

ISSA Proceedings 2010 - The Ways Of Criticism: Four Parameters



1. Introduction [i]

The notions of criticism and of argument are very much related, both at a practical and at a theoretical level. In practice, a critical attitude is often manifested by ‘being argumentative’ in one’s comments and appreciations, whereas arguments are associated with a critical stance sooner than with a constructive one. In daily parlance, both “criticism” and “argument” even share some negative connotations, such as meddlesomeness and quarrelsomeness. In the theory of argumentation, there are no such connotations, but the theoretical concepts of criticism and of argument are all the same closely related. Argumentation can be either critical (opposing someone else’s point of view) or constructive (defending one’s own point of view) or both. Moreover, some sort of critical stance is often seen as essential for all argumentation, including the constructive kind, since argumentation is conceived as an instrument to overcome doubt, and doubt seems to imply a critical stance. In pragma-dialectics, the normative model for argumentation proposed is that of a critical discussion in which standpoints are critically tested (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 1992, 2004). Also, at the intersection of argumentation studies and artificial intelligence, dialogue protocols and models for persuasion dialogue have been developed that start from the assumption that argumentation and criticism are closely interwoven (Prakken 2005; Parsons, Wooldridge & Amgoud, 2003). Thus criticism seems not only to lie at the origin of argument, but also to pervade the whole argumentative procedure.

But then, there is not just one kind of criticism. Merely expressing critical doubt is certainly different from expressing an opposite point of view, and expressing such a point of view is again different from arguing for that point of view. All three are different from raising specific objections against a point of view, or against an argument, or against parts of an argument, or against the arguer, or against the circumstances in which the argument has been presented. This paper purports to contribute to a systematic characterization of these and other kinds of critical reaction and thus to contribute to the dialectical approach to

argumentation. In this, others have preceded us (Aristotle 1976; Finocchiaro 1980; Freeman 1991; Snoeck Henkemans 1992; Pollock, 1995; Govier, 1999; Johnson, 2000; Walton, 2010), and we have ourselves each attempted to contribute to this enterprise as well (Krabbe 2007; Van Laar 2010).

In this paper, we deal with the term “criticism” in the sense in which the term pertains to negative evaluations, rather than in a sense that also pertains to positive evaluations. (Nevertheless, such criticism can itself be called *constructive* when making valuable contributions to a discussion.) We aspire to discuss negative critical reactions in a wide sense, encompassing such criticisms as pertain to (expressions of) propositions, arguments, parts of arguments, and (the applications of) argument schemes, as well as those pertaining to arguers and institutional circumstances - criticisms which relate to such issues as understandability, admissibility, validity, appropriateness, reasonableness, consistency, timeliness, and civility. But we shall not discuss such aspects of critical reactions as fail to contribute to the contents of an argumentative exchange. Thus one could ‘critically react’ to an opponent by grabbing his shoulders and shaking him gently. Would this add content to the exchange? Of course, it might. If in some culture or in some special circumstances, this would be the way to express that one disagrees with the opponent’s point of view, it would as such add some content and be among the critical reactions we intend to cover; however, the circumstance that the expression of disagreement is performed by grabbing and shaking, rather than by a speech act, will not be part of our concerns. And then, the grabbing and shaking may also fail to express anything that must be taken into account as a part of the argumentative exchange, and thus fail to be part of our concerns altogether. From now on, we shall use the term “critical reaction” exclusively for those (aspects of) reactions that do contribute to an argumentative exchange (dialogue).

It should be mentioned that not all reactions in dialogue are critical. Reactions of agreement or acceptance, or requests to grant a concession would not count as such. The same holds for elucidations and explanations of earlier contributions, and indeed for arguments offered in response to criticism. What is missing in these reactions is a negative evaluation of the move they react upon or at least a suggestion that such a negative evaluation may be forthcoming. One might stretch the concept of critical reaction to the extent that an elucidation of one’s earlier contribution would count as criticism of a request for elucidation, and that

arguments would count as criticisms of doubts or requests for arguments. One might also claim that acceptance of a statement is a criticism of that statement as being superfluous, since one agrees. Taking this line, all reactions in dialogue could be said to be critical in some sense. In this paper, we shall not go that far, but exempt from the realm of critical reactions those reactions that merely comply with the requests (to accept, to elucidate or to argue) contained in the move one reacts upon. We do so because of the lack of obviousness of the negative evaluation content of such reactions, if any.

Rather than straightforwardly heading towards a general classification of types of critical reaction - based upon a division of genera into species - we shall attempt to characterize critical reactions in terms of four parameters or factors (based upon Van Laar 2010): the *focus* of a critical reaction (Section 2), the *norm* appealed to in a critical reaction (Section 3), the illocutionary *force* of a critical reaction (Section 4), and the *level* at which a critical reaction is put forward (Section 5). Each parameter can take several values, which are characteristic features of critical reactions of certain types.

By examining these parameters, we attempt to contribute to a systematic conceptual analysis of the various ways of criticism. A characterization of the distinct kinds of critical reactions will be helpful, for example, when trying to understand various reactions in an argumentative discourse. But also the development of models or protocols for reasonable persuasion dialogue will be facilitated by theoretically motivated characterizations of critical reactions. Finally, given the wide terminological and conceptual divergences in the area of critical reactions, we hope these parameters facilitate the making of reasoned choices.

2. *Focus*

Each critical reaction has a *focus*, which functions as a precondition for a critical reaction of a particular type (cf. Wells & Reed 2005). This may be a focus on a move of a particular type, or on a special part of a move, or on a sequence or combination of moves, put forward by the interlocutor, and possibly reconstructed by the critic. Because one can take a critical stance towards any kind of contribution, each type of speech act in an argumentative exchange can be at the focus of a critical reaction. What is more, an argumentative move can be seen as having four aspects: it expresses a particular *proposition*, by employing a particular *locution* put forward with a particular illocutionary force, by a

particular *person*, within a particular *situation*. So, the focus of a critical reaction, besides being aimed at a particular kind of speech act, can be *propositional*, *locutional*, *personal* or (in other respects) *situational* in character. We shall first list the most prominent kinds of focus and then discuss these aspects.

First, a critical reaction can focus on (parts of) an elementary argument as reconstructed by the critic. An elementary argument is an illative core of a (possibly more complex) argument, having just one justificatory step. It contains a standpoint (or conclusion) and a set of premises (reasons) containing exactly one connection premise (cf. Walton & Krabbe 1995, p. 128). The connection premise is a conditional statement, having the conjunction of the other premises as its antecedent and the standpoint as its consequent, which – within an argumentative context – expresses the commitment to accept the standpoint as soon as one has accepted the reasons in the antecedent. Often, the connection premise remains implicit, and in such cases the procedure for making it explicit is straightforward.

One of the parts of an elementary argument a critical reaction can focus on is the standpoint advanced by the proponent. This may happen before the elementary argument has been advanced – and in fact elicit the argument. Such a critical reaction may be focused on an expression of an opinion by the interlocutor, whether this expression has been marked as a standpoint or not (if not, the criticism will turn the expression of opinion into a standpoint, see Houtlosser 2001, p. 33). Of course, critical reactions can also focus on other parts of an elementary argument, or on a combination of parts. Where critical reactions on individual parts of an elementary argument are concerned, a threefold distinction can be upheld: such a critical reaction focuses on a standpoint or on a reason advanced in support of a standpoint (turning that reason itself into a substandpoint), or on a connection premise (on the three ways hypothesis, cf. Walton 2010). Comparing this three-fold distinction with the criteria for good arguments in Informal Logic, it is clear that critical reactions to the standpoint are not connected with any of these criteria, but the criticism of a reason corresponds to the criterion of acceptability whereas the criticism of a connection premise may either involve the criterion of sufficiency or that of relevance (Johnson & Blair 1983, p. 34). The distinction between the latter two cases is not one of focus but rather one of strategic advice (discussed below in Section 4).

It can be useful to characterize a critical reaction on an elementary argument in more detail as being focused on a special type of reason belonging to a specific

argument scheme (Garssen 2001) or kind of argumentation. For instance, a reaction could focus on the 'normality premise,' belonging to defeasible arguments, which expresses that circumstances are not exceptional, or it could focus on the 'desirability premise,' belonging to the pragmatic argument scheme (a kind of practical reasoning), which expresses the desirability of a particular goal.

Second, a critical reaction can focus on a more complex argument, such as a basic argument that is built up from several elementary arguments (cf. Walton & Krabbe 1995, p. 129). This happens when it is pointed out that there occurs a shift in the meaning of a particular term in the course of a chain of arguments, or when it is alleged that a chain of arguments is circular and begs the question, or when it is shown that various parts of the complex argument are mutually inconsistent. The critic can also charge the arguer of having made mistakes in suppositional arguments: for instance, when the arguer has derived an absurdity after having introduced a supposition to be refuted, but then subsequently misidentifies the responsible premise (see Aristotle (1965) in *Sophistical Refutations* 5 on the fallacy of *non causa*, 167b21-36).

Third, the focus of a critical reaction can be on a kind of argumentative move that does not itself present (a part of) an argument. A challenge, to take an example, can be the focus of a critical reaction when it is alleged that the critic's challenge is inappropriate due to the critic's having conceded the proposition at issue at an earlier stage. In a similar vein, one can critically react towards requests for clarification, for example because any further clarification would be superfluous. In such cases, a request can be pictured as a delaying tactic. More in general, a critical reaction can be focused on any kind of critical reaction. But there are also other moves that one can critically react to, for instance proposals. When one party, defending a standpoint, proposes a premise that is to function as a shared point of departure, a possible critical reaction by the other party could be that accepting that premise as a starting point would come down to accepting the standpoint. The critical reaction, in such a case, is aimed at preventing an arguer from begging the question.

Fourth, a critical reaction can focus at a combination of argumentative moves (which could all be different from moves needed for constructing an elementary or complex argument). For example, it could be pointed out that one's opponent refuses to concede a proposition that is immediately implied by a proposition

granted earlier. In that case the criticism focuses on the combination of the present move of refusal and the earlier move of concession.

When focusing on such (parts or combinations of) moves of the interlocutor, the emphasis can be on one or other of the four aspects of a move. Consider first *propositional critical reactions*. If such a reaction focuses directly on the content of a standpoint or of a reason, it can be called a *tenability criticism*, “Why *P*?” (Krabbe 2002, p. 161); if it focuses on the content of a connection premise, it can be called a *connection criticism*, “Why would I be committed to *Q* if I were to concede *P* in the current circumstances?” (cf. Krabbe 2002, p. 160).

A *locutional critical reaction* focuses on the formulation of a standpoint, reason or connection premise, or of some other contribution. It may either be concerned with unclarity of the propositional content or with unclarity of the illocutionary force of the contribution. In the *first* case, it aims at getting the speaker to indicate into more detail what proposition he tries to express, “What do you mean by *P*?”; or it aims at pressing him to adapt his formulation on some other ground, for example because the terminology is biased, or distasteful. A locutional criticism concerned with unclarity of propositional content can also focus on a complex argument when pointing out a fallacy of equivocation, or when pointing out the lack of terminological coherence in the opponent’s set of commitments. In the *second* case, when the illocutionary force is unclear, a locutional criticism aims at getting clearer about the kind of speech act performed by the other side: is he offering an argument or an explanation? Is this multiple argumentation or coordinative argumentation? Is this a mere concession or a stronger kind of commitment?

A *personal critical reaction* ‘attacks’ the person who brought forward an argumentative contribution, for example by saying something like “you’re not in a position to argue in favor of (or: against) *P* in a credible way due to a general flaw in your character (or a specific bias, etc.)” or “You shouldn’t argue about Burma; you have never been there.”

A *situational critical reaction* can point out that the circumstances of the dialogue are such that the other side’s contribution is inappropriate. For instance, it can be told to the interlocutor that he has performed an inappropriate kind of speech act: he should not himself have made a *concession* for he is in the present dialogue the proponent in an unmixed interchange and therefore is not to *make*

concessions to defend his standpoint, but to *employ* concessions made by the opponent in order to do so. Or, external circumstances may make a move inappropriate: “Defending this very standpoint in the current societal circumstances enhances violence”, or “Challenging proposition *P* is impolite and therefore not allowed in this family.” Though directed at a particular person and sometimes implying a personal attack, the focus is on the situation rather than just on the person.

3. Norm

Each critical reaction appeals to a particular kind of argumentative norm. One can relate to a norm in various ways. One merely *follows* a norm, without appealing to it, when one fulfills the obligations prescribed by the norm. For example, if, when one is supposed to provide an argument if asked to do so, and is indeed asked to do so, one provides an argument. One merely *utilizes* a norm, again without appealing to it, when one makes use of a right provided by the norm. For example, one utilizes the norm according to which the parties can take turns, simply by performing one’s move when the interlocutor has finished speaking. However, one *appeals* to a norm by putting forward a critical reaction (of a kind that is sanctioned by the norms) in order to put some pressure on the interlocutor to respond in a certain way. So, by challenging a standpoint, the critic is utilizing the freedom rule (also called Commandment 1, Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, p. 190) which allows her to challenge, but she is also, although implicitly, appealing to the obligation-to-defend rule (Commandment 2, *ibid.*, p. 191) in order to press the arguer to present an argument. One appeals to a norm, in the special sense of *emphasizing* it, in case the critic not only appeals to the norm, but is also rubbing it in, meaning that she is more or less clearly conveying the message that her critical reaction is pertinent because of the fact that this norm is operative. So, when the critic puts forward a challenge, and in addition stresses that the arguer is under the obligation to provide an argument, she is quite explicitly emphasizing a burden of proof rule. Below we shall repeatedly give examples of these two ways of appealing to norms (implicitly, and explicitly by emphasizing the norms). In the remainder of this subsection, however, we shall concentrate on the distinction between three *kinds* of norms, rather than on ways to refer or appeal to them.

First, there are the so-called *rules for critical discussion* (a normative model for persuasion dialogue). These rules mark the distinction between argumentatively

reasonable and unreasonable dialogue moves (*fallacies*). A critic may charge an arguer with having violated one of these rules. Such a charge would amount to an appeal to the rule in the sense of emphasizing. Of course the charge may be ill-founded. When a critic appeals to a norm that she considers to be part of the constitution of genuine critical discussion but we do not, her critical reaction must be seen by us as an incorrect appeal to a rule for critical discussion.

Second, there are *norms of optimality*, which mark the distinction between argumentative moves that are really good and those that, though not fallacies, are unsatisfactory in some argumentative respect (*lapses* or *blunders*). For instance, if a proponent can choose between a stronger and a weaker argument, the stronger argument is to be preferred (cf. Krabbe 2001, on the discussion rule “Try to win”). Since one’s lapses or blunders are usually ‘advantageous’ for one’s interlocutor, the latter may leave them unnoticed. But she may also point out that the argument, though not fallacious, is flawed and therefore unconvincing. External observers of an argumentative discussion often appeal to optimality norms to criticize the participants.

Third, there are the so-called *institutional norms*. Argumentative norms that are institutional can be seen as marking the distinction between dialogue moves that are appropriate within the institutional setting, and those which are inappropriate within the setting. In the latter case we may speak of *faults*. In contradistinction to the rules for critical discussion, these norms are not part of the general explication of argumentative reasonableness. However, they do apply in particular types of context, where the participants use argumentation for special purposes that supplement the goal of resolution of a difference of opinion, for instance the purpose of resolving the difference of opinion in one’s own favor (Van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2002). Van Eemeren and Houtlosser discuss these institutional settings as ‘argumentative activities’ (2005, pp. 76-7; cf. Van Eemeren 2010, Ch. 5). For example, when engaged in legal proceedings, additional rules apply to the argumentative moves put forward by the participants, for in order for the difference of opinion to have been resolved in a manner that is not merely dialectically reasonable but also legally admissible, various additional constraints must have been taken into account. These additional constraints can be emphasized as norms in critical reactions.

We take the idea of an institution in a broad sense, including rather mundane activities such as having a colloquial conversation, or discussing current affairs,

in addition to more formalized activities such as being engaged in a lawsuit, a parliamentary discussion, a public debate or a debating contest. Norms to the effect that particular topics are, within certain circumstances, not up for debate, or to the effect that certain character traits or personal circumstances can disqualify a person as a serious participant can be regarded as special norms that characterize some (and not all) argumentative activities.

4. Force

A third parameter to be used for characterizing the ways of criticism is that of the illocutionary force of a critical reaction. Conspicuous here are reactions in the form of requests, assertives, and strategic advice.

Requests

First, a critical reaction, whatever the norm appealed to and whatever the focus, can be put forward as a directive in the form of a *request*; either for argument or for clarification. Requests for argument (or: challenges) have a propositional focus, “Why *P*?”, whereas requests for clarification have a locutional focus, “What do you mean by formulation *P*?” In both cases, the request aims at an extension of the argument as constructed at some stage of the dialogue. Requests utilize the rules for critical discussion, and appeal to them in an implicit manner. By filing a request for an argument or a clarification, the critic is capable of pressing the arguer to provide the requested argument or clarification on the basis of certain rules for critical discussion. The implicit, normative appeal of a request for an argument would, if made explicit, yield something like: “in order for you to fulfill your burden of proof, as laid down in Rule 3 for critical discussion, or Commandment 2 of the code of conduct (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, pp. 139 and 191), you must provide an argument as requested.” The urgency of a request for clarification becomes clear from a similar message, which could be made explicit to yield: “in order for you to adequately express yourself, as required in Rule 15 for critical discussion or Commandment 10 of the code of conduct (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, pp. 157 and 195), you must provide a clarification as requested.” Normally, the reference to the applied rules remains fully implicit in such requests, but sometimes the norms are emphasized, rather than merely appealed to implicitly.

Assertives

Second, instead of merely requesting an argument or a further explication, a critic can reconstruct and negatively evaluate (a part of) a contribution by the

other side, by making an *assertion* to the effect that there is a flaw of some kind in the interlocutor's contribution. Critical reactions such as these have been dealt with by Finocchiaro as 'active evaluations' (1980, p. 339). When pointing out a flaw, the critic is actively taking part in the discussion about the matters at issue in the criticized contribution by putting forward a negative evaluation in which she appeals to one or more norms: the flaw needs repair. The critic can do so but nonetheless refrain from alleging that her interlocutor has been unreasonable on the ground of having violated some rule for critical discussion (a norm of the first kind) or inept on the ground of having violated some institutional norm (a norm of the third kind).

One prominent way of pointing out a flaw is to deny a proposition that has been expressed or employed by the interlocutor or to assert a proposition that implies a denial. Such denials come in two kinds, depending upon the messages conveyed to the other participant. If party A denies a proposition *P* that has been used by party B, saying "not *P*", this denial can convey the relatively weak message that B will not be able to defend his standpoint that *P* vis-à-vis party A. This so-called *weak denial* is not itself a kind of standpoint that requires a defense when challenged. Instead, it expresses an expectation to the effect that, according to A's assessment, party B will not be capable of constructing a case for his main standpoint that will turn out to be convincing for A. If requested to *defend* 'not *P*', party A can justifiably answer "It is not my opinion that *P* is not the case, and therefore I am not willing to present an argument in favour of 'not *P*'; instead I am evaluating negatively your strategic chances of finding an argument that will convince me." A weak denial does, however, come with an obligation for the critic to be open about her considerations that brought her to this assessment: what makes her think that B lacks the means for persuading her? So, there is, instead of a burden of proof, a kind of burden of giving some explanation, be it that this burden will have to be rather limited considering that the critic herself may not have full access to the grounds of her assessment. In short, a weak denial will always be a purely critical move, rather than a constructive one.

A second kind of denial is the *strong denial*. With a strong denial, "not *P*," party A conveys the message that A will be able to defend this denial against B's critical testing. Such a counterstandpoint does carry a burden of proof, when challenged. So, besides being critical, such a move is constructive, generating a mixed dispute in which argumentation (for *P*) is parried by counterargumentation

(argumentation for not-*P*).

If the focus of a weak or strong denial is on the propositional content of the connection premise, the critic is pointing out a justificatory flaw. Such flaws can also be pointed out in ways other than by denials, for example by presenting a counterexample. Methods using assertives, other than denials, for pointing out flaws can also be found in critical reactions in which it is alleged that a formulation used by the other side contains biased terms or harmful ambiguities. Or when the evidence is pictured as legally inadmissible; or when it is held that the interlocutor has exceeded the time limit. In each case, the assertive that points out the flaw may itself be supported by arguments (see Krabbe 2007, pp. 60-61, on *strong objections*).

Strategic advice

Third, when raising a challenge or when pointing out a flaw, party A can choose to accompany this critical reaction by some of the counterconsiderations that party B must take into account when making further decisions as to whether and, if so, how to proceed in his attempts to persuade A of B's standpoint *P*. Within an argumentative context, these counterconsiderations function as directives conveying *strategic advice* to B. Such strategic advice is critical in so far as it conveys the message that a negative evaluation is forthcoming if the proponent will turn out to be incapable of defusing the counterconsideration. We will provide a few examples. First, a challenge can be accompanied by a consideration that explains to B why A is critically disposed to *P*. The message to B then is that B must adapt his persuasive strategy in such a way that this motive for a critical stance will be defused. For instance, a challenge directed at the connection premise, "Why if *P* then *Q*?" can be accompanied by the counterconsideration that *P* does not suffice to establish *Q* (conveying the message that additional reasons should be supplied or that a specific objection should be met), or by the counterconsideration that *P* is not clearly relevant for *Q* (conveying the message that argumentation must be supplied to show the relevance; see Snoeck Henkemans 1992, p. 89-93 and 2003, pp. 408-410). Second, it has been stated above that weak denials should generally be accompanied by considerations that explain why party B will turn out to be unable to persuade A. But such considerations would of course be overruled if B were to defuse them in some way or other. Hence they provide strategic advice for B. Third, strong denials can be accompanied by counterargumentation. Such argumentation can fulfill two

functions: a constructive persuasive function (persuading B of not-*P*), but we refrain from discussing this function since we are concerned with critical, rather than with constructive moves. In the present context it is more to the point to stress the function of providing party B with considerations that must be refuted before party A will retract her critical doubt towards *P*.

5. Level

The fourth and last parameter is that of level. The distinction we have in mind has to do with the directness with which a dialogue move contributes to the argumentation in favour of one of the standpoints adopted in the discussion. Quite direct contributions will be located at the ground level dialogue, while more indirect contributions – moves that are about the dialogue rather than about the issue at hand – are to be located at the next meta-level of dialogue or at levels even higher up in the hierarchy (Krabbe 2003). Although it is difficult to draw a borderline, we think such a distinction can be upheld.

Clearly, a move in which a proponent puts forward an argument in favour of a challenged proposition, or in which a critic puts forward a counterargument against some part of the argument of the other (and so in favor of some kind of strong denial), contributes directly to the issue discussed, and so this move will be a ground level move. The same applies to the clarification of a part of the argument, for example by explaining what was meant by this or that expression. Requests for further arguments or for clarification of an argument will be seen as quite directly contributing to the argumentation in that the response aimed for is an argument or a clarification. So, these moves are considered to be ground level moves as well.

However, if a party's move deals, for instance, with the strategy adopted by himself or by the other side, the contribution may still be seen as dealing with the standpoints at issue, but only indirectly so. The primary topic is a strategy that has been, can be or should be adopted (or not adopted). So, what we have called weak denials are to be seen as initiating a meta-level dialogue. Similarly, moves offering explicit strategic advice are meta-level moves.

An example of an explicit strategic advice can be found in Plato's *Euthydemus*, where Ctesippus challenges Dionysodorus' claim that Dionysodorus and Euthydemus really know everything:

Here Ctesippus interrupted: For goodness' sake, Dionysodorus, give me some

evidence of these things which will convince me that you are both telling the truth.

What shall I show you? he asked.

Do you know how many teeth Euthydemus has, and does he know how many you have?

Aren't you satisfied, he said, with being told that we know everything?

Not at all, he answered, but tell us just this one thing in addition, and prove that you speak the truth. Because if you say how many each of you has, and you turn out to be right when we have made a count, then we shall trust you in everything else. (*Euthydemus* 294c, Plato 1997, p. 732)

When a party claims that the other side has transgressed a rule for critical discussion or an applicable institutional norm of some kind, the moves must be seen as being primarily about the legitimacy or appropriateness of part of the preceding dialogue, and thus as initiating and contributing to a meta-level dialogue. When the critic puts forward a negative evaluation by charging her interlocutor with having breached a norm, strongly emphasizing the norm, her evaluation will count as a request for some kind of repair, as is generally the case with pointing out flaws. But in addition, the interlocutor is accused of having put forward a move that hinders or even blocks either the resolution-goal of their discussion (a fallacy) or one of the goals inherent in the institutional activity (a fault). All such charges take place at a meta-level of dialogue.

Charges of faults (in the present sense) occur for instance when party A points out to party B that defending a certain proposition will have unacceptable social consequences (the charge may of course be unjustified). One may think of the self-fulfilling prophecy that ensues when a prime minister too much stresses its country's economical troubles, or of cases where it is said that our adversaries will profit if anyone would take a critical stance towards a standpoint. Also personal attacks can be seen as charges at a meta-level that the interlocutor has violated an institutional norm, in that case a norm to the effect that for instance the arguer's financial involvement, lack of expertise or insincerity is inappropriate for the kind of discussion at hand. Those personal attacks that are dialectically illegitimate constitute *ad hominem* fallacies.

6. Conclusion

As has become evident from our discussion of the four parameters, there exists an enormous variety of critical reactions. These must be taken into account within

argumentation studies aimed at the development of norms for argumentation and of practical guidelines for those who wish to engage in argumentative activities, displaying rationality as well as persuasiveness. In Table 1 below we provide a survey of the critical reactions on the basis of the four parameters.

<i>Parameters</i>	<i>Main types</i>	<i>Some subtypes / Examples</i>
Focus <i>Aspects:</i> Propositional Locutional Personal Situational	On elementary arguments	On the standpoint
		On a reason
		On the connection premise
	On complex arguments	Charges of equivocation, begging the question, inconsistency, and <i>non causa</i> .
	On a move that does not present (a part of) an argument	Criticizing challenges, requests, and criticisms
	On further combinations of moves	Charges of inconsistency or of unreasonable behavior
Norm <i>Ways of appealing to norms:</i> Merely appealing Emphasizing	Rules for critical discussion	Freedom rule Burden of proof rule
	Norms of optimality	Use the stronger argument. Choose the clearest formulation. Avoid digressions.
	Institutional norms	Adapt to audience. Provide only legally obtained evidence.

Force	Directives	Requests:Requests for arguments (challenges) Requests for clarifications
		Strategic advice:To supply additional reasons, meet objections, or show relevance
	Assertives	Pointing out flaws:Weak denials Strong denials (counterstandpoints) Counterexamples Pointing out ambiguities, inadmissibility of evidence, or that there is no time left
Level	Ground level	Requests for further argumentation or clarification Strong denials Counterarguments
	Meta-levels	Calling into doubt the legitimacy or the appropriateness of moves Weak denials Strategic advice Personal attacks

Table 1.

In order to proceed in these areas we think it to be important to apply and illustrate the notions in the present approach, comparing them with notions of critical reactions as they exist within such areas as formal dialectic, pragma-dialectic and computation, so as to facilitate the development of a clear and useful inventory of critical reactions. In fact, we took some steps in that direction, which were here omitted by lack of space, but will hopefully be published in a sequel. These applications, illustrations and comparisons concern texts by (1) Aristotle on objections and criticisms in the Topics and the Sophistical Refutations, (2) Finocchiaro on active involvement (Finocchiaro 1980, 1987, 1997), (3) Freeman

on central questions in a basic dialectical situation (Freeman 1991), (4) Pollock on rebutting defeaters and undercutting defeaters (Pollock 1995), and (5) Snoeck Henkemans on complex argumentation in critical discussion (Snoeck Henkemans 1992, 2003).

One thing that has become clear to us, at the present stage of research, is that criticisms often constitute subtle argumentative instruments that do not only carry negative messages for the interlocutor, but are often helpful in that they provide various kinds of strategic advice.

NOTES

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