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Dialectical analysis as a normative reconstruction of argumentative discourse

FRANS H. VAN EEMEREN

Abstract

In this paper the author argues in favour of applying analysis, particularly in relation to argumentative discussions, and presents a theory for adoption as the tool for the normative analysis of argumentative discourse. The argument for normative analysis consists of a demonstration of the Van Eemeren and Grootendorst dialectical argumentation theory in operation. Confining the analysis to the identification of the type of dispute characterizing the confrontation stage of a critical discussion, the analytical instrument is applied to a specimen of political discourse, the purpose of this exemplary analysis being to compare dialectical analysis with pure description. The author points out some advantages of normative reconstruction in terms of surveyability and discernment.

1. Dialectical analysis and the description of discourse

In my opinion, a theory of verbal communication and interaction which purports to be practical must be normative as well as descriptive.¹ In this paper, therefore, I would like to make a plea for a normative extension of the prevailing methodology in discourse analysis. I shall substantiate my contention on the basis of a dialectical analysis of the confrontation stage of a political discussion.²

In order to comment constructively on a sample of discourse, one has to know the purpose of the verbal utterances comprising this discourse and to what extent the verbal behaviour is adequate in view of this purpose. Verbal acting is a form of goal-directed behaviour and has to be treated accordingly.

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This means that in order to get satisfactory analyses, systems of norms must be established which are relevant to the various types of discourse. Risky as it may be, a normative element has to be incorporated in the theorizing process.

The modification in the description of discourse I propose does not simply consist of paying attention to norms which *are* as a rule operative in language use, as for example the Gricean maxims. Any and all norms which may further the pursuit of a particular language goal must be taken into account. This may result in the construction of systems of norms which are partially disregarded by the language-users involved or which are even unknown to them. In order to avoid inconsistencies and other defects, every system of norms proposed for analytical purposes must be scrutinized with respect to both its 'problem validity', relating to the language goal concerned, and its 'inter-subjective validity', relating to the language-users.³ A normative construct evaluated in this way is suitable for an adequate description and appreciation of particular samples of discourse.

Characteristic of the normative conception advocated here is that it is a *dialectical* one. It relates to argumentative discourse and, as a matter of principle, every argumentation is considered part of a *critical discussion aimed at resolving a conflict of opinion*, regardless of whether the dispute and discussion are externalized or not.⁴ A discussion which is critical in a dialectical sense takes place between a *protagonist* of a standpoint and one or more language-users who, rightly or wrongly, are considered to fulfil the interactional role of *antagonist*. In the most simple form of a fully-fledged dispute, one language-user has explicitly *cast doubt upon* another language-user's explicitly avowed *positive or negative standpoint*.⁵

Unfortunately, life is seldom as simple as that and real discourse, as a rule, does not simply reflect the dialectical ideal. Nevertheless, this definition supplies us with a practical starting point for further considerations. It may be the case that the protagonist happens to anticipate a discussion which will never be verbalized; he is just trying to parry an imaginary attack. Putting it even more strongly: he may be trying to solve a dispute which does not exist. But in all these cases, the moment he argues, the very fact of his argumentation testifies to the legitimacy of a dialectical approach to argumentation. In my opinion, this dialectical approach needs to be allied (among other allies) to the functionalist speech act approach, in a so-called *normative pragmatics*.⁶

2. Dialectical characterization of disputes about opinions

Language-users who have externalized a difference of opinion and have embarked on a dispute about an opinion could, of course, leave it at that, but very often they will undertake an attempt to resolve the dispute, as postulated in dialectical theory. Disputes are resolved when the language-users who have expressed doubt about points of view have withdrawn these expressions of doubt or when language-users who have advanced points of view retract those points of view. To resolve a dispute by way of a critical discussion, the language-users have to go through several *stages of discussion* which, although they need not always be explicit, correspond to the stages in the resolving of the dispute.

According to our dialectical theory, a critical discussion passes through four discussion stages: the *confrontation stage*, during which the dispute is externalized; the *opening stage*, during which agreements are reached concerning the manner in which the dispute and the discussion are to be conducted; the *argumentation stage*, during which argumentation is advanced and reacted to; and the *concluding stage*, during which it is established how the discussion is concluded. Although all four stages are indispensable, on this occasion I will occupy myself only with the confrontation stage.

In the confrontation stage of a discourse analyzed dialectically as a critical discussion a difference of opinion becomes apparent between a language-user advancing a point of view and a language-user (in many cases a different one) casting doubt on that point of view or, in more complex cases, even arguing against it. The language-users then have a dispute about an expressed opinion, and an analysis of the confrontation stage consists of *identifying the type of dispute*.

Disputes may be categorized according to their complexity.⁷ I shall here identify four *standard types of dispute*. In the first place, I believe, it is necessary to differentiate between *single* and *multiple* disputes. Single disputes have to do with *one and no more than one opinion*. Multiple disputes have to do with *more than one opinion*. Multiple disputes can always be broken down into a number of single disputes, as is the situation in the following example:

Peter: 'You should never take an aspirin with milk, and you shouldn't drink so much either.'

Agnes: 'Are you sure about the aspirin? And why shouldn't I drink when I feel like it?'

In the second place, I believe it necessary, when analyzing disputes, to distinguish between *simple* and *compound* disputes. In simple disputes only *one (positive or negative) point of view* is advanced with respect to an opinion. In compound disputes *two contradictory points of view* (one positive and one negative) are propounded with respect to one and the same opinion, as in the following example:

Peter: 'You should never take an aspirin with milk.'
 Agnes: 'On the contrary: you should!'

Simple single disputes, in which a single positive or negative point of view with regard to a single opinion is advanced and subjected to doubt, represent the *basic form* of dispute. All the other standard types of dispute can be analyzed as *composites* of simple single disputes. If we indicate the expression of doubt with a question mark, we can then characterize the two variants of the basic form of a dispute as follows:

(a) Peter: 'You should take an aspirin with milk!'
 Agnes: 'Should I?'

Analysis of (a) as a simple single dispute:

party I : +/p (party I = Peter)
 party II : ?/(+/p) (party II = Agnes)

(b) Peter: 'You should never take an aspirin with milk!'
 Agnes: 'Shouldn't I?'

Analysis of (b) as a simple single dispute:

party I : -/p (party I = Peter)
 party II : ?/(-/p) (party II = Agnes)

It is important to observe that expressing doubt, while it may *accompany* the adoption of the opposite point of view, *is not identical* to the adoption of the opposite point of view. In variant (a) of the basic form of dispute, for example, Agnes does not necessarily have to take the position that you should *not* take an aspirin with milk, and in variant (b) she does not necessarily have to take the position that you should. Not all disputes need be compound. Besides *compound multiple disputes* and *compound single disputes*, *simple multiple disputes* and even *simple single disputes* can also occur.

Since dialectical analysis of the confrontation stage of a critical discussion consists of an identification of the type of dispute at the heart of the discussion, the analysis amounts to establishing the exact composition of the conflict of opinion underlying the discussion. Crucial for this is the detection of standpoints, positive or negative, and expressions of doubt, explicit or implicit. When these are known, further analysis is as easy as shelling peas. Unfortunately, in real discourse, standpoints and doubts are often only implicated or tacitly assumed, so that serious problems of interpretation may arise.

3. Analysis of a sample of political discourse

Let us now analyse the confrontation stage in a sample of political discourse. For the sake of clarity, in this institutional context I will concentrate on a deliberation of party representatives trying to reach agreement on the question of whether or not to vote for a proposal concerning the abolition of a certain provision of the Act of Settlement. Before revealing their standpoint to the public, they have to reach a unanimous position on the matter, and this means there is no need for them to play up to the audience, as politicians so often do, but they must try to even out their differences of opinion. This example is particularly suitable for the things I want to illustrate, for the simple reason that I have made it up for the occasion! I have based it on real-life cases, but for the purpose of demonstration I have concentrated a number of exemplary peculiarities into one piece of discourse.⁸

In presenting and considering this example, I shall ignore the peculiarities of oral presentation (such as inflection and emphasis). Here, then, in 'transcript' form, is how the discussion of the Act of Settlement amendment develops:

Mr. Starfield: 'How about the Act of Settlement amendment?'

Miss Jones: 'I'm all for it.'

Mrs. Harrison: 'I am not.'

Mrs. Williams: 'I don't know yet. It's not that easy.'

Miss Frankel: 'Oh, but I'm sure we ought to approve it.'

Mrs. Williams: 'Should we, really? I think not. As liberal-minded people, in my opinion, we have to reconsider.'

Mr. Parsons: 'I would be ashamed if we voted for it.'

Mrs. Goulding: 'Would you really? Whatever for?'

- Miss Jones: 'Our young voters would be very disappointed if we didn't join in.'
- Mr. Vanderberg: 'Speaking of young voters, I'm due to address the Union of Railwaymen next Friday, and they are mostly a rather young lot, so, as this question is on everybody's mind at the moment, it is important to me, or I should rather say, to the party as a whole, that I make a clear statement, and it had better not be some kind of pretext for not giving support to the amendment. I can't see why we shouldn't sustain it wholeheartedly. Everybody who thinks otherwise is a blockhead. To put it more carefully: why should we *not* vote for the amendment?'
- Mrs. Harrison: 'I would like to vote against the amendment, but that doesn't mean that I'm totally free from doubt. I'm afraid I'm not as sure about my own point of view as some of my political associates seem to be. Maybe I am overlooking something important that tells in favour of the amendment. I could have drawn an overhasty conclusion. Now that I come to think of it, I am beginning to wonder. Perhaps I am wrong – as I have been in the past. Can anybody tell me what considerations argue – for the abolition of the provision?'
- Mr. Starfield: 'If everybody changes his mind continually we can't possibly come to an agreement.'
- Mr. Parsons: 'Hear, hear!'
- Mrs. Harrison: 'Isn't that the whole point of a party deliberation?'
- Miss Jones: 'Don't we want to eliminate abuses? Don't we strive after a fair constitution, without any discriminatory stipulations? Then, why aren't we all, without any hesitation, in favour of the proposed amendment?'
- Mrs. Goulding (frowning): 'I don't know. I really wonder why we shouldn't vote against it. I really don't know.'
- Mr. Starfield: 'I think we'd better start a formal discussion on this subject. I myself am prepared to be chairman.'

At this point the opening stage of the discussion seems about to begin, so I will leave it here.⁹ For a dialectal analysis of the confrontation stage of a critical discussion it is necessary to trace the protagonists and the antagonists of the opinions under discussion. There is just one opinion (O) under discussion, *viz.* the Act of Settlement amendment must be supported. Some take a positive view with regard to this opinion, some take a negative point of view, and many participants betray their doubts. The assignment of dialectical roles turns out to be as follows:¹⁰

- (a) *protagonist of a positive point of view about O* (party I)
Miss Frankel, Miss Jones, Mr. Vanderberg
antagonist of a positive point of view about O (party II)
Mrs. Harrison, Mrs. Williams, Mr. Parsons
- (b) *protagonist of a negative point of view about O* (party II)
Mrs. Harrison, Mrs. Williams, Mr. Parsons
antagonist of a negative point of view about O (party I)
Miss Frankel, Miss Jones, Mrs. Goulding,
Mrs. Harrison, Mr. Vanderberg

As the dispute as a whole isn't resolved until all doubts have disappeared and all participants hold the same view on the disputed opinion, all positions being taken into account, with Miss Frankel, Miss Jones, Mrs. Goulding, Mrs. Harrison and Mr. Vanderberg participating in party I and Mrs. Harrison, Mrs. Williams and Mr. Parsons in party II, whatever the outcome of the discussion, for all concerned a dialectal analysis of the complex dispute to be resolved is as follows:

party I : +/O , ?/(-/O)

party II : ?/(+/O), -/O

This dispute can be characterized as a *compound single dispute*.

As some amplification may be wished for, let me make a few explanatory remarks. For one thing, it is important to realize that a dispute by definition entails that a standpoint is being cast into doubt. The parties involved need not necessarily hold contradictory positions (so that the dispute becomes more complex); for a simple dispute, it is sufficient that doubt is cast upon the other party's point of view. Not every dispute is a compound one. Mrs. Goulding, for example, in the discussion just reported, does not hold any standpoint of her own, but is, by virtue of the articulation of her doubt, involved in the dispute all the same. Mr. Starfield, on the other hand, does not even venture any doubt and he is therefore not involved in the dispute.

Doubting a point of view is a sufficient, but also a necessary condition for a dispute. This means, among other things, that in a technical sense, the articulation of a contradictory point of view automatically implies casting doubt upon the point of view contested. Otherwise, by definition, there would be no dispute, but merely a coincidental externalization of different viewpoints which happen to be contradictory. That would be like your saying

in Chicago that it's a sunny day today and my saying in Amsterdam that it's not, when we're not talking to each other.

Reciprocal doubt must be assumed in the analysis of any compound dispute to do justice to the complex nature of this kind of dispute. Without this assumption, the analysis would be as if there were no real dispute at all. Suppose, for instance, that the negative Mrs. Harrison completely changes position in favour of a positive point of view, owing to the mere fact that the charming Mr. Vanderberg holds a positive point of view. In that case, there is no doubt left and the compound dispute between them has indeed disappeared. This could even be rational if Mr. Vanderberg is a famous expert on the matter concerned. In either case, the dispute comes to a stop in the confrontation stage.¹¹ With Mr. Vanderberg as party I and Mrs. Harrison as party II, viewed in a dialectal perspective, the situation develops like this:

Mrs. Harrison (party II) : -/O
 Mr. Vanderberg (party I) : ?/(O), +/O
 Mrs. Harrison (party II) : +/O

Therefore, if the compound dispute is to be fully maintained, the dispute must be analyzed in this way:

party I : +/O , ?/(-/O) (Frankel, Goulding, Harrison, Jones,
 Vanderberg)
 party II : ?/(+/O), -/O (Harrison, Parsons, Williams)

Unfortunately, the presentation of standpoints and the expression of doubt are seldom unambiguous. Very often, the intended communicative force of utterances and series of utterances is only implicitly indicated and must be made explicit with the help of the verbal and non-verbal context, whether or not institutionally determined, and with the help of other kinds of background knowledge. This may pose some problems for the analysis of discourse, political and otherwise.¹²

One such problem arises when a point of view advanced earlier is repeated, summarized or formulated anew and at the same time rephrased or reworded, so that it is not clear whether a 'new' standpoint is being advanced. If this were the case, a previously single dispute may become multiple. This would, for example, be the case if Miss Jones, after having stated her approval of

the Act of Settlement amendment, had ventured to say that every sensible person should support the amendment.

Differences of opinion are sometimes difficult to detect. Here insight of an empirical descriptive kind into the verbal and non-verbal cues for interpretation can come in handy.¹³ Knowledge of the institutional context can create a well-defined framework for anticipation which facilitates interpretation.¹⁴ A normative model, like our dialectical model of critical discussion, may play a similar anticipatory role.¹⁵ But that is not what I have chosen to talk about now.

I must confine myself to calling attention to just one problem of interpretation which is crucial to dialectical analysis. It concerns the difference between an expression of doubt and a negative point of view. These can be difficult to discern, as is shown by the reaction of Mrs. Williams to the positive standpoint of Miss Frankel ('Should we, really?'), but in this case the expression of doubt, as frequently occurs, is followed immediately by a negative statement, so that the expression of doubt acts as a preliminary to the advancing of a negative point of view contradicting a positive statement put forward earlier by the interlocutor.¹⁶ Sometimes the institutional context makes clear that an expression of doubt may be taken as a negative point of view as well, as when a politician in a public debate doubts whether his opponent's standpoints are acceptable.

4. A comparison between dialectical analysis and pure description

As one can see, dialectical analysis clearly differs from so-called pure description. Bearing in mind that even a 'pure' description, if it is to be of any significance, has to be theoretically motivated, one must realize that the difference is not just between being theory-laden and not being theory-laden. It's rather a difference between a descriptive record and a normative reconstruction, both equally based on theoretical considerations. The normative perspective, however, as it manifests itself in the dialectical approach to argumentation, by its very nature has its own characteristic impact. A comparison between dialectical analysis and pure description may show what this distinctive impact produces.

The first difference between a normative reconstruction and a descriptive recording is one of *selection*. Depending on the criterion of relevance supplied by the theoretical framework serving as a starting point, some data are deemed

worth noting while other data are left aside as immaterial. This means that all redundancy is removed, so that the discourse can be reported in the dialectical garb of a dialogical tableau.¹⁷ This removal of redundancy is why the transformation which has taken place can also be called *deletion*.

The specimen of political discourse quoted earlier provides us with numerous examples of deletion in this sense. Apart from such more superficial phenomena as stammering and hesitation, which had been omitted already, the analysis leaves out repetitions and paraphrases, and – in my view, more importantly – selects from the utterances made in the discourse only those which have a dialectical role to fulfil in the confrontation stage of a critical discussion. This means that certain speech acts can be excluded at the outset.¹⁸ Abstracting from the persons who play the parts, only the parties involved in the dispute are registered, together with their contributions to the creation of the dispute, without any need to record all speech acts of different persons amounting to the same dialectical contribution.

The second noticeable difference is one of *completion*. This is partly a question of making explicit or externalizing implicit elements which are required to fill the dialectical gaps, as when by contradicting a standpoint somebody implicitly expresses his doubt with regard to that standpoint. Completion is also partly a question of adding elements whose presence has to be assumed in the case of a fully-fledged dispute of the type implicated by the way the discussion develops, as when somebody defends his position without any attacks being made. Because of this supplementary character, this transformation may also be called *addition*. In compliance with the dialectical theory adhered to, in certain cases the addition may even involve assigning an argumentative communicative force to a constellation of speech acts which seems to lack such force in its literal utterance.¹⁹

In the discussion quoted earlier, completion is accomplished by the addition of statements of doubt where, *expressis verbis*, no doubt is articulated. Thus the expression of a negative point of view against a positive point of view about some opinion is interpreted as the casting of doubt on the positive point of view on that opinion. Mr. Parsons indirectly opposes approving the amendment. Mrs. Harrison, when replying to Miss Jones, directly opposes Miss Jones' approval of the amendment. Both Mr. Parsons and Mrs. Harrison can thus be taken as casting doubt on the opinion of support for the amendment. The point also applies, of course, the other way around. But it is even more strongly the case when, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is assumed that persons who are contradicted, not only maintain their origi-

nally expressed point of view, but also feel doubt about the opposite viewpoints which are posed against theirs.²⁰

The third difference between dialectical analysis and pure description to be mentioned here is one of *arrangement*. In contrast to the procedure in a descriptive recording, the normative reconstruction of a dispute need not directly reflect the linear course of events in the sequential order of their actual occurrence. In the dialectical analysis, the arrangement is organized in order to bring out as clearly as possible the composition of the dispute, the facts reported corresponding to dialectically relevant factors. Because of the alterations it may bring about, this transformation may also be called *permutation*.

The effects of permutation in the analysis of the political discussion quoted earlier are clear. Abstracting from the individuals who are participating in the dispute and from the order in which their contributions are put forward, an arrangement is made in accordance with dialectical party membership. Thus Miss Frankel, Miss Jones and Mr. Vanderberg, for instance, are put together as protagonists of a positive point of view about the Act of Settlement amendment and Mrs. Harrison, Mrs. Williams and Mr. Parsons as protagonists of a negative point of view. The order in which they expressed their positions is immaterial to the analysis. The same holds for the order in which different aspects of the position of the same person (doubts and standpoints) are expressed, as long as it does not affect this position.²¹

The fourth and last difference I will mention is one of *notation*. It is completely in line with the points just made to provide for an adequate notation of the analysis. It is advisable to report the findings in such a way that the things which are theoretically noteworthy are expressed clearly. Similar cases need to be recognizable as similar; dialectically relevant distinctions need to be easily identifiable, and so on. In order for a comparison to be possible, it is necessary to create a notation system and to reformulate the various contributions to the dispute in terms of this system.²² As a result of this procedure, diffuse and ambiguous wordings have to be replaced by standard formulations. For this reason this transformation can also be called *substitution*. Different ways of expressing an opinion, which, dialectically speaking, amount to the same thing, have one and the same substitute, so that identical cases are treated alike. In a purely descriptive notation differences of expression are maintained and dialectical similarities may easily escape attention.

In the analysis under consideration the notational differences are immedi-

ately clear from the use of question marks, parentheses, plus and minus signs, and slants. They reflect the effort being made to standardize the formulation. In addition to this, however, it must be recognized that non-relevant differences of expression in the analysis are also abolished. Mr. Parson's indirect speech act 'I would be ashamed if we voted for it', which means something like 'The Act of Settlement amendment must not be supported', for example, is treated in exactly the same way as Mrs. Harrison's 'I am not', which is – for our purposes – equivalent to it.

5. Some advantages of normative reconstruction

I opened my exposition with a plea for a normative extension of the description of discourse, exemplified in the dialectical approach to argumentation. Subsequently I discussed some of the characteristics of dialectical analysis, confining myself to the identification of the type of dispute characterizing the confrontation stage of a critical discussion. The analytical instrument was applied to a specimen of political discourse, the purpose of this exemplary analysis being to compare dialectical analysis with pure description. The remaining question is: what might be the advantages of this normative reconstruction of the dispute?

These advantages are mainly of two kinds: *surveyability* and *discernment*. The increase in both stems from the selection, completion, arrangement and notation which are the result of analysis. Especially in more complex discourse, the transformation of deletion, addition, permutation and substitution can alter an inextricable tangle into a clear picture of the very thing we are looking for. Something of this is already evident in the analysis of the Act of Settlement discussion.²³

For example, it is noteworthy that the analysis of the complex discussion reported clarifies the dispute under discussion. It explains what exactly the points of difference are, as far as these differences are maintained during the confrontation stage and eventually constitute the dispute to be resolved. Doubt which no longer exists need not give cause for argumentation and the same holds, *mutatis mutandis*, for points of view which are already abandoned.

The analysis of the confrontation stage also gives us insight into the particular positions of the discussants with regard to the various components of the dispute and the likeliest distribution of roles in the dialectical role play resulting from it. It supplies us with an overview of the commitments which

each of the discussants has accepted in advancing his own statements. Someone who has advanced a positive point of view about an opinion has thereby accepted a positive commitment with regard to that opinion and someone who has advanced a negative point of view, a negative commitment, while someone who has expressed doubt has accepted no commitment at all. A positive commitment may lead to an obligation to defend a positive point of view (if challenged) and a negative commitment to an obligation to defend a negative point of view (if challenged). An expression of doubt creates no obligation at all, whether conditional or unconditional.

The analysis of the confrontation stage makes it possible to check afterwards (preferably in the concluding stage) the extent to which the dispute has been resolved and, in so far as this is not the case, which components are *not* resolved. In this way, it can be established what the remaining obligations are, and whose duty it is to fulfill them. This helps to solve the burden-of-proof problem and may prevent the fallacy of *shifting the burden of proof*. A protagonist who does not acknowledge that, because he had voluntarily advanced a point of view which had been called into question by the antagonist, the burden of proof with regard to that point of view rests on him, retreats from a discussion in which his point of view can be tested critically. A protagonist who tries to evade his burden of proof by passing it on to the antagonist is guilty of the fallacy of shifting the burden of proof. This fallacy of forcing the other party to suggest a better proof if an alleged proof is not admitted, is also called (by Locke) the *argumentation ad ignorantiam*. It occurs in its strongest form when a situation arises in which when it is either not possible, or it appears not to be possible, to justify a positive point of view about an opinion, the conclusion is drawn that the contradictory negative point of view must hold, or *vice versa*. Especially in the case of a compound dispute, it is necessary to take care that this unjustified simplification does not take place. Just as an adequate analysis of the confrontation stage prevents a multiple dispute from not being recognized as such (or a single dispute from being regarded as multiple), the analysis prevents a compound dispute from being regarded as simple, or the other way round, so that the analysis can act as a fallacy-detecting safeguard in the evaluation of the discussion.

The approach to argumentation in political discourse and other kinds of discourse that is proposed here is profitable to discussants and potential discussants, and also to people who act as chair-persons or who, as supervisors or otherwise, have an interest in the quality of discussions. Practitioners

of speech communication, in particular, will want to take this interest to heart. That's why it is worthwhile to draw their attention to dialectical analysis of argumentation.

Notes

1. This paper is a revision of a paper delivered at the workshop 'Discourse Analysis and Public Life', Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, January 1985. A more extensive version of it will appear in the proceedings of the workshop. I am grateful to J. Anthony Blair for his useful comments.
2. I must confine myself here to the 'confrontation stage' of an argumentative discussion, but the point I want to make applies equally well to the other stages. Cf. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984) and Van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Kruiger (1983).
3. Cf. Barth and Krabbe (1982: 19-22) and Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984: 134).
4. See for a more extensive account Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984).
5. Note that words like *standpoint* and *doubt* are used here as technical terms in a dialectical argumentation theory, not necessarily referring to any well-delineated 'psychological state' of the language-users playing their parts in the dialectical role-play, although it may be advocated that they are to be considered as psychopragmatical primitives.
6. For a more extensive account of this view, see Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984) and Van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Kruiger (1983).
7. Cf. Barth and Krabbe (1982) and Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984).
8. The central example around which the paper is organized is not 'natural', but reconstructed, even though it is claimed to be based on 'real-life cases'. Such a construct would be objectionable if it misrepresented the salient features found in actual argumentative discussions and in consequence stacked the deck in favour of the theory being demonstrated. However, in this case, the example captures a variety of typical features of such discussions, and, far from being framed in such a way as to artificially support this theory, it seems, instead, to show up some areas where the theory needs further extension. If time and space were not constraints, quotations from actual discussions could have been used, but this would have required an awkwardly large number and tedious amount of irrelevant material in order to illustrate the different points at issue. In the final analysis, the theory must stand or fall by how useful it is in the explication and analysis of actual or 'real' texts, though for the purpose at hand, such examples are not necessary.
9. Systematic demarcation of the stages is facilitated by reliance on a well-defined framework of a dialectical theory about the development of a critical discussion.
10. For the sake of brevity, I have refrained from a textual justification of the assignment of dialectical roles.
11. In my opinion, it is an interesting task for discourse analysts to examine the ways in which in real discourse confrontation is sought or, for that matter, averted.

12. Cf Van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Kruiger (1983). Of course, in this paper I cannot deal with the many problems of interpretation which may arise.
13. That's why I think it important for those who want to improve speech communication systematically to participate in empirical research such as that reported in Van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Meuffels (1984).
14. Cf., among others, Schank and Abelson (1977).
15. Cf. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984).
16. Other problems arise, for example, from the fact that standpoints are often put forward in an indirect way ('Wouldn't it be better to stop?') and from the fact that the non-explicit stating of a positive standpoint is often indistinguishable from merely informing ('Learning French is more difficult than learning Dutch').
17. Cf. Beth (1962) and Barth and Krabbe (1982) for formal dialogical tableaux. This notion is here interpreted in a rather informal way, as in Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984). As I confine myself in this paper to characterizing the type of dispute, the question of dialogical tableau notation does not really arise.
18. For a detailed discussion of the cf. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984).
19. Cf. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984: 117) and Van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Kruiger (1983: 139-144) for the 'strategy of maximum argumentative interpretation'.
20. To say nothing of the rather more complicated possibility of completing some arguments by making explicit unexpressed arguments with a complex structure, as is sometimes necessary when analyzing the argumentation stage of a critical discussion.
21. As the same person, like Mrs. Harrison, may belong to different dialectical parties at the same time, no permutation is called for in that case. It is quite another matter that such a position will be difficult to maintain.
22. Cf. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984) and also Van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Kruiger (1983).
23. It must be stressed that each dialectical transformation has its own specific advantages to offer, but for the sake of brevity I cannot explain those here in full detail.

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