the action is used to portray something else which it resembles in some way, and this something else is in the mind, a 'truth' […] Fable generates conceptual meanings, does not merely furnish an illustration in a particular instance […] In so far as it is a fable, it is so because it can stand on its own with more general application […] a narrative device, to provoke and to aid concrete thinking, focused on some general matter of concern. (Blackham, 1985: pp. xv–xvii)

However, according to Blackham the degree of generalization is variable. It varies from representing a 'truth' about human nature in general to representing less generalized wisdoms. This point is apparent when modern instances are discussed:

> A *more ambitious fable* [my italics, Ahmed Omar] will not merely express a truth graphically and memorably, but mainly will generate and store more meaning in the conception it represents, whereas a general statement relies mainly on established meanings. What Animal Farm says could be formulated, and may have to be for any evaluation of its 'truth'. But summary statements cannot resume all the meaning generated and stored in the images and events of the narrative. (Blackham, 1985: p. xii)

What can be inferred from this quotation is that a less generalized story with speaking animals and birds is still a 'fable'. Although what *Animal Farm* is believed to express (in most interpretations) is not a universal truth that is applicable to the human nature in general, it is still viewed as a fable. So, any narrative form with speaking animals and birds can be called a 'fable', regardless of how general its point is.

The second component of the term is 'allegory'. The *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* gives the following definition of 'allegory': "a story or a visual image with a second distinct meaning partially hidden behind its literal or visible meaning. An allegory may be regarded as a metaphor that is extended into a structured system". Putting several and coherent metaphors together in a narrative form which constitutes a meaningful story is how the process of allegorical structuring is carried out.

Crisp (2001) gives a distinctive illustration of what is meant by allegory as a radically extended metaphor. Conceived as a conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), an allegory is based upon mapping between a source domain (animals, for example) and a target domain (political actors, for example). An allegory is the result of extending the source domain through narrative means and with no overt reference to the target domain:

> Allegory brings the metaphorical source domain to life in a way that no other form of metaphorical language can. Its peculiar imaginative excitement resides in the fact that a metaphorical source domain is given its own, strange and fantastic, fictional life, instead of just being mapped straight onto a target domain. Allegory

> exists referentially and not just predicatively.[87] The target domain's conceptualization is of course enriched by the source domain's activation, as with any form of conceptual metaphor. This is the ultimate point of allegory. Yet, with allegory, the source domain itself also attains a unique degree of imaginative life and density.
> (Crisp, 2001: p. 10)

An allegory thereby involves a parallel (not always a full parallel) between two levels of meaning in a story, so that the persons and events represented in the allegorical fable correspond to their equivalents in a system of ideas or a chain of events external to the tale.

Blackham differentiates between fable and allegory implying that a degree of overlap is likely:

> An allegory in a narrative form may seem close to fable. Again, the principal difference is that the allusion in allegory is to something particular, and in fable to something general. Rather, although both may embody general conceptions in particular forms, with roles in a particular action, fable will do this to focus attention on an illuminated patch exposed to thought, whereas allegory tends to explore labyrinthine manifestations with delight in the description. Allegory constructs a series of specific correspondences in two systems, so that one translates into the other, either way. (Blackham, 1985: p. xv)

Although Blackham highlights the principal difference between an allegory and a fable in a clear manner, in his book and in other sources, *Animal Farm,* for instance, is called a beast fable and an allegory interchangeably.

What I propose here, for the specific purpose of this chapter, and without going any further in scrutinizing the historical evolutions of both forms, is that it is possible to re-define both beast fable and allegory as merely narrative features. The former amounts to fictionalizing animal characters which act in a human manner, whereas the latter amounts to intentionally structuring the narrative form by the author as reflecting two layers of meaning in order to be understood by the reader in this specific way. These two features can be combined in some speech events, but they can be separated in others as well.

In this chapter, I use the term *allegorical beast fable* to denote a combination of these two features that conveys some kind of messages (e.g. political). An allegorical beast fable aimed at conveying a political message refers to a fictional, narrative form which the author intends to be interpreted (and actually read) at two levels: a

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87. If an allegory is viewed like a proposition in which a predicate is related to a referent, an allegory exists at two levels: the referent level/source domain level, where a fictional life is created, and a predicate level/target domain level, where a realistic message is conveyed.

direct (literal/fictitious/source domain) level at which animal characters, settings, happenings and actions constitute a fictional world, and an indirect (figurative/real/target domain) level at which the same elements are recognized as paralleling real elements of some political situation. The author of an allegorical beast fable intends his reader to find out the counterpart of each animal or narrative event (and believes that his reader to be able to do so). This characterization of an allegorical beast fable applies to "A Story for Children and Adults", the case study of this chapter.

In the next section, I will explain how a speech-act-based approach to the nature of fiction can justify an allegorical interpretation of a fable. This kind of approach is instrumental in identifying which type of speech acts is performed when a fictional text is presented. It is thus useful in explaining how non-fictional messages can be inferred from fictional texts.

6.3 Speech-act-based approaches to fiction

In 1975, Searle wrote an article entitled "The logical status of fictional discourse", in which he reaches some conclusions concerning the nature of fiction:

1. The author of a work of fiction pretends to perform a series of illocutionary acts, normally of the representative or assertive type.
2. The identifying criterion for whether or not a text is a work of fiction must of necessity lie in the illocutionary intentions of the author. There is no textual property, syntactical or semantic, that will identify a text as a work of fiction.
3. The pretended illocutions which constitute a work of fiction are made possible by the existence of a set of conventions which suspend the normal operation of the rules relating illocutionary acts and the world.
4. The pretended performances of illocutionary acts which constitute the writing of a work of fiction consist in actually performing utterance acts with the intention of invoking the horizontal conventions that suspend the normal illocutionary commitments of the utterances (Searle, 1975: pp. 319–332)

Searle ends his column with explaining why identifying the speech act status of fiction matters:

> And one aspect of the role that such products [fictional works] play derives from the fact that serious (i.e., nonfictional) speech acts can be conveyed by fictional texts, even though the conveyed speech act is not represented in the text. Almost any important work of fiction conveys a "message" or "messages" which are conveyed by the text but are not in the text. (Searle, 1975: p. 332)

According to Searle, there is no general theory of the mechanisms by which serious illocutionary intentions are conveyed by pretended illocutions. Literary critics have explained on an *ad hoc* and particularistic basis how the author conveys a serious speech act through the performance of the pretended speech acts which constitute the work of fiction (Searle, 1975: p. 332).

Lanser believes that speech act theory had not yet, at that time, adequately identified the conventions that govern the sending and receiving of fictional texts because the theory has not defined its terms broadly enough to encompass all, rather than only a portion of, human verbal activity. Traditionally, fictional utterances have been classified as assertives and then labelled deviant within that frame, that is, called "quasi-assertions" or pretended assertions. To solve this problem, Lanser suggests adding a sixth category of speech acts: a class of speech acts that operate as hypotheticals (Lanser, 1981: pp. 286–289).

For an encompassing definition of hypotheticals, Lanser incorporates some elements of the declarative or commissive act: *in* hypothesizing, the speaker brings a hypothetical or alternative world into existence and commits him- or herself to representing that world consistently. Once the hypothetical speech situation is signaled, the speaker is bound to at least some of the same internal requirements of truth and consistency that are required of a historical narrative (Lanser, 1981: p. 290).[88]

Other scholars think that there is no need for suggesting a sixth category of speech acts to understand how fiction works communicatively and interactively. Rather, a new sub-category can be attached to an already existing category. In *The Nature of Fiction,* Currie (1990) proposes to view fiction-making as a speech act performed by the speaker (or the writer) aiming at inviting the listener (or the reader) to involve imaginatively in some propositional content (i.e. to induce the reader to activate his imaginative faculty in receiving this content), or (as Currie likes to call it) to make believe that the story as uttered is true.[89] Currie states a number of conditions required for an utterance *U* uttered by *S* with the propositional content *P* to be taken as fictive:

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88. Lanser (1981) explains: "In other words, once I have created Miss Marple and made her an elderly, grey-haired woman, I cannot change these features without violating the felicity of my hypothetical illocutionary act – unless, of course, my discourse is fantastic or surrealistic" (Lanser, 1981: p. 287).

89. Currie himself admits that talk about make-believe tends to be "loose and unsystematic". Yet, he gives some commonly acknowledged generalizations: "[M]ake-believe allows us to achieve in imagination what we are denied in reality, that we gain vicarious experience through make-believe; that disaster can follow if we confuse what we make believe with what we believe" (Currie, 1990: pp. 20–21).

> *S*'s utterance of *U* is fictive if and only if *S* utters *U* intending that the audience will
>
> 1. recognize that *U* means *P*;
> 2. recognize that *U* is intended by *S* to mean *P*;
> 3. recognize that *S* intends them (the audience) to make believe that *P*;
> 4. make believe that *P*. (Currie, 1990: pp. 30–35)

Another scholar, Friend, makes his own differentiation, in a way not really different from Currie's, between fiction and non-fiction as corresponding to the difference between imagining and belief:

> Fiction (as opposed to non-fiction) invites mere-make-believe, whereas non-fiction (as opposed to fiction) invites belief. This proposal may seem plausible given that mere-make-believe is appropriate to those features of a work that are made up (and known to be so), and it is common to associate fiction with such features (Friend, 2008: pp. 158–159)

Garcia-Carpintero provides an insightful contribution pertaining to the correctness conditions of the speech act of fiction-making. He discusses a variety of ideas presented by Walton (1990) and Currie (1990), elaborating the view that fictive utterances are characterized by a specific form of illocutionary force in the family of directives – a proposal or invitation to imagine.

Garcia-Carpintero discusses an initial problem Currie (1990) noticed in the typical case of fiction-making. This problem concerns the make-up of the audience (addressed by authors as "my readers"), which is relatively indefinite. He finds a solution by emphasizing that we have a sufficiently clear idea of the mindsets that are addressed by fictions: "Fictions are proposals addressed to those with a general mindset of interests, abilities and dispositions, and fictions of specific kinds are proposals addressed to those with a correspondingly specific mindset". Based on this solution, he states the main correctness condition of the speech act of fiction-making: "For one to fiction-make p is correct if, and only if, p is worth imagining for one's audience, on the assumption that they have *relevant desires and dispositions*" [My italics, Ahmed Omar]. Garcia-Carpentero adds: "fiction-making is a representational act constitutively such that, in putting forward the represented content p, one exposes oneself to criticism if there is no relevant value that the contextually assumed audience can obtain from imaginatively attending to P" (2013: pp. 350–351).

For an example of what is meant by relevant desires and dispositions, imagine a politician who is publicly addressing his supporters before elections. The politician tells them a fairy story about a poor young man who is in love with the daughter of a king and the sufferings he faces in order to marry her at the end of the story. His audience is expected to recognize that he is performing a series of fiction-making speech acts when they interpret the specific content he conveys. Yet, such content

is not relevant for adult people interested in politics and public affairs. Even if some addressees consider this content worth imagining, they would consider it inappropriate in this specific communicative situation.

Based on the insights just explained, the speech act of fiction-making can be formulated in Searlean form. In a Searlean characterization according to its further modification developed by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984), fiction-making is viewed as a communicative act which is recognizable to the listener (or the reader) when its identity conditions are fulfilled. The identity conditions consist of the propositional content condition and the essential condition. To be happily performed, and thus considered successful, the correctness conditions of the speech act of fiction-making must be fulfilled as well. The correctness conditions are divided into two categories: the preparatory conditions and the responsibility (sincerity) conditions. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst explain the responsibility conditions as follows:

> If the speaker makes a promise, then, regardless of his intention on that point.., he takes upon himself a certain responsibility to which the listener can hold him. And this is why.. we believe it might have been better to call the sincerity condition the *responsibility condition* or *liability condition*.
>
> (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984: p. 42)

For a situation in which a speaker (or a writer) *S* utters a fictive utterance *U* in a communicative situation *C*, the felicity conditions of the speech act of fiction-making can be formulated as follows:

Identity conditions

Propositional content condition:

1. The utterance *U* consists of the propositional content *P*
2. *P* is not true

Essential condition:

Uttering *U* counts as an attempt to invite the listener (or reader) to make believe *P*

Correctness conditions

Preparatory conditions:

1. S believes that the listener (or reader) believes that P is not a fact.
2. S believes that the listener (or reader) considers P as worth imagining within context C (i.e. the listener has relevant desires and dispositions with respect to P).

Sincerity conditions:

1. S believes that *P* is not a fact.
2. S believes that *P* is worth imagining for his listener within *C*.

To conclude, the author of a fictional text performs a number of speech acts of fiction-making aiming to invite his or her readers to imagine the content included. The author will also perform a number of speech acts of another kind: representatives or assertives. A realistic novel, for example, must consist of some assertives conveying pieces of information about reality, e.g. the geography of a city, some historical events, etc.[90] These two types of speech acts can be called *direct authorial* speech acts.

In some cases, such as the case at issue, fictional texts are aimed to convey symbolic or allegorical messages that are not literally expressed. The author, then, performs indirect assertives that can be derived (or inferred) from one or more direct authorial speech acts. These indirect assertives can be designated as *indirect authorial* speech acts. This point will be explained in detail in Section 6.6 when I shall suggest how propositions can be derived from the story at issue in order to reconstruct it as a critical discussion aimed at resolving a difference of opinion.

In addition to *direct authorial* and *indirect authorial* speech acts performed by uttering fictional texts, the characters in the story perform speech acts at the fictional level. Fictional characters apologize, promise, assert, order, predict, thank, and so on. These speech acts can be called *fictional* speech acts.[91] In the next section, I will explain how a speech-act-based approach to fiction can systematically contribute to giving an allegorical interpretation of the fictional text at issue in a justifiable way.

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90. A fictional work is sometimes a patchwork of fiction-making speech acts and assertives. If a sentence such as "Amsterdam is a cosmopolitan city" is a part of a novel, it cannot be considered as a fiction-making speech act since it is certainly considered by both the author and any of his readers as a fact. This problematic issue is not represented in the text at issue: "A story for Children and Adults" is wholly fictional, and none of its parts represents a fact (see Currie, 1990: 48–49).

91. Bernaerts (2010) explains how integrating speech act theory with narrative studies resulted in different models of narrative speech act analyses which are designed as tools aimed to distinguish different clusters of speech acts performed within a narrative text, and viewing how these clusters contribute to producing the meaning of the narrative utterance on various levels. He discerns five clusters of Illocutionary acts occurring on different levels of the narrative act: (1) the creative act of the author, (2) the inferred speech acts of the text as a whole, (3) the reader's act of interpretation, (4) the narrator's act of telling, (5) the fictional speech acts performed by the characters (see Bernaerts, 2010: pp. 278–285). My terms "direct authorial speech acts" and "indirect authorial speech acts" correspond to his fourth and second clusters respectively. I follow him in using the term "fictional speech acts" to denote the same concept.

6.4 Justifying an allegorical interpretation of a beast fable

For a story to be recognized as a fictional work, it must consist of a number of fiction-making speech acts of which the identity and correctness conditions are happily fulfilled. In specific cases, it is evident that the author does not consider the content of the story as worth imagining. Therefore, one of the sincerity conditions is not appropriately fulfilled. The macro-context of some communicative activity types determines that such an imaginative content is not appropriate. So, readers or listeners should do their utmost to view the speech acts of fiction-making taking place in these activity types as indirect speech acts. To this end, they may assume that the story is intended to be interpreted allegorically.

In the illustrative case at issue, inviting the readers of a political column to imagine the propositional content of animals speaking and acting is inappropriate. The readers do not render the propositional content of the speech acts performed worth imagining within the communicative situation of reading a political column in a daily quality newspaper. Al Aswany, even though he is stating in the title that he addresses adults and children, knows well that his readers, in this specific situation where political non-fiction is dominantly addressed, his readers are not interested in the content of the story itself. Consequently, the second preparatory condition and the second sincerity condition are inappropriately fulfilled.

The incorrectness of this connected series of fiction-making speech acts becomes more evident when the characterization of a political column as the macro-context of the case at issue is taken into consideration. In Section 3.4, I have explained that the political column is a communicative activity type functioning in the domains of journalism and politics. As a hybrid activity type, it implements the genres of information-dissemination and (indirect) deliberation. The institutional point of a political column is to maintain a well-informed and critical public opinion that enables readers to act politically in a rational way. Columnists provide analyses and evaluations of current events in order to engage citizens in the public sphere, and to support or maintain a democratic culture.

In this macro-context, the speech acts performed within the illustrative case are inappropriate. Inviting the readers to imagine such content does not serve to realize the institutional point of a political column. Al Aswany can obviously be considered as insincere in performing the series of fiction-making speech acts. He knows that the desires and dispositions of his audience in this specific communicative situation are not in accordance with the imaginative content.

However, the fact that these speech acts are viewed as incorrect does not disrupt communication. It just induces the readers to derive indirect speech acts from of the speech acts of fiction-making. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992) integrated the Searlean conditions for the performance of speech acts with Grice's

maxims. The Gricean *Co-operative Principle* was replaced by a general *Principle of Communication* that applies to speech acts. As van Eemeren and Grootendorst explain, in accordance with Grice's *Co-operative Principle* (Be clear, honest, efficient and to the point), people who are communicating with each other generally try to ensure that their communication goes as smoothly as possible. Accordingly, when they perform speech acts, they observe the five rules which further this purpose: you must not perform any speech acts that are incomprehensible, insincere, redundant, meaningless or not in an appropriate way connected with previous speech acts or the communicative situation. Yet, a listener or a reader acting cooperatively must treat any apparent violation of any of these rules in a way that makes the speech act at issue relevant to communication (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992: pp. 49–51; 2004: pp. 75–80).

In Al Aswany's performance of the speech acts of fiction-making in "A Story for Children and Adults", the second rule of the Principle of Communication (you must not perform any insincere speech act) is violated. Suggesting an allegorical interpretation is the only way in which the violation can be removed. The allegorical interpretation enables the reader to derive from the fictional utterances a series of connected propositions with a content related to the political reality. Al Aswany can thus be held committed to performing a series of indirect authorial assertives.

Al Aswany's political views which are familiar to his readers, determine the scope of the allegorical interpretation, i.e. what the beasts and events precisely stand for. In all of his columns, Al Aswany is interested in commenting on Egyptian political affairs. Even when he comments on an international piece of news, he links it to the Egyptian political context. So, readers should interpret the fictional animals depicted and the events narrated as paralleling existing political actors and events taking place in political reality. The story is then not about the inevitable destiny of tyrants, but about the specific destiny of a certain dictator in a specific historical situation created by specific political actors. The reader is not intended, for example, to conclude that the people will oust any kind of dictator at the end of the day, but it is intended to draw the conclusion that the Egyptian people will succeed in forcefully unseating Mubarak in particular.

A speech-act-based approach to fiction is, thus, useful in identifying the cases in which an allegorical interpretation is indispensable and other cases in which this type of interpretation is just a possibility. Take the example of *Animal Farm*, the most prominent allegorical beast fable in modern literature. The speech acts of fiction-making which George Orwell performs by writing his story are correct in view of the macro-context of fairy stories (this is how Orwell calls his work on the cover of the book). Some readers can consider the content of the story as worth imagining, and therefore, the felicity conditions are fulfilled. Other readers who know more about Orwell and his political views, can take another route, exactly as

in the case of "A Story for Children and Adults". They may consider the speech acts of fiction-making performed in which *Animal Farm* inappropriately performed, and thus infer that indirect speech acts are performed with propositional contents associated with the Cold War setting.

6.5 The conceptual aspects of an allegorical beast fable

Seeing the allegorical beast fable as a narratively interconnected group of conceptual metaphors is useful in two respects. It provides a better grasp of the mechanism of allegorical interpretation, and allows for a clear characterization of the argumentative reality of this type of texts. The mechanism of interpretation is illustrated by considering the way in which readers usually find out the real figures corresponding to the fictional animals.

In the illustrative case, for example, a pig plays the role of one of a King Elephant's assistants. If the principle of an allegorical interpretation is applied, Al Aswany's readers will think of the pig in terms of his dominant characteristics, according to the shared cultural views of their society and the descriptions the story gives to the pig: "The pig, *whose body gave off a foul smell*, squealed to object".

Thinking of this phrase in the light of the cultural set of values connected to pigs results in highlighting the pig's filthiness. Consequently, a reader will search for a political group which shares the pig's generic characteristic of being greedy for satisfying desires in any possible way even by using impure means. This shared characteristic is translated at a political level as being corrupt. Hence, a conceptual metaphor is established, in which the pig functions as source domain, and the stakeholders benefiting from the regime as target domain. The mapping is between eating feces (or any other example of glutton and filth) and taking advantage of corruption.

The same mechanism of establishing a conceptual metaphor based on how the shared cultural set of values explains a specific narrated content can also be applied to the allegorical interpretation of the fox character. The fox is depicted in the story at issue as sensitively recognizing how reality has changed according to the special information it has. The mapping is between the fox's sagacity and the intelligence's prudent insight into reality. The conceptual metaphor "INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AS A FOX" is thus established.

My aim is not to present any cognitive analyses of the used metaphors by analyzing what takes place in the minds of readers. Rather, and in agreement with pragma-dialectics, conceptual metaphors are considered relevant insofar as they can be interpreted as propositions that can be used in reconstructing the argumentative discourse. According to my allegorical interpretation of the story, five conceptual metaphors are established:

1. MUBARAK IS FEEBLE AS AN AGED ELEPHANT.
2. THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY IS CUNNING AS A FOX.
3. THE SECURITY APPARATUSES ARE GRIM AS WOLVES.
4. THE STAKEHOLDERS ARE GLUTTONOUS AS PIGS.
5. THE MEDIA HYPOCRITES ARE THOUGHTLESS AS DONKEYS.

When a political actor or institution is depicted as a specific animal in an allegorical beast fable, it follows that the reader can derive two propositions: one of them is related to describing this actor as sharing one of the traits of the corresponding animal (political actor X has Trait T as animal Y). The second proposition is related to the specific way in which this political actor actually acts, or is predicted to act. This is in fact a result of the teleological nature of most narratives not only allegorical beast fables; the knowledge of the traits and tendencies of characters enables the reader to forecast how the story will come out. The first proposition may function as an argument supporting the second if they are included in an argumentative text or discourse (political actor X will do Z because he has trait T as animal Y). The following example (explained later in detail) taken from the illustrative case gives substance to how conceptual elements function argumentatively:

1 The security apparatuses prefer the use of violence against protesters
  1.1 The security apparatuses are grim as wolves (the conceptual scenario)
  1.1′ It is symptomatic of those who are grim as wolves to prefers using violence to solve a problem

In "A story for Children and Adults", the traits of feebleness, grimness, gluttony, and stupidity cannot lead to taking deliberate decisions. Since the ability to foresee reality that is inherent in the intelligence agency/the fox cannot balance the attitude of the other assistants, the final decision of the King Elephant's camp to oppress the furious animals is justified by the trait-related propositions. Five propositions can be derived, expressing traits that lead to a preference for using (or not using) oppression against the protesters. From a pragma-dialectical perspective, these five propositions can be viewed, as starting points. The writer advances these starting points aiming to have them subsequently used as arguments supporting the sub-standpoint "The regime will use violence against the protesters". If one of these propositions is not acceptable, the acceptability of the standpoint put forward decreases.

Each proposition reflects one aspect of the conceptual metaphor that is dominant in a specific part of the narrative: each reflects a conceptual *scenario*. Following Musolff, the term "scenario" is used to denote "ensembles of little scenes or story lines" that are built up by "conceptual clusters that focus on a few aspects of 'common-sense' knowledge and experience" of a specific conceptual metaphor.

"Scenarios provide the main story-lines in perspectives along which the central mappings are developed and extended" (Musolff, 2004: pp. 17–18).[92]

To give an example, what is exactly evoked in the initial scene (the meeting of pro-King's camp) by the conceptual metaphor "THE SECURITY APPARATUSES AS WOLVES" is the story-line of a predator animal that tends to take violent actions in confrontational situations. How the wolf acts in this meeting is justified by this specific scenario. Argumentatively speaking, the proposition inferred from the specific conceptual scenario is put forward to support the (sub-)standpoint stating that a specific political actor acts (or will act) in a certain way. It is a symptomatic argument scheme, since the fact that it can be expected that this or that action is carried out is seen as a sign of possessing a specific trait. A scenario, when viewed in its place in an argumentation structure, consists of an argument and its unexpressed premise. In the example of the wolf, if the argumentation supporting the wolf's action involving a preference for violence is taken out of the whole argumentation structure, it can be schematized as follows:

1 The security apparatuses prefer the use of violence against protesters
  1.1 The security apparatuses are grim as wolves
    And 1.1′ It is symptomatic of those who are grim as wolves to prefer using violence to solve a problem

This simple structure clarifies that the scenario used in the conceptual metaphor is manifested in 1.1 and 1.1′.

To take the donkey as another example, Al Aswany's readers can identify the media supporters as the real counterpart of the donkey. The loud bray of a donkey can be grasped as a metaphorical representation of the foolish speeches in politics

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92. Musolff's characterization of the term 'scenario' seems compatible with Fillmore's (1975) general concept of "sense" as "any kind of coherent segment of human beliefs, actions, experiences or imaginings" and Lakoff's (1987) more specific definition of "scenarios" as "idealized cognitive models" (ICMs) that have a relatively rich ontology. Lakoff views scenarios as "structured by a SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema in the time domain".They are consisting "typically of people, things, properties, relations and propositions"; among the relations are "causal relations, identity relations" and a "purpose structure" (1987: pp. 285–286). Another term for this kind of rich conceptual structure is "script", which has been advanced in artificial intelligence (AI) research (Schank & Abelson 1977: pp. 36–68; Taylor 1995: pp. 81–92). Like *scenario,* the term *script* has useful associations with the domains of drama and film plots, in that it conveys the idea that an action sequence constitutes a whole that can be 'scripted' and prepared and then put into action, and later described and assessed according to its 'scenic' quality. The main difference between Lakoff's and the AI's concepts on the one hand and Musolff's understanding of *scenarios* on the other is the theoretical status of these constructs. Instead of being introduced a priori, in Musolff's study "scenarios" are posited as categories that reflect documented clusters of individual tokens of domain elements in the corpus (see Musolff, 2004: pp. 17–18).

that those supporters used to deliver in supporting Mubarak's regime. Among the possible aspects of the conceptual metaphor at issue, the invoked scenario is that of a thoughtless, stubborn animal which, because of its stupidity prefers to use its physical abilities rather than its mental ones. When preference for the use of violence is advanced as a standpoint supported by this specific scenario, the argumentation structure can be schematized as follows:

1 The media supporters prefer the use of violence against protesters
  1.1 The media supporters are thoughtless as donkeys
  1.1′ It is symptomatic of those who are thoughtless as donkeys to prefer using violence

I have explained now how the conceptual aspects of an allegorical beast fable are formulated as propositions presented in a narrative form, and how these propositions can take their place in an argumentation structure. In the next section, I will discuss in detail how an allegorical beast fable can be reconstructed as a critical discussion aimed at resolving a difference of opinion.

6.6 Reconstructing an allegorical beast fable as a critical discussion

In raising the question "Which is the criterion for regarding a discourse or text as argumentative that is not explicitly presented as such?" van Eemeren and Grootendorst state that there is no easy answer. "The most natural criterion is whether argumentation is advanced or not. If argumentation is advanced, the exchange is, at least partly, aimed at removing genuine or supposed doubt regarding a standpoint. A discourse or text can only be regarded as indubitably argumentative – at least in part – if the speech act of argumentation is carried out" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: p. 97).

The problem that may arise in a specific case at issue is that it is unclear whether the speech act of argumentation is carried out or not. Solving this problem requires establishing whether the identity conditions (both the propositional content condition and the essential condition) are fulfilled through the utterances expressed in the text. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst formulate these two kinds of conditions as follows:

> The propositional content condition: The constellation of statements S1, S2 (,...., Sn) consist of assertives in which propositions are expressed.
> The essential condition: Advancing the constellation of statements S1, S2 (,...., Sn) counts as an attempt by S [the speaker] to justify O [expressed opinion or a standpoint] to L's satisfaction, i.e. to convince L [the listener] of the acceptability of O.
> (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984: p. 43)

In order to show that the propositional content condition is fulfilled, it should be systematically explained that the author is held committed to performing a constellation of assertives. I have shown in Section 5.3 that applying the narrator = author equation solves the attribution problem. In "A Story for Children and Adults", the same equation applies: in a story published as a political column, no gap between the author and the narrator is assumed. All the propositions that can be derived from the story are thus attributed to Al Aswany.

Based on the speech-act-based approach to fiction I have discussed in Section 6.2 and the conceptual aspects of an allegorical beast fable elucidated in Section 6.6, three different types of propositions can be inferred from an allegorical beast fable. The distinction between these types is based on the way in which these propositions are derived:

1. Conceptual-scenario-based propositions derived from the identification of characters
2. Propositions derived by a change in the references from fictional to realistic elements
3. Propositions derived from fictional speech acts

Some propositions can be derived from specific utterances of the text by replacing the reference (indicating fictional elements) of the sentences with other references (indicating real elements). In the final scene, for instance, the giraffe addresses the King elephant, saying:

> A. Old elephant, your reign has come to an end today. I still remember how the animals had high hopes at the beginning of your reign, but you surrounded yourself with the worst and dirtiest animals, and now you can see the result for yourself

In this fragment, the giraffe performs a fictional assertive, among others, with the propositional content "you surround yourself with the worst and dirtiest animals". At the non-fictional level of the text, a parallel proposition can be derived: "Mubarak has been surrounding himself with the worst and dirtiest assistants".

Generally speaking, the speeches of a narrative character may imply a description of one or more of the character's traits. In the illustrative case at issue, the way in which the giraffe, for instance, talks shows its courage and efficiency to act as a leader. These traits cannot be justified by referring to the conceptual metaphors and scenarios as in other cases, since (in the shared cultural values of the writer and his readers) the giraffe is an animal that has no distinctive stereotypical traits. The following fragment illustrates this point:

B. At this point, the wolf snarled and said: "Since when did we have to take those wretched animals into account? We decide what we want and they just obey our orders"
Suddenly, the wolf shouted out, "Who are you and what do you want?"
The giraffe shouted back, "We are the inhabitants of this jungle and we have grievances we want to submit to the elephant king,"
"This isn't the time for grievances. The king is tired and busy. Go away."
The giraffe swung his long neck right and left, "We won't go away until we've submitted our grievances."
"How dare you be so bold!"

The wolf knows well who the animals are and what they want. This can be inferred from the initial dialogue between the four assistants (the fox, the wolf, the pig and the donkey), in which the fox says:

C. …I have heard that all the animals in the forest are coming this way in a protest march led by the giraffe … The problem is not with the giraffe. All the animals are disgruntled and we have to negotiate with them.

In its reaction, the wolf only opposes the fox's preference for negotiating, and it can therefore be concluded that the wolf agrees on the other propositional contents the fox has uttered. The wolf replies:

D. I am sorry, fox. We won't negotiate with anyone … Now we need to be tougher than ever. We own everything. We have a trained army of dogs fierce enough to subdue any animal that lifts its head against us.

Accordingly, one of the felicity conditions for performing the wolf's earlier two directives ("who are you and what do you want?") is not fulfilled as the wolf can be considered as insincere in raising his questions. Since asking about what they want is a sequel to asking about who they are, it can be inferred that the wolf is in fact saying something else. The wolf may be making an indirect evaluative statement asserting that such demands related to political power and distribution of benefits (what they want) should not be made by such ordinary animals (who they are). So, the wolf can be held by the reader to performing an indirect assertive with the propositional content "You should not have done that".

However, the giraffe's response to this indirect assertive reflects that it chooses to ignore this fact. Its answer is an assertive with a propositional content stating who they are and what they want, in a manner that implies the giraffe's ability to use the conversation for its own purpose.

By performing the directive "Go away" (fragment B), the wolf presupposes that he has an institutional position over the inhabitants of the jungle that allows him to give them orders. The giraffe's reaction, however, reflects that this order of social positions is an arena of conflict between the two camps: the elephant's camp insists

on maintaining this kind of hierarchy, whereas the furious animals led by the giraffe challenge it and are willing to change it. Through the utterance of the giraffe "We won't go until we've submitted our grievances", a commisive is performed. One of its correctness conditions is that the giraffe is allowed to speak on behalf of other animals. The giraffe's speech manner, as explained by these two examples, is meant to suggest that the corresponding political actor has the characteristics of a leader. The proposition inferred is thus "ElBaradei is a prudent leader".

Through these three types of derivation (identification of characters, change in the references, and inference from textual segments), the *propositional content condition* for the speech act of argumentation is happily fulfilled: the story, as a constellation of statements, consists of (indirect) assertives in which propositions are expressed.

With regard to the *essential condition*, the derived propositions must be reconstructed as support for the standpoint that is put forward. In an allegorical beast fable, and in narratives in general, for there are no explicit verbal indicators that indicate a relation of justification between some propositions and another. However, the plot gives a clue on how propositions support each other.

A story consists of events, including actions and happenings.[93] A story's plot is constituted by connecting some events to others. Such a connection requires causality, not only chronology. The resolution event of a story is not merely the event that succeeds the complication events and settles the conflict of the story, but it is also a probabilistic consequence of the complication events, the happenings, and the governing traits and motivations of characters. The working out of a plot (or at least some plots) is a process of delineating or narrowing possibility. The choices become more and more limited, and the final choice seems not a choice at all, but an inevitability (Chatman, 1978: pp. 46–51). This means that actions and happenings in narratives justify each other, and some of them lead to others.

Understanding a narrative text as a chain of causality provides a means of making a connection with an argumentative perspective. In cases in which narratives are aimed at resolving a difference of opinion, the standpoint is derived from the resolution event, and justified by arguments derived from some (if not all) preceding events and the characters' motivations and traits that lead up to the resolution.

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93. I follow Chatman in using the term 'event' to denote any change of state. Events are narrative predicates that include actions and happenings. Actions are done by the characters regardless of their specific type (verbal or non-verbal), whereas happenings are events taking place apart from the will of any relevant specific character (e.g. an eruption of a volcano). Actions of characters are rooted in their traits which create motivations. A trait is defined as the narrative adjective tied to the narrative copula when that replaces the normal transitive predicate. The actual verbal adjective, of course, need not appear. But whether inferred or not, it is immanent to the deep structure of the text (Chatman, 1978: pp. 44, 125).

In "A story for Children and Adults", for instance, the victory of masses of animals over the King elephant and his clique, which is depicted in the resolution scene, is allegorically interpreted as the proposition "the Egyptian protesters will succeed in bringing Mubarak's regime down". This proposition functioning as the standpoint is supported by the allegorical interpretations of the events that make it possible: the rage of the animals, the preference of the King's camp to use oppression, and the withdrawal of some guard dogs.

I have explained that the identity conditions of the speech act complex of argumentation are happily fulfilled in the case of presenting an argumentative discourse by means of "A Story for Children and Adults". The pursuit of analytically reconstructing the text at issue as a critical discussion is thus justified.

In a pragma-dialectical reconstruction, "the desired analytic identification of the discourse or text is achieved by interpreting each of its components from the perspective of the resolution of a difference of opinion, and thus examining whether, and in what way, it is relevant in this connection. On this view, the relevance of every speech act is related to the specific and subsidiary purpose of the stage of the resolution process in which it is performed" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: p. 96).

In reconstructing a text as an argumentative discussion, four transformations must be carried out in order to identify the relevant speech acts from the perspective of a critical discussion, and to provide an analytic overview of the text: deletion, addition, substitution and permutation (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: pp. 100–110). In the case of a political allegorical beast fable, each of these transformations is performed by the analyst in a specific way.

The transformation of deletion is implemented in leaving out all narrative events that cannot be interpreted allegorically in some way or another. All animal behavior that reflects the very nature of animals and has no political parallel must therefore be deleted. In "A Story for Children and Adults", a phrase such as "The giraffe swung his long neck right and left" is deleted. Some utterances that are used for describing the settings are also deleted. Although some of these utterances can give clues for completing the allegorical interpretation of the story, they do not necessarily lead to deriving propositions that contribute to the difference of opinion. The following fragment from the initial scene is an illustration:

> E. The old elephant was under the big tree on the riverbank, the place where he usually met his assistants, but this time he could not stand on his own four legs, so he knelt down and his trunk rested on the ground beside him. He looked so completely exhausted that it was a major effort for him to keep his eyes open and follow what was happening around him.

The riverbank may parallel Egypt, as it is widely known as the country where the River Nile's estuary is located, and it was historically entitled "gift of the Nile". The

big tree may suggest Cairo; the biggest Egyptian city. These are some semantic clues which reinforce the specific allegorical interpretation. However, they have nothing to do with supporting the rebellion against Mubarak.

A common instance of addition, the second transformation, is making explicit the communicative force of standpoints and arguments in cases where it is left implicit. Unexpressed premises are also made explicit by means of the reconstruction transformations, and critical doubt regarding a standpoint is attributed to someone who raises the opposite point of view (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: p. 103). In the case of an allegorical beast fable, the most remarkable addition is to make the political situation explicit. Generally speaking, it is quite rare for a standpoint to be expressed explicitly (e.g. "my standpoint is that ...."). When an allegorical beast fable is used as a presentation of argumentative discourse, the standpoint is never expressed explicitly. This is because the standpoint is derived from the resolution scene, and then in an explicit formulation added to the analytic overview. In the case at issue, the proposition added is formulated as "My standpoint is that the protesters will succeed in bringing Mubarak's regime down".

The third transformation, substitution, "entails the replacement of formulations that are confusingly ambiguous or unnecessarily vague by clear ones, so that every part of the discourse or text that is relevant to the resolution of the difference of opinion is included in the analysis in an unequivocal way. Different phrasings of the same standpoint or the same argument that have the same meaning are, for instance, represented by a single standard formulation" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: pp. 103–104).

In the text at issue, and because of its allegorical feature, all assertive speech acts that together indicate what the standpoint advanced is and what the material starting points are come into being by virtue of applying this transformation. The three types of derivation mentioned in Section 6.6 (identification of characters, replacing the fictional existents and events by their real parallels, and inferring propositions from fictional speech acts) are variations of applying the transformation of substitution. For instance, a fictional dialogue is replaced by a series of propositions, each of which characterizes the attitude of a real political figure (paralleling the inferred intention of some story character). The following dialogue fragment displays the opinions of the fox, the wolf, the donkey and the pig concerning the best way to face the predicted protest march:

> F. ...the fox, which seemed tense and started the conversation, saying, "Brothers, our great forest is going through trying and difficult times. Our lord the old elephant is still suffering the effects of his recent disease and I have heard that all animals in the forest are coming this way in a protest march led by the giraffe." The donkey brayed loudly and said, "Why does this giraffe insist on causing trouble?"

> The pig whose body gave off a foul smell, squealed to object. "I suggest we kill this giraffe to be rid of him," he said.
> The fox looked at the donkey and the pig with disdain and said, "Really, I've never seen anyone as stupid as you two. The problem is not with the giraffe. All the animals are disgruntled and we have to negotiate with them and reach some compromise."
> The wolf howled and said, "I'm sorry, fox [...] We won't negotiate with anyone. The king of the jungle, the old elephant, is still alive, God preserve him, and his son, the young elephant, Daghfal, will succeed him on the throne."
> The fox smiled and said, "Let's be frank. Daghfal isn't fit to rule. He plays all the time and isn't responsible. Look what he's doing now."

The reader is intended to conclude the following propositions:

1. The intelligence agency prefers to contain the protests peacefully.
2. The security apparatuses prefer to repress the protests violently.
3. The stakeholders prefer to repress the protests.
4. The regime's supporters in the media prefer to repress the protests.
5. Mubarak is the nominal ruler of Egypt.
6. The pillars of his regime are the *de facto* rulers.

Other propositions can of course be inferred from the fragment, but I concentrated on the propositions that function as arguments.

Permutation, the fourth transformation, "requires parts of the discourse or text to be rearranged where necessary in the way that best brings out their relevance to the resolution process. Elements of one of the discussion stages which appear at an earlier or later point in the discourse and overlaps between different discussion stages are readjusted, and justice is done to their function in the resolution process" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: p. 104).

An allegorical beast fable is a simple narrative form as it is intended to convey political (or another type of) messages. It is therefore expected that its author does not employ playful narrative techniques. For this reason, it is typical for the narrative events of an allegorical beast fable to be represented in an ascending line where the complication of the story is narrated before its resolution. Accordingly, the standpoint that is presented in the resolution of the story typically follows the argumentation that is presented in the preceding parts. This order corresponds to a progressive presentation of argumentation, where the arguments are advanced in the argumentation stage before the standpoint is put forward in the confrontation stage.[94]

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94. Pragma-dialecticians distinguish two types of presentation of argumentation: retrogressive, when the standpoint is put forward before the arguments are advanced, and progressive, when the standpoint is put forward after the arguments are advanced. See van Eemeren et al. (2002: pp. 39–40).

Having carried out the four transformations, I can give an analytic overview of the text in order to "bring together systematically everything that is relevant to the resolution of the difference of opinion" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: p. 118). The overview states exactly which parties are involved in the dispute, what their procedural and material starting points are, which arguments are advanced, and how they are connected to each other.

In the case of "A story for children and adults", the analytic overview includes the following points:

1. The standpoint "The protesters will succeed in bringing Mubarak's regime down" is presented implicitly.[95]
2. The columnist plays the role of a protagonist, and the audience (the readers of his *Al Shorouk* columns) plays the role of an antagonist who is not highly expected to accept the standpoint, as I have explained in Section 5.1.
3. The material starting points from which the protagonist starts out are some selected political views on the main actors in the Egyptian political situation at that time. These views concern the tendencies that govern the choices of these actors, and the way in which they are expected to act in case the people taking to the streets. An allegorical beast fable imposes a constraint on the protagonist as a procedural starting point: the protagonist is not allowed to explicitly present the material starting points and standpoint(s). All propositions are implicitly presented as narrative elements.
4. The structure of the argumentation adduced in support of the standpoint at issue can be schematized as follows:

1 The protesters will succeed in bringing Mubarak's regime down
  1.1a Many, diverse Egyptians will participate in anti-regime protests
    1.1a.1a The Egyptian people are no longer afraid of repression
    1.1a.1b The regime's clique deprived them of all bounties
      1.1a.1b.1 They are the worst and the most unscrupulous
    1.1a.1c The regime will make no compromise with opposition representatives
      1.1a.1c.1a Most of the regime's pillars prefer to use violence

95. The speech act complex of argumentation that is performed in defense of this standpoint may be considered by readers as aimed at achieving the effects of both acceptance and provocation. Al Aswany, perhaps, intends his readers to accept his expectation and to participate in these prospective protests. However, I concentrate only on analyzing the inherent (or minimal) perlocutionary effect of the speech act of argumentation, not on any other consecutive (or optimal) perlocutionary consequences. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst make a conceptual and terminological distinction between two categories of perlocutionary effects: *inherent* and *consecutive*. Acceptance is the only inherent effect that is consciously intended when performing a speech act complex of argumentation, whereas other effects (e.g. participating in a political activity) are consecutive (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984: p. 24; van Eemeren, 2010: p. 36).

1.1a.1c.1a.1a The security apparatuses prefer using violent solutions
1. 1a.1c.1a.1a.1 The security apparatuses are grim as wolves
1. 1a.1c. 1a.1b The stakeholders prefer using violence
1.1a.1c.1a.1b.1 The stakeholders are gluttonous as pigs
1. 1a.1c.1a.1c The media supporters prefer using violence
1.1a.1c.1a.1c.1 The media supporters are thoughtless as donkeys
1. 1a.1c.1b Only the intelligence agency prefers a peaceful solution
1. 1a.1c.1b.1 The intelligence agency is cunning as a fox
1. 1a.1c.1c Mubarak has no considerable role in taking decisions
1. 1a.1c.1c.1 Mubarak is feeble as an aged elephant
1. 1a.1c.1d Most of the regime's pillars have too much trust in the capacity of security staff
1. 1a.1c.1d.1a The number of security staff is big
1. 1a.1c.1d.1b security staff are fierce and loyal as guard dogs

1.1b ElBaradei will act as a good leader of the protesters

1.1c None of the regime's pillars will be able to support Mubarak until the end
1.1c.1a The media supporters and stakeholders will be too confused to act
1.1c.1a.1 The media supporters and stakeholders are stupid as donkeys and pigs
1.1c.1b The intelligence will sidestep from the scene
1.1c.1b.1 The intelligence sidesteps losing battles as a fox does
1.1c.1c The security forces will not be able to suppress the masses
1.1c.1c.1 Some of the security staff will retreat from attacking the protesters
1.1c.1c.1.1 The security staff suffer from poverty and injustice as well

This analytic overview is instrumental in identifying the elements that come into being as a result of presenting the argumentation by means of the form of an allegorical beast fable. These elements are the conceptual-scenario-based propositions. An allegorical beast fable can be considered as strategically selected if these propositions are evidently topical choices adapted to audience demand. In the next section, I will investigate how Al Aswany employs these propositions to overcome the rhetorical exigency he is confronted with.

6.7 Strategic maneuvering in the "A story for children and adults" case

For a better understanding of the allegorical beast fable as a strategic choice, I shall investigate the strategic function that each of its components may perform. The first component is the correspondence between political actors and animals established by the use of conceptual metaphors and corresponding scenarios. The second component is the fable as a literary genre having a distinctive significance.

The propositions derived from the conceptual scenarios selected are topical choices that can be analyzed as contributing to enhancing the acceptability of the standpoint at issue. Presumably, using conceptual scenarios from a widely used conceptual metaphor is expected to be more acceptable, since such a metaphor functions as a shared premise that is part of the audience's frame of reference. It is to be taken in consideration that each of the specific scenarios invoked must be acceptable. Otherwise, a fallacy would be committed because the protagonist acted as though a certain proposition was accepted as a starting point while this is not the case. A violation of the sixth rule of a critical discussion "No party may falsely present a premise as an accepted starting point, or deny a premise representing an accepted starting point" would then be committed (van Eemeren et al., 2007: pp. 127–128).

In the illustrative case, the selected scenarios are not equal with regard to the acceptability of each. Among them, the conceptual metaphor THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AS A FOX is most widely used by Egyptians.[96] This conceptual metaphor is invoked in two scenarios. The first has to do with the capability of taking deliberate decisions after a thoughtful evaluation of reality. This capability is narratively depicted in the initial dialogue when the fox prefers to negotiate with the furious animals since it knows that their fear of repression no longer exists. The second concerns the withdrawal from battles in which winning is not guaranteed. ter the rebellious animals defeated the dogs, the fox.

G. ran off, leaving no trace behind him.

The two narrative scenarios are interpreted as follows: "The intelligence prefers a peaceful solution of the expected public rage" and "The intelligence will not support Mubarak when the revolution will erupt" respectively.

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96. Some examples can be given to support this claim. One of them is related to a TV drama. In the 1990s, Egyptian TV presented a famous series entitled "The Fox". It tells the story of an Egyptian intelligence agent who succeeded in obtaining information about secret meetings between Israeli intelligence officials and other countries' counterparts. A more recent example is calling the late, Omar Suleiman, the former head of the intelligence and the vice president of Mubarak, the "fox".

In order to examine whether these two propositions are acceptable to Al Aswany's audience, a brief overview of how the audience viewed the intelligence agency should be given. In the Egyptian situation before 2011, the different types of information publicly circulated about the so-called sovereign apparatuses were carefully filtered. Various measures of control were practiced not only over news discourse, but also over opinion texts and drama. Consequently, an ideal image of the intelligence agency was created and circulated. This image remained unchanged during the eras of Sadat and Mubarak.

Based on this view of the agency, the scenario of sidestepping is unlikely to be acceptable to the audience. Withdrawal from confrontations is not in agreement with an ideal image of patriotic and courageous intelligence agents. At the argumentative level, the reader as an antagonist may cast doubt on the argument "The intelligence will sidestep from the scene" considering it as unacceptable, or may (implicitly) put forward the argument "The intelligence agency will support Mubarak". Judging this argument unacceptable will weaken the acceptability of sub-standpoint (1.1c), "None of the regime's pillars will be able to support Mubarak to the end", which is supported by coordinative argumentation. Accordingly, the acceptability of the initial standpoint advanced by Al Aswany is weakened as well.

At the narrative level, however, the development of the fox's character (the fictional counterpart of the intelligence agency) is verisimilar and plausible. How the fox acts in the story seems plausible if the traits of its behavior are taken in consideration. Both scenarios mentioned above are typical of a stereotypical fox (due to the prevailing set of cultural values). A stereotypical fox is so cunning that he knows reality better than others, and gives up supporting anyone that is about to be a loser. The allegorical counterpart of the fox's sidestepping is that the intelligence agency will give up supporting Mubarak when it is clear that the protests are overwhelming. This counterpart is likely to be refuted as I have just explained, and herein lies a paradox. While a fictional action is plausible because it is viewed by the audience as verisimilar, its allegorical parallel is unacceptable in the light of a political frame of reference.

From a literary perspective, such a paradox resulting from the overlap between fictional lines and realistic lines is, according to Blackham, a distinctive characteristic of allegorical forms *per se*: "Any part of the allegory has a counterpart in the material allegorized, but at points the material may intrude into the narrative as a disruption, and at points the exigencies of the narrative may take over" (Blackham, 1985: pp. 190–191). This overlap can be deemed as a choice which an author may adopt or avoid. When a critical discussion is presented in the form of an allegory, this choice should be analyzed and evaluated in the light of the results achieved. In presenting an argument which is likely to be unacceptable in the form of a metaphoric scenario which is narratively depicted, and looks persuasive if viewed

within the story line, the arguer is likely to be considered as carrying out a fallacious move since the balance between reasonableness and effectiveness is derailed as effectiveness is achieved at the expense of reasonableness. Making use of the narrative form can be analyzed as instrumental in disguising the fallaciousness of this specific move.

For the sake of clarity, I give another, even more obvious example of the contradiction between the unacceptability of the arguments and the plausibility of the narrative counterparts depicting these arguments. The argument "The stakeholders are gluttonous as pigs" is implicitly advanced to support their preference for using repression against the protesters. The correspondence between pigs and stakeholders is likely to be accepted. This is because the public image of this group of people was extremely negative even from the point of view of some of Mubarak's supporters. The Egyptian drama, even in the state-run TV channels, had been steadily circulating a type of content in which businessmen and corrupt civil servants are exchanging benefits illegally. Furthermore, they were depicted as ready to even commit crimes for maintaining such interests. Therefore, the scenario of a greedy group (paralleling the pig) which uses decadent means to maintain its interests is acceptable to the audience. Consequently, the stakeholders' preference for using repression to protect their own interests may be acceptable as well.

Al Aswany later in the story narrates how the pig and the donkey behave during the battle between the furious animals and the trained dogs:

> H. The donkey and the pig were so stupid that they were unable to act until the animals mobbed them and finished them off.

The stupidity of the pig is accepted when viewed within the narrative rationale of the story and the cultural set of values shared by the readers. The particular scenario used in this fragment is of an animal (person, group, etc.) that is too stupid to take the right decision under pressure. Yet, the argument "the stakeholders will be too confused to act (as a result of stupidity)" is unlikely to be acceptable. The negative image of the stakeholders does not only include greed, but in some cases also grimness and revenge-taking, and in other cases fox-like compromises. Consequently, the stakeholders are, in contrast to what is predicted by Al Aswany, likely to support the regime by coercion or consent. So, again, what may be considered plausible at the story-line level (the way in which a pig acts), is not convincing when its political parallel is revealed. The allegorical presentation of the argumentation can be analyzed as a rhetorical endeavor to disguise the unacceptability of an argumentative move.

Unlike these two examples (THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AS A FOX – THE STAKEHOLDERS AS PIGS), the realistic content, not the plausible story lines, intrudes in the case of (SECURITY STAFF AS GUARD DOGS) as a disruption at some point. Inventing

a story that seems ratified as depicting a fictional world is not the priority. The priority is given in this case for presenting the political situation in a way that is acceptable to the audience. The conceptual metaphor (SECURITY STAFF AS GUARD DOGS) can be manifested in the scenario of a watchdog which is very loyal to its master and carries out whatever it is asked to do. It also evokes the scenario of preferring a violent task in the grimmest manner. These two scenarios are actually used to support the exaggerated trust which most pillars of the regime have in security staff. By contrast, no conceptual scenarios are used to support the expectation that some security staff will stop using violence. Their behavior is not justified by the dominant traits and motivations of guard dogs. In other words, the expected withdrawal of some security staff is not in agreement with the conceptual metaphor (SECURITY STAFF AS GUARD DOGS) in any of its scenarios that reflect how stereotypical guard dogs act.

The second component of an allegorical beast fable that can perform strategic functions are the connotations of the literary genre of fables. Al Aswany aims to overcome the predicament of convincing his audience of the acceptability of expectations about the response of different political actors to a prospective event. He attempts to present his argumentation in a way that gives the reader an impression of certainty, i.e. a way that presents the argumentation as incontestable, and thus makes the standpoint acceptable.

Defining the correspondence between animals and political actors in "A Story for Children and Adults" shows that ElBaradei is the only political actor who is not identified according to a conceptual metaphor. Presumably, the conceptual metaphor "ELBARADEI AS A GIRAFFE" could have been invoked. However, there is nothing distinctive about giraffes in the Egyptian culture in general, except for their tallness, which is politically irrelevant. Al Aswany, who was an enthusiastic supporter of ElBaradei before 2011, does not present him in a one-sided manner in his conceptual scenarios.

For both groups constituting Al Aswany's audience presented in Section 2.6, ElBaradei is expected to play a positive role in leading protesters on the road to political change. With regard to the *Al Shorouk*'s audience, the results of my quantitative analysis of the front pages showed that viewing ElBaradei as an effective alternative of Mubarak was on the political agenda of the newspaper. With regard to Al Aswany's followers, their appreciation of the Western set of values is likely to result in their support of ElBaradei. ElBaradei spent years serving in international institutions like the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency. His first announcement of the desire to play a political role was centered on the call for drastic constitutional amendments that are in accordance with the liberal democratic view of rights and freedoms. To conclude, for both groups of Al

Aswany's audience, the proposition 1.1c, "ElBaradei will act as a good leader of the protesters", is likely to be acceptable. Therefore, Al Aswany does not need to depend on a conceptual scenario in order to present ElBaradei in a particular manner.

On the other hand, Al Aswany attempts to present the pillars of Mubarak's regime in a one-sided manner to convince his audience that they would subsequently act in specific ways. In such a complicated political reality, it is challenging to argue that five groups and state apparatuses (the security commanders, the intelligence agency, the stakeholders, the media hypocrites, and the ordinary police staff) are expected to act in certain ways. Yet, these political actors are presented through conceptual metaphors that are narratively interconnected in order to simplify such a complicated reality.

The genre of fable is rooted in a long history of stories that claim to present the "truth": what is general and universal to human nature. Consequently, as a genre revered precisely for stasis, eternity, and closure, the fable is revived whenever a desire for ideological completeness, appears such as with the emergence of the neoclassical. Such completeness can be achieved by presenting ideological representations as a truism (Stewart, 1991: p. 16). This may explain the commonness of fables as educational tools, especially with children (Mazid, 2009: pp. p52). This is, as a rule, because the educational institutions (traditional ones at least) design their course content for children in a way that crystallizes what is considered as standardized and prototypical. By means of the fable, the impression of generality and absolute wisdom-possession is bestowed on the argumentation advanced, and thereby transferred to the standpoint. Supporting the expectation that the protesters will succeed in overthrowing Mubarak's regime by means of an allegorical fable contributes to making the argumentation advanced incontestable.

6.8 Conclusion

Supporting the expectation that protests will lead to bringing Mubarak's regime down, I have argued, goes against the frame of reference of Al Aswany's audience. This is because modern Egyptian history did not witness such a radical shift of power by means of massive protests. In addition, arguing in favor of complex socio-political expectations is in generally challenging compared to justifying natural scientific expectations.

Having integrated insights of Searle, Currie, and Garcia-Carpentero, I proposed a Searlean formulation of the speech act of fiction-making which has helped me differentiate between three types of speech acts performed by uttering a fictional text: (1) *authorial direct* speech acts of fiction-making; (2) *authorial indirect speech*

acts (assertives) that an author can be held committed to with a propositional content conveying the message of the text; (3) *fictional* speech acts performed by characters in the imaginative world.

Since the authorial direct speech acts of fiction-making made by Al Aswany in the specific macro-contexts of political columns cannot be considered appropriately performed, Al Aswany is thus regarded as violating the Principle of Communication. In order to remove this violation, it was necessary to view the fable as allegorical. A speech-act-based approach to fiction can thereby systematically determine when and how a fictional text as allegorical.

Readers of a political beast fable allegory can identify the corresponding political actors to the animals depicted in the story with the help of the conceptual aspects of metaphors constituting the text. The events of the fable evoke some mappings or scenarios of conceptual metaphors. These conceptual aspects may function argumentatively: the way in which a political actor acts or is expected to act is the standpoint that is supported by a specific conceptual scenario evoked.

Based on the speech-act-based approach to fiction and the understanding of the role conceptual metaphors play in the allegorical beast fable, I have categorized the propositions that can be derived from an allegorical beast fable into three types: (1) conceptual-scenario-based propositions, (2) propositions inferred by a change in the references from fictional to realistic elements, and (3) propositions derived by examining the fulfillment of the felicity conditions of the fictional speech acts.

The analytic overview of the illustrative case of this chapter has enabled me to highlight the strategic functions of using the conceptual-scenario-based propositions as arguments. Arguing by using this fictional form results in advancing as arguments propositions based on conceptual metaphors, presented in a form that is strongly related to wisdom and absolute truth. The use of an allegorical beast fable disguises the fallaciousness of some argumentative moves by exploiting the overlap between the narrative lines and the real ones. Some propositions that are unlikely acceptable to the audience are presented as narrative events that are in accordance with the conceptual metaphor evoked and the consequent scenarios. Al Aswany, as an arguer, makes use of an allegorical beast fable attempting to present a simplified version of a complicated reality as incontestable.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

The motivation of writing this book was to pay the attention of readers to the fact that the Arab Spring in Egypt, seen first and foremost as an anti-regime call for democratization, was not a result of Internet struggle, but also, and perhaps mainly, an outcome of a prolonged process of exchanging arguments and counter-arguments in more traditional macro-contexts such as political columns. This motivation was given substance by explaining how Al Aswany supported the feasibility of political change before 2011 by means of argumentation.

My theoretical and methodological choice was to basically adopt the extended pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation. Pragma-dialectics, let alone its vitality and coherence for almost four decades, is characterized by a position of integrity: reconciling descriptive and normative approaches into argumentation, and incorporating pragmatic, and recently rhetorical insights, into a dialectical framework investigating argumentative reality.

Fortunately, the selection of Al Aswany's columns which was based on criteria of prominence, consistency and popularity amounted to discussing columns that raise research questions on how the employment of fictional and narrative means and argumentation relate to each other; how the literary talent of an arguer can be systematically viewed as contributing to resolving a difference of opinion on the merits and also in favor of the arguer's aims.

In Chapter 2, an explanation was given of how a pro-democratization can ideally support his call; what the stock issues he should discuss are. A call for democratization by is an advocacy of a policy change at the national level. A pro-democratization advocate has to engage with his or her audience in two critical discussions in order to convince the audience of the acceptability of two propositions:

1. The status-quo (despotic, totalitarian, dictatorial) political system is no longer effective.
2. An alternative democratic system should be installed instead.

The audience can critically respond to the argumentation advanced by a pro-democratization advocate in defense of these two standpoints by asking critical questions depending on the argument schemes used. The pro-democratization advocate should anticipate these questions, and give answers to them that function

as argumentation in favor of the call for democratization. Some of the questions are related to the status-quo system (the status-quo group), and others are related to the alternative system (the alternative group). They together constitute the pro-democratization group of critical questions. These are the critical questions that should be anticipated and responded to:

1. Do significant living conditions problems at a national level really exist?
2. Is eliminating these problems (improving living conditions) really so desirable?
3. Does maintaining the existing political regime really lead to the occurrence of these significant problems?
4. Are there any other causes for the occurrence of these living conditions problems?
5. Will eliminating these problems (improving the living conditions) indeed follow when democratic measures have been taken?
6. Could the improvement of the living conditions not be achieved more easily and economically by another set of measures?
7. Does applying the proposed pro-democratic measures not have any serious negative side-effects that cannot be prevented?
8. Are the proposed pro-democratic measures feasible?

After combining the first and the second question in one question concerning the significance of the problems (Is eliminating these significant problems so desirable?), seven questions resulted which correspond to seven stock issues: harm, inherency, alternative inherency, solvency, alternative solvency, cost, and feasibility. The current study thus showed that these stock issues are not pre-established arenas of discussion that a policy-change advocate should go through. Rather, they are viewed as context-dependent, that is, the situational particularity of a policy-change discussion can lead to doing without an issue, or inventing more issues.

Analyzing the maneuvers made by Al Aswany in supporting the claim that political change is feasible required identifying the frame of reference of the audience he sought to reach by his columns. I envisaged a columnist's audience as consisting of two main groups, which may have two more or less distinctive frames of reference: the one includes all the readers having an interest in the newspaper(s) publishing his or her columns, so that they will encounter them; the other includes the followers of the columnist who are interested in knowing his views wherever they are published. Al Aswany's audience thus consists of the *Al Shorouk*'s inscribed reader, and his fans and followers.

In order to identify the inscribed reader of *Al Shorouk,* I highlighted the main points on the political agenda of this newspaper by conducting a quantitative analysis of the front pages of the newspaper in October 2009 and May 2010. I randomly selected these two months from the period in which Al Aswany had been writing for *Al Shorouk*, and classified the news stories appearing on front pages according

to the main political actor it tells about (the regime, the Muslim Brotherhood, the non-Islamic opposition, or the protesting activists), and the evaluation implied of this actor (positive, negative, or neutral). The analysis of the *Al Shorouk*'s front pages was instrumental in finding out the pragmatic commitments of the inscribed reader of *Al Shorouk* before 2011. It showed that such readers were enthusiastic about a 'moderate' political change led by trustworthy elites as they viewed the regime's performance with varying degree of negativity. The *Al Shorouk*'s readers judged non-Islamic political figures like ElBaradei and Amr Mousa as more effective in achieving political change. They might be interested in protest movements but were not so sure of their capability to launch a process of change. The way to political change they believed to be dependent on active crowds led by the non-Islamic elites.

The frame of reference of Al Aswany's followers was identified by designating the sub-stereotype Al Aswany is attached to: that of a writer belonging to the second wave of literary commitment. I showed Al Aswany as expressing a combination of different ideological orientations. His stature reflects an appreciation of the set of values of Western modernism, with some reservations concerning the how Western governments apply these values.

While the information provided in Chapter 2 was instrumental in explaining the intrinsic constraints determining the space of maneuvering available to Al Aswany, the argumentative characterization of Egyptian political columns presented in Chapter 3 Was aimed to identify the extrinsic constraints imposed on Al Aswany in his argumentative practices. Indeed, this chapter was a good opportunity to more thoroughly scrutinize this "Cinderella genre", as Alonso (2007) calls it, in order to do justice to its inherently argumentative character and estimate how it works as a political discourse.

The first step of this characterization was to define the institutional point of political columns as a communicative activity type. I explained that political columns come into being to realize the institutional point of the domain of journalistic communication, i.e. engaging citizens in the public sphere by providing them with specific biased and value-based information on a current event. Political columns realize this institutional point in the Egyptian context, i.e. they support democratic culture by stimulating a well-informed and critical public opinion that enables readers to act politically in a rational way.

I showed that the political column is a hybrid communicative activity type as it realizes its institutional point by implementing two different genres: information-dissemination and (indirect) deliberation. Contrary to the direct variant of deliberation, I argued, the implementation of the indirect variant does not necessarily lead to taking immediate political decisions or actions.

The second step in the argumentative characterization of Egyptian political columns was to examine the argumentativeness of these columns. Such an examination consists in identifying the extent to which a political column can constitute an argumentative discourse, so that the prototypical presentation of such an argumentative discourse can be compared to the stages in the ideal model of a critical discussion. I concluded that opinion articles are in general inherently or essentially argumentative. Consequently, even if there are no verbal indicators of the advancement of argumentation, an analyst should make an effort to analytically reconstruct the column as aimed at resolving a difference of opinion.

Political columns were shown to, broadly speaking, diverge from the ideal model of a critical discussion. Because they are strongly affected by the dominant informative activity type of press proceedings – news stories – a columnist cannot avoid starting with the opening stage in which information is provided related to a current event which is part of the material starting points. In my view, this characteristic reflects the special positioning of political columnists as primarily professional communicators rather than political actors.

The third step in the argumentative characterization was to define the empirical counterparts of the dialectical stages in political columns: the initial situation, the procedural and material starting points, the argumentative means and criticisms and the outcome. With the help of illustrative political columns published in Egyptian newspapers, I described each of the four empirical counterparts in terms of what is allowed and what is not. Not so much restrictions were discovered because a political column is a communicative activity type that is, to a great extent, informally conventionalized.

A further research can be conducted to examine how launching the electronic versions of newspapers changes the argumentative characterization of political columns. Ideally speaking, the readers of an electronic version are allowed to explicitly advance any opposite standpoints and/or counter-arguments whenever they want by leaving their comments. Thanks to the electronic versions, the columnists are now allowed to include web links to videos, documents on the Internet, or news stories functioning as arguments. Such an option can enhance the acceptability of the argument advanced because the reader can verify this argument. Readers are also allowed to explicitly contribute to determining the result of the discussion. Unlike the printed version of a newspaper, which allows only for a few comments selected according to the regulations set by the editorial board, the electronic version helps to turn the implicit discussion included in political columns into a *quasi-explicit* discussion in which an actual exchange takes place.

I concentrated in this book on analyzing how Al Aswany strategically maneuvers in his discussion of the "active people", "defeatable police" and "victorious people" topics. Five columns were selected as illustrative cases: "Egypt Awakened" and "the

Coming Civil Disobedience on April 6th." in which Al Aswany discussed the first topic, and "An Unfortunate Incident Befalling on a State Security Officer" and "Why was the General Screaming?" in which the columnist discussed the second topic, and finally "A Story for Children and Adults", in which he discussed the third topic.

I opened Chapters 4, 5 and 6 by elaborating how Al Aswany's audience roughly viewed the "active people", "defeatable police" and "victorious protesters" topics respectively in view of its frame of reference. I explained why the standpoints propounded in discussing these three topics were unlikely acceptable to Al Aswany's readers, and why therefore the argumentative predicaments confronting him were challenging. In this endeavor, I depended on various sources: the pro-regime discourses, movies, news discourse of non-governmental newspapers and my personal experiences.

The "active people" was highly contestable because the Egyptians in Mubarak's era were aimed to conceive themselves as innately inactive, politically indifferent, and over-dependent on the government. A political activist was stereotyped as an isolated male university, slightly intellectual, and highly individualistic, while the vast majority of the people show no interest in politics. So was the "defeatable police". This is because the police was viewed as Mubarak's own loyal army, which would respond harshly to any rebellion. However, most recent film representations had created an image of policemen as free employee with a variety of psychological traits. A policeman was depicted as not fully committed to the norms of the institution.

When we add to the last two observations about these topics that in the modern history of Egypt no shift of power had taken place as a consequence of massive demonstrations, it becomes clear that Al Aswany's readers would unlikely accept the "victorious protesters" topic; the state apparatuses that constituted Mubarak's regime were not expected to give up their support of Mubarak.

In the two columns analyzed in Chapter 4, I investigated how Al Aswany strategically maneuvers in selecting and framing the examples cited utilizing the lens of a novelist he has in order for them to be considered by audience as optimally representative and sufficiency. By making use of linguistic means (e.g. lexical choices) and employing narrative details, Al Aswany attempted to put an emphasis on the typicality of the examples/individuals cited. In doing so, he aimed to strength the representativeness of these examples. By applying the technique of "resorting to the hierarchally arranged examples", Al Aswany implies, I argued, that the thesis contested applies to much more examples which were not mentioned that are less typical and ordinary. The columnist is thus shown to strengthen the sufficiency of the cases cited. Sufficiency is also raised by carefully selecting as many, widely different examples as possible. Al Aswany was successful not only in framing the examples cited in supporting the "active people" topic, but also in framing the current events on which he comments addressing this topic.

In the three columns analyzed in Chapters 5 and 6, Al Aswany uses narrative and fictional techniques and forms. In Chapter 5, I explained how a narrative text can be analytically reconstructed as a part of a critical discussion. I suggested solutions for two relevant problems: the attribution problem and the derivation problem.

To solve the first problem, I followed Lanser (1981) in assuming that the narrator = author equation is applied in specific cases. In such cases, the propositions that can be derived from a story are attributed to the author and not to the narrator or the implied author. The communicative activity type of a political column is one of the contexts in which this equation is applied.

To solve the derivation problem, I viewed a narrative text as consisting of the narrator's discourse and the characters' discourse. In addition to the propositions that can be derived from the narrator's discourse as explicit norms and values, I suggested that the following focal points are helpful in deriving propositions that can be attributed to the author: the views that the story's plot supports, the textual space given to a character, and the way in which characters are presented.

I next investigated to what extent the narrative perspective Al Aswany adopted is exploited to overcome the rhetorical exigency he faces in discussing the "defeatable police" topic. For this purpose, I explained the potential strategic roles of narrative perspectives.

The narrative perspective is selected strategically if any of the aspects constituting it is shown to be a topical choice or a presentational device that is selected in adaptation to audience demand. Following Lanser's insights into the narrative perspective, the reader can derive propositions from the ideological stance (values, norms, evaluations, etc.). If the narrative text is an attempt to solve a difference of opinion, these propositions can function as (sub-)standpoints, starting points, and arguments. A certain part of the ideological stance can be a strategic topical choice if it is evident that the propositions concerned is adapted to audience demand.

In order for the proposition constituting a part of the ideological stance to be acceptable, the author can adopt other aspects of a narrative perspective that are instrumental to achieve the aim of being effective. The psychological, phraseological, and spatial-temporal stances can thus be presentational devices strategically selected in adaptation to the audience's demand. If the ideological stance adopted is controversial, the author may depend on his or her status and contact to enhance the acceptability of such a contestable stance. If well-established and designed, status and contact can be analyzed as an attempt to make the argumentation uncontestable.

Following Schmid's model (2010), I made use of his differentiation between a narratorial and a figural perspective. The perception, ideology, language, field of vision, and temporal manifestations of a narrative text can be attributed to the selection made by the narrator or one of the characters. The plausibility of narratorial

or figural perspectives affects the acceptability of the argumentation advanced by means of a narrative text. Therefore, selecting a narratorial or a figural perspective can be analyzed as a strategic choice.

In order to make the contestable standpoint acceptable in the third illustrative case, and thus to overcome the challenging rhetorical exigency he is confronted with, Al Aswany designs a specific narrative perspective for the column/story at issue. He presents his argumentation in a narrative form that allows him to evoke his preeminent pre-established status. Furthermore, in strengthening his contact with readers in order to balance the controversial stance, Al Aswany makes use of two means: (1) encouraging the readers to reconstruct the plot lines, and (2) a moderate use of linguistic taboos in accordance with audience demand.

In order to do the same in the fourth illustrative case, Al Aswany should have adopted a figural perspective that might have led to depicting the perceptual and ideological perspectives corresponding to the contestable argumentation advanced as plausible. However, the analysis of the linguistic choices in the segments at issue I gave showed that the linguistic perspective is much more narratorial than figural. My conclusion was that Al Aswany's design of the narrative perspective in the fourth illustrative case did not help to overcome the rhetorical exigency concerned.

In Chapter 6, I analyzed how Al Aswany maneuvers strategically by means of an allegorical beast fable to support the "victorious protesters" topic. For this purpose, I investigated how fictional elements can be analytically reconstructed as a critical discussion aimed at resolving a difference of opinion focusing on the fictional form at issue. I started out from giving a description of the type of speech acts performed in fictional texts. Integrating the insights of Searle (1975), Currie (1990), and Garcia-Carpintero (2013), I presented a Searlean formulation of the speech act of fiction-making. In fictional forms that are intended to convey political messages, such as the allegorical beast fable, three types of speech acts occur:

1. Direct authorial fiction-making speech acts by which the author invites readers to imaginatively attend to the fictional content.
2. Indirect authorial assertives that can be derived (or inferred) from one or more direct authorial speech acts. The content of these speech acts is related to the political situation concerned.
3. Fictional speech acts which are performed by fictional characters existing in the imaginative world.

In order to explain how an allegorical beast fable may contribute to the resolution of a difference of opinion, I discussed how indirect authorial speech acts can be derived from an allegorical beast fable. The propositions contained in these speech acts can be divided into three types according to the way in which they are inferred:

4. Conceptual-scenario-based propositions derived from the identification of characters
5. Propositions derived by a change in the references from fictional to realistic elements
6. Propositions derived from fictional speech acts.

Having made it clear how the text at issue is analytically reconstructed as a critical discussion aimed at resolving a difference of opinion, I provided a schematized structure of the reconstructed argumentative discourse taking place in the fifth illustrative case. I highlighted the role conceptual-scenario-based propositions play in supporting the standpoint. I concluded that, by virtue of the fictional form at issue, some of the propositions put forward express a simplified vision of reality. In a controversy on a complicated political reality, presenting the argumentation in this way can lead to accepting a simplified reality. Al Aswany succeeded in overcoming the rhetorical exigency concerned by presenting the institutions constituting Mubarak's regime in the most simplified way.

APPENDIX A

Egypt awakened

Although the Egyptian government officially ignored the arrival of Mohamed ElBaradei in Egypt, it did in fact send a clear message to Egyptians when the Interior Ministry detained several young people simply for urging Egyptians to go out and welcome him. The security .agencies also made it clear that they would not allow Egyptians to rally to greet ElBardei at the airport and announced they had mobilized eight thousand riot police to deal with anyone who gathered there. These unofficial- statements were leaked and some 'independent' newspapers published them on their front pages in the same form on the morning ElBaradei arrived in Egypt. I read these reports as I was preparing to go to the airport and I was certain that, given this campaign of intimidation, Egyptians would naturally be reluctant to go and welcome ElBaradei. It's true that greeting someone at the airport can never amount to a crime, even under the emergency law by which President Mubarak has governed Egypt for the past thirty years, but since when have the Egyptian police needed a charge to arrest anyone they want? Egyptian citizens know well the extent of the abuses committed by the security agencies. On many previous occasions the security agencies have not flinched from committing horrendous crimes to suppress demonstrators: beatings, detention, sexual abuse of protesters, and hiring thugs and calling in convicted criminals to shed protesters' blood while policemen look on without intervening. I knew that, and I told myself that although it is true that Egyptians like and support ElBaradei, it is also true that fear is a human instinct we have to understand. I braced myself not to be disappointed if only a meager number turned out. But as soon as I reached the airport I was taken by surprise by hundreds of Egyptians, who soon became thousands, all of whom had come to greet ElBaradei. They were not frightened by the government's terrorism or the threats of the security agencies. They wanted to prove to the whole world that they would support Mohamed ElBaradei and would work with him to recover the rights they have lost. The vast and impressive popular reception that Egyptians organized for Mohamed ElBaradei's return to Egypt conveys several important messages:

First, from now on no one can accuse Egyptians of being passive, submissive to injustice, disengaged from public affairs, or any other of those claims that no longer reflect the reality of Egypt. The thousands of Egyptians who conquered their fear and gathered at the airport to welcome ElBaradei were not professional politicians, and most of them did not belong to political parties. They were very ordinary Egyptians, like our neighbors or our colleagues at work, and they came from different provinces and different social classes. Some of them came in luxury cars and many came by public transport. They included university professors, professionals, students, farmers, writers, artists, and housewives, Muslims and Copts, women with and with-out veils and some wearing niqab. These Egyptians, different in every way, all agreed on change, on serious work to restore justice and freedom. Egyptian public opinion, once a hypothetical term, has now become a real popular force whose influence is growing day by day. That force revealed itself in all its strength on the day of the reception for ElBaradei.

Second, I congratulate Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei on the trust Egyptians have in him at the same time as I realize the weight of the responsibility thrown on his shoulders. The thousands of

Egyptians who stood all day to greet him are in fact representative of the millions of Egyptians who like him and trust him. I was standing in the middle of the crowd when an old woman came up to me and asked to speak to me in private. I took her aside and in a low voice she asked me, "Do you think the government will do anything to harm Dr. ElBaradei?" When I assured her that this was most unlikely, she sighed with relief and said, "May God protect him." For millions of Egyptians Mohamed ElBaradei has become a symbol of hope for change in every sense. Perhaps the deafening chants at the airport-"Here are the crowds, ElBaradei; there's no going back, ElBaradei" clearly reflect how much Egyptians trust ElBaradei and that they are confident, as I am, that he will never let them down.

Third, the truly exhilarating aspect of this reception was the great work done by thousands of young people of both genders, most of them university students or young graduates. These people form the power base of support for Mohamed ElBaradei, the unknown soldiers in organizing this historic reception. They set up Facebook groups to support ElBaradei, some of which attracted seventy thousand members, and they prepared well for the reception, using their technical expertise to set up an extensive and effective communications network on the Internet. Several days in advance they prepared and distributed everything necessary: maps of the airport and specific instructions on how to get there by public transport or by car. They even drew up an emergency plan in case the police prevented them from entering and set up a dedicated hot line for people to call if they were detained. The names of the organizers should be recorded on a roll of honor: poet Abdel Rahman Youssef, Heba Elwa, Ahmed Maher, Amr Ali, Bassem Fathi, Nasser Abdel Hamid, Abdel Moneim Imam, and dozens of their colleagues, who really set a high standard for bravery and orderly and systematic national action.

Fourth, from the start the security forces decided not to block people because the international media were all present at the airport and would have caused a major scandal, which the regime did not want, if security had attacked ordinary citizens who had come to greet a respectable public figure who is well-known internationally. Another reason is that the security agencies were confident that Egyptians would be frightened off by the threats and the detentions and that the number of people at the airport would be insignificant. The security agencies did not interfere with the people already inside the airport, but when the number had grown to several thousand, police officers began to harass people just arriving. They kept out all those carrying banners in support of ElBaradei and anyone they suspected was coming to greet him. When ElBaradei's plane landed, the arrival hall was chock full of people chanting slogans and singing songs. But security prevented ElBaradei from coming out, and closed the gate on the pretext of maintaining his safety. The fact is that security could easily have protected ElBaradei but the decision to keep him back was basically political, because to have ElBaradei emerge surrounded by thousands of chanting supporters in front of the western media was more than the regime could tolerate. Security officials took ElBaradei out through another gate, far from his supporters, but he sent them a message through his brother, Dr. Ali ElBaradei, saying he would come to greet them. The thousands stood around waiting until ElBaradei's car appeared and he saw for himself the people's genuine enthusiasm for him.

Friday was a wonderful day in my life because I truly felt I belonged to a great nation. I will always remember the atmosphere of sincerity and enthusiasm I experienced. I will not forget the sight of the thousands of people chanting "Long live Egypt" or singing the national anthem. Some of them could not control their feelings and wept. I will not forget the people eagerly discussing what ElBaradei should do now that he is back in Egypt. They were speaking with the affection and intimacy of friends, though they were meeting for the first time. I will not forget the man who came with his wife and their pretty little girl with two plaits, who sat on his shoulders carrying

a picture of ElBaradei. I will not forget the people who gave out mineral water and cold drinks to those present. I will not forget the dignified woman in the hijab, the good-hearted Egyptian mother who brought with her several packets of fine dates. She opened them one after the other and started to give them out to people standing around that she did not know. When someone said, "No, thank you," she gave them an angry look, then smiled and said, "You must eat something. You've been on your feet all day and you must be hungry. Please have some."

This is the Egypt that has woken up, an Egypt that from today onward no one can enslave, treat with contempt, or oppress.

Democracy is the solution

APPENDIX B

The coming civil disobedience on April 6th

Last summer, I was in a visit to Sweden and invited to dinner with some intellectuals and writers. A Sweden writer who speaks Arabic fluently sat down next to me. She inquired how things were going in Egypt. I was surprised when she asked me:

– What is up about April 6th Youth Movement?

It was normal to ask her about what she knew about the movement. She told me the following story:

– After the April 6th civil disobedience in 2008 which succeeded in all of Egypt, a Swedish newspaper hired me to make a lengthy interview with one of the labor leaders who participated in the civil disobedience. I went to a factory where I got to know one of them. I requested him to spend a full day in his house so that I can be acquainted with his daily life with the family. He immediately accepted and took me to his house.
– And what did you find there?
– I have never imagined that such poor people really exist. This worker was living with his wife, mother, and four children in a very tight apartment, though the monthly wage that he was paid was not enough for only one person to live a decent life. This is unfortunately how millions of Egyptians live. It was amazing that in spite of their bad conditions, this worker and his family received me with a great hospitality inviting me to lunch. I felt that they are really happy about my being among them. In the end, a weird thing happened.
– What happened?
– At the end of the day, I bade farewell to them feeling pity for their poverty. I also thought that I wasted their time paying them no money, whereas I would be paid a lot of money for the article I would write about them. I took out of my wallet a hundred euro note, and put it surreptitiously under a cigarette extinguisher. Then, I said goodbye to them and left. Do you know what happened later?
– What happened?
– After minutes of walking in the street searching for a taxi, I saw the worker's daughter (named Marwa and is ten years old) running after me until she caught up with me. She then stretched out her hand with the hundred euro note, and told me breathlessly: "My father thanks you and says that he doesn't need this money. He is a worker not a beggar".

Silence fell upon us. Her eyes glittered with emotion and said:

– This Egyptian worker has taught me an unforgettable lesson. I have been thinking a lot of what he did, and came to a conclusion: a man who suffers from this great extent of poverty, oppression, and injustice and is still able to maintain his courage and dignity – this man will inevitably triumph.

I remembered this dialogue while following up the wide acceptance of the call for a civil disobedience next April 6th. Syndicates, professionals, students, university professors, and many political movements explicitly announced that they will participate in the disobedience. Even the

Egyptians abroad expressed solidarity with the participants. They will organize demonstrations in front of the Egyptian embassies in Washington, London, Paris, and several other capitals. The April 6th. Youth Movement invested the success of the last year disobedience by specifying four demands for the civil disobedience of this year:

1. Raising the minimum wage to be 1200 Egyptian pound, so that the citizens can live in dignity, feeling that their and their children's future is safe
2. Linking wages to prices
3. Electing a constituent assembly to write a new constitution which guarantees the political and syndicate freedoms, and limits the terms of a president to be maximally two
4. Cutting off gas supply to Israel

These patriotic demands, if realized, would end the sufferings of all Egyptians. It is true that the success of the last year disobedience, the rise of April 6th. Youth Movement as an effective patriotic group, the widely positive response to the next April 6th. civil disobedience, in addition to tens of sit-ins and protests that are taking place every day in Egypt – all of that carry two highly important significances. The first is that the deterioration of living conditions in Egypt is unprecedented to the extent that a decent life became literally impossible for millions of Egyptians. The regime became a failure and entirely incapable of properly administrating the state. It is a pity that the daily-perceptible social anger in Egypt neither draws the regime's attention nor induces it to merely think about making a policy change. The regime simply no longer cares about the plaint of Egyptians because it is sure of its ability to abuse them at any moment. The regime is now preoccupied with preparing Gamal to inherit Egypt from his father (as if Egypt were a poultry farm), and all the government newspapers are busy with covering the stagy visits of Gamal to some villages. The inhabitants of these villages have been evacuated and replaced by some extras playing fabricated roles. We read odd news about a female peasant who requested a buffalo from Gamal, and how Gamal illustrated to some students how important the computers are in their lives (does this need any explanation?!). Interestingly, pro-regime hypocrite scribes were creative in showing how Gamal was touched by the misery of poor peasants. None of them asked: what caused them to be in such a disreputable status? Isn't it the policy of President Mubarak who ruled the country alone for a quarter of a century?! I advise Gamal Mubarak to try to persuade his father of executing a real democratic reform that will eliminate the misery of millions of Egyptians. This will be more fruitful than giving buffalos or pieces of cloth to the peasants on air.

The second significance is that Egypt has really changed. Whoever would have believed that young people in twenties would call for a civil disobedience through Facebook and Egypt would positively respond end to end?! I have met some of these young people and was impressed by them indeed. I saw in them the great Egypt, and found myself wondering: what inspires these boys and girls of their legendary courage?! How could they take to the streets confronting the riot police (the Egyptian occupation army), be harshly beaten, dragged off, detained and tortured in state security premises, and then released more determined to change their country?! How and when do these sons and daughters feel the love of Egypt?! They were born in the era of Camp David, comprehensive corruption, decayed education, and superficial media; the era of contempt of national issues and ridiculing the notion of dignity. They, however, could maintain their national awareness and moral rigidity which of a higher age. The youth of April 6th. are now representing a symbol for the aspiration of all Egyptians in justice and freedom.

The civil disobedience in which Egyptians will participate on April 6th. is successful even before it starts. It is enough that all Egyptians are willing to object to inequality, and to demand for their inalienable rights. The message the Egyptians convey is clear: The conditions in our country

cannot stay unchanged; it is the time for the regime which is responsible for the ordeal of Egypt and Egyptians to change; and it is the time for it to open the door for a real democratic reform that gives an opportunity for the actually qualified people to take the responsibility in order to fix what the failing and corrupt people spoiled. The four demands of April 6th. Movement are the national demands of all Egyptians. Whatever the repression practiced by the regime against the participants in the civil obedience protests might be, and even if the regime mobilized tens of thousands of riot police to beat and drag them, and even if the regime would jail the patriots accusing them of fabricated cases, whatever the regime would do, its ability to use repression will disappoint it soon. This is because the State Security Investigations, no matter how savage they might be, cannot torture all Egyptians. And jails, though so many, would not be able to accommodate all Egyptians. The civil disobedience of the coming April 6th. makes me optimistic about the future of Egypt, and as the Swedish writer said: "A man who suffers from this great extent of poverty, oppression, and injustice and is still able to maintain his courage and dignity – this man will inevitably triumph"

Democracy is the solution

APPENDIX C

An unfortunate incident befalling a state security officer

Last Saturday Amr Bey, an officer in State Security, finished his work unusually early and hurried home. He was happy because he would see his only daughter, Nourhan, who is ten years old and whom he rarely sees during the week. He usually comes home from work after she has gone to bed arid when he wakes up she's already at school. Amr Bey came in and greeted his wife, Nadia, who was in the kitchen, and then quickly headed to his daughter's room. He opened the door and found her studying. She was wearing a blue workout outfit and had her hair in a ponytail. He kissed her on the forehead and asked if she had had dinner. She said she would have dinner when she finished her homework. Amr Bey told her he would eat with her, then put out his right hand and patted her on the cheek. Suddenly Nourhan looked terrified and shouted, "Papa, there's blood on your hand!" Amr Bey looked at his right hand and to his amazement found it covered with congealed blood. Nourhan screamed in horror and her mother rushed in from the kitchen to find out what was happening. Amr Bey kept his cool and tried to reassure his wife and daughter. He went into the bathroom quickly and washed his hand with hot water and soap several times until he had removed all traces of blood. Then he dried it with a towel.

When he came out of the bathroom he found Nadia waiting for him. He kissed her on the cheek and smiled to reassure her. The couple went into the bedroom and Amr Bey started to take off his suit to put on his pajamas and go to bed. But as soon as he looked at his hand he shouted, "Nadia, the blood's come back!" It was no longer possible to ignore what was happening. Nadia dressed hurriedly and took him off in her car. Amr sat next to her and tried to contact the director of Salam Hospital, whom he knew well. He was holding his cell phone in his left hand because his right hand was completely covered in congealed blood. On the way to the hospital Amr began to wonder where all this blood on the palm of his right hand was coming from. He hadn't injured himself and he didn't remember bumping his hand into anything.

Amr Bey mentally went over everything he had done that day. He had arrived at the State Security offices at 1p.m. and before going to his office he had dropped in on his colleague, Tamer Bey, to make sure he had booked his summer vacation in Marsa Matrouh for August 1, so they could spend it together. Tamer Bey was in the same year as Amr at college and was one of his closest friends. Amr Bey went into Tamer's office and found him busy interrogating some Islamists who were members of the Wa'd (Promise) group. He saw a man hanging upside down by his feet- the position known as the dabiha, or sacrificial victim as the detectives gave him repeated electric shocks between his legs. The man was screaming in a horrifying way, while Tamer's voice boomed through the room. "You know what, mamma's boy, if you don't confess, I'll bring your wife, Bothaina, strip her naked, and have the soldiers do her in front of your eyes," he said. As soon as Tamer Bey caught sight of his friend, Amr Bey, his face lit up and he rushed to shake his hand. Then Tamer took him aside and assured him he had made the booking.

Amr Bey came out of Tamer Bey's office and decided to say good morning to his colleague, Abdel Khalek Bey, who was interrogating cement plant workers who were on strike. Amr Bey

went in and saw a man dressed only in his underwear, tied by the hands and feet, as though crucified, to a piece of wood they call "the Doll." The man's body was covered with bruises and wounds. Behind him stood a detective thrashing him with a whip while other detectives were busy beating him violently about the head and face. Abdel Khalek started shouting at him, "So you're acting the militant and the hero, are you? Very well, mamma's boy, I swear I'm going to make you kiss the soldiers' boots. I'll make you wish you were dead, but you won't be able to die." Amr Bey greeted his friend, Abdel Khalek, from afar and hurried off so as not to distract him from his work.

After that Amr Bey settled down in his office, where he interrogated two young men from the April 6th. Movement who had been inviting people in the street to come out and welcome Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei at the airport. The interrogation was easy because the men had arrived in his office completely exhausted after detectives beat and whipped them through the night, and in fact Amr Bey didn't have much to do. He gave the men the usual barrage of insults and was about to dismiss them, but he noticed that one of them was looking at him with a certain defiance. He stood up from behind his desk and slapped him on the face several times. This was the signal for the detectives to start a new barrage of kicks and cuffs. At this point Amr Bey shouted at the man, "Say, 'I'm a woman.' Come on!" The brutal beating continued but the young man refused to say, "I'm a woman." Amr Bey gave an order and the detectives started to drag the man about by his feet, with his head banging against the floor as they hit him with their fists and heavy boots until he lost consciousness.

That's all Amr Bey had done during the day. He went over it in his mind and did not see anything strange or unfamiliar in it. Quite an ordinary day. So where did this congealed blood come from? Amr Bey arrived at the hospital and found the director waiting for him in person. He gave him a thorough check-up and took a blood sample, which was analyzed immediately. With Amr Bey and his wife, Nadia, sitting in his office, the director read the results of the analysis several times, then took off his glasses and said, "Look, sir. People bleed from the palm of the hand in three cases: because of a wound, or because of an overdose of anticoagulants, or, God forbid, because they have a malignant blood disease. You're not injured, you haven't taken any anticoagulants, and the blood looks healthy. The fact is, sir, that your case is odd. Let's wait twenty four hours and hopefully the bleeding will stop."

The hospital director prescribed some drugs, gave the officer some bandages to stop his hand from bleeding, and asked him to stop by in the morning for a check-up. Amr Bey did not sleep all night and in the morning he heard his daughter, Nourhan, as she prepared for school. He decided not to go out and see her in case she was frightened by the sight of his bloody hand. He dressed with the help of his wife, who again went with him to the hospital director, who examined him and repeated with regret that there was no medical explanation for the bleeding. The director asked Amr Bey to continue with the drugs and the bandages.

Amr Bey went back home, called the office, and told them he was ill and would not come in that day. He spent a full day in his room, eating nothing despite his wife's insistence. He would sleep only for a few minutes before waking up to look at his hand and finding it always stained with blood. The next morning his wife came in and found him stretched out on the bed, apparently completely exhausted. But on his face she also saw a new and strange expression. Amr Bey struggled to his feet, dressed with his wife's help, and asked her to drive him to the office. There he went to the office of the general who was the director of State Security investigations and asked to see him. They let him in straight away. The general welcomed him and was upset when he saw the bandages on his right hand. "Hope it's not serious, Amr. What's the problem?"

Amr Bey told the general what had happened and the general scowled. “Strange story,” he said. “Anyway, take time off until you’re better.” But Amr Bey smiled and with his left hand produced a piece of paper that he placed on the desk in front of the general. The general .read it quickly and then cried out in disapproval, “What’s all this? Have you gone mad, Amr? Would anyone leave State Security?”

“I implore you, sir.”

“Give yourself a chance to think, my son. You’re one of the best officers in the department and you have a great future. Can you tell me why you want to leave the department?”

At that point, without speaking, Amr Bey held his bloody right hand in front of the general’s face.

Democracy is the solution.

APPENDIX D

Why was the general screaming?

The young men and women who came out to demonstrate in the streets of Cairo on April 6 did not break the law or do anything wrong. They only wanted to express their opinion. They were demanding freedom, justice, dignity, fair elections, the abolition of the emergency law, and constitutional amendments to ensure equal opportunities for all Egyptians to stand in elections. All of these demands are just and legitimate. So why were these youngsters abused and beaten, dragged off and detained? No respectable state in the world punishes its citizens in this brutal way just for expressing their opinions. What happened on April 6 will remain a shameful stain on the reputation of the Egyptian regime forever. The youngsters were surrounded by a cordon of riot police, who pressed in on them until they almost suffocated them, then the karate units of the police pounced on them, hitting the demonstrators on the head and body with thick sticks. I have never seen such barbaric methods used on protesters, other than by the Israeli army against Palestinian demonstrators during the Intifada. Why do Egyptians attack fellow Egyptians with such brutality? The young people were screaming and some had such serious injuries that the asphalt was covered with their blood, but the beatings did not stop.

Finally a man in his fifties appeared, well-built, swarthy, and dressed in civilian clothes, with a large prayer mark on his forehead. The man, addressed as "General" by the policemen, gave orders that the girls be taken out of the cordoned area one by one. "Bring me that whore over there," he shouted to his assistants in a voice like thunder. Immediately the men rushed off to drag the girl away from her colleagues. The youngsters fought hard to defend the girl, protecting her with their bodies and shielding her from assault, but the police attacked with such ferocity and inflicted so many injuries that in the end their resistance flagged and the police managed to remove the girl. They pushed her from behind and hit her until she was standing facing the general, who greeted her with a barrage of vulgar insults. He raised his hand and slapped her several times, then grabbed her hijab and removed it. Then he took hold of her hair and dragged her along the ground, kicking her as hard as he could as he went until he threw her toward a group of policemen, who kept hitting, slapping, and kicking her until finally they dumped her, a total wreck, in the police wagon. The image of the general attacking girls in the same way appears in all the video material that escaped confiscation by the police.

But I noticed something strange: while the general was attacking the girl and dragging her off, his face was contorted and he was incessantly screaming. He was making strange rasping, guttural noises as though it were he who was in pain, and I wondered: Why is the general screaming? It's obvious why the girl would scream when she was being savaged in the streets Within view of all the passersby. But the general who was hitting her, why would he scream? He was strong, powerful, and incomplete control of the situation. He had everything in his favor while the poor girl had nothing. His word was law and he could do what he wanted with the girl: hit her, slap her, drag her along the ground. Even if he killed her no one would punish him. So why was he screaming? In war a fighter might scream out loud in battle to frighten the enemy, but the general was not at war and he was not facing an armed enemy. He was attacking a defenseless girl who was almost dying of fright, pain, and a sense of humiliation and shame. Was the general

screaming as he attacked the girl in order to overcome the reservations of his subordinate police officers, some of whom might refuse to assault an innocent Egyptian girl who had not committed a crime or broken the law? Was he screaming in order to forget that his real duty was to protect this girl from assault rather than to assault her himself?

Was he screaming in order to forget that this girl, whose hijab he had removed and whom he was dragged along the ground, was just like his own daughter, whom he no doubt loves and cherishes and whom he would never allow to be insulted or harmed? If his own daughter had a difficult exam or just had a simple cold, the general would not be able to sleep without checking on her. Was he screaming because when he graduated from the police academy thirty years ago, he had dreams of upholding the law and justice and swore to protect the dignity, lives, and property of Egyptians, and then little by little he had been drawn into protecting the Mubarak regime, until in the end his mission was to abuse girls?

Perhaps he was screaming because he is religious, or at least considers himself religious, because he prays and fasts regularly; even performs the dawn prayer on time whenever he can, has gone on the hajj and on the lesser pilgrimage more than once, and has had the prayer mark on his forehead for years from all his prostrations. Perhaps he was screaming because he knows that he is over fifty and his death may come at any moment. He might die in a traffic accident or he might be struck down by some serious disease, or even, as happens with many people, he might go to bed one night in the best of health and in the morning his wife tries to wake him up and finds him dead. The general knows for sure that he will die and will stand before God, who will hold him to account, and on that day neither President Mubarak nor Interior Minister Habib al-Adli will be able to do him any good, nor even the prosecutor general, who has been shelving all the complaints against him for lack of sufficient evidence. On the great Day of Judgment, everyone will abandon him – the bodyguards, the informers, the riot police, the officers, his friends, his wife, and even his children. On that day his general's rank will do him no good, nor his ties to senior officials, nor his wealth. On that day he will stand as naked as the day his mother gave birth to him, weak and defenseless. He will tremble in tear at the judgment of the Creator.

On that day God will ask him, "Why did you assault a poor Egyptian girl who could not defend herself? Why did you hit her, drag her along the ground, and abuse her in public? Would you like it if someone did that to your daughter?" What will the general say then? He cannot tell God he was carrying out orders. Orders will not absolve him or spare him God's punishment for the crimes he has committed, despite the general's authority and influence, despite the tens of thousands of riot police and thugs and police karate units that, like vicious trained dogs, await one signal from him before they beat and abuse innocent people. In spite of all this overwhelming power, the general felt deep inside as he assaulted the girl that he was weak and wretched and unable to control himself and that little by little he was being drawn into committing horrendous crimes in order to protect Mr. president Hosni Mubarak and his family.

The general felt that the girl he was beating was stronger than him because she was defending truth and justice, because she was innocent, noble, pure, and brave, and because she loved her country and would defend it with all her strength. As they dragged her along the ground, kicking her with their boots, she did not beg, or call for help, or appeal to the brutes. She was chanting: "Freedom, freedom, long live Egypt, long live Egypt." And at that point the general had a strange feeling. He realized that tie could kill this girl, tear her body apart if he wanted, but he could never defeat her, or humiliate her, or break her will. He felt that despite all his power he was defeated and that it was this poor abused and violated girl who would triumph. At that point all the general could do was scream.

Democracy is the solution.

APPENDIX E

A story for children and adults

The old elephant was under the big tree on the riverbank, the place where he usually met his assistants, but this time he could not stand on his own four legs, so he knelt down and his trunk rested on the ground beside him. He looked so completely exhausted that it was a major effort for him to keep his eyes open and follow what was happening around him. Next to him stood his four assistants, the donkey, the pig, the wolf, and the fox, which seemed tense and started the conversation, saying, "Brothers, our great forest is going through trying and difficult times. Our lord the old elephant is still suffering the effects of his recent disease and I have heard that all the animals in the forest are coming this way in a protest march led by the giraffe."

The donkey brayed loudly and said, "Why does this giraffe insist on causing trouble?"

The pig, whose body gave off a foul smell, squealed to object. "I suggest we kill this giraffe to be rid of him," he said.

The fox looked at the donkey and the pig with disdain and said, "Really, I've never seen anyone as stupid as you two. The problem is not with the giraffe. All the animals are disgruntled and we have to negotiate with them and reach some compromise."

The wolf howled and said, "I'm sorry, fox[…] We won't negotiate with anyone. The king of the jungle, the old elephant, is still alive, God preserve him, and his son, the young elephant, Daghfal, will succeed him on the throne."

The fox smiled and said, "Let's be frank. Daghfal isn't fit to rule. He plays all the time and isn't responsible. Look what he's doing now."

They all looked over at the young elephant and found him rolling happily in the grass, flapping his vast ears, sucking water up his trunk and then spraying it on his body. He did indeed seem to be too fun-loving and carefree for the difficult times the jungle was going through.

The fox continued:'11 I ask of you is that you keep quiet and leave me to come to terms with the angry animals."

At this point the wolf snarled and said, "Since when did we have to take those wretched animals into account? We decide what we want and they just obey our orders."

The fox smiled and said, "You would be wise to realize that the situation in the jungle has changed. The animals today are not as they were yesterday. Being tough won't work any longer."

"On the contrary. Now we need to be tougher than ever. We own everything. We have a trained army of dogs fierce enough to subdue any animal that lifts its head against us."

The fox was about to speak when suddenly the sound of all the animals together rang through the jungle. A mixture of all the species – rabbits, chickens, cows, buffalo, sheep, cats, and monkeys, and even fairground monkeys – joined the march. They advanced from all over the forest, with the elegant giraffe striding at their head. They came close to where the old elephant was lying. Suddenly the wolf shouted out, "Who are you and what do you want?"

The giraffe shouted back, "We are the inhabitants of this jungle and we have grievances we want to submit to the elephant king."

"This isn't the time for grievances. The king is tired and busy. Go away."

The giraffe swung his long neck right and left. "We won't go away until we've submitted our grievances."

"How dare you be so bold!"

The fox intervened and said, "Okay, calm down, giraffe. What are these grievances?"

The giraffe replied, "This jungle belongs to all of us but we see none of the benefits. You rule the jungle in your own interests and don't care about the other animals. All of the benefits go to the donkey, the pig, the wolf, and the fox. The other animals do an honest day's work but still don't have enough food for their children."

The wolf was about to speak but the giraffe continued with gusto: "The situation in the jungle has hit rock bottom in every way. You have indigestion from eating too much while we die of hunger. We can't take it any longer."

The rebellious animals cheered at length in support of the giraffe, their leader. The wolf stuck his head out and shouted, "Go away. I don't want to hear what you say. Off you go!"

"We won't go." It was the giraffe who spoke and it seemed clear that he would not back down. At that point the wolf looked up and gave a long howl, and instantly dozens of trained dogs appeared and started to growl defiantly at the animals. In the past the sight of these dogs had been enough to strike terror into the hearts of the jungle inhabitants, but this time they stood their ground against the dogs. Amazed, the donkey said, "They're not afraid of the guard dogs. My God! What's happened to our jungle?"

The giraffe said, "Wolf, you and your colleagues have to understand that we're no longer afraid of you. We're no longer afraid of anything, even death. Either you give us our rights or we'll have to fight you."

The guard dogs advanced in combat formation in a semicircle, ready to attack. They opened their mouths, showed their sharp teeth, and started to snarl. The sigh.t was truly frightening but the giraffe did not flinch. "You're in a strange position, you guard dogs," said the giraffe. "You're fighting us on behalf of the elephant and his assistants, although you really belong on our side, not on theirs. Just like us, you are victims of injustice and poverty. We've all lost the same rights. Why are you supporting the despotic elephant against us? He's using you and when he no longer needs you he'll throw you by the wayside."

Some of the dogs seemed to hesitate. The giraffe went on the attack and all the animals attacked behind him. The dogs grappled with them savagely. Much blood was spilled and many dead fell on both sides. The strange thing is that many of the dogs were moved by what the giraffe had said and did not take part in the fighting, which enabled the animals to triumph over the other guard dogs. When the fox realized that defeat was certain he ran off, leaving no trace behind him. The wolf crouched on the ground, then made a single pounce at the giraffe, digging his powerful teeth into its chest. But despite the severe pain and the copious bleeding, the giraffe climbed to its feet, thought hard, and then aimed a firm kick at the wolf's head, crushing its skull instantly. The donkey and the pig were so stupid that they were unable to act until the animals mobbed them and finished them off. Then the animals found themselves face to face with the elephant king and his son, Daghfal.

The giraffe went up to them and said, "Old elephant, your reign has come to an end today. I still remember how the animals had high hopes at the beginning of your reign, but you surrounded yourself with the worst and dirtiest animals and now you can see the result for yourself."

In a tired voice, the old elephant replied, "I've always done what I thought was right. If l made any mistakes then forgive me."

"We'll treat you with respect," the giraffe said, "because you were once a good elephant. We'll let you leave peacefully with your son, the young elephant, Daghfal. Go now and never come back to this forest. We've suffered enough from your corrupt and oppressive governance."

The old elephant nodded his head, lifted his trunk slowly and with difficulty, and looked almost grateful.

The giraffe turned to the animals and cried, "The reign of tyranny is over, never to return!"

The animals all cheered, declaring with enthusiasm their joy at freedom.

Democracy is the solution.

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In *Strategic Maneuvering for Political Change*, the author analyzes five political columns written before 2011 by Al Aswany, a prominent Egyptian novelist, using the lens of the extended pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation. What these texts have in common is the use of narrative, fictional and semi-literary techniques to strategically maneuver in supporting the feasibility of political change. It is a contribution to explain how an anti-regime writer paved the way to the Arab Spring in Egypt, and thus goes against a common opinion that the Arab Spring in Egypt was fortuitous or a wholly social-media-based movement.

This monograph is an attempt to help argumentation theorists, linguists, analysts of narratives, and political scientists better understand and evaluate how fiction and narration can be effective means of persuasion in the domain of political communication. It therefore reconsiders the non-straightforward and artistic variants of the language of politics.

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