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Characterizing Reflective Diary Writing as an Argumentative Activity Type
Caractériser la rédaction d'un journal réflexif comme un type d'activité argumentatif

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Article abstract

This paper is focused on the practice of unsolicited, reflective diary writing as an act of externalizing internal dialogue. I suggest that it should be analyzed as an argumentative practice from the point of view of pragma-dialectics. In the first part of the paper, I demonstrate that internal communication can be examined from the perspective of pragma-dialectics because it is in line with its meta-theoretical principles (especially socialization and externalization). In the second part, I suggest that reflective diary writing should be conceived of as an argumentative activity type. I show that this practice is a conventionalized activity type that is preconditioned by implicit norms governing the conduct of argumentation.

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Characterizing Reflective Diary Writing as an Argumentative Activity Type

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Abstract: This paper is focused on the practice of unsolicited, reflective diary writing as an act of externalizing internal dialogue. I suggest that it should be analyzed as an argumentative practice from the point of view of pragma-dialectics. In the first part of the paper, I demonstrate that internal communication can be examined from the perspective of pragma-dialectics because it is in line with its meta-theoretical principles (especially socialization and externalization). In the second part, I suggest that reflective diary writing should be conceived of as an argumentative activity type. I show that this practice is a conventionalized activity type that is preconditioned by implicit norms governing the conduct of argumentation.

Résumé: Cet article se concentre sur la pratique de l'écriture non sollicitée et réfléchie d'un journal comme un acte d'extériorisation du dialogue interne. Je propose qu'elle soit analysée comme une pratique argumentative du point de vue de la pragma-dialectique. Dans la première partie de l'article, je démontre que la communication interne peut être examinée du point de vue de la pragma-dialectique parce qu'elle est conforme à ses principes méta-théoriques (en particulier la socialisation et l'extériorisation). Dans la deuxième partie, je suggère que la rédaction d'un journal réflexif soit conçue comme un type d'activité argumentative. Je montre que cette pratique est un type d'activité conventionnalisé qui est préconditionné par des normes implicites régissant la conduite de l'argumentation.

Keywords: argumentative activity type, argumentative characterization, internal communication, pragma-dialectics, reflective diary writing

1. Introduction

Diary writing is usually conceived of as an activity through which diarists record their personal experiences, observations, reflec-

tions, or comments from a first-person perspective in the moment of writing (see van der Wal and Rutten 2013; Fothergill 1995; Paperno 2004). It is typically thought of as the diarist's written monologue: van der Wal and Rutten (2013, p. 1, fn. 1) conceive of it as writing in which the diarist's "I" is continuously present in the text as the writing and describing subject; Gillespie (1999, p. 623) considers it an affirmation of the authorial "I," i.e., a forthright and uncensored expression of the diarist's right to her or his own persona, written by and for the "self." In this paper, however, I adopt an alternative perspective according to which diary writing can also be conceived of as a specific type of intrapersonal communication: communication in which the diarist conducts an internal *dialogue* from various I-positions and externalizes this dialogue through the process of writing (see van Dijck 2004, Androutsopoulou et al. 2020; Geheran 2011; Zittoun and Gillespie 2012; Zittoun 2014; Svačinová 2021).

I am concerned specifically with the activity of so-called *unsolicited reflective diary writing*,[1] wherein the diarist writes a private diary in an effort to process some incomprehensible experience (see Lejeune 2009, p. 195; Fothergill 1995, pp. 84-85; Zammuner 2001, p. 4; Zittoun and Gillespie 2012, pp. 12-13). Reflective diary writing, from this perspective, can be conceived of as a specific variant of intrapersonal communication in which the diarist externalizes a specific type of internal dialogue: by presenting, confronting, comparing, and criticizing various views and possible interpretations from different I-positions, the diarist tries to find the most appropriate and most satisfactory interpretation of a given experience. Here, I consider the argumentative character of this activity: the diarist deals with a difference of opinion regarding the interpretation of the given experience, takes on, through different I-positions, the role of multiple communication as well as discussion partners, and presents and confronts different interpretations of the given experience in an effort to reach a solution to the internal difference of opinion.

[1] In this paper, I also refer to this practice with the abbreviated term *reflective diary writing*.

This paper aims at characterizing the activity of reflective diary writing as a type of argumentative practice, thus enabling the study of this phenomenon from the point of view of argumentation theory, particularly pragma-dialectics (see van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984; 2004; van Eemeren 2010). I have two goals here. First, I intend to show that internal dialogue externalized through reflective diary writing can be conceived of as an argumentative discourse from the point of view of pragma-dialectics. Although pragma-dialectics has been developed primarily for the purpose of analyzing argumentation in social discourses, I believe that internal dialogue can be theorized in terms of pragma-dialectics as it is in line with its meta-theoretical principles. Second, I intend to show that reflective diary writing can be conceived of as a specific argumentative activity type impacting the course and character of critical dialogue from the point of view of pragma-dialectics. I use the tools of extended pragma-dialectics, which allow us to describe the argumentative character of a certain type of communication practice by identifying its institutional point, communicative genre, and the impact of specific conventions on the course of individual stages of critical dialogue. I show that reflective diary writing is a specifically conventionalized activity type that is preconditioned by implicit norms governing the conduct of argumentation.

The structure of the study is as follows: In section 2, I deal with the concept of internal dialogue externalized through reflective diary writing and show that it aligns with a pragma-dialectical perspective, especially with respect to two of its meta-theoretical principles: socialization and externalization. In section 3, I present the concept of the communicative activity type theoretically and then apply this concept to characterize the internal dialogue generated during unsolicited reflective diary writing. I specify the institutional point and communicative genre of this communicative practice. Through argumentative characterization, I show how the generation and externalization of internal dialogue during this activity impacts the course and character of argumentation.

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2. Diary writing as an argumentative practice from the point of view of pragma-dialectics

Pragma-dialectics is based on four meta-theoretical principles: socialization, externalization, functionalization, and dialectification. These four principles refer to the systematic combination of pragmatic and dialectical angles in developing pragma-dialectics: the parallel development of research on communication and interaction together with the normative study of argumentative steps in rule-governed critical exchanges (see van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984; van Eemeren et al. 1993, p. 13-15; van Eemeren et al. 2014, p. 523). Argumentation is considered to arise in response to, or in anticipation of, disagreement with another language user (socialization) and is to be regarded as a purposive activity (functionalization) that is aimed at solving the disagreement through a rule-governed critical discussion (dialectification), by explicitly or implicitly performing speech acts that bring along specific commitments to which the discussants can be held (externalization) (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, pp. 4-18).

When theorizing about *internal dialogue* recorded through the activity of diary writing from a pragma-dialectical perspective, the principles of socialization and externalization especially could seem to exclude this activity from being labelled argumentative in pragma-dialectical terms. In sections 2.1 and 2.2, I address these principles explicitly to demonstrate that research on the activity of diary writing as a specific argumentative practice is relevant from the perspective of pragma-dialectics.

2.1 Socialization

An important feature of the pragma-dialectical approach is the focus on argument as a communication and interaction phenomenon; argumentation is viewed as a bilateral process. It always assumes two distinct roles in the argumentative exchange (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, p. 9). Socialization of argumentation is achieved in pragma-dialectics by the distinction between the roles of parties included in the argumentative exchange and by considering the speech acts performed in this exchange as part of the argumentative dialogue between them. In this sense, the prin-

ciple of socialization does not necessarily presuppose the existence of two distinct individuals or groups of individuals conducting a dialogue, but generally of *two parties* capable of accepting different argumentation roles. The roles that the parties hold in dialogue are associated with positions they have adopted with regard to the difference of opinion. Parties accept the roles of *protagonist* and *antagonist*, and along with those roles, they accept commitments. The protagonist accepts a commitment to defend the standpoint, respond to potential criticism, and submit additional arguments if requested. The antagonist accepts the commitment to raise doubts and critically test the sustainability of the standpoint and arguments. Together, they attempt to reach a solution to the difference of opinion.

Theorists of argumentation investigating the character of intrapersonal argumentation consider that research on internal argumentation is possible if we think of the individual as being able to accept different argumentative roles (see Billig 1996, p. 142; Baumtrog 2018; Greco Morasso 2013; Greco 2017, p. 333; Rocci, 2005, p. 101; Zampa and Perrin 2016, p. 10). Particularly in pragma-dialectics, van Eemeren and Grootendorst explicitly admit that internal dialogue can be argumentative:

> This [argumentation conceived as a bilateral process] can also apply where only one person is involved: if a language user doubts his own standpoint and as it were tacitly disagrees with himself about the acceptability of an expressed opinion, then effectively we have *two parties* adopting different points of view in respect of an expressed opinion. This may give rise to an *interior dialogue*. Even in this special case someone has to be convinced and we may therefore speak of a bilateral or *social* process. (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, p. 9, italics in original; see also 2004, p. 120)

When theorizing about the internal dialogue a diarist conducts with herself or himself, we consider the diarist as capable of accepting two different argumentative roles, along with the commitments belonging to those roles. To capture the dialogical character of one individual's mind, it seems useful to utilize the terminological apparatus developed by *dialogical self theory* (Hermans 2001,

2003; Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010). The idea that the process of thinking can be conceived of as a form of dialogical communication is based on the concept of "self" put forward by Vygotsky and Bakhtin. Vygotsky (1987) hypothesized that inner speech is a form of *internalized* dialogue that people learn in childhood; Bakhtin (2006) proposed the concepts of *dialogicity* and *polyphony*, according to which the self consists of various polyphonic dialogues, and beyond these collective dialogues there is no general position or perspective. Based on these perspectives, dialogical self theory suggests conceiving of the self not as a single unit, but rather as being multifaceted and complex. It considers that the self is organized as a dynamic landscape of autonomous internal or external[2] I-positions that continually influence each other through dialogical interchanges (Hermans 2003, p. 90).

The description of the behavior of I-positions and their mutual relations is reflected in dialogical self theory's analogy between I-positions and the functioning of a social system. Just like people in a social system, I-positions behave in a relatively autonomous way: each I-position is endowed with views, memories, wishes, motives, interests, and feelings. I-positions are described also from the perspective of hierarchical order and power relations: some I-positions are dominant, others are rather subdued, some are supportive, caring, and confidential, and others may tend to be fearful, derogatory, or critical (Hermans 2001; Nir 2012, p. 284, 2016, pp. 1-2).

The analogy between the functioning of the self and a social system is also used at the level of communication. According to Hermans (2001), communicative interactions between I-positions are in principle *dialogical*[3] and may be of different forms. For

[2] Dialogical self theory distinguishes between what are called *internal* I-positions, representing various aspects of the self's personal identity (I-as-daughter, I-as-ambitious-worker, etc.) and *external* I-positions representing significant others at different levels of generality (my mother, my employee, my religious community, my ethnicity, etc.) (Hermans 2001, p. 252).

[3] Internal dialogic activity is defined by the authors as "engagement in dialogues with imagined figures, the simulation of social dialogical relationships in one's own thoughts, and the mutual confrontation of points of view representing different I-positions relevant for personal and/or social identity" (Oleś and Puchalska-Wasyl 2010, p. 179).

instance, internal voices are "involved in a process of question and answer, agreement and disagreement. Each of them has a story to tell about his or her own experiences from his or her own stance" (Hermans 2001, p. 248). According to Nir (2012, 2016), internal dialogue can take the form of internal negotiating designed to reach an agreement when both sides have some of the same shared interests and other interests that are in opposition (Fisher and Ury 1981, p. xiii; Nir 2012, p. 287). She develops *negotiational self theor*y which suggests that:

> just as between people, whenever conflict erupts within the self and a decision is called for, the dialogical interchange between I-positions takes the form of a negotiation process. As the internal negotiation unfolds, contrasting I-positions come to the foreground to promote their standpoint, and advocate their unique perspective with the aim of influencing the decision. As arguments and counterarguments are presented, internal clashes erupt within the self. Like self-absorbed actors zealously fighting over the limelight, so I-positions battle for their place in the internal landscape of the mind. (Nir 2016, p. 2)

Thus, Nir develops the view of internal conflict as a difference of opinion between (at least) two I-positions, in which different I-positions present and defend different standpoints and defend themselves against the criticism of other I-positions by presenting arguments. In this sense, there is nothing to prevent the conception of the internal dialogue as being in accordance with the principle of socialization when conceived of as a dialogue conducted by an individual from two different I-positions accepting different argumentative roles.

2.2 Externalization

The principle of externalization is adopted in pragma-dialectics, according to van Eemeren and Grootendorst, in order to avoid "unnecessary guesswork about the motives" and "speculating about what [language users] think or believe" (1992, p. 10). According to this principle, analysts should leave aside the internal states of mind of discussants and should begin the investigation

from public commitments arising from language behavior, in essence, from the "obligations [that] are created by (explicitly or implicitly) performing certain speech acts in a specific context of an argumentative discourse or text" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, p. 54). The principle of externalization is directed against approaches that explain argumentation and its effects by means of speculation about internal processes in the minds of those who are arguing.

When theorizing about the internal dialogue diarists conduct with themselves, we consider it potentially externalizable into a verbalized and publicly accessible form based on which the obligations arising from the language behavior of individual participants of internal communication can be identified and analyzed. The key seems to be the use of an appropriate method of externalization of internal dialogue, especially in two senses: (a) the method of transferring internal dialogue into a verbalizable form in which the internal dialogue is accessible to the analyst, and (b) the method of externalization of the obligations of I-positions participating in the internal dialogue.

When considering the method of externalization into verbalized form, it should be mentioned that as Vygotsky showed (Vygotsky 1987, pp. 235-249; see also Alderson-Day and Fernyhough 2015, p. 932), internal communication is different in many respects from socially communicable, fully verbalized dialogue. The characteristics depend on the level of internalization. At the level of syntax, abbreviation is typical for internal communication, and at the level of semantics, a predominance of sense over meaning, development of hybrid words signifying complex terms (agglutination), and infusion of sense are typical. At higher levels of the process of internalization, inner speech can approach "thinking in pure meanings" (Vygotsky 1987, p. 249). Fernyhough, however, shows that the transformation process accompanying the process of internalization can also be conceived of as progressing in the opposite direction. He considers a process of *re-externalization* that allows inner speech to be externalized into a publicly communicable form (2004, p. 55).

Empirical studies of inner speech in the field of psychology (see Aveling et al. 2015; Gillespie et al. 2008; Zittoun and Gilles-

pie 2012) as well as argumentation theory (see Greco Morasso 2013; Greco 2017; Zampa and Perrin 2016) rely on the assumption that inner speech can be transferred into a verbalized form using relevant methods. I consider diary writing to be an activity through which people naturally externalize their inner dialogues into verbalized form. Such a method of externalization can be seen as a written version of the so-called *think-aloud method* that requires people to immediately verbalize everything that comes into their minds (see Surd-Büchele 2011; Svačinová 2021).

As shown by Svačinová (2021, pp. 243-244), conceiving of the activity of diary writing as a method of externalization of internal dialogue and using personal diaries as data to research the character of internal dialogue seems promising for three reasons: (i) diary writing can be characterized by contemporaneity or by the short interval between the internal dialogue and the action of writing it down (see Alaszewski 2006a, p. 45; Hyers 2018, p. 70; Gillespie 1999, p. 621). We can therefore expect that the diary entry reflects the true course of the inner interaction, including details that could be lost or forgotten if not quickly recorded, such as the switching between I-positions and their replicas. (ii) Unsolicited diary writing arises without the direct intervention or guidance of the researcher, and we can conceive of it as a natural method of externalization of internal dialogue. (iii) Diaries can be seen as "frozen" records of people's internal dialogues from different historical periods. By using diaries as data for research, we have access to internal dialogues even from individuals that are inaccessible in any other way.[4]

When considering the method of externalization of the obligations of I-positions participating in the internal dialogue, it should be understood that according to pragma-dialectics, the obligations that can be ascribed to the parties must be externalizable based on

[4] Diaries are also commonly considered in psychological—especially in dialogical self theory—research as data records of diarists' internal dialogues. In the works of dialogical self theorists, diaries figure as material either for analytical or illustrative purposes (Hermans 1996, 2001; Gillespie et al. 2008; Geheran 2011; Androutsopoulou et al. 2020). In research on internal dialogue in argumentation theory, diaries have been used for analytical purposes by Svačinová (2021).

one of three possibilities: they are (a) externalized by the parties themselves in the discourse, (b) externalizable from what has been said in the discourse, or (c) externalizable based on other grounds that can be understood in the discourse. In the case of diary writing, (b) seems to be relevant (see van Eemeren et al. 2014, p. 526). I consider that the text of a diary, which is the product of externalization through diary writing, also reflects the process by which it came into being. The text of the diary exploits certain linguistic characteristics that allow us to reasonably assume the dialogic character of the internal communication and to identify the I-positions from which the diarist spoke, the type of interactions between the I-positions, and the commitments accepted by the participating I-positions.

As pointed out by van Eemeren et al. (2014), in externalizing the commitments of the parties, logical as well as pragmatic insights concerning presuppositions and implications or implicatures can be exploited. They suggest utilizing a speech act perspective for this purpose. For example, the notion of "disagreeing," which is vital for characterizing the differences of opinion and the argumentative commitments of the parties, can be defined as "an opposition among speech acts interlocked within a common discourse activity" (van Eemeren et al. 2014, p. 256). To analyze the text of a diary, I suggest following the procedure proposed by Aveling et al. (2015). The authors propose a three-step method to analyze different I-positions and their interrelations based on linguistic characteristics of the text. The three steps consist of identifying voices of the self (or internal I-positions), voices of others (or external I-positions, inner others), and interacting voices, in essence, determining how the I-positions interact. The authors suggest identifying individual I-positions by examining the text using the following questions: "from which I-positions does the self speak?"; "what other voices (inner-others) can be heard?"; and "what are the interactions between voices of the self?" For each step, the authors propose linguistic indicators to identify dialogical aspects. For example, to identify internal I-positions, they suggest coding all first-person pronouns (singular and plural) as well as possessive determiners (Aveling et al. 2015, p. 673-675; see Greco 2016, p. 63). Aveling et al. also propose guidelines for identifying

conflict situations within the self, that is, for identifying differences of opinion within the self. The analyst should focus on finding the so-called "dialogic knots" in the text:

> 'Dialogical knots' are points of conflict or tension within autodialogue. These are often indicated by words such as 'but' or 'however', or by a sudden switching from one voice to another, suggesting underlying tensions within the dialogical Self. (Aveling et al. 2015, p. 682)

This method, therefore, allows us to identify individual I-positions and the replicas they exchange in dialogical interactions. At the same time, this approach allows us to focus specifically on those interactions, recording internal differences of opinion between individual I-positions.

3. Diary writing as a communicative activity type

Pragma-dialectics, in its extended form, contains the idea that the conventions of communicative activity types have an impact on the possible forms of argumentation (see van Eemeren and Houtlosser, 2005, 2006; van Eemeren 2010). The use of the extended pragma-dialectics model, therefore, enables us to expand our understanding of diary writing and consider it to be a specifically conventionalized communicative activity type that impacts the character of argumentation.

Levinson (1992) used the term 'activity type' to refer to rule-governed, institutionalized settings of communication. In pragma-dialectics, communicative activity types are conceived as

> conventionalized practices whose conventionalization serves, through the implementation of certain 'genres' of communicative activity the institutional needs prevailing in a certain domain of communicative activity (van Eemeren 2010, p. 139).

Argumentation theorists have thus far focused predominantly on researching interpersonal communication domains: political, legal, medical, and scientific domains (see van Eemeren 2016, p. 8). Theoretically, however, it is possible—and the initial analogy

between interpersonal and internal communication allows it—to extend this scope and to also apply the concept of communicative activity type to research into the character of intrapersonal communication (see Greco Morasso 2013; Greco 2016, 2017; Zampa and Perrin 2016; Svačinová 2021).

As explained above, I understand diary writing to be a communicative activity type that falls under the general domain of intrapersonal communication—that is, communication realized by the self from different I-positions. The general institutional point of this communicative domain is *to acquire adequate beliefs or decisions through internal communication with different I-positions*. On the more specific level of individual communicative activity types, however, particular institutional points can be distinguished that are instrumental for realizing the specific institutional point of the communicative activity type concerned.

As was demonstrated by Hermans (2018), different kinds of internal dialogue with more specific goals can arise in the mind using different communicative genres. Hermans distinguishes five types of internal dialogue: generative dialogue, negotiation, debate, persuasion, and command (2018, pp. 317, 321). All of these types of internal dialogue capture a certain variant of negotiation between I-positions, differing in the degree of dominance of the I-positions and the related a/symmetry of their mutual relations. For instance, a generative dialogue is defined by Hermans as "[t]he most symmetrical relationship (…) where both positions receive full space to become expressed in their own specific qualities with no position placed above all other positions on an a priori basis" (2018, p. 321). In contrast, a command, which is at the opposite end of the spectrum, can be characterized by the dominance of one of the I-positions and the suppression of the others: "[t]he command relation is highly asymmetrical in that one of the participants is highly dominant and leaves no space for others to express themselves from their own point of view" (Hermans 2018, p. 321).

Hermans considers that different types of dialogue are chosen in response to the need arising from a person's situation. According to him,

> the selection of a particular form of dialogue depends on the position and situation in which the communicators find themselves. Different positions demanded by particular situations require different forms of dialogue (2018, p. 320).

For example, a generative dialogue arises in a situation that requires new meaning to be created, such as in creative thinking, reading, or writing. A command, on the other hand, may occur in a situation that requires quick decisions to be made, such as a situation in which behavior that has just been implemented needs to be changed, which is perceived as undesirable—for example, the decision, "I'll stop this addiction" is of this sort (see Hermans 2018, p. 317). In this sense, intrapersonal communication can be considered a general communicative domain and the types of inner dialogue distinguished by Hermans can be seen as different communicative activity types that have been established in this domain to achieve specific exigencies of the self (see Svačinová 2021, p. 250). With regard to these exigencies, different conventions and sets of norms and rules that influence the character of the given internal communicative practices have been established.

Diary writing as an externalized version of internal dialogue can be conceived of as a very individualized, hybrid activity that can fulfill a number of the diarist's exigencies. Diaries do not capture in some sense "usual" or "prototypical" internal dialogue. They record the type of dialogue that arises within a specific context in response to a diarist's specific exigencies, and they serve as a means to meet those exigencies. Lejeune (2009, pp. 194-196) distinguishes four functions of diary writing: to express, reflect, freeze time, and take pleasure in writing. These functions, however, may be multiple, as well as interconnected, or they may be specifically reflected only in some passages of the diaries.

Not all forms of diary writing can be conceived of as being argumentative—for example, diary writing in which the diarist aims only to "freeze time" and create a personal "chronicle" is probably a completely non-argumentative communicative practice. When investigating the argumentative character of diary writing, the versions of diary writing in which the diarists attempt to interpret an incomprehensible experience (i.e., reflective diary writing) or

search for a solution to a life crisis situation (i.e., crisis diary writing) are particularly relevant. In both cases, we can expect the diarist to confront different perspectives and to try to reach agreement between I-positions about the acceptability of the suggested standpoint(s). The characterization of crisis diary writing as a communicative activity type has been proposed elsewhere (see Svačinová 2021).

In this paper, I focus on unsolicited, reflective diary writing, which can be conceived of as a specifically conventionalized communicative practice whose argumentative dimensions can be examined as an argumentative activity type (van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2005; van Eemeren 2010, p. 145). In order to determine how implicit conventions of this communicative practice regulate the conduct of argumentation externalized through reflective diary writing, it is necessary to (a) define this specific activity and (b) specify its conventions and their impact on the character of argumentation between I-positions in its individual stages.

3.1. Reflective diary writing

Rainer (1980) defines the reflection used in diary writing as "an observation of the process of one's life and writing. It seems to occur when you stand back, even if only momentarily, and see connections or significances that you had not noticed before" (p. 68). Zammuner (2001) describes the reflective function of diary writing as "allowing the person to elaborate reality by noting thoughts, comments, speculations (including not-so-personal ones) about events, activities, etc." (p. 4). Similarly, Zittoun and Gillespie (2012) refer to diary writing as an "elaboration of experience" (p. 12). According to Rottenberg-Rosler et al. (2009), when a diarist expresses herself reflectively, she is "conducting a continuous dialogue and seeking insight into her experience" (p. 136). The diarist "experiences a new and wider perspective of herself, and frequently uses verbs of thought, creating an imaginary audience and a dialogue with her past experience" (Rottenberg-Rosler et al. 2009, p. 136). Based on these general considerations, reflective diary writing can be provisionally defined as:

(a) an activity that is triggered when a diarist needs to process various types of incomprehensible experience; (b) is associated with a feeling of uncertainty and confusion about the meaning of a situation the diarist is experiencing. The diarist uses writing (c) to externalize the inner stream of consciousness, as (d) a tool for finding an adequate interpretation of the experience. (e) The activity of reflective diary writing can become part of a regular diarist's practice and can serve as a tool to make sense of everyday experiences.

Let me briefly elaborate on these aspects.

(a) Reflective diary writing can be used to examine an experience that is not fully comprehensible to the diarist at the time. Through reflection, the diarist examines the experience, tries to understand its meaning, and interprets it in relation to themselves. According to Baud (2001),

> [r]eflection involves taking the unprocessed, raw material of experience and engaging with it as a way to make sense of what has occurred. It involves exploring often messy and confused events and focusing on the thoughts and emotions that accompany them (p. 2).

Scholars point out that reflective diary writing is a tool that allows the diarist to gain some distance from the experience and elaborate on it (see Lejeune 2009; Zittoun and Gillespie 2012; Crowther 1999, p. 207). According to Lejeune (2009), "[y]ou take refuge in its calm to 'develop' the image of what you have just lived through and to meditate upon it (…)" (p. 195). Zittoun and Gillespie understand diary writing as "a process of exploration, elaboration, and transformation of experience" (2012, p. 12).

Through diary writing, diarists can process various types of experience; they can try to understand specific events or situations in their life and can make sense of their own ideas, emotional states, values, or relationships or make sense of how they relate to, assess, or evaluate them. Diarists can also try to understand other people, their thinking, emotional states, attitudes, behavior, relationships, or the world in gen-

eral (see Accardo et al. 1996; Burt 1994; McFerran and Scott 2013, pp. 14-15; Seiffge-Krenke 1997). The need for reflection may extend beyond events that have happened in the past to current and anticipated future experiences (Baud 2001, pp. 10, 12-15).

(b) An incomprehensible experience is typically associated with a feeling of uncertainty or confusion. At the moment of reflection, the diarist does not yet have an established interpretation of the event and does not know how to process it. Essentially, the diarist does not yet know what has happened/is happening/will happen or how they will evaluate/react to the situation. As Rainer (1980) points out, reflective diary writing is characterized by self-questioning:

> You might even begin a diary entry with an incisive self-reflective question: "What is the secret I am keeping from myself?" or "What is really bothering me?" The reflective voice can thus encourage the feeling, interior self to speak (p. 70).

The need to eliminate the uncertainty and confusion regarding the experience thus encourages the diarist to seek an adequate and acceptable interpretation.

(c) The diarist externalizes the process of reflection through writing. Zittoun and Gillespie (2012) refer to diary writing as "a process whereby the internal flow of thinking is translated into a semiotic and communicable form" (p. 8). According to Zittoun (2014), diaries are "natural laboratories" in which people "externalize their flow of thinking-discourse in a verbal form over a long period of time" (p. 102). The externalization of the inner stream of consciousness through diary writing is characterized by non-selectivity and immediacy. According to Rendall (1986), the expression of diarists is characteristically non-selective: "*quicquid in buccam venit*, whatever comes into the mouth goes onto the paper, without premeditation, without concern for formal or logical coherence, without guile; in short, without art" (p. 58). Diary

writing is also characterized by contemporaneous experience and writing. As stated by Alaszewski (2006a) "[t]he entries are made at the time or close enough to the time when events or activities occurred so that the record is not distorted by problems of recall" (p. 45).

(d) Dealing with an incomprehensible experience typically involves confronting and considering alternative interpretations. Scholars generally agree that diary writing usually has a dialogical form (Rainer 1980, pp. 70-71; Crowther 1999, pp. 208-210; Zittoun and Gillespie 2012, p. 11; Hubbs and Brand 2005, p. 62). Diarists typically address their thoughts to an (external) addressee or engage in a dialogue with themselves, letting various internal positions speak. The addressee can take on different roles. According to Crowther (1999), "[t]he addressee becomes anything from a record-keeper to a confidant, a confessor, a skeptic, a moral judge, a peer or a parent (critical or admiring), one's 'better self' and so on" (p. 209).

The dialogic form allows the diarist to take different positions on and formulate different interpretations of the incomprehensible experience. As Crowther puts it, "[w]ith each modulation of address, the writer is involved in putting on a slightly different performance, presenting different readings or inflections of the same life, different manifestations of the self" (1999, p. 209).

The diarist conducts internal dialogues that have an exploratory character; they allow various I-positions to speak and interact, which allows them to try out these perspectives: "some of what is going on in diary discourse is a kind of performance in front of a mirror, seeing how things look, trying out poses and voices" (Crowther 1999, p. 208). This explicit postulation and confrontation of different perspectives through internal dialogue allows the diarist to consider them and evaluate their acceptability.

(e) The need to reflect on experience through reflective diary writing may arise due to a significant current experience that

> is incomprehensible and may end when a suitable interpretation is found. However, reflection can also become part of a regular (routine) diary practice and serve as a tool for the diarist to regularly devote themself to examining everyday experience (see Lejeune 2009, p. 193). According to Rainer, several more or less formalized techniques for facilitating reflection have been established: writing from an alternative point of view, writing a letter that remains unsent, or writing in the form of dialogue (Rainer 1980, pp. 95-114).

3.2. Data

Here, I illustrate the practice of reflective diary writing with specific fragments of diaries that I obtained during the project "The forms of (self-)persuasion in personal diaries" funded by the Czech Science Foundation (GA ČR 19-14095S). When selecting the method of data collection, I proceeded under the assumption that gaining unsolicited diaries for research purposes would be a relatively difficult task (see Alaszewski 2006b; Rottenberg-Rossler et al. 2009) for the following reasons. First, we do not know the prevalence of diary writing in the population (Alaszewski 2006b, p. 61) and second, the practice of diary writing, as well as the diaries themselves, are often considered, by their authors, to be highly private or even secret, which can cause participants to feel distrustful and reluctant to provide their diary for research purposes (Accardo et al. 1996, p. 561; Zammuner 2011, p. 17; Rottenberg-Rosler et al. 2009, p. 137).

Therefore, *self-selection* seemed to be the most effective method of data collection, with participants joining voluntarily or actively expressing an interest in participating in the research. Participants themselves could decide whether they wanted to provide a diary (or a segment of one) and select a (number of) particular fragment(s) of the diary that seemed, from their perspective, to be relevant for the purpose of the research. I proceeded with the data collection by combining two different versions of the self-selection method: (1) a questionnaire distributed to university students and (2) informal inquiry addressed to colleagues and friends who expressed interest in the research.

(1) *Questionnaire*

The data collection using this method took place in two phases. In the first phase, I distributed a questionnaire survey regarding the nature of unsolicited diary-keeping and diary writing practice. I emailed 874 bachelor's and master's students in humanities, pedagogy, and economics at five Czech universities. The questionnaire was completed and sent back by 114 recipients (73 females and 41 males) aged 17–33 years, of which 66 recipients responded that they have in the past maintained or are currently maintaining a diary writing practice. Based on their willingness to participate in the following phase of the research (indicated by leaving an email address) and based on their answers indicating the typical needs that their diary writing meets,[5] I identified 10 participants that were suitable for the research. In the second phase, I contacted these participants by email with an offer of collaboration. I asked them to re-read their diary and to consider whether they were willing to participate in the research by providing 10–15 pages that conformed to the characteristics of crisis or reflective writing. In return, I promised participants financial compensation of CZK 2,000 (approximately €76). The diarists had a week to re-read their diaries and to consider their answers. After a week, I contacted them by email again with the offer. In this way, I managed to obtain seven diaries (six diaries from female diarists and one from a male diarist).

[5] Because the project "The forms of (self-)persuasion in personal diaries" focused on mapping argumentative practice through the activity of diary-writing, the cases of so-called *crisis* diaries and *reflective* diaries were desirable given that the occurrence of internal differences of opinion was expected. I therefore identified the potential participants based on their answers to the question about the need(s) diary-writing satisfies from the perspective of the diarist: "I write a diary mainly because writing allows me to: (You can choose more than one option)." Answers including one (or more) of the following choices were considered relevant: "get rid of the burden of emotions by writing them down," "confide in someone with your thoughts, wishes or problems," "analyze and rethink your past actions and decisions," "analyze and rethink your choices and decisions concerning the future."

(2) *Informal addressing*

In conjunction with the questionnaire method, I also utilized the method proposed by McFerran and Scott (2013): in informal conversations about my project with colleagues and friends, I found that several of them had maintained a diary practice of the desired type in their youth. Due to the fact that I also have experience with diary practice, it was possible to share experiences regarding writing with each other. Mutual trust led to two colleagues (both men) agreeing to provide me with part of their diaries for research purposes. As part of this method, I also included one diary from my youth in the sub-sample that was the subject of our discussions. In this step, I followed the method proposed by McFerran and Scott (2013, p. 1-2), according to which the researcher's own example can be an appropriate strategy for gaining the trust of close recipients and gaining access to diaries. In this way, I managed to obtain three diaries (one from a female diarist and two from male diarists). In total, I therefore worked with a sample of 10 diaries (seven from female diarists and three from male diarists).

In this paper, I use fragments from this collection for illustrative purposes. The names of the diarists, as well as the names of the people and places mentioned, have been anonymized.

3.3. Institutional point and communicative genre of reflective diary writing

Since the diarist usually employs the practice of reflective diary writing to process incomprehensible experiences of various types, the specific institutional point is *to find an interpretation of an incomprehensible experience that is acceptable to all participating I-positions*.

The communicative genre that can be implemented in pragma-dialectical terms to achieve such a point seems to be *negotiation*. In negotiation, the parties typically focus on each other (rather than a third party) with the aim of finding some kind of compromise, which usually consists of the maximum amount of agreement the parties can reach on the basis of the concessions each of

them is willing to make (van Eemeren 2010, pp. 149-150). The parties share a broad zone of agreement regarding starting points, and argumentation and criticism are incorporated in mutual exchanges between the parties. The discussion concludes with an outcome that is mutually accepted by the parties involved; it is not delegated to a third party. If the parties do not agree, they can return to the initial situation (van Eemeren 2010, pp. 149-151).

Van Eemeren (2010, p. 149, fn. 44) suggests that there are two types of negotiations: "integrative" negotiation, where the parties' interests are conflicting but not necessarily mutually exclusive, so it is possible to achieve an outcome in which both parties gain something and "distributive" negotiation, where one party's loss is the other party's gain. For the domain of internal negotiation, a similar distinction is suggested by Nir (2012, pp. 284-285, 2016, pp. 3-4), who distinguishes between the "integrative mode" and the "distributive mode" of internal negotiation. According to her, the integrative mode captures a win-win situation in which the conflicting I-positions can express their interests, and a solution is constructed that satisfies the interests of multiple I-positions. The distributive mode, on the other hand, captures a win-lose situation in which one dominant I-position takes the negotiating space and directs the decision in its favor regardless of the interests of other I-positions. In the case of reflective diary writing, with respect to the institutional point of the activity, I suggest conceiving of it as aligning with the integrative mode of internal negotiation.

3.4. Argumentative characterization of reflective diary writing

According to van Eemeren (2010, p. 145), if the communicative activity type is at least partly argumentative, it may be considered useful to offer its *argumentative characterization*. Argumentative characterization clarifies how argumentative discourse is conventionalized to serve an institutional point. By providing an argumentative characterization, it is possible to describe how internal dialogue implemented through reflective diary writing is specifically regulated in its individual stages. To grasp these specifics, van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2005, 2006; see also van Eemeren 2010, p. 146) propose a comparison between the empirical argu-

mentation practice in a particular communicative activity type with the "ideal model" of critical discussion. According to the ideal model, critical discussion goes through four stages in which standpoint and argumentation are critically tested. In order to characterize reflective diary writing, we must take into account specifically how the argumentation is impacted by the conventions of reflective diary writing by comparing it with the ideal model.

In the ideal model of a critical discussion, pragma-dialecticians distinguish four stages. In the confrontation stage, the standpoint and its critical reception are externalized. In the opening stage, common ground between the parties in terms of procedural and material starting points is established. In the argumentation stage, the protagonist defends the standpoint by means of argumentation, and the protagonist and antagonist together test the sustainability of the protagonist's argument. In the concluding stage, the results of the discussion are determined. Each of these stages of the ideal model has its empirical counterpart in argumentative reality. The empirical counterparts serve as the focal points for the argumentative characterization of a communicative activity type (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 2004; van Eemeren 2010).
In accordance with the method introduced by van Eemeren (2010, p. 146), I focus on the four counterparts he proposed corresponding to the stages of critical discussion. For the purposes of this paper, the initial situation (as a counterpart to the confrontation stage) can be described as the way in which conventions of reflective diary writing impact discussants' externalizations of a difference of opinion. Under procedural and material starting points (as a counterpart of the opening stage), we can list specific discussion rules and a set of factual and value propositions used in internal discussion. For argumentative means and criticism (as a counterpart to the argumentation stage), we can describe argumentative patterns and critical reactions that are typically used in reflective diary writing. Concerning the outcome of the dispute (as a counterpart to the concluding stage), we can describe conventions for determining the resolution of the discussion implemented through reflective diary writing (van Eemeren 2010, p. 146).

Initial situation

Reflective diary writing is prompted by an incomprehensible experience that can vary greatly with respect to topic and is typically accompanied by a state of confusion and uncertainty. As already pointed out, a state of confusion typically results in self-questioning. Let us illustrate such initial confusion with a fragment from the diary of Adam, a young man reflecting on his confusion about the emotions raised by an encounter with a young woman, Stella:

> A new person in my life. Stella. Who is she? What's going on? Where is it headed? What the fuck does this mean? I don't even know !![6]

Adam's confusion relates to one particular encounter with Stella and the emotions the encounter aroused in him. The state of confusion is accompanied by self-questioning ("Who is she? What's going on? Where is it headed? What the fuck does this mean? I don't even know !!")

Through the activity of reflective diary writing, the diarist tries to find an adequate (i.e., acceptable from the point of view of various I-positions) interpretation of the given experience. The diarist looks for an appropriate interpretation by presenting and testing the sustainability of various interpretations of the experience. Proposed interpretations of incomprehensible experience can therefore be understood as standpoints presented by different I-positions.

At the most general level, we can formally express the interpretation of an incomprehensible experience as a statement of the subject-predicate form: "X is Y." However, we consider that through the reflective diary writing activity, two types of standpoints are typically presented: (a) factual and (b) value.[7] The particular form

[6] In original (Czech): Nová osoba v mém životě. Stella. Co je zač? O co jde? Kam to směřuje? Co to kurva znamená? Nevím ani !!.

[7] As shown in Svačinová (2021, p. 252), a suggestion for action associated with a prescriptive standpoint ("The diarist should behave in way X") is typical for the form of diary practice known as *crisis diary-writing*; its goal is to find a solution to the crisis experienced (see Lejeune 2009, p. 195; Sederberg 2017).

of the standpoint depends on whether the diarist is trying to interpret what happened or rather determine their emotional/attitudinal relation to the experience. Standpoints can therefore typically be expressed in two general forms (Wagemans 2016, p. 7):

> (1) Person, event, thing, act, policy (X) has empirical property P (Y).
> (2) Person, event, thing, act, policy (X) is judged by diarist as J (Y).

The diarist considers the adequacy of the proposed interpretation from various I-positions. The initial difference of opinion, in the simplest case, is what is called *simple non-mixed*—a diarist proposes one interpretation of an incomprehensible experience from one I-position, and from another I-position raises doubts about such an interpretation. Such a doubt does not necessarily have to be raised explicitly; the diarist may only anticipate it. The origin of the non-mixed difference of opinion can be illustrated by the following fragment from the diary of Edith, a young woman who reflects on whether she is in love with her new boyfriend, Peter: [8]

> *And I'm probably really in love, because I write about it like that and I think about him* [Peter]*, and I'm even willing (perhaps for the first time in my life) to accept everything, to fight it and gradually to start tolerating and accepting it. Well, what if that's exactly what relationships are about?*[9]

[8] In the illustrative fragments, for the sake of clarity, I graphically distinguish the passage (italics, underlining) that is reconstructed as a statement from different I-positions (see Aveling et al. 2015). Distinguishing the passages graphically makes it possible to highlight the dialogical character of the diary entries (as reflecting the dialogical character of diary-writing) and also helps with orientation when reconstructing the arguments raised by the individual parties.

[9] In original: A já jsem asi fakt zamilovaná, protože si o tom takto píšu a přemýšlím o něm a jsem dokonce i ochotná (snad poprvé v životě) to všechno přijmout, poprat se s tím a postupně to začít tolerovat a akceptovat. No a co když je zrovna tohle to, o čem ty vztahy jsou.

From the I-position we can label as *I-as-in-love*, Edith presents a factual standpoint stating that she is in love with Peter ("And I'm probably really in love"). However, she simultaneously anticipates a doubt from another critical I-position, which we can detect from her need to present evidence to support the standpoint that demonstrates her amorous behavior ("because I write about it like that and I think about him, and I'm even willing [perhaps for the first time in my life] to accept everything, to fight it and gradually to start tolerating and accepting it.") The initial difference of opinion is simple non-mixed:

I-as-in-love
1 I am in love with Peter.

I-as-critic
[raises doubts]

There may also be a situation in which the interpretation presented by a diarist from one I-position is rejected from another I-position. In such a case, the second I-position is committed to defending the counter-standpoint in the general form: "X is not Y." In such a situation, a *mixed* difference of opinion arises between the I-positions. We can also expect that an alternative interpretation of the experience may be presented by one of the already participating I-positions or by a new, third I-position: "X is Y'." Such a standpoint may also be doubted or rejected from another I-position. In such a case, there is a *multiple mixed* difference of opinion because the difference is about the acceptability of more than one standpoint.
Let us illustrate the initial situation with another fragment from Edith's diary. Edith tries to find an adequate interpretation of her relation to housework in a household that she shares with her new boyfriend, Peter:

> *Today I washed and cleaned. I made some food ... I keep thinking about him* [Peter]. *Somehow I care from my own free will. And I think it's such a nice thing ... I don't mind.* (…) *It is strange. Sometimes so beautiful, idyllic, normal, human, relaxed, slow-moving, the way I've always wanted it. And I feel happy and*

> *grateful for what I have now.* But on the other hand, I also have states in which I think that this is simply not worth it, that it just slows me down and exhausts me.[10]

The entry can be conceived of as a particular dialogical knot where Edith, from two I-positions, expresses and confronts differing perspectives. The standpoints that the I-positions raise can be reconstructed as follows:

I-as-caring:

1 Household care fills me with gratitude and happiness.

I-as-exhausted:

1 Household care slows me down and exhausts me.

From the position of *I-as-caring*, Edith presents one standpoint. She claims explicitly that the household care fills her with gratitude and happiness ("And I think it's such a nice thing. … And I feel happy and grateful for what I have now"). From the position I-as-exhausted, she opposes this and offers an alternative interpretation of household care: it rather exhausts her ("I also have states in which I think that this is simply not worth it, that it just slows me down and exhausts me"). In this case, therefore, there is a multiple mixed difference in the diarist's different valuations of her role in the household care.

Procedural and material starting points

According to pragma-dialectics, starting points can be procedural or material. Procedural starting points refer to the distribution of argumentative roles and the rules of discussion. Material starting

[10] In original: Dneska jsem prala a uklízela. Připravila jsem i nějaký jídlo...myslím na něj pořád. Tak nějak sama od sebe se starám. A myslím, že je to i taková hezká věc...nevadí mně. (…) Je to zvláštní. Někdy tak krásný, idylický, normální, lidský, pohodový, zpomalený, tak, jak jsem si to vždycky přála. A cítím se šťastně a vděčně za to, co teď mám. Ale na druhou stranu mám i stavy, že tohle prostě nemá cenu, že mě to akorát brzdí a vyšťavuje.

points are a set of propositions about the facts and values that can be used in the discussion (van Eemeren 2010, p. 44).

With regard to the distribution of roles, in the simplest case of a simple non-mixed difference of opinion, the diarist accepts the role of protagonist (P) from one I-position and commits to defending the standpoint. From the other I-position, they accept the role of antagonist (A) and commit to critically testing the acceptability of the standpoint. In the case of a mixed difference, the diarist accepts the role of protagonist of the opposing standpoints from different I-positions (P1, P2). In such a case, the I-positions automatically become antagonists of the standpoint of the counterparty.

The I-positions, between which the difference of opinion arises, represent different aspects of the diarist's identity, defined by distinct values and interests in resolving the difference of opinion (Nir 2012, p. 285). I-positions that are in a non-mixed or mixed difference of opinion can be seen as mutual *primary audiences*: the I-positions' aims are primarily to persuade a counterparty to accept their standpoint (and to reject an initial doubt or a defended counter-standpoint)—they do not intend to influence a third party with their argumentation (van Eemeren 2010, p. 109).

However, in the context of reflective diary writing, we can expect the diarist to also consider *secondary audiences*. As Kunt (2015) points out, some diarists regularly address someone as part of their writing routines. Such an addressee is usually different from the diarist and can be considered to be one of the external I-positions. It can be a representation of a real or imaginary person or even the diary itself (e.g., "Dear Kitty," "Dear Diary," etc.) (see Lejeune 2009; van Dijck 2004; Zittoun and Gillespie 2012; Paperno 2004; Sinats et al. 2005, pp. 264-265). As Svačinová (2021, p. 253) points out, such an addressee usually has a secondary function from the point of view of argumentation theory—the diarist's objective is not to convince such an addressee of the acceptability of the standpoint. Rather, the addressee plays the role of a confidant who is *informed* about ongoing events; they are a silent wit-

ness to a process of reflection who does not raise any criticisms or doubt.[11]

It could be also added that the practice of reflective diary writing is time-bound. Lejeune (2009, p. 189) distinguishes diaries devoted to a single life phase and organized around a particular area of experience from "all-purpose" diaries written to accompany a life for as long as possible. Reflective practice can become part of both of these forms. It can therefore be practiced either intermittently, if it is necessary to reflect on the current incomprehensible experience, or continuously, thus becoming part of the day-by-day reflective routine. Arguments in favor of a standpoint can therefore be part of a single diary entry but can also be presented sequentially and be part of many entries written at different times.

With regard to material starting points, it can be said that diarists have an extensive base, which is given by their subjective experience. This base includes the sum of factual and value starting points and is a combination of a diarist's memories, wishes, and reflections that can shift "between present, past, and future time, at times addressing the future in an inquisitive way (…)" (Sederberg 2017, p. 330; see also Culley 1985, p. 20).

Diarists record factual starting points—that is, what they accept as facts with regard to an incomprehensible experience. These starting points are widely shared between I-positions. Let us illustrate this with a fragment from the diary of Esther, a young woman who reflects on the situation of an accidental encounter with Robin, her past love. Before she reflects on her emotions, she describes the situation:

> So, what actually happened. My sister had a party and then we went to Olympia [name of a store], nothing unusual. But Patrick [Esther's current boyfriend] was tired, drunk, so I gave him the

[11] In this paper, I limit my focus to internal dialogue between *internal* I-positions conceived as primary audiences. I do not focus on the practice of diary-writing in which the primary goal is to influence or persuade an external audience or prepare for a (real) dialogue with a significant other (see Harrison 2003; Martinson 2003); however, this kind of practice may be addressed in future research. The impact of the secondary audience in the role of confidant or the impact of an assumed real external reader of the diary on the character of various forms of diary-writing could be addressed in future research as well.

> keys and money for a taxi to go to my place to rest. (…) I went there with my sister's buddies and he [Robin] was standing there. I had butterflies in my stomach and I was looking forward all night to walking home with him. But I thought of Patrick, how I would explain it to him. But he didn't ask today, he found nothing strange about it, neither did I.[12]

Material starting points have the character of a description of the context of the experience being reflected on. Esther describes the event in general, its participants, and the important key moments of the experience ("My sister had a party and then we went to Olympia, nothing unusual. But Patrick was tired, drunk, so I gave him the keys and money for a taxi to go to my place to rest," "I went there with my sister's buddies and he was standing there"). At the same time, she also records the emotional states that the event aroused in her, which she evaluates as factual states of affairs ("I had butterflies in my stomach and I was looking forward all night to walking home with him").

Diarists also express their evaluations of situations, people, or events that can serve as value standpoints in internal dialogue. A fragment from Ida's diary provides an example. Before she reflects on her emotions with respect to her future life, she valuates her actual life situation:

> I'm still thinking only of Jeremy… over and over again… how I love him and how much I miss him now! :([13]… I want to cry… from how I live day by day and I'm just looking forward to living again because I'll be with him![14]

[12] In original: Takže, co se vlastně stalo. Ségra měla oslavu a potom jsme šli pod Olympii, klasika. Jenže Patrick byl unavený, opilý, tak jsem mu dala klíče a peníze na taxíka, aby jel ke mně a odpočinul si. (…) Šla jsem tam se ségry kámošema a on tam stál. Měla jsem motýlky a celou noc jsem se těšila na to, až ho pujdu vyprovodit. Ale myslela jsem na Patricka, jak mu to asi vysvětlím. Ale dneska se nezeptal, nepřišlo mu nic divnýho, ani já.

[13] In her diary entry, Ida uses the handwritten emoticon :([sad face].

[14] In original: furt myslím jenom na Jeremyho… pořád a pořád… na to, jak ho miluju a jak moc mi teď chybí! :(… chce se mi brečet… z toho, jak prožívám den za dnem a jen se těším, až budu zase žít, protože budu s ním!

Here, Ida records an evaluation of her boyfriend Jeremy ("how I love him and how much I miss him now!") as well as her evaluation of her actual situation ("I want to cry… from how I live day by day") and expected future ("I'm just looking forward to living again because I'll be with him!").

Argumentative means and criticism

Given the point of the activity, in essence, to find an adequate interpretation of an incomprehensible event, we can expect that the I-position accepting the role of protagonist proposes a certain interpretation of an incomprehensible experience in the standpoint and supports it by presenting evidence in its favor. Typically, we can expect the use of what is called *symptomatic argumentation* in favor of the proposed standpoint. According to van Eemeren et al. (2007),

> [i]n argumentation that is based on a symptomatic relationship (…) 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 (p. 154).

Symptomatic argumentation can be expressed by the following general scheme (see van Eemeren et al. 2002, p. 97):

1 Y is true of X.
  1.1 Z is true of X.
  1.1' Z is symptomatic of Y.

The I-position that does not accept such an argument can doubt the acceptability of the argument as an antagonist and test it critically through critical questions. In the case of disagreement and acceptance of the role of the protagonist of the opposing standpoint, the opposing I-position can draw from critical objections that relate to symptomatic argumentation. Such criticism can typically indicate that (a) the empirical property/valuation Z does not characteristically go together with the empirical property/valuation Y; (b) that Y is rather characteristic of something else (Z'); or (c) that

X must have some other characteristics Y' in order to attribute property/valuation Z to it (van Eemeren et al., 2007, p. 155).

Let us consider an example of such a case from the diary of Norah, a young woman who reflects on an incomprehensible experience during which Daniel, a man she is secretly in love with, kissed her on the cheek.

> *I have absolutely no idea what that kiss on the cheek was supposed to mean.* Probably nothing. *Why is he* [Daniel] *doing this to me? Now I am back in something that I don't want to be in.* After all, it was just on the cheek. *But what about the look?* I see more in that than there is. Especially when there's nothing in it. After all, he likes Amy. I saw how much. More than he ever liked me.[15]

In this fragment, we can identify two positions that can be labeled as *I-as-romantic* and I-as-skeptic. Norah, from the position of *I-as-romantic,* accepts the role of protagonist (P1) and defends the standpoint according to which Daniel has romantic feelings for her. From the position of I-as-skeptic, she raises doubt, in essence, she accepts the role of the protagonist of the counter-standpoint (P2) and criticizes the argument put forward from the position of *I-as-romantic*. We can reconstruct the presented argumentation as follows:

I-as-romantic (P1)	I-as-skeptic (P2)
(1) (Daniel has romantic feelings for me.)	1 Daniel does not have romantic feelings for me.
1.1a Daniel kissed me on the cheek.	1.1 A kiss on the cheek did not have to mean anything.
1.1b Daniel looked at me significantly.	1.2 Daniel's look had no special significance.
	1.3 Daniel likes Amy more than me.

[15] In original: Naprosto netuším, co ta pusa na tvář měla znamenat. Asi nic. Proč mi tohle dělá? Teď jsem zase o stádium zpátky a to být teda nechci. Vždyť to bylo jenom na tvář. Ale co ten pohled? Vidím v tom zas víc, než v tom je. Zvlášť, když v tom nic není. Vždyť se mu líbila Amy. A já dobře viděla jak. Tak, jak já nikdy ne.

1.3.1 I saw that Daniel likes Amy.

Arguments 1.1 and 1.2, presented from the I-position I-as-skeptic, proceed from the critical objection that the evidence presented by *I-as-romantic* in her arguments 1.1a and 1.1b is not sufficient to establish Daniel's romantic interest.

The internal dialogue does not necessarily have to include criticism of the presented arguments. The opposing standpoint may be supported by symptomatic arguments that use independent sources of evidence. We can illustrate such a case with a fragment from Edith's diary in which Edith is considering from two I-positions whether Peter is a suitable partner for her. She formulates her evidence in the form of a list of pros and cons:

> *Why not this guy:*
> *.he doesn't push things*
> *.sometimes he is very caustic*
> *.he doesn't talk about how he feels*
> *.he doesn't give a damn about his appearance*
> *.he is uncompromising when he thinks he's right*
> *.he is pretty lazy*
> *.he is still a kid in some ways*
> *.when he thinks about a part-time job, he thinks about some jobs such as delivering PPL packages and similar bullshit, even though he can do better and could work amazingly with his brains, earn better money and especially gain interesting practical experience for the future* (…)
>
> For this guy:
> .I want to learn Chinese with him
> .he is an interesting guy
> .when he talks, he knows what he's talking about
> .he probably really likes me
> .he likes to cuddle
> .and he does it well when he wants to
> .he smiles and that's it
> (…)[16]

[16] In original: Proč ne tento kluk: .nehroti věci .nekdy je az moc urejpanej .nemluvi o tom, jak se citi .nekdy dost sere na svuj vzhled .je nekompromisni, kdyz si mysli, ze ma pravdu .je dost linej .je v necem porad jeste decko .kdyz uz

The presented fragment can be reconstructed as argumentative dialogue between Edith's positions of *I-as-skeptic* and I-as-romantic. The sources of evidence used by the I-positions to support the opposing standpoints are independent in this case: they are different categories of Peter's qualities. The parties do not doubt or criticize the submitted argumentation of the counterparty:

I-as-skeptic	I-as-romantic
1 Peter is not a suitable partner for me.	1 Peter is a suitable partner for me.
1.1 Peter is passive.	1.1a I want to learn Chinese with Peter.
1.1. Peter is sometimes overly critical.	1.1b Peter is an interesting guy.
1.2 Peter does not talk about how he feels.	1.1c Peter is thoughtful.
1.3 Peter does not care about his appearance.	1.1d Peter really likes me.
1.4 Peter is uncompromising when he thinks he is right.	1.1e Peter likes to cuddle.
1.5 Peter is lazy.	1.1f Peter can satisfy me sexually.
1.6 In some respects, Peter is childish.	1.1g I am attracted to Peter's smile.
1.7 Peter is unambitious when choosing a part-time job.	

Given the character of the standpoint, we can expect that the argumentation may have a complex structure. The diarist can, from different I-positions, strengthen the acceptability of the interpretation of an incomprehensible experience proposed in the standpoint by providing additional (symptomatic) evidence, in which case new arguments may be submitted that form a *coordinative* or *multiple* argumentative structure, as illustrated in the case of

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teda premysli o nejake brigade, tak premysli nad nejakyma pracema, jako je tahani ppl baliku a takovej podobnej bullshit, i kdyz ma na mnohem vic a mohl by krasne pracovat hlavou, mit za to lepsi prachy a hlavne zajimavou praxi do budoucnosti (…) Proč ano tento kluk: .chci se s nim ucit cinstinu .je to zajimavej borec .kdyz mluvi, tak vi o cem .asi me ma fakt rad .rad se tuli .a umi to, kdyz se mu chce .usmeje se a je hotovo (…).

Edith's diary. Alternatively, the diarist can, from different I-positions, also respond to the (raised or anticipated) doubt/criticism of the acceptability of individual arguments. Such a reaction may lead to an attempt to supplement or support the previously presented argument, creating a *coordinative* or *subordinative* argumentative structure as illustrated in the case of argument 1.3.1 being submitted by Norah's I-as-skeptic position.

Outcome of the discussion

The activity of reflective diary writing ends when an adequate interpretation of an incomprehensible experience is found. From a pragma-dialectic point of view, such a moment can be defined as reaching mutual agreement on the acceptance or non-acceptance of a standpoint (in the case of a non-mixed difference of opinion) or on the acceptance of one of the opposing standpoints (in the case of a mixed difference). If this does not happen, the internal discussion may return to the initial situation.[17]

Note that the outcome of the discussion often remains implicit—it is not recorded in the data. Diarists do not have to feel the need to write down their final (accepted) interpretation of experience; they can achieve it purely in their minds.

Let us consider the outcome of the discussion in a fragment from the diary of Adam, who reflects on his feelings for a young woman, Brenda. His entry can be interpreted as providing a report on finding a suitable interpretation of an incomprehensible experience and thus the conclusion of reflective activity:

> So the mystery is solved. I already know why I fall back on feelings of depression and self-contempt every time I am alone, without contact with friends and especially with Brenda. I already know why my heart was pounding when I saw Brenda leaving the art lesson with her boyfriend, Andy, on February 10th. Why I get depressed and feel inferior every time I remember Brenda, Andy and the art lesson. It was actually hidden right in plain sight, and I wasn't willing to admit it subconsciously.

[17] In the case of a regular diary practice in which a diarist reflects on different kinds of incomprehensible experiences, we can talk about consecutive, different (separate) differences of opinion.

In short, I am platonically in love with Brenda.

I have nothing to add.[18]

Adam provides information in the diary about the final acceptance of the standpoint that his feelings for Brenda have the character of platonic love ("I am platonically in love with Brenda").
The argumentative characterization of reflective diary writing, which captures the way in which an internal discussion is specifically regulated in its individual stages, is captured in Table 1:

Initial situation	Procedural and material starting points		Argumentative means and criticism	Outcome of discussion
Single non-mixed difference of opinion about factual or value standpoint; it can develop into a single mixed or multiple mixed difference of opinion; decision up to parties.	<u>Procedural:</u> Implicitly and informally regulated practice; role of protagonist and antagonist is accepted by a diarist speaking from different internal I-positions. Special techniques of diary writing (e.g., altered point of view, unsent letter, dialogue)	<u>Material:</u> A broad zone of agreement on shared starting points. Factual and evaluative starting points.	Argumentation incorporated in multivaried intrapersonal exchanges. Typical use of symptomatic argumentation. Complex argumentation structure arising in response to raised or anticipated criticism about	Implicit conclusion by mutually accepted outcome or return to initial situation.

[18] In original: Tak záhada je vyřešena. Už vím, proč na mně dopadají pocity skleslosti a sebeopovržení pokaždé, když jsem sám, bez kontaktu s přáteli a obzvláště s Brendou. Už vím, proč mi ruplo srdce, když jsem 10. února viděl, jak Brenda odchází z výtvarky se svým přítelem Andym. Proč na mně dopadá deprese a pocit méněcennosti pokaždé, když se si na Brendu, Andyho a ZUŠku vzpomenu. Ono to vlastně bylo schované přímo před mým zrakem a já jsem si to nebyl ochoten podvědomně připustit. Já jsem zkrátka do Brendy platonicky zamilovaný. Nemám co k tomu dodat.

	The reflective practice is time-bound; it is performed either intermittently (if necessary to reflect the current incomprehensible experience) or continuously (it becomes part of the day-by-day reflective routine).		acceptability of standpoint and argument.	

Table 1: Argumentative characterization of reflective diary writing.

Conclusion

I have suggested that internal dialogue externalized through the activity of reflective diary writing can be theorized as an argumentative discourse in pragma-dialectical terms as it is in accordance with its meta-theoretical principles. In particular, I have thoroughly examined the principles of socialization and externalization. In accordance with the principle of socialization, internal dialogue can be conceived as a "socialized" activity when we consider that the diarist is capable of accepting different argumentation roles from different I-positions. The theoretical basis proposed and elaborated on using dialogical self-theory (Hermans 2001, 2018) and negotiational self-theory (Nir 2012, 2016) could serve as a suitable starting point for conceiving of the dialogical character of the individual and the examination of their internal clashes. At the same time, in accordance with the principle of externalization, internal dialogue can be seen as "externalized" when we conceive of it as transferable through the process of diary writing into a verbalized and analyst-accessible form. Based on specific linguistic features of the record of internal dialogue, "dialogical knots" recording internal differences of opinion between I-positions (Aveling et al. 2015) can be identified and subjected to argumentative analysis.

I have also suggested that reflective diary writing can be conceived of as a specifically conventionalized practice belonging to the domain of intrapersonal communication. I have shown that reflective diary writing is a conventionalized activity type utilizing the genre of (integrative) negotiation preconditioned by implicit norms governing the conduct of argumentation. The initial situation of reflective diary writing can be conceived of as a single non-mixed difference of opinion arising between two internal I-positions about a factual or value standpoint that can develop into a single mixed or multiple mixed difference of opinion. The roles of protagonist and antagonist in the difference of opinion are accepted by a diarist speaking from different internal I-positions, and a broad zone of agreement on shared factual and evaluative starting points can be expected. I-positions prototypically utilize symptomatic argumentation when presenting evidence for their standpoints, and complex argumentation structures can arise in response to raised or anticipated criticism regarding the acceptability of a standpoint and argument. An implicit conclusion is reached by achieving a mutually accepted outcome or the discussion can return to the initial situation.

The results of this study are limited by the size and character of the sample of diaries, as well as by the social and cultural context of their production: the study is based on a limited number of diaries (10) mostly written by young people who were predominantly students of Czech nationality and who were also willing to interrupt the privacy of their diary practice and offer their diaries for the purpose of the research. It is therefore not necessarily an exhaustive characterization of reflective diary writing practice. Thus, this research could be expanded in the future not only by increasing the number of diaries evaluated, but also by including a greater diversity of diarists, thereby enriching our concept of reflective diary writing as well as the character of argumentation included therein by other forms of practice.

The argumentative characterization of reflective diary writing can function as a starting point for further analysis and evaluation of argumentation in this context. The importance of studying the reflective practice of diarists is twofold. First, at the more theoretical level, it contributes to the general understanding of some as-

pects of human thinking. Second, it helps us better understand individual forms of self-persuasion. For example, it enables the examination of the ways in which I-positions can strengthen their communication rhetorically in a given communicative practice (see van Eemeren 2016, p. 10). It can therefore serve as a suitable starting point for research into the rhetorical strategies of I-positions (see Larrain and Haye 2012; Nienkamp 2001). An interesting direction for further research from the perspective of pragma-dialectics would be the strategic maneuvering implemented from different I-positions by the diarist, which could shed light on specific strategies used by I-positions to gain dominance in an internal discussion and win the difference of opinion.[19] The current study of the character of reflective diary writing can also serve as a starting point for the characterization (and potentially also comparison) of other forms of diary writing as well as other forms of internal dialogue and research into their argumentative character.

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[19] An interesting case study of the effectiveness of the inner voices of "hope" and "despair" in the final passages of Virginia Woolf's diary was offered by Androutsopoulou et al. (2020) using a thematic narrative analysis where the strength of the voices was determined based on the space each covered in the narrative. Research using argumentative and rhetorical perspectives could enrich this and similar types of analysis by characterizing the argumentative and rhetorical strategies that voices employ in internal communication to gain dominance over other voices.

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