Do Arguers Dream of Logical Standards?
Arguers' dialectic vs. Arguments' dialectic

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RESUMEN

Hay dos concepciones básicas de la dialéctica. Puede referirse al arte de la controversia o del debate, con confrontación de opiniones y de argumentadores. La dialéctica así entendida se centra en las reglas y procedimientos convencionales que rigen esas confrontaciones. Es lo que llamo "dialéctica argumentativa". La dialéctica también puede referirse al estudio de las oposiciones entre argumentos. Esta concepción presupone un concepto comparativo de argumento convincente, y puede definirse como el estudio de la fuerza de los argumentos. El propósito de esta "dialéctica argumental" es desarrollar estándares y criterios para comparar y evaluar la fuerza relativa de los argumentos. La distinción entre dialéctica argumentativa y dialéctica argumental afecta a la organización del campo de la teoría de la argumentación y obliga a reconsiderar la demarcación de las tres perspectivas clásicas en términos de sus objetos de estudio.

ABSTRACT

There are two main conceptions of dialectic. It can be conceived of as the art of controversy or debate, with confrontation of opinions and hence of arguers. The focus of dialectics thus understood is the conventional rules and procedures governing such confrontations. This is what I call *arguers' dialectic*. But dialectic can also mean the study of the oppositions between arguments. This conception is historically linked to the notion of argument strength, and can also be defined as the study of argument strength. The aim of *arguments' dialectics* is to develop standards and criteria for comparing and assessing the relative strength of arguments. The distinction between arguers' dialectics and arguments' dialectics has implications for the overall organization of the field of argumentation studies, for it forces us to reconsider the demarcation of the three classical perspectives on argumentation in terms of their objects.

1. LOGIC, DIALECTIC AND RHETORIC

Argumentation theory emerged with the integration of the rhetorical, logical and dialectical perspectives. Today, our understanding of the main perspectives on argumentation derives from Wenzel's *three Ps principle*: the rhetorical perspective understands and evaluates arguing as a natural <u>process</u> of persuasive communication; the dialectical perspective understands and evaluates arguing as a <u>procedure</u> or cooperative method for making critical decisions; and the logical perspective understands and evaluates arguments as <u>products</u> that people create when arguing.

The tripartition of the theory of argumentation into logic, dialectic and rhetoric may be simplistic and even unfair, since it leaves out some important perspectives on argument, as the socio-institutional one emphasized by Luis Vega and the linguistic one that is dominant in the French-speaking area. However I will adopt it as my starting point.

Wenzel explains the differences between the three classical perspectives on argumentation through a series of elements: theoretical and practical purposes, general scope and interests, conceptions of the argumentative situation or context, the resources employed or used, applied standards of evaluation, and the envisioned roles or arguers. Table 1 summarizes Wenzel's description of logic, dialectic and rhetoric.

Luis Vega gives a slightly different characterization, on the basis of six aspects: subject matter, focus of interest, categories of appraisal, paradigm of argumentation, notion of fallacy and preferred image of argumentation (*cfr.* Vega 2013, pp.107-108). Table 2 shows Vega's account.

According to Wenzel, rhetoric deals with arguing as a natural process of communication. The practical purpose of those processes is persuasion, and the subject of rhetoric are the many different ways people try to influence one another's beliefs, values and actions using language and other symbolic means. Rhetoric focuses on the symbolic means of persuasion and evaluates them by their effectiveness to achieve the communicational end of the process of argumentation. To characterize rhetorical situation Wenzel quotes Kenneth Burke: "Wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is 'meaning' there is persuasion". Thus rhetorical situations emerge naturally or better spontaneously –i.e., not consciously or deliberately– from human communication.

	Rhetoric	Dialectic	Logic
General statement: helps us to…	Understand and evaluate arguing as a natural process of persuasive communication	Understand and evaluate argumentation as a cooperative method for making critical decisions	Understand and evaluate arguments as products people create when they argue
Practical purposes	Persuasion	Organize discussions to produce good decisions	Judge the merits of particular arguments
Theoretical purposes	How people influence one another through language and other symbolic means of expression	Rationale for principles and procedures used to organize argumentative interactions for critical purposes	Standards and criteria used to distinguish sound arguments from unsound ones
General scope and focus	Arguing among people as a natural communication process. Symbolic means by which people try to influence one another's beliefs	Methods used by people and institutions in order to bring the natural processes of arguing under deliberate control. Rules, attitudes and behaviors that promote critical decision-making	Arguments as intellectual constructions offered for acceptance. In its theoretical form studies the standards by which to evaluate arguments. In its practical form involves the application of those standards to judge specific arguments; it is a method of criticism
Object of study	Argument overtly expressed	[*Wenzel does not specify*]	Argument reconstructed for the purpose of evaluation
Conception of argumentative situation	Natural	Consciously planned or designed; characterized by the existence of procedural rules to control a discussion	It is a retrospective viewpoint; re-situation of an argument in a context where it can be evaluated with respect to form, substance and function
Resources employed or examined	Discursive techniques allowing us to induce or to increase the mind's adherence to the thesis presented for its assent	Designs or plans for conducting critical discussions	Methods for reconstructing arguments to facilitate criticism and the critical standards themselves

Standard of evaluation What is a good argument?	Good arguing consists in the production of discourse that effectively helps members of a social group to solve problems or make decisions	Good argumentation consists in the systematic organization of interaction so as to produce the best possible decisions	A good argument is one in which a clearly stated claim is supported by acceptable, relevant and sufficient evidence

Table 1. Rhetoric, dialectic and logic in "Three Perspectives on Argument".

	Rhetoric	Dialactic	Logic
Subject	*Processes* ≈ processes of communication and interpersonal influence with the purpose of persuading or deterring	*Procedures* ≈ interactive and dynamic argumentation	*Products* ≈ textual arguments
Focus	Resources and strategies of personal interaction	Rules of debate	Structure of argumentation
Categories of appraisal	Eficient/Unefficient	Appropiate/unapropiate	Valid/invalid or Sound/unsound
Paradigm	Convincing discourse	Rational discussion	Conclusive proof
Notion of fallacy	Dramatic presentation	Violation of the code	Failed or fraudulent proof
Image	Interaction distortion, manipulation	Fight	Building

Table 2. Rhetoric, dialectic and logic in *La fauna de las falacias*.

Wenzel identifies dialectic with a method, system or procedure for regulating interpersonal discussions, even if it acknowledges that the term has also other senses. The existence of procedural rules to control a discussion is the distinctive feature of dialectic; from this Wenzel goes on to conclude that dialectical situations are "consciously planned or designed" (1990, p.18). Hence dialectic focuses on the rules,

standards, attitudes and behaviors that promote critical decision-making, and evaluates them by their capacity to achieve this end, i.e. to make good decisions through debating. Wenzel (*Op.cit,,* p.24) says that from a dialectical perspective good argumentation as a procedure should meet the "four Cs":

> Good dialectical argumentation depends on the arguers being cooperative in following appropriate rules and committing themselves to the common purpose of sound decision-making. Good argumentation is comprehensive in dealing with a subject as thoroughly as possible. Good argumentation is candid in making ideas clear and getting them out in the open for examination. Finally, sound argumentation is critical in its commitment to basing decisions on the most rigorous testing of positions that circumstances allow.

On Wenzel's view, logic, like dialectic, is concerned with decision-making but does it on the "microlevel". By "microlevel" he means that logic focuses on the relation between the reason given and the standpoint it supports. Wenzel's microlevel is similar in some respects to Freeman's microstructure:

> By the microstructure of an argument, we mean its logical form as studied in deductive or inductive logic. Specifically in formal deductive logic, microstructural analysis reveals how the constituent statements of an argument are built up from simple or atomic components by means of truth-functional connectives, quantifiers, and in some cases other operators such as adverbial modifiers and modal or propositional attitude connectives (2011, p.1).

By contrast the macrostructure of an argument concerns how its component statements and other elements fit together as wholes to allegedly lend support to some claim or claims. The macrostructure of arguments is studied by informal logic and represented with diagrams using circles and arrows.

The logical question by excellence, Wenzel says, is "Shall we accept this claim on the basis of the reasons put forward in support of it?" Since logic deals with arguments as products and not with their use, Wenzel goes on to conclude that logic is "a retrospective viewpoint which is activated when someone adopts a critical stance and 'lays out' an argument for inspection and evaluation" (1990, p.17). I guess that this is partly what is meant by saying that logic is distinctively normative. The outcome of logical reconstruction –Wenzel continues– is neither the argument that exists in the mind of the arguer, nor the argument overtly expressed, nor the one in the mind of the listener, but a fourth argument. The logical evaluation of such construct combines formal, substantive and functional criteria: Is the argument coherent? Are the premises acceptable, relevant and sufficient? Do the premises provide all the functionally relevant information?

2. ARGUERS' DIALECTIC VS ARGUMENTS' DIALECTIC

Wenzel has therefore a procedural conception of dialectic, in that it focuses on the conditions and rules governing argumentative exchanges between a proponent and an opponent who argue and counter-argue in turns. This is also the conception in pragma-dialectics.

> We believe this interaction [the discussion between a protagonist and an antagonist] to be an essential feature of dialectical process of convincing. However, it will only be able to lead to a resolution of the dispute at the centre of the discussion if the discussion itself is adequately regimented. This means that in a dialectical theory of argumentation it will be necessary to propose rules for the conduct of argumentative discussions. (van Eeemeren & Grootendorst, 1984, p.17).

But dialectics can also be understood otherwise. Zeno, credited with the invention of dialectics, presents dialectical reasoning as a monological method of counter-argumentation. Likewise, Plato's dialectics is a method of inquiry, not a procedure directed at the reasonable resolution of a difference of opinion. More recently, Rescher has advocated for the transition from rational controversy to rational inquiry, from procedures of controversy and disputation to a cognitive methodology of inquiry:

> The object now is not to refute the contentions of an opposing spokesman, but to appraise the rational credentials of a thesis. The process of reasoned exchange is reoriented from a bilateral adversary procedure of controversy and disputation to the unilateral enterprise of a "discussion" carried on with oneself, in foro interno, within a self-contained course of reflective thought. (Rescher 1977, p.46).

Dialectics thus becomes a method for assessing arguments by weighing them against other arguments. In other words, arguers' dialectics becomes arguments' dialectics.

I contend that, so far as argumentation is concerned, there are two main and complementary conceptions of dialectic. If there is some concept permanently bound to dialectic throughout its whole history, from Zeno to van Eemeren through Marx, it is that of opposition (and resolution of an opposition). On the one hand, dialectics can be conceived of as the art of controversy or debate, with the confrontation of opinions and hence of arguers. The focus of dialectics thus understood is the conventional rules and procedures governing such confrontations. If the rationale of these rules and procedures is that they allow for the reasonable resolution of a difference in opinion, dialectics will be bound to the quest of some kind of consensus. This is what I call arguers' dialectic. It is clear that pragma-dialectics is an arguers' dialectic.

On the other hand, dialectic can also mean the study of the oppositions between arguments. This conception rests on a comparative, i.e. non-qualitative conception of cogent argument. Such comparative concepts have been historically linked to the notion of argument strength, and therefore dialectics can also be defined as the study of argument strength. The aim of arguments' dialectics is then to develop standards and criteria for comparing and assessing the relative strength of arguments. Given that arguments' dialectics deals with the relationships between arguments as products, it is a logical dialectics. With all the caution that such historical pronouncements require, I would say that Plato's dialectic is an arguments' dialectic.

Something like the sketched distinction between arguers' dialectic and arguments' dialectic can be found in the dictionaries. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, for instance, defines dialectic (singular) as "discussion and reasoning by dialogue as a method of intellectual investigation", and dialectics (plural) as "any systematic reasoning, exposition, or argument that juxtaposes opposed or contradictory ideas and usually seeks to resolve their conflict".

The distinction between arguers' dialectics and arguments' dialectics has implications for the overall organization of the field of argumentation studies, for it forces us to reconsider the demarcation of the three classical perspectives on argumentation in terms of their objects.

3. ARGUMENTS' DIALECTC

> Other negatives [of a vegan diet]: you might not get enough omega-3 fatty acids. Nuts and chia seeds have some, but she [Judy Simon, a clinical dietitian at the University of Washington] says they only provide a fraction of what you get from fish like salmon. ("To Vegan or not to Vegan? KING 5 HealthLink, June 19, 2015).[1]

This can be considered a paradigm of dialectical text in arguments' sense, since it consists in the weighing of arguments for opposite standpoints on the possibility of getting enough omega-3 fatty acids from a vegan diet. For our present purposes the argument in the text can be diagrammed as follows:

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[1] Retrieved July 1, 2015 from
http://www.king5.com/story/news/health/living-well/2015/06/19/vegan-vegetarian/28994231/

Nuts and chia seeds have some omega-3 fatty acids		Nuts and chia seeds only provide a fraction of what you get from fish like salmon
so	*but*	*so*
You might get enough omega-3 fatty acids from a vegan diet		You might not get enough omega-3 fatty acids from a vegan diet
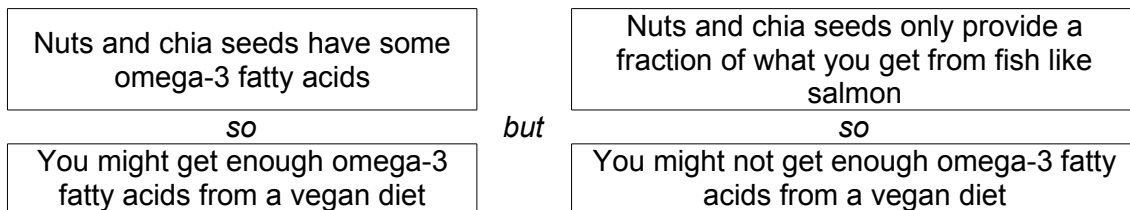
The author of "To Vegan or not to Vegan?" seems to put more weight on Judy Simon's argument as it is shown by the use of the argumentative connector *but*.

Not distinguishing the two senses of dialectic, pragma-dialecticians (and other procedural dialecticians) have to give bizarre justifications of the relevance of a dialectical analysis of such monological texts.

> Argumentative discourse can, in principle, always be dialectically analyzed, even if it concerns a discursive text that, at first sight, appears to be a monologue. The monologue is then, at least partially, reconstructed as a critical discussion […] He [the speaker who is intend on resolving a difference of opinion] may also deal with doubt that is purely imaginary. The presumed antagonist need not even exist, as when the speaker or writer imagines how his standpoint might be received by a skeptical listener or reader. Then he is anticipating a possible doubt. His argumentative discourse is in all these cases, as it were, part of a real or imagined implicit discussion (1992, pp.43-43).

Thus, for example, Elwood P. Dowd used to have implicit discussions with his best friend, an invisible 6' 3.5" (about 2 meters) tall rabbit named Harvey.

Fig. 1. Elwood P. Dowd having a real or imagined implicit discussion with Harvey.

4. DIALECTICAL RULES vs LOGICAL NORMS

Wenzel himself describes the dialectical opposition sometimes as an opposition between arguments (inherently dialectical situations "encourage the critical testing of positions one against the other in the give and take of the debate" *op.cit.*, p.13) and sometimes as an opposition between arguers ("The notion of one speaker serving as a check on another brings us to the dialectical perspective and its practical purposes" *op.cit.*, p.14). To illustrate the difference let us consider the notion of debate by Ehninger & Brockriede, that Wenzel presents as a model of the dialectical method. Debate is a method of critical discussion because it implements six directives (Ehninger & Brockriede, 1963, p.15).

1. Enter the competing views into full and fair competition to assess their relative worth.

2. Let this competition consist of two phases. First, set forth each view in its own right, together with the most convincing supporting proofs. Second, test each view by seeing how well it withstands the strongest attacks an informed opponent levels against it.

3. Delay a decision until both sides have been presented and subjected to testing

4. Let the decision be rendered not by the contending parties themselves but by an external adjudicating agency.

5. Let this agency weigh the competing arguments and produce a decision critically.

6. Let the participants agree in advance to abide by such a decision.

These six rules allocate roles and obligations to the participants and regulate their interventions in the debate. Despite their generality they are conventional rules that contrast with the empirical and non-conventional nature of rhetorical precepts. They belong therefore to what I have called "arguers' dialectic". However Ehninger and Brockriede's directives don't say anything on the method used by the external adjudicating agency for weighing and assessing the competing arguments. These rules belong to the realm of what I have called "arguments' dialectic" and they do not seem conventional, or at least as conventional as the rules of arguers' dialectic. In the same vein Rescher insists upon the contrast between the unconventional rules of rational inquiry and the conventional rules of rational debate or controversy.

> We must return to the difference between the natural —the "purely rational"— mechanisms for assessing presumption and plausibility and the merely conventional mechanisms, illustrated by certain essentially arbitrary and unreasoned devices of law (e.g., statutorily determined presumptions) and of disputation (e.g., conventionally canonical proof-tests), etc. All such merely artificial devices of probative procedure are abrogated in inquiry, where "pursuit of knowledge" is itself the only relevant task. Here the evidential rules of knowledge-oriented controversy apply without distorting constraints or restraints. When we make the transition from controversy to inquiry, it is purely rational controversy, with its natural (nonconventional) ground rules, that constitutes the paradigm. (Op. cit., pp.47-48).

The distinction and imbrication of arguers' dialectic and arguments' dialectic can be also found in the pragma-dialectical code for critical discussions (Van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Snoeck Henkemans, 2002, pp.182-183). The "argument scheme rule" and the "validity rule" refer to standards and criteria for argument evaluation and they order the participants to apply these standards and criteria, and thus to behave "logically".

- Argument scheme rule: A standpoint may not be regarded as conclusively defended if the defense does not take place by means of an appropriate argument scheme that is correctly applied.

- Validity rule: The reasoning in the argumentation must be logically valid or must be capable of being made valid by making explicit one or more unexpressed premises.

Therefore these two rules could be unified as the single rule:

- Parties must assess argumentations advanced in the course of the critical discussion according to logical standards and criteria.

Notice that the pragma-dialectical rules for critical discussion present logical standards and criteria as something "external" to the critical discussion itself, as something logic prescribes to the participants. On the contrary I think that an adequate theory of argument evaluation (i.e., an adequate logic) must systematize the normative component of argumentative practices.

5. THE NATURE OF LOGICAL RULES

Returning to the debate rules from Ehninger & Brockriede, it could be argued that what the external adjudicating agency does is weighing arguments –i.e. products of arguing– and therefore that the weighing rules have to be logical rules. It could also be argued in favour of this thesis that logic deals with the standard by which to evaluate arguments.

But the claim that weighing rules are logical rules collides with Wenzel's idea of logic, and hence with his way of understanding the relations between logic and dialectic. Remember that according to Wenzel logic deals with the internal structure of arguments, with the relation between premises and conclusion. But the task of the adjudicating agency is to *compare* arguments with each other in order to make a decision, and such a comparison is not so much a matter of *properties* of arguments as a matter of *relations* between arguments.

When Wenzel grounds the three perspectives on argumentation in the triad process, procedure and product, he says that the conceptions of argument as a rhetorical process and a logical product are already established and what needs justification is the addition of dialectic as a different and definite perspective on argument. To that end he "intends to show how Habermas' treatment of epistemological problems in his pursuit of a critical social theory may help us to understand the nature, significance and promise, of a dialectical perspective in the study of argumentation" (1979, p.83). It is therefore not surprising to find the tripartition rhetoric-logic-dialectic in Habermas' *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981). According to Habermas, argumentation theory should respond to questions such as these: How can problematic validity claims be supported by good reasons? How can reasons be criticized in turn? What makes some arguments, and thus some reasons, which are related to validity claims in a certain way, stronger or weaker than other arguments? These questions concern three different and complementary aspects of argumentative speech: process, procedure and product. Like Wenzel, Habermas proposes to differentiate three perspectives on argument in correlation to these three analytic aspects. The chosen perspective, rhetoric, dialectic or logic, will lead to the discovery of a different structure of argumentation; respectively:

> The structures of an ideal speech situation, immunized against repression and inequality in a special way; then the structures of a ritualized competition for the better arguments; finally the structures that determine the construction of individual arguments and their interrelations. (Op.cit., p.26)

Hence Habermas, unlike Wenzel, assigns to logic not only the study of the internal structure of arguments (the microstructure) but also the study of their interrelations (the macrostructure), so that arguments' dialectic becomes part of logic. The repeated use of the expression "the force of the better argument" in *The Theory of Communicative Action* also suggest that Habermas has a *comparative* concept of the notion of cogent argument.

Snoeck Henkemans too, from different assumptions, has emphasized the necessity of analyzing the interrelations between arguments in order to evaluate an argumentation: "An overall judgment of the quality of a complex argument requires not just a clear picture of individual arguments, but also insight into the relations among these arguments" (2000, p.447). By "complex argument" she means a combination of single arguments with a common conclusion, and she specifies that a 'single' or 'individual' argument is the equivalent of a 'reason'.

6. LOGIC *vs.* ARGUMENTS' DIALECTIC

Arguments' dialectic deals with the interrelationships among arguments. Arguments' dialectic, like logic, is thus concerned with the products of arguing. Given that logic can be defined from Wenzel's point of view as the theory of arguments, What are the relations between (informal) logic and arguments' dialectic?

It could be held that arguments' dialectic is logic, since according to Johnson and Blair "Informal logic is best understood as the normative study of argument. It is the area of logic which seeks to develop standards, criteria and procedures for the interpretation, evaluation and construction of arguments and argumentations used in natural language". (1987, p. 148). Arguments's dialectic as a set of norms and principles to determine the relative strength of reasons presupposes a comparative, not qualitative, concept of cogent argument. Therefore it could be said that arguments' dialectic is the logic resulting from the assumption of a comparative concept of cogency.

This is where the deferred character that Wenzel attributes to logical evaluation comes in:

> [Logic] is a retrospective viewpoint which is activated when someone adopts a critical stance and "lays out" an argument for inspection and evaluation. In such a case a fourth version of "the" argument is created. Such version of arguments, reconstructed for purposes of examination, becomes the subject matter for logical evaluation. (Wenzel 1990, p.17).

Wenzel's view is in sharp contrast with the opinion of Hamblin, for whom:

> Logicians are, of course, allowed to express their sentiments but there is something repugnant about the idea that Logic is a vehicle for the expression of the logician's own judgements of acceptance and rejection of statements and arguments. The logician does not stand above and outside practical argumentation or, necessarily, pass judgement on it. He is not a judge or a court of appeal, and there is no such judge or court: he is, at best, a trained advocate.

> It follows that it is not the logician's particular job to declare the truth of any statement, or the validity of any argument. (1970, p. 244).

Hamblin is rejecting here the traditional view of the logician as an onlooker of debates or critical discussions. Hamblin claims that there is no normativity out of the argumentative practices themselves. Given what Hamblin means by dialectical criteria for argument evaluation (e.g. "The passage from premisses to conclusion must be of an accepted kind" –*Op.cit*. p. 245), arguments' dialectic may be defined as the study of standards, criteria and procedures for the evaluation of arguments involved in argumentative practices. The thesis that argumentative practices are normative on their own, that they are "logic" so to speak, is the reverse of Finocchiaro's thesis that "Logical theory and argumentation theory are or ought to be instances of meta-argumentation" or that "argumentation theory can and ought to be practiced as meta-argumentation" (p. 244). (2013, p. 15) -i.e. argumentation theory is in turn an argumentative or meta-argumentative practice.

The logician's deferred evaluation is in opposition to the direct evaluation of those who participate in a debate. Participants do more than exchanging arguments in favour or against a thesis, accepting or questioning premises or unveil alleged fallacies. The practice of arguing is intrinsically evaluative. Beyond giving reasons, the mastery of the art of arguing involves the ability to balance and weigh competing arguments (think of conjunctions like *but* or *even*), and the ability to justify and explain the resulting weighing. Any description of people's argumentative practices would be incomplete if it ignores people's own normative ideas about argument appraisal. As Marianne Doury points out in "The Virtues of Argumentation from an Amoral Analyst's Perspective" (2013, p. 492): "A quick look at argumentative practice makes it obvious that such spontaneous theories have a normative component, which helps the arguers to elaborate their case and to evaluate their opponent's argument according to some standards".

Robert C. Pinto contends that a distinctive mark of dialectic is the rejection of any rule or standard for argument evaluation external to the argumentative exchange.

> One cannot appraise an argument from a position one takes up outside the context of the dialectical interchange in which that argument occurs. One cannot appraise an argument in the role or office of neutral judge. Appraising an argument requires one to step into the dialectical interchange, become party to it, become a participant in it. Informal logic, insofar as it seeks to be an art of argument appraisal, would turn out to be the very art of arguing itself. Plato had a name for it. He called it the art of dialectic (2001, pp.8-9).

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The thesis of the retrospective character of logical evaluation implies that arguers' standards are different from logicians' standards. What is worse observation confirms this divergence. Arguers' have a comparative concept of cogent argument, as shown by the analysis of connectors as *but* or *even*. But logical theories of argument evaluation incorporate qualitative concepts of good argument. This is so for theories conforming to the P + I model (appropriate premises + adequate inference):

- deductivist definition: an argument is sound iff it has true premises and the conclusion logically follows from them;

- logico-informal definition (RSA criteria): an argument is cogent if its premises are singly or in combination relevant as support for the claim in question, individually acceptable, and sufficient together to support the claim on behalf of which they were offered.

Ralph Johnson thinks that the P+I model is deficient for it ignores the dialectical tier of argument that he identifies with the alternative positions and standard objections. To put matters right he proposes the addition of a dialectical level to supplement the criteria of acceptability, relevance and sufficiency: Does the argument deal with and defuse well-known objections, differentiate itself from other positions on the issue and respond to them? To sum up, Johnson claims that an adequate definition of good argument must incorporate three kinds of requirements: concerning premises, concerning the relation between premises and conclusion, and concerning the relations of the given argument with other competing arguments. Notice that Johnson's proposal still takes out logical evaluation from the argumentative exchange that would be the realm of dialectic. On Johnson's view relevance and sufficiency are not dialectical notions because they do not depend on the competing arguments that could be put forward by the participants.

7. ARGUMENTS CRITICISM AND EVALUATION

The theory of argument is usually divided into theory of analysis and theory of appraisal. The theory of analysis has the task of dealing with the questions concerning the nature, structure, and typology of argument; the theory of appraisal has the task of coming up with the standards and criteria and types of evaluation and/or criticism (Johnson 2000, pp. 40-41). It is sometimes claimed that the theory of analysis is descriptive while the theory of appraisal is normative. Moreover Ralph

Johnson proposes a further distinction in the theory of appraisal between evaluation and criticism (*op.cit.*, p. 219):

- Evaluation is the process (or the result of the process) of assessing a product in terms of criteria (or set of criteria), where the purpose of such assessment is for the evaluator to establish the value of the product. The main function an evaluation serves is to contribute to the evaluator's knowledge and understanding, typically as a prelude to decision or action.

- Criticism is the articulated and reasoned evaluation of something communicated to the creator with the view that it will help improve the product. Criticism goes beyond evaluation in that it must take into account the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the product and is intended for the one who produced the argument as a vehicle whereby the argument may be improved. Thus, it may be said that criticism is part of a dialectical process, whereas evaluation is not.

Lilian Bermejo Luque stresses the distinction in her recent *Falacias y argumentación*, explaining it in terms of models:

> [There is a distinction] between models to assess the argument in the sense of determining its correctness, appropriateness, etc. –which we might call evaluation-models– and models for assessing argumentation in the sense of explaining what's right or wrong in it, which we might call models for critical argumentation.[2]

The distinction between evaluation and criticism may seem parallel is some respects to the distinction between logic and arguments' dialectic. While logic would deal with the proposal and justification of standards and criteria for the assessment of arguments, arguments' dialectic would take care to describe the normative dimension of argumentative practices. But this parallelism brings to light a presupposition of the distinction between evaluation and criticism: the existence of standards and criteria of appraisal external and alien to argumentative practices, thus setting up a discontinuity between argumentation and meta-argumentation. However, in my opinion, as I have already said, a good theory of evaluation should systematize the normative components of argumentative practices. Logic and arguments' dialectic (or qualitative and comparative logic, if you prefer) should not be considered two distinct disciplines

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[2] [Cabe distinguir] entre los modelos para valorar la argumentación en el sentido de determinar su corrección, adecuación, etcétera –lo que podríamos llamar modelos de evaluación- y modelos para valorar la argumentación en el sentido de explicar qué hay de correcto o incorrecto en ella –lo que podríamos llamar modelos para la crítica de la argumentación (Op.cit., p. 63).

with different subject matters. They are in fact two competing, and even antithetical, conceptions of the standards and criteria for good and bad argumentation.

Table 3 summarizes the comparison between arguers' dialectic, arguments' dialectic and logic.

	Arguers' dialectic	Arguments' dialectic	Logic
General statement: helps us to…	Understand and evaluate argumentation as a cooperative method for making critical decisions	Understand and evaluate argumentations (i.e. multilinear composition of arguments) as products people create when they argue	Understand and evaluate arguments as products people create when they argue
Practical purposes	Organize discussions to produce good decisions	Judge the relative strength of a particular argument within a set of concurrent arguments	Judge the merits of particular arguments
Theoretical purposes	Rationale for principles and procedures used to organize argumentative interactions for critical purposes	Standards and criteria used to compare the relative strength of arguments	Standards and criteria used to distinguish sound arguments from unsound ones
General scope and focus	Methods used by people and institutions in order to bring the natural processes of arguing under deliberate control. Rules, attitudes and behaviors that promote critical decision-making	Argumentations as intellectual constructions offered for acceptance or rejection. Attempts to describe, systematize and give coherence to the practices of argument evaluation	Arguments as intellectual constructions offered for acceptance. In its theoretical form studies the standards by which to evaluate arguments. In its practical form involves the application of those standards to judge specific arguments
Object of study	Procedures of interactive and dynamic argumentation	Practices of argumentation evaluation	Argument reconstructed for the purpose of evaluation
Conception of argumentative situation	Consciously planned or designed; characterized by the existence of procedural rules to control a discussion	Constellation of actual and potential arguments directly or indirectly related to an issue	It is a retrospective viewpoint; re-situation of an argument in a context where it can be evaluated with respect to form, substance and function

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Resources employed or examined	Designs or plans for conducting critical discussions	Methods for reconstructing argumentations to facilitate the weighing of arguments and the critical standards of weighing themselves	Methods for reconstructing arguments to facilitate criticism and the critical standards themselves
Standard of evaluation What is a good argument?	Good argumentation consists in the systematic organization of interaction so as to produce the best possible decisions	A good argument is one that meets the standards of proof of the situation in which it is used and overcomes the available objections and counter-arguments	A good argument is one in which a clearly stated claim is supported by acceptable, relevant and sufficient evidence

Table 3. Arguers' dialectic, arguments' dialectic and logic.

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