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The Voice of the Other: A Dialogico-Rhetorical Understanding of *Opponent* and Toulmin's *Rebuttal*

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ABSTRACT: Although contemporary dialectical logic recognizes an important role for the opponent in argumentation, it remains loyal to the idea that arguments are supportive. In this paper, it is argued that because of this dialectical logic does not take seriously its own dialogical perspective. Without acknowledging a substantial role for rebutting factors in argumentation, the role of the opponent remains secondary. Toulmin's understanding of the rebuttal suggests a way to incorporate such a substantial role of the opponent.

KEY WORDS: dialectical logic, Stephen Toulmin, rebuttal, dialogical rhetoric, opponent, burden of proof

INTRODUCTION

A negative conclusion is also a conclusion. It is normal scientific practice to test hypotheses and negative results are as important as positive ones; -albeit perhaps not always as exhilarating. For some reason, however, contemporary logic seems to oversee the negative conclusion. It is preoccupied with supporting conclusions and acknowledges only positive results. This is surprising. Classical logic, we will remember, was by definition focused upon supportive arguments. But since logic made a *dialectical* shift, one would expect a different approach. The dialectical shift, resulting from the work of a.o. Hamblin, the Erlangen School, Barth and Krabbe, and with Stephen Toulmin and Chaim Perelman as important precursors, acknowledges not only proposition, but also opposition. In fact, opposition to a claim is what gives argumentation its sense. Only when there is an opponent who, not as yet, accepts the claim, it makes sense for the proponent to defend it.[1] Dialectical theory thereby analyzes argumentation as verbal exchanges between proponent and opponent with the purpose 'to establish whether the protagonist's [proponent's] standpoint is defensible against the critical reactions of the antagonist [opponent]'(Van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1984, p. 17).

Despite this important role of the opponent, it seems that in the resulting conclusion her influence is only marginal. Her counter-considerations may only *modify* the conclusion; they can never overturn it. James B. Freeman for instance argues that any conclusion is always a qualified conclusion, because of possible counter-considerations, yet his 'modality' is always a positive one, ranging from 'possibly' to 'certainly' (Freeman, 1991, p. 111). Apparently, although in a modified form, dialectical logic is just like classical logic concerned with supportive arguments. In that sense, the argument remains a matter 'of the proponent' and serves to support his

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[1] The logical roles are known by different names. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984): protagonist and antagonist. Freeman (1991): proponent and challenger. Johnson and Blair (1983): arguer and doubter/questioner. For convenience, I apply Barth and Krabbe's (1982) terminology of proponent and opponent throughout.

position. Dialectical logic may not be as dialogical as it wants to be. Is the opponent nothing more than a stooge in a monological act?

In this paper, I intend to investigate the reasons of this feature of dialectical logic and propose a way of granting the voice of the other a more substantial role in the conclusion of arguments. Doing so, I shall gratefully use Stephen Toulmin's idea's on the lay-out of arguments, although being aware of bending his approach in a more rhetorical direction. Doing so, present paper contributes to a larger program: to argue that a dialogical orientation compels to a rhetorical approach.[2]

DIALECTICAL CRITERIA FOR GOOD ARGUMENTS

Dropping the formal-logical criterion of soundness, -truth of the premises combined with validity of the inference-,[3] dialecticians apply three basic criteria of good reasoning: *acceptance*, *relevance* and *adequacy*. These three criteria correspond to three different types of questions that might be asked by an opponent. The first question concerns the status of the given reasons.[4] If support is derived from a premise, it is clear that the premise itself must be accepted. The second type of question concerns the relevance of the reasons provided.[5] Even if the status of the reasons is undisputed, they must also be relevant to the matter in discussion. Relevance concerns the link between the premises and the conclusion: it tells why these premises yield this conclusion. The third type of questions is somewhat less straightforward, as it brings forward possible weaknesses of a given argument. For several reasons, even an argument that is acceptable and relevant may not be adequate. There may be only some evidence but not enough, or there are possible reasons that might overrule the argument, or there may actually be counterevidence.[6] At issue is: does the argument hold in the light of possible counter-considerations?

Together, the three basic questions of acceptance, relevance and adequacy determine the strength of the argument. Clearly, this is seldom an all-or-nothing matter. Whereas formal logic knows no shades, applying these criteria yields nuances. All three allow for degrees, and taken together almost never a definite conclusion will be reached. Precisely for that reason, dialectical logic is more apt than its formal counterpart to apply to actual argumentative practice.

ARGUMENTATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

In the dialectical view, the opponent and the proponent have distinctive argumentative responsibilities. By means of a question the opponent initiates the argument because any 'why' challenges the proponent to defend the claim and to bring forward supporting reasons. Barth and

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[2] For this larger program see: Slob, 2002a.

[3] Ralph Johnson takes the rejection of formal-logical soundness as defining characteristic of 'informal logic.' Cf. Johnson, 1995. Johnson sees differences between dialectical and informal logic, but not on this point: 'it appears that the rules of pragma-dialectics embody the force of the criteria used by the informal logic approach'(p. 241).

[4] James B. Freeman formulates the acceptability questions as: 'why should I believe that premises?' or 'how do I know that reasons is true.' Cf. Freeman (1991, p. 38).

[5] Freeman: 'why is that reason relevant tot the claim?' He calls into mind Toulmin's warrant-generating question: 'how do you get there?' Cf. Freeman (1991, p. 38).

[6] Freeman (1991, p. 39) distinguishes three 'ground adequacy questions.' The first one is simple: 'can you give me another reason.' The reason given does have some weight, but not enough. The second asks more directly after the weight of the reasons given: 'how sure can we be with these reasons?' The last one concerns relative weight: 'how sure can we be when possible counterevidence is taken into account?' In all three cases, the weight of the reasons is at stake.

Krabbe accordingly define the proponent and opponent by stating: 'P[roponent] opposes none of the statements in the (pure) conflict, and O[pponent] is neutral to none of them'(Barth and Krabbe, 1982, p. 59). Barth and Krabbe want to present a normative orientation rather than a description of an actual situation, but it is clear that the respective roles of proponent and opponent are different with respect to the burden of proof involved. Only the proponent is called to defend his position if called for.

Of course, all dialecticians admit that the opponent may not only be critical of a claim of the proponent, but may have a standpoint herself. If so, however, the discussion is to be considered 'mixed' and should be treated as a complex argumentative situation: '[a] set[s] of simple conflicts superimposed upon each other *without interfering with one another*' (Barth and Krabbe, 1982, p. 74, italics original). Analyzing mixed discussions as separate discussions in which the argumentative responsibilities are reversed, allows one to keep the two responsibilities clear. The burden of proof remains to be seen as a matter incumbent upon the proponent only.

In the meantime, the opponent has no obligation to defend her position; questions can be asked at any time and the proponent is obliged to answer them. It is telling that according to the pragma-dialecticians Van Eemeren and Grootendorst only the proponent ('protagonist') can violate rule nr. 2 of their ten commandments: 'a party that advances a standpoint is obliged to defend it if the other party asks him to do so' (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1992, p. 208). Probably the idea is that whoever claims must defend. In itself a quite acceptable maxim, but it neglects two things. Firstly, allowing the opponent to ask away without even attributing burden of proof for her challenges invites filibustering (a fallacy seldom acknowledged by theorists). As the opponent does not have to justify her position in the discussion, she is free to obstruct the process, which in certain circumstances may be an appealing strategy.[7] Secondly, if the opponent has no obligation to defend her position, she cannot be forced to accept any conclusion. In particular, she cannot be asked to defend stubborn opposition in the face of all the support the proponent has provided. Dialectically, there is nothing wrong with an opponent who keeps repeating: 'can you give me another reason? (And don't ask me why I am not impressed by the reasons you have given me; I have no obligation to tell you, remember).'

Barth and Krabbe suggest that one might object to this asymmetry in burden of proof out of a 'feeling of justness',[8] but that is not my concern. Rather, my point is that if we cannot force the opponent to give up unreasonable resistance we have not improved much upon formal logic in terms of understanding normativity. Such a logical tool is as useless to investigate actual discussions as formal logic is.

If the opponent is attributed burden of proof for her position in the discussion, we can better see how actual discussions work, what is involved in them and how the discussants are in fact reaching compelling conclusions. Attributing the opponent burden of proof does not only concern the situation in which she defends a standpoint of her own, but also concerns her opposition as such. To my mind, this suggestion is merely a variant on Aristotle's advice 'a man should not enter into discussion with everybody or practice dialectics with the first comer' (Topica, VIII, 14, 164b): also a question must be reasonable. And it is up to the opponent to defend this, if asked to do so.

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[7] American Democrats applied filibustering to prevent oil-drilling in Alaska, hoping that they could postpone the decision till after John Kerry was elected president. He was not and the Democrats gave up their strategy.
[8] Cf. Barth and Krabbe, 1982, p. 75: 'if the reader has qualms about the fundamental asymmetry in simple conflicts of opinions and feels that everything has to be symmetrical in order to be 'just', …'

WHAT IS AT ISSUE IN ARGUMENTATION?

The distribution of the burden of proof is intimately connected to the question as to what constitutes an argument. Generally, an argument is conceived as given reasons that support a claim: 'argumentation comprises the whole constellation of utterances advanced in defense of a standpoint' (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1992, p. 14). If this is indeed what is at stake in a discussion, it is no wonder that only supportive reasons are taken into account. Is this, perhaps, what James Freeman calls a 'monological view of argument' (Freeman, 1991, p. xiii), and which he contrasts with a dialogical view in which argument is seen as an 'interchange between two or more persons' (idem)? Probably not what either Freeman or Van Eemeren and Grootendorst intend. Yet, emphasizing the supportive function of argumentation alone, and disregarding counter-indicative aspects, does suggest a semi-monological approach.

Walton and Krabbe more consistently elaborate on the dialogical outlook, and distinguish between different kinds of discussions. Different types of discussions have different goals (as well as different rules), and hence different kinds of argumentative responsibilities (Walton and Krabbe, 1991, pp. 65-121). Without discussing these in detail here, we can say that this suggests that the participants have a mutual[9] interest in the outcome of a discussion. This implies, however, that the logical role of the opponent must be more substantial than merely triggering the discussion. Freeman acknowledges this, to a certain extent: the questions of the opponent may weaken or soften the conclusion so that a qualification is at place. Still, Freeman also wants an argument to be supportive. The role of the opponent is only to nuance the conclusion. A negative conclusion should be analyzed as a(nother) thesis for which the opponent becomes proponent.

If, however, an argument is really an interchange between argumentative interlocutors, why not think of the claim at issue as a conclusion to which both participants contribute substantially? The proponent provides supporting reasons, but the negative considerations are as important to come to a balanced conclusion. Typically, the opponent embodies this negative, rebutting, side of the discussion.

This suggestion puts the understanding of what an argument is in a different light. Rather than giving support for the claim, argumentative interchange is now seen as determining the relative weight of the conclusion, for which both supporting but also rebutting forces are important. This implies that any conclusion is always, just like Freeman maintains, a qualified conclusion, but in contrast to Freeman, it also involves that the qualification can become negative. The range is from 'certainly', via 'possibly', to 'unlikely' or 'certainly not.'

TRUTH OR COMMITMENT?

Although the issue is rarely discussed, we may suspect an epistemological motive behind the preoccupation to regard arguments as supportive. The idea presumably is that the conclusion must reveal some truth, as for instance Ralph Johnson says: 'an argument is an attempt to persuade someone (even oneself) on rational grounds of the 'truth' of some controversial thesis' (Johnson, 1990, p. 137). I will leave aside here what 'rational grounds' exactly comes down to, and shall refrain of discussing the extremely complicated issue of understanding truth, just to remark that truth is generally considered an all or nothing matter. Either a claim is true, or it is not. Obviously, this puts the idea of qualified conclusions under pressure: what does it mean to

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[9] Not necessarily: shared. The interlocutors may have different motivations to participate.

qualify something that is not supposed to have any shade? Freeman argues that qualifications are not part of the conclusion, but indicate the connection between premises and conclusions. In a rather classical fashion he remarks that 'the truth of the premises guarantees the truth of the conclusion'(Freeman, 1991, p. 118). Still, as the connection between premises and conclusion is argumentatively based on evidence, and depends upon the acceptance of specific participants in the discussion, the truth of the conclusion is not always determinable. I take this to say that acknowledging the qualification of the conclusion is a matter of epistemological discomfort, resulting from the human predicament of necessarily having only a limited view. In this view, the truth of the conclusion remains an all or nothing matter, but the limitedness of human perspective calls duly for epistemic modesty. This assumption would clarify why arguments must be supportive; it makes no sense to qualify a conclusion negatively that in itself is supposed to be true. Indeed, this could only be concluded by a positive qualification of its denial. But in that case, the truth of the negation would be at issue.

It is questionable, however, whether truth understood in this way is useful in the study of argumentation. We may suggest an alternative understanding of the status of the conclusion. Not as reflecting truth in any sense, but as providing commitment of the participants. The predicament of human limitedness is obviously acknowledged, but it is not considered a matter of discomfiture. In fact: limited conclusions is all we can have and there is no reason to complain about that. It involves the modesty that all claims are tentative in the sense that counter-considerations may overturn even our deepest convictions in due time, but until than, we shall have to act according to our best knowledge. Conclusions, than, are not supposed to reflect all or nothing matters such as truth, but indicate the degree of commitment resulting from specific exchanges of arguments. From this perspective, argumentative qualification belongs intrinsically to the conclusion, and there is no reason to object to negative qualifications.

DEVELOPING COMMITMENT

If argumentation is about yielding commitment for some claim, it should be made clear how positive and negative aspects come together and how commitment is welded from both these forces. I propose to see the conclusion as the vector-like result from supportive and rebutting forces brought forward by both the participants. In this view, the proponent contributes the positive supporting force, whereas the opponent contributes the negative rebutting force. We are not interesting primarily in linking premises and conclusion, but in transferring commitment. In rhetorical terms, the proponent wants to 'win over' the opponent. As the proponent is ready to defend his thesis, he is obviously committed to it himself. Considering the opposition of his interlocutor, she is not (as yet). We may understand the attempt of the proponent to 'win over' the opponent as an attempt to bring her to drop the opposition and to accept commitment to the claim. On the other hand, the opponent may have good reasons to keep her reservations, or even compelling reasons why the claim should not be accepted. She, in other words, is committed to a neutral or negative attitude towards the claim and is ready to defend this.

An argumentation may be understood as the interchange between those two positions. The point now is how commitment is transferred to the other side. Clearly, any reason that is proposed, even if it is only a strategic move, brings along commitment. But if a reason is accepted within a particular context, than not only the proponent but also the opponent has acknowledged commitment. I shall call such a reason *established* within a given context. In essence this is all we need: commitment derives from either advancing or from accepting

reasons. Cleary, not all reasons are easily established. Sometimes an elaborate subargument, satisfying the demand for acceptance, relevance and adequacy, is required to win over the interlocutor. But if the interlocutor finally accepts the conclusion of the sub-argument, commitment to its role in the bigger context is also established.

From this perspective, whether or not a reason is established depends upon the acceptance of the reason by the interlocutor. It should be seen that nothing more is required. In particular, no external perspective of some neutral arbiter is required. We can do without it, because the participants themselves can guard off the process of accepting and rejecting reasons. As long as the opponent has reasonable questions, the proponent is still called to answer them. But if the opponent is satisfied, the argument reaches closure, because without any questions left the reason for arguing has disappeared. Still, whether or not the opponent accepts the reasons presented does not depend upon her good- or ill-humouredness, as if she is completely free to do as she likes. The proponent can enforce it, when the opponent has no longer any reasonable doubts. It is here that the double burden of proof pays out. Not only the proponent, but also the opponent can be called to defend her position. Just as the proponent is supposed to convince the opponent of his position, so it is the proponent who is the main audience for the opponent. In other words: both participants should orient their reasons to each other. In this process, nothing more is required than applying reasons that are convincing for the interlocutor, and accepting commitment that results from advancing them. In this 'balance of powers' the proponent is most times the one who wants to win over the opponent and is strategically advised not to call the opponent too quickly to defend her position. But at some point, for instance when more than sufficient good reasons have been given, the opponent may be called to defend further opposition. In this way, accepting reasons is a matter that can be enforced by the proponent: if the opponent, given the reasons presented, still refuses to accept the conclusion, she must bring up good reasons herself. Or become unreasonable (as far as the proponent is concerned).[10]

As the opponent also faces burden of proof, and may defend her position in the discussion, it is very well possible (even likely) that her negative input is relevant for the overall conclusion. But this can be so only when her reasons are established. That is: when her interlocutor (the proponent of the main argument) accepts the reasons of the opponent, he is to be considered committed to this rebutting force. The opponent herself, advancing the negative input is obviously committed to it already.

In this way, dialogical rhetoric perceives of argumentative normativity: a balance between the interlocutors. Both participants should orient their arguments mutually to each other in order to defend their respective positions and thereby establish reasons. To the extent that the respective interlocutor accepts the reasons, they are established and influence the final conclusion. Positive and negative factors add up and together lead up to the conclusion. Both participants are committed to this conclusion, because both are committed to all the ingredients.

TOULMIN'S DIAGRAM

Not being merely illustrative, diagrams help to show the structure of an argument and serves to be a strategic tool. I find Toulmin's analysis as proposed in *The Uses of Argument* (1958) very helpful. Especially because his proposal allows us to incorporate the three basic criteria of argument-evaluation in the distinguished elements of argumentation.

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[10] For a discussion on 'unreasonableness' in this understanding, cf. Slob, 2002b.

As is well-known, Toulmin distinguishes between Data, Warrant, Backing, Rebuttal, Qualifier and Conclusion. The basic line goes from data to conclusion. The warrant is added because it indicates why the data are relevant for the conclusion. Backing is added to support the warrant itself. The rebuttal is added because there may be counter-considerations to reckon with. The rebutting force may qualify the conclusion.

In a diagram, Toulmin's layout of arguments looks like this:

Data ⟶ so, Qualifier, Conclusion

since, Warrant   unless, Rebuttal

on account of Backing

Toulmin's scheme serves well to show how the three basic questions of dialectics, acceptance, relevance and adequacy, contribute to the development of an argument. Being called to defend a claim, a proponent brings forward a reason, in Toulmin's scheme the data. If this is as such accepted, the reason is without further ado established and leads unobstructed up to the conclusion. If so, the discussion will be over because the opponent has no further objections. But obviously, she may have some hesitations. First, she may question the acceptability of the data itself. This simply calls for support, which results in a subargument.[11] The argument is extended, so the speak, with a 'deeper', subordinated layer.

Beside the acceptability of the data, the opponent may also ask after the relevance of the reason: why does the data lead up to the conclusion? The question of relevance seeks some kind of bridging between data and conclusion, and this is precisely what Toulmin's notion of warrant brings about. Warrant licenses the inference from data to conclusion and typically consists of a rule. Toulmin considers it important to support warrant with the special element of backing, but when we allow that the main argument can be extended 'sideways' as well this element becomes superfluous.[12] If we acknowledge that warrant can be supported by a sub-argument of its own, backing is not needed.

The third question concerns possible counter-considerations, and asks after the adequacy of the reasons given. Although the data presented may be both acceptable and relevant, there can be compelling reasons why the conclusion does not follow. These counter-considerations can collectively be headed as rebuttal. When it is recognized that counter-considerations may undermine the conclusion, we must also accept the qualifier.

STRETCHING THE REBUTTAL

Toulmin's rebuttal may qualify, but cannot overrule the conclusion. This is also the way dialectical logicians perceive of counter-considerations. If argumentation is considered to be supportive of the conclusion, than it is obvious that qualifier must be positive. If so, counter-considerations can be allowed to modify the conclusion, but cannot be acknowledged to outweigh the support. In fact, as the overall argument is required to be supportive, it is even better when the counter-considerations can be shown to be neutralized. If so, the neutralized rebuttal gives in fact extra strength to the conclusion: '…counterrebuttals support conclusions by

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[11] Cf. for instance Van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1992, p. 77.
[12] Verheij, 2002, §2.3, makes the same observation but does not drop the backing.

ruling out possible rebuttals…'(Freeman, 1991, p. 163). Acknowledging the rebuttal as a separate element of argumentation is therefore not designed to give the voice of the other an ear, but serves dialectically the purpose of supporting the conclusion in an indirect way.
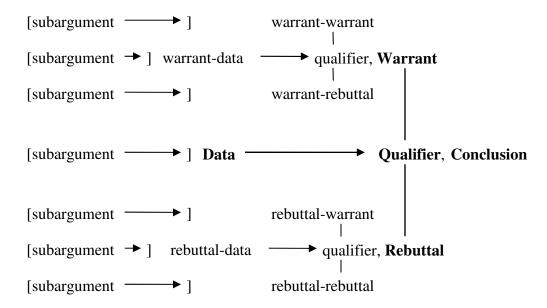
This view raises several difficulties. First of all, it is odd to grant rebuttals qualifying strength when they are ideally neutralized in a dialectical argument. The main reason to add the qualifier was, after all, to absorb its rebutting force, but when they are neutralized, it is hard to see what rebutting force is left for qualifying the conclusion. Secondly, if counterrebuttals are considered to be supportive for the conclusion, they function as premises. Yet, as they only make sense in relation to the rebuttal, they must be distinguished from the main premises (data and warrant). Indeed, Freeman distinguishes between 'premises directly supporting the conclusion' and counterrebuttals, apparently only indirectly supporting the conclusion (Freeman, 1991, pp. 193f.). But how do these two types of premises relate? More specifically: are they compound or multiple? This question is considered important because it concerns the strength of the argument: multiple arguments are supportive independently of each other, whereas compound arguments have strength only collectively.[13] If direct and indirect premises are multiple, the logical position of the counterrebuttal is undermined. It is supposed to neutralize the force of the rebuttal, but it is hard to see how in multiple argumentation rebuttals affect the direct premises in the first place. If the counterrebuttal is supposed to be independent of the direct premises, how does the rebuttal concern them? Yet, if the two types of premises are compound, we face another problem. It is always and at all stages possible to come up with rebuttals, even the most farfetched and irrelevant ones. Clearly, farfetched and irrelevant rebuttals are easily countered. But if we are dealing with compound argumentation, we *must* counter all possible objections, because only collectively a compound argument has strength. Not only can this go on endlessly, it also puts into question whether any compound arguments can ever reach a suitable conclusion: when can we say we have a complete compound argument?[14] Thirdly, if the counterrebuttal is part of the main argument, a supported rebuttal is to be considered a side-argument, for which the opponent faces burden of proof. This counterargument is a separate argument, but it is unclear how it relates to the main argument. Even if its conclusion yields a substantial rebuttal in the main argument, it is unclear how the reasons for its support affect the main argument. Yet, it is quite likely that both arguments pro and contra interfere with one another.

To my mind, the dialectical approach is contrived with respect to the role of the opponent, which becomes clear in the function of the rebuttal. If the counterrebuttal is to support the conclusion, it is in fact rebutting the rebuttal. This is more than a funny observation, for it means that we can ask after the adequacy of the rebuttal. If so, however, we can of course also ask after the acceptability and the relevance of the rebuttal. In other words, just as the data could be questioned for further support, yielding a 'deeper' argument, and just as the warrant could be asked for support, extending the argument 'sideways', so it seems that we can ask after the

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[13] Cf. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1992, p. 164. For a discussion of the differences, cf. Snoeck Henkemans, 1997.

[14] The difference between multiple and compound argumentation may be a non-issue, that vanishes when a distinction is made between different kinds of supportive elements within argumentation. The only reason, as far as I can see, to remain asking after the difference is that it has consequences for argument-evaluation. From a dialogico-rhetorical point of view, as argued below, argument evaluation is part of the process rather than of the product. Snoeck Henkemans (1997) discusses Toulmin's model with regard to complex argumentation. She argues that the use of warrant makes an argument 'subordinatively compound'(p. 53). Unfortunately, she does not address the position of rebuttals or counterrebuttals.

liability of the rebuttal, extending the argument 'sideways' as well (but in the opposite direction, so to speak, as the warrant). What we get is this:

[subargument ⟶]   warrant-warrant
                                              |
[subargument →] warrant-data ⟶ qualifier, **Warrant**
                                              |
[subargument ⟶]   warrant-rebuttal |
                                                              |
                                                              |
                                                              |
[subargument ⟶] **Data** ⟶   **Qualifier, Conclusion**
                                                              |
                                                              |
[subargument ⟶]   rebuttal-warrant |
                                              |
[subargument →]   rebuttal-data ⟶ qualifier, **Rebuttal**
                                              |
[subargument ⟶]   rebuttal-rebuttal

       This picture, however, is not possible in a dialectical understanding. The subarguments regarding data and warrant can both be understood as supportive for the conclusion, and hence fit the dialectical scheme. But this is not the case with the rebuttal. Only if rebutted itself, the conclusion is supported. Support for the rebuttal itself means in effect an undermining of the conclusion. If we allow the rebuttal to be developed within the structure of the main argument, it means that we are not only acknowledging supportive, but also rebutting forces. This requires that the opponent must have substantial impact within the main argument itself.

CONCLUSION

To my mind, the above proposal of a structure-analysis that allows for extending the main argument with sub-arguments is straightforward and elegant. But it requires that the voice of the other can be heard and that the opponent has a substantial influence in the course of the argument. Why do dialecticians resist this appealing suggestion (indeed, why haven't they thought of it)?
       There is a reason: dialectically, argument analysis serves argument evaluation. The main question is: is the conclusion sufficiently supported? This means that the dialectical approach is primarily focused upon the product of argumentation: only a clear-cut and orderly argument can be judged properly. Dialogical rhetoric, by contrast, follows the argumentative process and sees arguments as interchanges of supporting and rebutting forces. Here, argument analysis does not serve evaluation, but serves the mapping of established reasons. Evaluation is no longer at stake in argument analysis, because a reason is only established when both discussants have in fact accepted it and thus have evaluated it positively. The map of established reasons forms a vector that leads up to the conclusion. Data form the basic ingredient, warrant forms the positive force of the argument and the rebuttal the negative counterpart. Argument analysis shows these two forces and display their relative contribution to the conclusion.

Giving the voice of the other an ear is acknowledging the substantial function of counterconsiderations. They may not only defeat an argument, but indeed bent it in an opposite direction. Clearly, the rebuttal in the main argument is the prime focus of this function. But also in the subarguments of the data and the warrant counterconsiderations can be given.[15] Both data and warrant may be extended to subarguments with rebuttals of their own. It is clear that the rebuttal-rebuttal is in fact a reason of the proponent of the main thesis and supports the claim as it undermines the rebuttal. Still, which of the elements derive originally from either the proponent or the opponent is for argument-analysis not a main interest. Important is to map the established reasons and both participants are committed to these. In this way, a suitable conclusion is reached that both participants not only should, but will, accept.

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[15] Verheij, 2002, sums up five different types of rebuttals: against 1: datum, 2: claim, 3: warrant, 4: 'first implicit conditional', 5: 'second implicit conditional.' The data-rebuttal concerns 1, the main-rebuttal concerns 2 and 5, and the warrant-rebuttal concerns 3 and 4.