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One-sided arguments

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ABSTRACT: When is an argument to be called *one-sided*? When is putting forward such an argument *fallacious*? How can we develop a *model for critical discussion*, such that a fallaciously one-sided argument corresponds to a violation of a discussion rule? These issues are dealt with within ‘the limits of the dialogue model of argument’ by specifying a type of persuasion dialogue in which an arguer can offer *complex arguments* to anticipate particular responses by a critic.

KEY WORDS: one-sided argument, fallacy of one-sidedness, critical discussion, solo-argument

1. INTRODUCTION

Extant models for critical discussion deal with rights and obligations to make relatively simple moves, such as challenging a single statement or offering an elementary argument. Some flaws within real argumentative discussion, however, cannot be pointed out by reference to a single discussion move at a particular stage of the dialogue, but need to be understood as a flaw in *combining* a number of dialectical moves. A case in point is the fallacious use of one-sided arguments. This paper aims to extend dialectical models in order to explicate one-sidedness.

Frequently, arguers offer multifaceted arguments, as can be seen from televised debates or from disputes in the editorial pages. Such arguments deal with several sides of an issue in a single attempt to counter or anticipate numerous critical responses. If such an argument ignores relevant parts of the issue, it can be said to be one-sided. There are two *prima facie* grounds for considering one-sidedness legitimate. First, it is not feasible to deal with all parts of the issue and with all possible objections an antagonist might raise. Second, an arguer is often expected to represent one particular side of the issue and to deal with only those parts of the subject that make his or her case appear the stronger one. Notwithstanding these reasons for regarding one-sidedness non-fallacious in at least some contexts, we require balanced argumentation for deciding what propositions or proposals merit our acceptance. From that perspective one-sided arguments do not satisfy our needs. In this paper we will examine a specification of the notion of a *critical discussion* that enables us define *one-sided argument* (sections 2 and 3) and to make a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate cases (section 4).

This paper contributes to the debate about the dialectical obligations that has been initiated by Johnson (for instance, Johnson 2000a, 2000b). In particular it elaborates Krabbe’s notion of a ‘[a]n argument for a thesis T [that] can reasonably convince a person X’ (2002, see also 2000). The obligation to argue in a balanced, not overly one-sided manner will be specified by formulating appropriate rules for critical discussion. In this way it will be shown how some of

Johnson's undertakings in informal logic can be accommodated, unlike what Blair seems to expect, 'within the limits of the dialogue model of argument' (Blair, 1998). This result vindicates the dialectical approach to argumentation.

2. ONE-SIDED ARGUMENTS

Diverse dialectical notions can be said to be *one-sided*: arguments, standpoints, discussions, criticisms and bodies of evidence. This paper deals exclusively with one-sidedness in arguments. The expression *one-sided* may refer to two distinct, but closely related features of arguments. First it may connote bias, partiality, and the dealing with only *one side of an issue*, where *side* seems to mean 'a position viewed as opposite to or contrasted with another' (Webster's). Second, it may indicate the dealing with one *side of a subject*, where *side* seems to mean 'an aspect or part of something held to be contrasted with some other aspect or part' (Webster's). The expression *one-sided* can be correctly applied to an argument that deals with several aspects of the issue but not with all of them and also to an argument that responds to several alternative positions but not to all of them. In both cases the term is appropriate if the argument fails to account for parts of the issue or subject in a way that favors *one* party at the expense of others.

Issues often have more than two sides in the sense of involving more than two contrary standpoints or positions. An argument remains imbalanced if it does contain a refutation of an implausible position while neglecting a more plausible alternative. Consequently, Govier takes the *Two-Sides Model*, 'according to which fairness and lack of bias will result when both sides of an issue are presented by advocates' to be wrong (1998, p. 44). However, we will simplify matters by focusing on arguments that are directed towards a particular antagonist. Given a single conflict of opinions there are two sides of the issue: the position of the protagonist and that of the antagonist. An arguer addressing a mixed audience must, from this perspective, be seen as being engaged in several discussions, each starting from a dispute with a particular antagonist. In the other sense of *side*, we may say that even a particular conflict may involve many sides: the issue can be approached from several angles, focusing on distinct aspects or parts of the subject matter. The sides of the subject can be identified with the critical questions that may plausibly arise throughout the discussion. When defining *one-sidedness* for argumentative contexts, we can stipulate the term to apply simultaneously to a failure to adequately deal with the position of one's adversary as well as to a failure to adequately deal with at least part of the subject matter. For if the protagonist fails to deal with a side in the sense of failing to deal with a relevant critical question, he or she fails to deal with the antagonist's position in an adequate way, and vice versa.

In the following example, journalists allege that administration officers, by failing to represent counterevidence in an adequate manner, made a one-sided presentation in favor of the thesis that Saddam Hussein was rebuilding his nuclear weapons program.

Example

In 2002 U.S. Vice President Cheney showed so-called *irrefutable* evidence that Saddam Hussein was rebuilding his nuclear weapons program: the seizing of thousands of tubes supposedly destined for Iraqi uranium centrifuges. The White House's theory that the tubes were for nuclear centrifuges was disputed by nuclear scientists, who considered the tubes, in comparison with actual centrifuge rotors too narrow, too thick, too shiny and too long. Moreover, the tubes seemed suitable for building rockets.

Senior administration officials repeatedly failed to fully disclose the contrary views of America's leading nuclear scientists, an examination by The New York Times has found. They sometimes overstated the most dire intelligence assessments of the tubes, yet minimized or rejected the strong doubts of nuclear experts. (...) One result was a largely one-sided presentation to the public that did not convey the depth of evidence and argument against the administration's most tangible proof of a revived nuclear weapons program in Iraq. (Barstow, Broad & Gerth, 2004, p. 1.1)

Arguments said to be one-sided are typically *complex* cases that suggest to present a broad view on a controversial issue. Offering a complex argument is in two different, but systematically related ways connected to dialogue. First, an argument must be understood as a contribution to a discussion: arguments are typically used to persuade an audience. Second, an argument, even if constituted by only one standpoint and one supporting reason, is not a basic unit of analysis in dialectical theory. It is useful to understand such elementary arguments as *implicit discussions*, 'where the protagonist is speaking (or writing) and the role of the antagonist remains implicit' (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004, p. 59). By presenting an argument, a protagonist responds to or anticipates critical moves by antagonists in his audience.

In an analogous way we may explicate the normative notion of a critical discussion in two directions. First, a critical discussion can be modeled as an exchange of contributions that can be dialectically *complex*, such as offering extensive criticisms and argumentative monologues or solo-arguments (Blair, 1998). The presentation of more intricate arguments, if not solo-arguments, has been modeled by Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004) and by Walton and Krabbe (1995). Second, we can choose to specify a critical discussion as an exchange of dialectically *simple* moves, like posing a single critical question or offering a single reason in support of a standpoint. This type of critical discussion is modeled by for instance Hamblin (1970) and Mackenzie (1990). When Blair classifies the ways that arguments can be complex, he contends that 'at a certain stage in the increasing complexity of the argument turns, there is a qualitative change in the nature of the dialogue' (1998, p. 327). Blair holds that the kind of rules that apply to *solo-arguments* must be different from the rules, such as the pragma-dialectical ones, that apply to *duet arguments* (p. 336). The account below accommodates Blair's contention by proposing rules that are suitable for offering complex argumentation. Still, the rationale for this type of rule is entirely dialogical by requiring complex contribution to be constructed from dialogues that contain only dialectically simple moves. Within the limits of this dialogical framework we will explicate one-sidedness.

3. TWO LAYERS OF CRITICAL DISCUSSION

In order to account for one-sided arguments, a two-layered normative model for critical discussion called *Constructive Critical Discussion* will be proposed. The model specifies (a few elements from) reasonable discussion behavior in situations where it is opportune to make larger argumentative contributions, such as when exchanging arguments and criticisms via written media.

The exchange of complex arguments constitutes the main layer of dialogue. During the exchange, the parties need to keep track of what speech act responds to what speech act. In addition, it should be clear what responses are anticipated by the arguer. For these reasons we will take a complex argument to presuppose one or more exchanges of *individual* speech acts. These exchanges form the second, underlying layer of dialogue. Each of these underlying dialogues is called a *basic critical discussion*, also to be referred to as *basic discussion*. Within a

constructive critical discussion (or: *constructive discussion*) the parties are constructing basic discussions in a systematic manner.¹

A constructive discussion starts from a conflict of opinions. We will restrict ourselves to non-mixed disputes, where one party defends a standpoint while the other party challenges the standpoint and the supporting arguments. Following pragma-dialectical terminology, the defending party is called the *protagonist*, the critical party the *antagonist*. The shared goal of protagonist and antagonist is to *resolve* their conflict, that is, to examine in a cooperative effort whether the antagonist should, given her starting points, give up her critical stance towards the standpoint in order to preserve a consistent position, or whether instead the protagonist should give up defending his standpoint vis-à-vis the antagonist with these particular starting points. A decision to resolve the dispute one way or another constitutes real resolution only if it is based on (what the parties perceive as) the merits of the case. To promote a discussion on the merits of the case, the parties must obey two basic dialectical rules (cf. Krabbe, 2002).

First, each party is committed to achieve the individual aim of winning over the other side. Following this elemental rule promotes the final result to be based on a sufficiently complete overview of the pros and cons accounting for all relevant sides of the subject matter. Second, each party is obliged to leave the other party enough space to maneuver: one should not hinder or obstruct the other party in the attempt to achieve his or her individual aim, except by offering good arguments or relevant criticisms. What this basic rule amounts to in more detail is to be specified by the *rules for discussion*. Following the second basic rule promotes the final result to be based on *relevant* considerations only.

Within one and the same turn in a constructive discussion, the protagonist may *respond* to several critical questions raised by the antagonist and he is allowed to *anticipate* a number of critical moves as well. The antagonist is allowed to respond to several defensive moves by the protagonist.² The protagonist and antagonist do not fulfill their dialectical roles in a direct way. Instead, they are cooperating to construct one or more *basic* discussions. The end result of the constructive discussion as a whole depends on the end results of the basic discussions.

A basic discussion resembles a constructive discussion, but differs by requiring every stage of the dialogue to contain exactly one single speech act. The parties in a basic discussion are called the *proponent* and *opponent* (these roles can be played both by the protagonist and the antagonist in a constructive discussion). The proponent and the opponent move alternately. The parties are supposed to use a language L, such that $a, a1, a2, \dots, b, b1, b2, \dots$ are sentences of L and such that if S and T are sentences of L then, at least, so is $S \rightarrow T$ (S and T are used as variables for atomic or complex sentences of L). A sentence of the form $S \rightarrow T$ can function as a representation, called a *connection premise*, of the logically minimal justificatory connection between reasons and a conclusion. From the start of the dialogue there is a *set of commitments* associated with the opponent. This set contains sentences from L or is empty, and does not change during the discussion (a more refined view can be found in for instance Mackenzie, 1990).

The proponent starts the discussion by giving his standpoint, uttering *standpoint(S)*. The opponent is obliged to challenge the standpoint, uttering *why(S)?* From then on, the proponent, in each of his moves, must either give a reason for the lastly challenged statement, *because(T)*, or

¹ The model resembles Krabbe's model for metadialogues (2003). Krabbe specifies a model in which the parties are constructing an 'accepted ground level dialogue.' A move by a party is added to this dialogue if the permissibility of the move remains undisputed or if the party wins a metadialogue in which the move's permissibility is examined.

² The model might be extended by enabling the antagonist to anticipatory moves as well.

give up the discussion, *I give up*. The opponent must in every move either (1) respond to the argument at the last stage by (1a) challenging its basic reason, *why(T)?* or by (1b) challenging its connection premise, uttering *why(T → S)?*, or (2) give up the discussion, *I give up*. If a party gives up, he or she loses the basic discussion while the other party wins it. A basic discussion ending with *I give up* counts as concluded. The opponent will not be allowed to challenge a premise if the premise is an element of her set of commitments.

In a constructive discussion, the protagonist and the antagonist construct one or more basic discussions. The parties take *turns* such that each turn is made up of a number of moves to be added to the basic discussions under development. The protagonist takes primary responsibility for playing the part of proponent while the antagonist's prime concern is the opponent. There are two speech acts that are exclusive for a constructive discussion. A collection of moves expressed within a turn is followed by either the speech act of finishing a turn, *your turn*, or of making a winning remark, *I win*. If the one party has finished a turn, it's the other party's turn. If one party makes a winning remark he or she wins the constructive discussion and the other party loses it. In a concluding stage the parties balance the pros and cons by checking whether the initiated basic discussions have been concluded and in whose favor they have been concluded. The rule for the concluding stage, governing the speech act of making a winning remark, will be discussed in the next section.

A straightforward way of arguing in a *constructive* discussion is by letting the protagonist fulfill the role of proponent only and letting the antagonist fulfill the role of opponent only, and by developing just one basic discussion. Alternately protagonist and antagonist add a single move to the one basic discussion under construction. For instance, the protagonist as a proponent puts forward standpoint *a* and finishes his turn, the antagonist as an opponent challenges *a* and finishes her turn, the protagonist as a proponent gives a reason *b* for *a* and finishes his turn, etc.

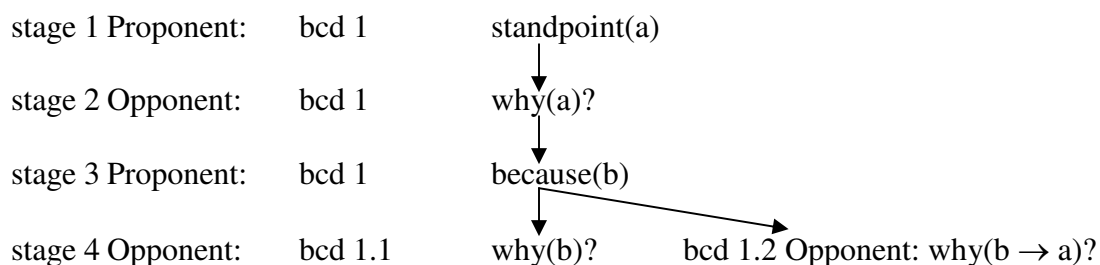
A contribution becomes more complex when the protagonist anticipates a critical response: (1) the protagonist as a proponent presents a reason or standpoint, (2) the protagonist as an opponent challenges this reason, (3) the protagonist as a proponent offers a reason for the challenged statement, after which the protagonist finishes his turn (see the protagonist's contribution in the diagram below). In a different way the antagonist can make the discussion more involved. If in a basic discussion a statement *S* has been argued for by a statement *T* then there are two directions in which the basic discussion may develop: the direction starting with a challenge of *T* and the direction starting with a challenge of *T→S*. In a constructive discussion the antagonist is allowed to pursue both options and to construe two basic discussions by challenging both *T* as well as *T→S*. This kind of complexity can also be introduced by the protagonist if he chooses to anticipate two critical responses to one argument.

Protagonist:	proponent:	standpoint(a)
	opponent:	why(a)?
	proponent:	because(b)
	your turn	
Antagonist:	opponent:	why(b)?
	opponent:	why(b → a)?
	your turn	

The configuration of basic discussions composed in the constructive discussion can be conveniently represented with a profile of dialogue. In the first turn, one basic discussion has

been developed comprising three stages. In the second turn, these three stages become part of two distinct basic discussions (see the profile below).

The opponent in a basic discussion can dispute the lastly presented argument in two ways. In order to refer to distinct basic discussions the following convention is adopted. The basic critical discussion that is initiated at the first few stages by the proponent and opponent is called *basic critical discussion 1*, or *bcd 1*. The first time when either the antagonist or the protagonist as opponent introduces a move at some fourth stage, this move is part of *bcd 1.1* (regardless of whether the move contains a challenge of the reason or of the connection premise). The second time a challenge is put forward at stage 4, that challenge is part of *bcd 1.2* (*bcd 1.2* can also be constructed in a later turn by one of the parties). *Bcd 1* is then considered as the initial part of both *bcd 1.1* and of *bcd 1.2*. More generally, if a *bcd i* (where *i* is a row of occurrences of *1* and *2*, starting with *1*) at stage *j* is extended with a move at stage *j+1* that contains a challenge then that move is located at stage *j+1* of *bcd i.1*, unless there is already a move *j+1* at *bcd 1.1* in which case it is located at stage *j+1* of *bcd i.2*.



Real discussion often develop in several directions simultaneously. The distinction between constructive and basic discussion enables us to model this feature. Due to a plethora of sides or aspects being at issue at the same time, these discussion are often difficult to absorb. In an ideal kind of constructive discussion, however, complex contributions remain transparent throughout.

For constructive discussions we can define *one-sided argument* in the following way.

Definition of *protagonist's argument at turn t*:

The *protagonist's argument at turn t* is the constellation of standpoint, reasons and connection premises put forward by the protagonist at turn *t* and at earlier turns.

Definition of *one-sided argument at turn t*:

The protagonist's argument at turn *t* is *one-sided* if and only if at the end of turn *t*, either there is a reason or connection premise that can (given the rules for constructive discussion) still be challenged by the opponent, or if there is a basic reason or connection premise that has already been challenged but has not yet been supported with an argument.³

³ Walton uses the notion of one-sidedness to provide a dialectical explication of 'bias.' I consider bias to be a possible, but not a necessary ground of one-sidedness in argumentation. '[A] biased argument can be defined simply as a one-sided argument - an argument that lacks the balance necessary for it to be two-sided. (...) A *one-sided argument* continually engages in pro-argumentation for the position supported and continually rejects the arguments of the opposed side in a dialogue. A *two-sided (balanced)* argument considers all arguments on both sides of a dialogue. (...) A balanced argument considers all the other arguments that have been opposed to it in a dialogue and reaches a summary judgment on which side (as a whole) has the stronger case' (Walton 1999, pp. 76-77).

By having not (yet) dealt with at least one critical question that the opponent may still raise, a one-sided argument is, by definition, a (still) *incomplete* argument that supports the standpoint *insufficiently* at that point of the discussion: the other side of the issue and at least one side of the subject has not yet been dealt with adequately.

The *definiens* explicates the pre-theoretical idea of failing to deal with objections that might plausibly be raised by a member of the intended audience. One-sidedness is a notion relative to a particular discussion with a particular antagonist. One and the same argument can be one-sided in the one discussion while being fully responsive in a discussion with a party having other commitments. The notion is also relative to a phase of a discussion. Normally, arguments develop gradually. An argument can be one-sided in an earlier phase of the discussion while becoming more balanced as the dialogue proceeds.⁴

According to this definition, many arguments are one-sided, but not all are. An argument is not one-sided at some turn (but *responsive*⁵) if the opponent has at that point no legal option of challenging one of the premises of the argument. This situation arises when all sentences expressing yet unchallenged premises of the protagonist's argument at that stage are within the opponent's set of commitments. So, a precondition for applying the definition to real arguments is that the analyst has a sufficiently complete hypothesis regarding the opponent's commitments at his disposal.

4. LEGITIMATE AND ILLEGITIMATE CASES

One-sidedness can be beneficial for the purpose of conflict resolution, but only at certain phases of a controversy. To encourage the protagonist to take account of and incorporate fruitful ideas from the antagonist, an exchange of still incomplete and insufficient arguments must take place in the *argumentation stage*, before the discussion is closed off. Requiring the protagonist to anticipate all relevant criticisms at this stage would violate the dialectical division of labor. On the other hand, one-sidedness can also endanger the balance aimed at in critical discussion. If questions remain unanswered, the parties will decide on the standpoint's acceptability without having recourse to all pros and cons. Only in the *concluding stage* the parties must draw up the balance-sheet and decide who has been defending the most plausible position.

So, whether the one-sidedness of an argument is legitimate or not can only be answered after taking another feature of constructive critical discussion into account. The dialectical obligations of an arguer must be specified for each stage of a critical discussion (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004), unlike Johnson (2000)). In Walton's view (1999, p.187) the legitimacy of one-sidedness in argumentation depends on the type of dialogue the parties are engaged in and on the purpose the argumentation serves. Restricting attention to critical discussion, we may consider a one-sided argument illegitimately one-sided if the protagonist also conveys the pretense, whether explicitly or implicitly, to have *concluded* the discussion in his own favor. By acting as if there is no other option for the opponent than to give up at every possible

⁴ The definition can be refined by making it a gradual notion: an argument at turn *u* is *less one-sided than* the argument at stage *t* only if the set of critical questions answered at stage *t* is a real subset of the set of critical questions answered at stage *u*.

⁵ 'Balance' seems to connote more than just not being one-sided. It adds to the balance (or at least the appearance of it) if the protagonist acknowledges strong points of the antagonist's position instead of only providing counter criticisms. So a typical ingredient of an argument that is perceived as 'balanced' would be: 'I acknowledge the importance of your objection A. However, ...' An argument's being one-sided is just one way of its being unbalanced. The importance of acknowledgement is not modeled by the model for constructive critical discussion.

development of the current basic discussions, the protagonist makes the opponent's position weaker than it really is.

In line with the term *concluding stage*, we will call an argument a *concluding argument* if an arguer offers an argument and in addition expresses the pretence to have resolved the dispute in his own favor (and won the discussion) by offering these lines of reasoning. A concluding argument will be analyzed as contributing partly to the argumentation stage as well as partly to the concluding stage of a constructive discussion.

In order to clarify the notion of a concluding argument further, we must distinguish between the concluding stage of a *basic* and the concluding stage of a *constructive* discussion. A *basic* discussion is concluded by an occurrence of the remark *I give up* by either the opponent or the proponent. This move ends a basic discussion. Within constructive discussion, the protagonist as a proponent has a right to give up a basic discussion. Likewise, the antagonist as an opponent may concede defeat. Yet, in special situations the protagonist is allowed to anticipate the opponent's giving up a basic discussion, namely in cases where there is no plausible way for the opponent to respond critically towards the lastly presented argument. For example, if the proponent in a basic discussion supports b with reason a while the opponent is committed both to a and to $a \rightarrow b$, the protagonist is allowed, as an opponent, to utter *I give up* (where I refers to the opponent).

The concluding stage of a *constructive* discussion is constituted by the utterance of *I win*, by either the antagonist or the protagonist. The antagonist should be allowed to utter *I win* only if at least one basic discussion as constructed until then has ended with the proponent's uttering *I give up*.⁶ The antagonist then wins the constructive discussion as a whole, while the protagonist loses it. The protagonist is allowed to utter *I win* and to win the constructive discussion, in case every basic discussion as constructed until then has been finished and if every basic discussion ends with the opponent's utterance of *I give up*. If neither of these conclusions can be derived, the constructive discussion remains undecided yet.⁷

The kind of norm that is violated when the protagonist fails to anticipate plausible challenges but all the same presents his argument as concluding, is different in kind from the rules that distribute rights and obligations among opponent and proponent. Those rules explicate what it means to resolve an issue at the level of performing elementary dialectical speech acts. The rule for excluding illegitimate one-sidedness has to do with *combining* elementary moves by the protagonist: first, combining critical questions with answers to them, and second, combining such arguments with a claim to have resolved the discussion in one's favor. Illegitimate one-sidedness can best be analyzed as a violation of a rule for constructive discussion, rather than of basic discussion. The fallacy of presenting a fallaciously one-sided argument can be defined in the following manner:

The protagonist's argument at turn t is *fallaciously one-sided* if and only if the argument is one-sided at t and the protagonist at t nevertheless makes a winning remark, *I win*.

If the antagonist is committed to d , $d \rightarrow (b \rightarrow a)$, e , $e \rightarrow c$, f , $f \rightarrow (c \rightarrow b)$, the following exchange would be an example of a constructive discussion:

⁶ The model, as it stands, does not enable the parties to develop multiple argumentation.

⁷ The model does not account for the distinction between refuting one's antagonist's arguments *perfunctory* and refuting them after having them presented and examined in a fair-minded and open way (Paul in Walton, 1999, p. 72).

turn 1	Protagonist:	bcd 1 your turn	stage 1	<i>proponent</i>	<i>standpoint(a)</i>
turn 2	Antagonist:	bcd 1 your turn	stage 2	<i>opponent</i>	<i>why(a)?</i>
turn 3	Protagonist:	bcd 1 your turn	stage 3	<i>proponent</i>	<i>because(b)</i>
turn 4	Antagonist:	bcd 1.1 bcd 1.2 your turn	stage 4 stage 4	<i>opponent</i> <i>opponent</i>	<i>why(b)?</i> <i>why(b → a)?</i>
turn 5	Protagonist:	bcd 1.1 bcd 1.2 bcd 1.1.1 bcd 1.1.1 bcd 1.1.2 bcd 1.1.2 bcd 1.1.1 bcd 1.1.2 bcd 1.2 I win	stage 5 stage 5 stage 6 stage 7 stage 6 stage 7 stage 8 stage 8 stage 6	<i>proponent</i> <i>proponent</i> <i>opponent</i> <i>proponent</i> <i>opponent</i> <i>proponent</i> <i>opponent</i> <i>opponent</i> <i>opponent</i>	<i>because(c)</i> <i>because(d)</i> <i>why(c)?</i> <i>because(e)</i> <i>why(c → b)?</i> <i>because(f)</i> <i>I give up</i> <i>I give up</i> <i>I give up</i>

Example (continued):

‘Saddam Hussein shipped thousands of tubes supposedly destined for Iraqi uranium centrifuges, so it is fully clear by now that he is rebuilding his nuclear weapons program.’ We suppose the commitment store of the opponent not to contain any of these propositions.

Protagonist:	proponent:	standpoint (he is rebuilding his nuclear weapons program)
Antagonist:	opponent:	why (is he rebuilding his nuclear weapons program)?
Protagonist:	proponent:	because (Saddam Hussein shipped thousands of tubes supposedly destined for Iraqi uranium centrifuges)
I win		

That the protagonist pretends to be in the position to conclude the discussion in his favor is indicated by ‘so it is fully clear by now that...’ Because the opponent may still raise two critical questions, the protagonist’s last move *I win* is illegitimate.

5. CONCLUSION

The two-layered model for constructive critical discussion provides a device for analyzing one-sided arguments, and for distinguishing between legitimate and fallacious instances. A one-sided argument can be defined as an argument, as developed by the protagonist at some stage of a constructive discussion, that does not deal with every relevant critical question that the opponent has raised or may still raise. The fallacy of offering a one-sided argument can be understood as a violation of a rule for concluding the constructive exchange of complex arguments and criticisms. It has been shown also that the degree of complexity that is typical of arguments said to be one-sided can be dealt with within formal dialectic.

The model can be extended by accommodating the antagonist’s *anticipating* particular arguments by the protagonist. This enables the explication of the notion of one-sided *criticism*.

The idea of a two-layered model such as Constructive Critical Discussion might also prove useful for some other issues in the theory of argument. The two-layered model might be applied to other fallacies: for instance, the straw man fallacy might be seen as an illegitimate move by either the protagonist as an opponent or by the antagonist as a proponent. Further, the distinction between layers might clarify Johnson's distinction between *objection* and *criticism* (2000, 2001). An objection can be seen as a kind of move by the opponent in a basic discussion. A criticism is then to be understood as a broader notion referring to critical contributions by the antagonist or protagonist in a constructive discussion. For instance, if the antagonist helps the protagonist to play the part of proponent by suggesting an argument, she can be said to *criticize* the way the protagonist fulfills his dialectical duties (Van Laar, 2004).

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