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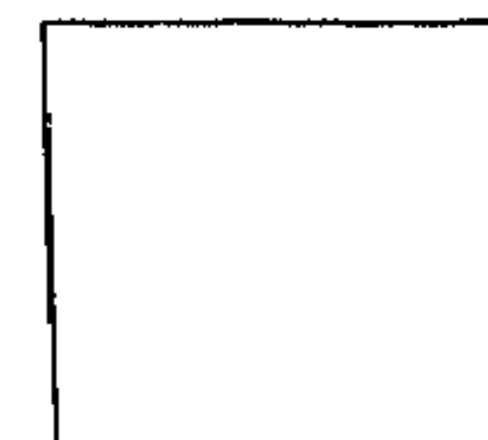
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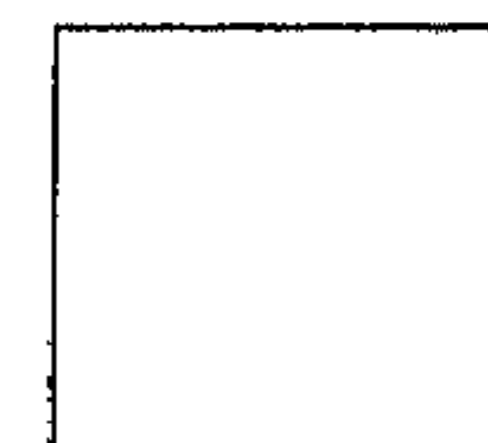
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For Reason's Sake: Maximal Argumentative Analysis of Discourse

Frans H. van Eemeren

1. Indirect Argumentation in Letters to the Editor

Everybody knows the kind of argumentation of the 'Look out! *Do you want to get run over?*'-type. In these argumentations a standpoint, which is not always presented as one, is defended by an argumentation, which may pose as a question, often called 'rhetorical', or which otherwise does not show itself directly as an argumentation. Recently, I came across some interesting samples in letters which were sent to *Time* magazine on 'Taking on Gadaffi' (April 28, 1986). Let me quote just three examples, starting with Alexander Panagopoulos from Athens:

(1) *If you hear about an accident or two on the highway, will you stop driving an automobile?* Please do not allow the terrorists to think they have succeeded.

Christine Barrero writes from New York:

(2) When Ronald Reagan approved the order for naval exercises in the Gulf of Sidra, did he consider that he might be signing a death warrant for American tourists and diplomats? *Didn't he know Gadaffi would retaliate with increased terrorism?*

Mr. Crane from France completes the three:

(3) As an American living in Europe, I congratulate the U.S. Navy on its successful but perhaps tardy maneuvers. *The attacks on the radar base and the patrol boats were justified and well executed.*

It seems clear to me that the italicised stretches of discourse may be considered as argumentation, but how can this interpretation be accounted for? I would like to answer this question now taking Panagopoulos' rhetorical question as a prototype.¹

2. Dialectical Analysis of Discourse

To answer the question satisfactorily, it must be placed in a theoretical perspective which provides a well-defined framework for an adequate reconstruction of discourse. As far as argumentative discourse is concerned, this reconstruction has to be normative, doing justice to the specific goal-directed character of this kind of language use.² Grootendorst and I have tried to outline a suitable perspective in a dialectical argumentation theory which is part of normative pragmatics.³ We did so by integrating insights collated from speech act theory,

conversation and discourse analysis, argumentation theory and formal dialectics into a theoretical model for analysing argumentative discourse.

In *Speech Acts in Argumentative Discussions* (1984) we formulated a code of conduct for reasonable discussants taking part in a critical discussion aimed at resolving a conflict of opinions. This code of conduct is an ideal model of the stages of a critical discussion and the distribution of speech acts through various stages. The model presents a regimen for the interaction of speech acts and may also serve as an heuristic tool for a systematic normative reconstruction of a discourse – both of the various dialectical stages and of the relevant speech acts. This systematic normative reconstruction is called a *dialectical analysis*. Dialectical analysis amounts to interpreting argumentative discourse as if it were part of a critical discussion. It is such an analysis which is being called for in the letters to *Time*. I have already demonstrated elsewhere what a dialectical analysis of a discourse amounts to for the confrontation stage of a critical discussion.⁴ In view of the problem raised at the beginning of this paper, this is a suitable juncture to concentrate on the argumentation stage, the very heart of the argumentative discourse.

Because it is a pre-requisite for an adequate normative reconstruction of argumentative discourse that the subject of investigation be functionalized, externalized, socialized and dialectified, in order to analyse a fragment of discourse dialectically, as part of a critical discussion, several kinds of operations must be carried out. These can be seen as transformations of a mere description of the discourse.⁵ It is the justifiability of the substitution transformation, transforming certain utterances into argumentation, which is at stake in our question regarding the *Time* magazine letters.

3. Dialectical Definition of Argumentation

In a dialectical analysis, before we can properly arrive at the question as to whether or not the italicised part of discourse (*I*) can be seen as the argumentation stage of a critical discussion, so that the substitution transformation may be justifiably carried out and Panagopoulos' question may indeed be regarded as an argumentation, we must explain what we mean by 'argumentation'. We need a definition of this concept, which takes full account of our dialectical objectives. With an eye to these theoretical considerations I would like to attempt the following definition:⁶

Argumentation is a speech act complex consisting of a constellation of statements designed to justify or refute an opinion and which is aimed at convincing a rational judge, who reacts reasonably, of the acceptability or unacceptability of that point of view.

As regards our dialectical starting-points, suffice it to say that externalization is achieved by concentrating on the verbalization of propositional attitudes, functionalization by conceiving argumentation as a speech act complex, socialization by linking this speech act with someone who is to be convinced of

a standpoint, and dialectification by assuming the recipient is acting reasonably and is willing to engage in a systematic interaction of speech acts aimed at resolving a dispute.

4. Identifying Argumentation

The main question now is how argumentation can be identified. When undertaking empirical research into argument identification to answer this question, one must first and foremost make sure that the subjects of the experiment understand approximately the same by argumentation as you do. Which is just what we did, as a preliminary to our investigating some hypotheses concerning factors influencing the ease of recognition in argument identification.

One should then go on and pay attention to the clues for the recognition of argumentation provided for by the verbal presentation of the discourse. Although argumentation may, to a greater or lesser extent, be structured complexly, we started for systematic reasons by concentrating upon simple argumentation. Here I would like to refer to an empirical feasibility study carried out by members of our Amsterdam team.⁷

Firstly, undergraduate students (in Amsterdam and Leiden) were requested to take part in a *pencil and paper test* in which they had to indicate whether or not a number of discourse fragments contained argumentation, and, if so, they were to underline the argument. Four factors presumed to be of influence in argument recognition were varied systematically: (1) subject highly charged or not, (2) standpoint marked or not, (3) argumentation indicator present or not, (4) standpoint preceding the argument or following it.

Two different replications of this research were carried out to gain a more definite idea about the suitability of the instrument used for measuring influence on argument recognition and to examine the precise effects of the various factors chosen as variables. The first consisted of a repeat of the pencil and paper test, varying the experimental subjects with younger subjects at a lower educational level, to countermand ceiling-effects in our previous test. In the second replication the instrument of measurement was varied, concentrating now on the analysis of decision time. Among the 4 variables manipulated, the effect of the presence of argumentation indicators, especially of indicators 'in a broader sense' such as 'Owing to' and 'On the basis of', proved to be the strongest. The absence of such an indicator slows down or hinders identifying argumentation – in some cases considerably. Marking the standpoint only facilitates the identification of argumentation if no argumentation indicator is present. In the other case the signal function of the marking of the standpoint is, as it were, over-ruled by the presence of the argumentation indicator. In *retrogressive* presentation, with argumentation following the standpoint as in the case of 'Because', identification turns out to be easier than in *progressive* presentation, with the standpoint following the argumentation, as in the case of 'Therefore'.⁸ A highly charged subject was (unlike social psychology seems to suggest) a factor without any significant effect.

Up to now we have concentrated upon the recognition of argumentation which may be called *implicit*, varying from utterances which are indicated almost explicitly as argumentation, to utterances the communicative force of which is less clearly indicated by the verbal presentation, but which nevertheless is pre-eminently suitable for conveying that force. Contextual indication seems to have a major part to play in the interpretation of *indirect* argumentation – such as Panagopoulos' question is supposed to be.⁹

In the case of indirect argumentation (and in the case of implicit argumentation in general) contextual indicators can have a clarifying effect and assist in interpreting the communicative force of the utterances. As argumentation normally takes place within a more or less defined context – artificial research situations being the exception – serious problems of interpretation, generally speaking, only arise in an 'undefined' context devoid of helpful pointers. Elsewhere we have argued that the degree of the conventionalization of the verbal presentation required to properly interpret indirect speech acts is inversely proportional to the necessary degree of definition of the context in which they occur.¹⁰

Starting from this hypothesis, some empirical tests have been carried out concerning the identification of indirect argumentation. In these tests students serving as experimental subjects were confronted with fragments of discourse consisting of items half of which in a split-plot design were supplied with a definite context, and half of which were not. Both contained an equal number of direct and of indirect argumentations, with or without an argumentative indicator. All defined contexts serving as independent variables were such that a literal interpretation, though perfectly possible, would be unsatisfactory.

As was to be expected, the communicative force of argumentation presented directly proved to be significantly easier to recognize than indirect argumentation. In the latter case, the language users needed some extra information in order to know that something more was meant than what was expressed literally. A defined context provides this information, as the tests significantly testify.¹¹ This is why we have to take a closer look at the context to explain the identification of argumentation in Panagopoulos' rhetorical question; as its semi-conventional form alone, which would also allow of other interpretations on other occasions, is insufficient to account for this. Here our speech act approach to argumentation may be of help.

5. The Conditional Relevance of Argumentation

Fitting argumentation into the framework of speech act theory means among other things that similar correctness conditions are supposed to be applicable as they are for instance to promises. Here, we are particularly interested in the conditions a reader may regard as having been fulfilled when a writer performs the speech act of argumentation. In refraining from stating them here in full detail, I shall confine myself to illustrating these conditions by the essential condition for *pro*-argumentation, defending a positive point of view:¹²

Advancing the constellation of speech acts constituting the argumentation, counts as an attempt by the utterer to justify a certain standpoint to the satisfaction of the recipient, i.e. convincing him by making him accept the standpoint in question.

As may be clear from this, it is characteristic of our approach that speech acts are not seen as being restricted to the level of the individual sentences (or preferably: clauses) to which John Searle's speech acts are exclusively related. Starting from Searlean terminology, argumentation can be described as a complex of illocutionary acts on the sentence level which constitute, as a unit at a higher textual level, the illocutionary act complex of argumentation. Typical of argumentation is, that it is on this suprasentential level connected with another more or less complex illocution in which a point of view is expressed. To put it more strongly: unless they are related to a standpoint, verbal utterances can not constitute an argumentation.¹³

It needs to be stressed that utterances which are argumentation in a situation of disagreement, when occurring in the context of a standpoint, may function as an explanation or simply as statements or as something else when the circumstances are different. Rather than *being* certain illocutionary acts, under certain conditions, utterances *serve* as these speech acts. The communicative meaning of a speech act not only depends on the formal properties of its verbal expression, but also, and primarily, on the context and situation in which it is performed.

As an illocutionary act complex, argumentation is a communicative act, which by its essential condition at the interactional level is conventionally connected with the perlocutionary act of convincing: convincing being conceived of as getting the addressee to accept the standpoint at issue. It is at this interactional level that argumentation is linked with other speech acts in the speech event constituting the context in which the communicative act is performed. This speech event may be a letter to the editor, but it can also be Question Time in Parliament, a paper for a conference, a debate or a sermon. Anyhow, it is the real-life context of actual language use in which the abstract constructs of speech acts get their socio-cultural significance for the language users.¹⁴

Speech events are the culturally determined 'language games' people play to articulate their *forms of life*, organizing communicative acts by way of the interactional acts associated with them in a characteristic way. As Hymes rightly observes, what must be distinguished as speech events in a certain culture depends wholly on how those people feel about this. It depends on their overall and local interactional goals determining which speech events there are and which communicative acts in their various components may be performed. It is at the level of the speech event that interactional strategies and tactics like the Co-operative Principle, conversational maxims, preference for agreement and politeness conventions come in.¹⁵

These strategies and tactics as they are employed in the process of the speech event affect its structural organization, but first of all the distribution of interactional (and matching communicative) acts is determined by overall and local interactional goals inherent in the speech event, the implementation of which is sometimes to a certain extent conventionalized, depending on the degree

of institutionalization of the speech event. So, therefore, knowledge of the speech event and its composition may lead to an educated guess concerning the interactional goal involved at a certain stage which, in turn, may lead to a justifiable interpretation of the communicative act being performed, as some communicative acts are particularly suited for furthering certain interactional goals, even being related to these goals by way of the essential condition. In this way the speech act central to our investigation, namely the communicative act complex of argumentation, which is a deliberate attempt at eliciting a calculated interactional effect of acceptance from the addressee, may take its proper place in a speech event like a plea, a discussion, a debate or maybe even a sermon, depending upon the structural organization of the speech event.¹⁶

In the speech event some communicative acts are linked, according to their interactional point, with certain communicative acts of the addressee, like advancing a point of view and accepting or rejecting it. In terms of structural dialogical organization, these communicative acts are then said to constitute an adjacency pair: standpoint/acceptance or standpoint/rejection, the former second pair part being a preferred response and the latter a dispreferred. If a dispreferred second pair part has come up or may be anticipated, a repair is called for, which in the case of the rejection of a standpoint is most adequately supplied by argumentation to make the standpoint acceptable. In this context, of a conflict of opinions, argumentation has indeed what is called *conditional relevance*, the relevance of the one speech act being dependent on the presence of the other.¹⁷ In speech events like letters to the editor it is clear from the general set-up that at a certain stage a standpoint should be defended against opposition or scepticism, so that argumentation would have conditional relevance. Knowing this, we now have to establish exactly when this conditional relevance is guaranteed in the case of indirect argumentation like, presumably, Panagopoulos'.

6. Interpreting Indirect Argumentation

In his letter to *Time* Panagopoulos lets his point of view be known with regard to the topic about which opinions differ: 'Taking on Gadaffi'. Given that it is clear from the previous analysis of the confrontation stage that the point of view defended by him is 'We should not allow terrorists to think they have succeeded', it needs to be pointed out that the question 'If you hear about an accident or two on the highway, will you stop driving an automobile?' must be interpreted as a rhetorical one so that in interpreting the argumentation involved it may be transformed into *A traffic accident or two on the highway would not stop you from driving an automobile* or a similar formulation. How can it be shown on the basis of conditional relevance that Panagopoulos' question in this letter to the editor is primarily intended as an argumentation, just as Christine Barrero's question and Mr. Crane's congratulation are primarily intended as an expression of a standpoint?

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, one must assume that the participants in a discourse are making sense, the things they are saying being relevant to

the stage of the speech event they have reached and the communicative acts performed at an interactional level relating adequately to one another and to the overall and local interactional goals in force.¹⁸ Bearing this in mind, it is clear that Panagopoulos' question may not be taken at face value because in the context of his standpoint it would be inapt. Incidentally, that the literal question can not be taken seriously is already evident from the fact that it is obvious that the answer must be 'no'. It is crystal clear that some of the preparatory and sincerity conditions for a correct performance of the communicative act of questioning will certainly not be fulfilled. The connected goal of getting an informative answer is sure to remain unachieved and this alone is already a good reason to consider it most unlikely that the communicative act of questioning is, after all, intended.

If Panagopoulos' question is to fit into the framework of relevance created by the speech event of a letter to the editor and a point of view to be defended by the writer, a relevance gap has to be bridged between this question and the standpoint. This may be done by considering the question as an argumentation, thus interpreting it as an attempt to repair the presumed disagreement between Panagopoulos and his readers by making his standpoint acceptable and justify it to the satisfaction of the readers. This interpretation of Panagopoulos' two utterances, according to which they are linked at the interactional level of the speech event, the one serving as a standpoint being cast into doubt and the other as an argumentation to overcome this doubt and gain acceptance for the standpoint, can only be established if the connection can be more precisely understood. This can be achieved by looking more closely at the communicative act of advancing a point of view and its correctness conditions. Once more I must confine myself to the essential condition:

Advancing the constellation of one or more speech acts constituting the point of view counts as taking responsibility for a positive or negative position with regard to the propositional content of these speech acts, i.e. assuming an obligation to defend that position if challenged to do so.

The conventional connection between the speech act, advancing a point of view as an act complex at a higher textual level, and some kind of disagreement, is expressed in the essential condition. When within this interactional context doubts are expressed, implicitly indicated or in any other way perceived to be present, argumentation is called for to defend the acceptability of the point of view. In a letter to the editor such a context is presumed by all, so that argumentation might well be expected. As satisfaction of the essential, propositional content, preparatory and sincerity conditions in the case of Panagopoulos' question being also, and primarily, an argumentation to the effect that we should not allow terrorists to think they have succeeded, pose no special problems but fit nicely into the background as far as it is known, an argumentative interpretation of this question is not only relevant, but also plausible.

With the help of the correctness conditions of the communicative act complexes of argumentation and, specifically, of points of view we can get a clearer picture of what exactly the plausibility of an indirect argumentation may consist of. The plausible realization of the conditional relevance as argumentation of indirect

speech acts such as Panagopoulos' question can be demonstrated all the more readily by pointing at preparatory or other correctness conditions for performing the communicative act complex of advancing a point of view which are left unfulfilled but which are satisfied by the argumentation, thus characterizing in more detail the link which joins argumentation and standpoint. This way our distinction is exploited between speech acts at the sentence level and at a higher textual level, for whilst at a sentence level the correctness conditions of the communicative acts may be completely fulfilled, without there being any necessity of an interactional link, at a higher level the self-same speech acts may constitute a standpoint for which argumentation may be purported to satisfy one or more of its unfulfilled correctness conditions.

As there are several kinds of correctness conditions, various sorts of links between argumentations and standpoints may be distinguished depending on the kind of condition(s) being called into question, precisely because in each case another form of doubt has to be overcome, and this has consequences for the point of departure in interpreting the possible argumentation. In the case of a preparatory condition being at issue, contextual pre-requisites (in the broadest sense of the words) for advancing a standpoint, are at stake; in the case of a sincerity condition, the personal commitments created by advancing a standpoint; and in the case of the propositional condition its tenability, this latter being considered by many as calling for argumentation 'proper', in contrast to explanatory argumentation, etc.¹⁹

Indirectness of both standpoints and argumentations may take various forms: an indirect standpoint may be presented as an assertive, directive, commissive, expressive or declarative, all serving as a standpoint when the appropriate conditions reign, and the same applies to the indirect presentation of argumentation. Of course, combinations of standpoints and argumentations which might be indirect, can also occur, so that instances may occur like the following:

S1: Go home now (*directive as indirect standpoint*)
 S2: Eh? (*expression of doubt*)
 S1: Don't you mind staying late? (*directive as indirect argumentation*)

S1: ?
 S2: I'll be there (*commissive as indirect argumentation*)
 (So) you can count on me (*commissive as indirect standpoint*).

S1: ?
 S2: It's so ugly (*expressive as indirect argumentation*)
 (Therefore) What a waste! (*expressive as indirect standpoint*)

S1: I hereby distinguish two kinds of complexes (*declarative as indirect standpoint*)
 S2: Eh? (*expression of doubt*)
 S1: I (hereby also) retract my doubt about your contention (*declarative as indirect argumentation*)

and also cross-combinations like these:

S1: Can you take this book with you? (*directive as indirect standpoint*)
 S2: Eh? (*expression of doubt*)
 S1: You only live around the corner (*assertive as direct argumentation*)

S1: ?
 S2: You only live around the corner (*assertive as direct argumentation*)
 Can't you take it with you? (*directive as indirect standpoint*)

S1: Can't you take this book with you? (*directive as indirect standpoint*)
 S2: Eh? (*expression of doubt*)
 S1: I'll do it next time (*commissive as indirect argumentation*)

In these cases the precise connection between argumentation and standpoint can be plausibly spelled out with the help of the correctness conditions of a standpoint. In the first example the argumentation *You would not want to be home late* satisfies an unfulfilled preparatory condition of the standpoint *You must go home now*, to the effect that one must have some justification for advancing this particular point of view. By virtue of the essential condition of a standpoint one assumes an obligation to defend the position one has taken responsibility for by expressing the standpoint if challenged to do so. If it is not clear from the context of the speech event what the justification is, as is obviously the case when a proposition is at issue in letters to the editor, an argumentation in which it is provided supplies the missing link adequately. This way in all the examples just quoted the gap between standpoint and proclaimed argumentation can be bridged simply by referring to one or more of the correctness conditions of the standpoints.

Once more, it is demonstrated by this that if the discourse is already partly understood the interpretation of the remainder may be assisted by what we know already. Obviously, this is the case if it is already clear what standpoint is at issue in a letter to the editor. As far as Panagopoulos' rhetorical question is concerned, the argumentation conveyed in this question, *A traffic accident or two on the highway would not stop you from driving an automobile*, clearly fulfils, among other correctness conditions, the preparatory condition left unsatisfied with the standpoint *We should not allow terrorists to think they have succeeded*: that there is an acceptable justification for advancing this standpoint – assuming that it is understood that this is the point of view to be defended in Panagopoulos' letter to *Time* magazine.

7. Dialectical Analysis and Reasonable Interpretation

So far we have concentrated on how far a rational judge can get in interpreting parts of ordinary discourse as argumentation, profiting from the special vantage point of speech act theory, which makes it possible in solving problems of

interpretation to exploit conversational maxims, etc. by referring to the tacit knowledge language users have of correctness conditions of speech acts. Only then when it is fully clear that in this way the problem cannot be completely solved and that the context of the speech event, which is often rather indicative, is of no help, does it seem to be legitimate and perhaps even inescapable to reach a decision motivated by the normative background of the dialectical analysis aimed for. In these problematical cases the dialectical starting-point shifts from the background to the foreground, providing a rationale for the transformation of substitution by linking the normatively desirable in the analysis with the descriptively possible. The justification for this transformation is then that it is for reason's sake.

There is, however, a deliberate ambiguity in the phrase 'for reason's sake'. Firstly, it may refer to Hobson's choice, and, secondly, also more positively, to a general disposition to try to resolve conflicts dialectically by way of a critical discussion.²⁰ Although it may be reasonable to do something for lack of any serious alternative, to act reasonably in a dialectical sense implies more. If its literal meaning alone would not make sense, any rational judge would try to interpret a communicative act as an indirect speech act, thus allowing for the Co-operative Principle and conversational maxims to be observed, but dialectical reasonableness goes yet a step further: when in doubt in analyzing a discourse, the speaker or writer is given the benefit of the doubt and the interpretation is favoured which is most beneficial to the resolution of a dispute. Starting from our theory, this means that a rational judge who acts reasonably will opt for assigning to questionable utterances the communicative force which is the most congruent with the distribution of communicative acts in the ideal model of a critical discussion.

For a dialectical analysis of speech acts occurring in the argumentation stage this means that if the communicative force of certain utterances is not completely clear an argumentative interpretation should be tried, reconstructing those parts of the discourse as serving as argumentation. It is in such an analysis of special importance that argumentation be clearly and justly distinguished not only from communicative acts like advancing a standpoint and accepting or rejecting it, but also from act complexes which may just as well be performed in that stage of a critical discussion but which aim at different interactional effects and create different kinds of commitments, such as usage declaratives like for example a definition, precization, amplification, explication and explicitization. Whilst interpreting a speech act as a usage declarative one must not ask if it is an adequate defence of a standpoint but, in the case of a precization for instance, if it indeed restricts the possible interpretations of what is precized. If, on the other hand, a speech act is not considered as an argumentation but mistaken for a usage declarative, it will fail to be judged properly and adequately as a contribution made by the speaker or writer in resolving the dispute at issue. Even if they are presented indirectly, the commitments made by advancing arguments (or standpoints) are those of assertives and have to be judged as such, therefore they should also be reconstructed as assertives.

8. Strategies of Dialectical Analysis

By way of a legal metaphor it might be said that in analyzing a discourse satisfactorily, in the absence of indisputable facts, for lack of proof, starting from circumstantial evidence and taking into account all extenuating or aggravating circumstances, judgement has to be made and pronounced by a rational judge who is reasonable in a dialectical sense. Such a judge is required, in interpreting speech acts the communicative force of which is not quite clear, to apply the strategy of *maximal reasonable interpretation*. This strategy implies that a discourse which may or may not be conceived of as a critical discussion, is conceived of as such. In applying the strategy of maximal reasonable interpretation, the point of departure is that the discourse is meant to resolve a dispute. In such an interpretation all speech acts performed are, in principle, interpreted as a potential contribution to this goal. In this way the language users are given maximal credit where it is due.

The code of conduct for the performance of speech acts in a critical discussion is at the same time the point of departure for the reasonable judge, who is interpreting the communicative acts performed in the various stages whilst analysing the discourse as a critical discussion. A dialectical analysis of any discourse has always a conditional character: only in as much as the discourse is, indeed, aimed at resolving a dispute, the ideal model used as a starting-point of the analysis is applicable and the analysis holds water.

The application of the strategy of maximal reasonable interpretation is a means of supplying a suitable perspective from which a discourse can be adequately analysed. To know what kind of speech act would be appropriate at any given point in a discourse, were it to be a critical discussion, the distribution of speech acts in the ideal model has to be consulted. This is exactly what has to be done in solving the remaining problems when determining the communicative force of some implicit and indirect speech acts as in the letters from *Time* magazine. In this dialectical perspective of reasonableness it is warranted in analysing speech acts in the argumentative stage, when in doubt, unless there is any clear indication to the contrary, to opt for the strategy of *maximal argumentative interpretation*. This means that unclear implicit speech acts occurring in this stage which may have the communicative force of argumentation but which may also have another communicative force should be assigned the communicative force of argumentation. This applies to speech acts belonging to the category of assertives but also to implicit speech acts which at first sight appear to be commissives, directives, expressives or declaratives, but which only fulfil a constructive part in the critical discussion if translated into assertives constituting argumentation, like Alexander Panagopoulos' and Christine Barrero's italicised questions.

Of course, it is only necessary to choose a maximal argumentative interpretation in doubtful cases, and the relevance of a question which remains unquestionably a question, naturally remains a question. The strategy of maximal argumentative interpretation just prevents speech acts which play a potentially crucial part in resolving a dispute from not receiving acknowledgment. This is also why in a dialectical analysis Panagopoulos' directives have to be substituted by the assertive standard form of a standpoint and an argumentation.²¹

- (1') We should not allow the terrorists to think they have succeeded, for you would not stop driving an automobile if you hear about some traffic accident.

Having seen how the dialectical ideal of reason can be implemented using a maximal argumentative interpretation, as it applies to speech acts the communicative force of which is yet undetermined, as with Panagopoulos' rhetorical question, then it is also possible to implement the dialectical ideal of reasonableness in yet another way in the normative reconstruction of the argumentation stage. Thus far, our analysis was confined to single argumentation, but very often the argumentation is more complex, like in the letter to *Time* of Mr. Crane. A problem of analysis arises when it is unclear whether a multiple argumentation or a co-ordinatively compound argumentation is the case. Then it is possible that the speaker or writer sees the single argumentations individually as conclusive of his standpoint, but it is equally possible that he takes them to be a conclusive defence only when seen in concert. In dialectical analysis multiple interpretation of the argumentation structure is a strategy to start with. That way, at least there are guarantees that each single argumentation will be examined as to its justifying or refuting capacity in relation to the proposition to which the standpoint being defended refers. Since in this way we attribute a maximum of argumentative force to each individual component single argumentation, this recommendation leads to the strategy of the *maximal argumentative parsing*.²²

After having indicated why a rational judge, for reason's sake, should perform the substitution transformation of reconstructing certain parts of a discourse, like Panagopoulos' rhetorical question, as an argumentation by applying a strategy of maximal argumentative interpretation, I have now also explained that this strategy in a dialectical analysis of the argumentation stage of a critical discussion can be supplemented by a strategy of maximal argumentative parsing of the argumentation structure, both strategies being consequences of a general strategy of maximal reasonable interpretation. In this way a normative reconstruction of argumentative discourse can be achieved which may truly be called a dialectification.

Notes

1. Indirectness is part of the subject matter of the Argumentative Language Use research project of the University of Amsterdam which was started some years ago by Rob Grootendorst, M. Agnes Haft-van Rees, Bert Meuffels and myself (VF UvA LET Discourse Analysis 102. 023 A). This paper is intended to give a wider circle of interested persons an inkling of the nature of this project, which will be carried on in co-operation with Sally Jackson and Scott Jacobs of the University of Oklahoma, whose work on conversational argument is closely related both in aims and theoretical background.
2. Cf. van Eemeren (1986a).
3. The term *pragmatics* is used here in a similar broad sense as in Levinson (1983). Cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, 1987).
4. See van Eemeren (1986b).
5. Cf. van Eemeren (1986a).

6. Cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984: 3-18) for explanatory notes to this definition. Without giving in to an objectionable tendency towards dissociating terms and concepts – treading for once in Russell's footsteps – possible confusion about the word 'argumentation', as may arise in English (cf. O'Keefe 1982: 3-6), is disregarded here as due to the infirmities of natural language, in this case the English language.

7. A report of this study in English is to appear in van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Meuffels (to be published in 1987). In fact, several feasibility studies were carried out in order to attain a more or less complete image of the suitability of the measuring instruments chosen. In measuring the ease with which argumentation can be identified, to start with, the research concentrated upon single argumentations in which a single argument in defence of a standpoint is articulated. The conceptual validity of our notion of argumentation was proven by the fact that argumentation was identified correctly in 95% of the items in a preliminary test submitted to the experimental subjects. This conceptual validity was confirmed by the ceiling-effects in our first pencil and paper test.

8. This terminology is suggested in van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Kruiger (1984: 22), but no explanation is offered there for the divergence in ease of recognition.

9. This illocutionary indirectness is to be distinguished from propositional indirectness, which may combine with it. See, for this, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1987: ch. 5).

10. See van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1987: ch. 5.3). The notion of 'context' is used here in the sense of 'purpose' introduced by Crawshaw-Williams, as described in van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Kruiger (1984: ch. 3.3).

11. With direct argumentation context definition does not have this influence, which suggests some confirmation of van Dijk and Kintsch's (1983) contention that language users who have to determine the communicative force of verbal utterances in the first instance take refuge in so-called linguistic strategies. All non-linguistic factors mentioned by Clark (1979) as affecting the interpretation of indirect speech acts seem to be incorporated in our defined contexts.

12. The other correctness conditions for pro-argumentation, as well as the conditions for contra-argumentation, are stated in van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984: 39-46), where distinctions are also made between recognizable, correct and successful performances of these speech acts as seen from the varying perspectives of the speaker or writer and the listener or reader.

13. Edmondson (1981: 26) correctly observes that 'the distinctiveness of some illocutionary categories (in a Searlean sense) derives at least in part from their sequential placing and relevance in a sequence of speech acts'.

14. Though a speech event always consists of one or more speech acts, these categories are by no means identical. As is explained in van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984 and 1987) speech acts are theoretically motivated analytical units of language use, characterized by their correctness conditions and distinguished in pragmatics because of the different kinds of commitments they create for the language users. Due to the conventional connection between speech acts as communicative acts and certain interactional goals, various speech acts may play a more or less fixed and regular part in the organisation of a speech event in which these goals are pursued. This may be so in real life speech events but also in ideal models of speech events such as the normative reconstruction of the distribution of speech acts over the various phases of a critical discussion proposed in van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984).

15. Confusing the communicative level and the interactional level of analysis, and confusing speech acts and speech events, leads to an underestimation of the possibilities of speech act theory by many authors, for example Levinson (1983), who overestimate its pretensions. Searlean communicative speech act theory does not claim to replace Gricean and other interactional speech event insights, and, accordingly, ought not be reproached for inadequacies in performing this task.

16. Of course, this structural organization is not always determined in advance but may develop during the verbal interaction (cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1987: ch. 7-9) on the structural organization of argumentation).

17. Here, it should be emphasized that similar observations are made by Jackson and Jacobs (1980, 1981) and Jacobs and Jackson (1982, 1983) as were also made by Grootendorst and myself, and which are rephrased here in a dialectically redefined version of the terminology of conversational analysis as described in Levinson (1983: ch. 6).

18. Apart from relevance, the coherence of the discourse is also at stake here (cf. Edmondson 1981: 14).
19. Given a standpoint cast into doubt, one knows because of the correctness conditions already that argumentation is to be expected and because of the kind of condition which is unfulfilled one also knows precisely what kind of argumentation is to be expected. This needs elaboration. In a joint project with Grootendorst, Jackson and Jacobs more details will be given on these matters.
20. This dialectical approach avoids the Scylla of 'geometrical' formal absolutism and the Charybdis of 'anthropological' epistemic relativism by combining logical problem-validity and rhetorical intersubjective validity in a code of conduct for resolving disputes by means of a critical discussion, regimented by procedural rules for the distribution of speech acts through the various stages (cf. Barth and Krabbe (1982), and van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984)). According to this dialectical approach, inspired by the critical rationalist views of Karl Popper, Hans Albert, Else Barth, among others, a discussion is deemed to be reasonable inasmuch as it congrues with rules which further the resolution of disputes and a discussant is deemed reasonable inasmuch as he obeys the rules of the ideal model. This construction of a rational judge who acts reasonably, is that of an ideal exponent of rationality whose conduct is in all respects in coherence with the code, and who judges others solely according to this code. In certain respects, Perelman's 'universal audience', Mead's 'generalized other', and Habermas' 'ideale Redesituation' fulfil not dissimilar functions, but the advantage of the dialectical concept of a rational judge, by virtue of its embodiment in the framework of an ideal model of a critical discussion aimed at resolving disputes, is that not only its intersubjective validity but also its problem-validity can be made subject to scrutiny.
21. To be precise, this argumentation is an example ('substitution instance') of the well-known argumentation scheme of reasoning from analogy (cf. van Eemeren and Kruiger (1986: ch. 2)).
22. See van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1987: ch. 8).

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