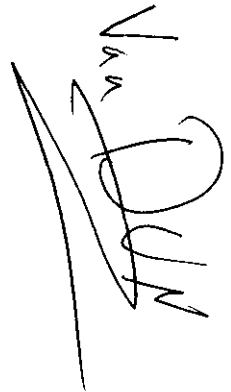




ARGUMENTATION

APPROACHES TO THEORY FORMATION

Containing the Contributions to the
Groningen Conference on the Theory
of Argumentation, October 1978

edited by
E.M. BARTH & J.L. MARTENS
University of Groningen

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Van Dijk', written vertically on the right side of the page.

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PREFACE

What can philosophers, linguists, and communications theorists do in order to promote a climate of discussion, preferably world-wide in the end, and improve the quality of discussions?

These were the questions and the long-term goals for the sake of which a number of scholars from other countries, as well as scholars from Dutch universities, were invited to come together at Groningen, The Netherlands, in 1978. The plan for such a conference met with immediate sympathy and support from the Groningen State University, and from the philosophical faculty there, for which we were, and are, very grateful.

Our short-term aspiration was to bring together a number of persons in a primarily non-combative and non-competitive atmosphere, in order to see whether some degree of synthesis between competing research programmes would be feasible. Obviously it is not possible to find that out in the course of a mere three days. We do hope, however, that the present volume will be of value in assessing the extent to which such a synthesis is feasible and, to be quite honest, we even hope that this collection of contributions may cause some of its readers to take steps in the direction of such a synthesis themselves.

The times being what they were, we had to make do with a very limited budget. To ensure that all types of contributions to the field were represented would not have been financially possible. Hence it was necessary to select a certain viewpoint from

which to work in organizing the conference.

In the budding discipline that should, in our opinion, be called the Theory of Argumentation, three theoretical phases may be distinguished. Each new phase allows for another definition of the very word "argumentation". In explaining this, let us start from the influential research programme called phenomenology. Edmund Husserl himself was primarily, though not exclusively, interested in the -- his own term -- "pre-predicative" phases of cognition. His quest for "foundations" of cognitive content had nothing to do with argumentation even in the weaker sense. Phase One of the theory of argumentation consisted in taking the step from this search for a pre-predicative foundation of a conviction, belief, theorem, or point of view, to the *justification* of an overt position (cp. S.E. Toulmin 1958). In Phase Two the justification is related to the specific concessions of an *audience* (Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca 1952), however the verbal reactions of the audience are not yet considered in detail, and the interplay of locutions is not analysed. Let us call this *the rhetorical stage* of the theory of argumentation.

In Phase Three the justification is analytically related to the audience's verbal reactions, and vice versa. 'The audience' now figures theoretically as an active partner in a discussion between two (or more) parties or *dialectical roles*. The interplay -- or, as Kant says in his Table of Categories, the *Wechselwirkung* -- between the locutions of these two (or more) dialectical roles will be called *the dialectical stage* of the theory of argumentation.

The development can be described as one from Idea (and Judgment) *via* -- public -- Meaning, and later, Sentence (Alston 1964, Hacking 1975), to the focal notion of a *Sequent* or *ordered pair* (*triple*,...), of the sets of locutions that, at a certain stage

of some dialogue, characterize the two (or more) parties, or their roles, in that dialogue. The third, or dialectical, phase in argumentational studies is that in which the theoretician, more or less consciously and more or less explicitly, is discussing *operations on sequents*. Such studies may be purely descriptive and empirical, in which case they may or may not be related to linguistic studies, or they may be normative, in which case they may be related to logic, ethics, and social affairs generally. Or they may be both at the same time.

We decided to devote the conference to the third, or dialectical, phase in argumentational studies. Even so we were not able to invite all the important contributors to the field, not even those within Europe. To our sincere regret, some of the invited speakers were, for one reason or another, unable to attend the conference. One of them was Arne Naess. Since the conference quite possibly would never have been thought of, had it not been for his inspiring influence, years before, it may seem strange that we went along with our preparations rather than wait another year; however, the financial situation at the universities being as it was, we deemed it wiser to carry out the plan immediately.

During the conference one of the participants emphasized that whereas there is no possibility of overlooking the practical importance of truth (or, we take it, of competing notions, such as agreement - eds.), truth alone is not enough. In philosophy as well as in daily life we also need a second value, viz. *relevance*. Argumentation is a human activity and instances of argumentation are, as all human activities, more or less "good" or "bad" (for someone, or, mediately, for something). When, in the discussion that followed, one of the participants pointed out that the sub-formula principle is a principle of relevance, the former

speaker retorted that as a principle of relevance in her general sense (of moral, of epistemic, and of general cultural relevance), the sub-formula principle is hardly of importance. Apart from the problem of the relevance of instances of argumentation to ethical goals she also threw up the still more involved topic of *creativity* in argumentative communication. The notion of a sentence which, given a certain argumentative situation, is in all respects appropriate, relevant in the technical sense of the word, yet *novel* in a sense in which a sub-sentence is not, certainly seems to be a realistic one.

This conference did not itself contribute to an analysis of what constitutes "appropriate, but novel and valuable" arguments. However, several among its participants have, in one way or another, demonstrated in writing that their involvement with other theoretical questions concerning argumentative uses of language is deeply rooted either in moral concerns, or in epistemic concerns, or in both. These earlier -- in a couple of cases, later -- publications should be seen as the background of the Groningen conference, or as connected with that background. These publications may be found in the bibliography at the end of this volume.

A small number of persons who had been invited to this conference and who had expressed their interest in participation were, for various reasons, unable to come. Two of them -- Arne Naess and Frank van Dun -- sent us their contributions afterwards. We decided to treat their contributions as if the authors had been present in person.

The papers have been put into five relatively coherent groups. With respect to the first of these groups, which we have called *Re-modelling Logic*, we finally decided to put the papers in the order in which the authors' first contributions to argumen-

tational studies (or to closely related studies) appeared in print. A chronological bibliography, which is intended to be complete (concerning argumentational studies) with respect to the contributors to this volume, but not with respect to other authors, is added at the end of the book (pp.295-333). It was compiled by Mr. A. van Hoof, graduate student of philosophy and argumentation theory in the University of Groningen, and for this we are very grateful to him. Our thanks are due also to Ms. C.A.M. Roy and especially to Mr. R. North, who went through the English texts from a linguistic point of view.

E.M. Barth

J.L. Martens

The editors of the series in which this volume is appearing, and the publishing house as well, have requested some kind of introductory text connecting the papers. I am glad to comply with their wish. In order not to dominate the volume too much I have kept these pieces as short as possible, but have arranged that a chronological bibliography was compiled which shows the development of the field better than I could do. By grouping the papers together in what I hope is a systematic manner (there are, of course, strong overlaps between the groups), and by asking those authors who had not done so already to produce clarifying subtitles throughout their papers, it was possible to keep the introductions short.

E.M.B.

INTRODUCTION TO PART FIVE: ANALYSING INTERACTION

The relevance of game theory and decision theory to practical disciplines, such as economics and ethics, is well known. Leopold-Wildburger discusses the relation of dialogue analysis to statistics and decision theory. She regards Bayesian thought as appropriate for the conduct and analysis of non-repeated discussion, and suggests that Harsanyi's extended and generalized n-person game theory -- where n may be greater than 2 -- should be used in developing an analytic theory of super-games and polylogues issuing from a system of somehow "opposed" interests, a "conflict", between n persons (or purposes). The full paper is presented elsewhere.

See in this connection also the paper by R. Giles (1976) and W. Hofstee (1980), both of which are listed in the Bibliography at the end of this volume; they discuss models of wager.

The paper by van Dun closes the book. It begins with a discussion of what it means to be reasonable, and goes on to formulate a basic principle for morality, in terms of respect for others, or self, as (a) *rational* creature(s). The last section of van Dun's paper contains a novel theoretical move in ethics. He formulates Lorenzen-strips (dialogical attack-defense rules) for statements concerning x's respect, or lack of respect, for y as a rational being.

It is interesting to contemplate the fact that on the definition of "being moral" that seems to follow from van Dun's fundamental principle of morality, Thomas Aquinas, Fichte, Hegel, and

some others were immoral in the first degree towards female humans.

It remains to be seen what possibilities there are for developing van Dun's approach to ethical theory into a body of insights that may be applied as guidelines to practical situations. It would seem possible to exploit his ideas for the purpose of coming to grips with certain types of fallacy or "irrational" modes of argumentation. In fact, this may well turn out to be the first contribution to the systematic treatment of what I have elsewhere called higher-order rules -- all those rules in a theory of argumentation that regulate human intercourse, verbal or other, prior to and conducive to the coming into being of "rational" discussion (the first-order rules being those that regulate the moves in a "rational" discussion).

A deepened insight into what constitutes such proto-argumentative behaviour should satisfy anybody's desire for socio-cultural relevance, in fact such insight is, in all probability, the abstract commodity that mankind is most urgently in need of.

ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF ARGUMENT AND THE LOGIC OF COMMON MORALITY.

F. van Dun

"The only desirable object which is
"quite satisfactory without any ul-
"terior reason for desiring it, is
"the reasonable itself."

C.S. PEIRCE

1. Dialectical argument and first principles

To say that man is a rational animal is to say that he is both an animal and a rational creature. But saying man is a rational creature is not at all like saying he is an animal creature. At least, the two are different for man himself, even if they might be instances of the same logical class for a non-human being. For us, human beings, the statement "Man is an animal creature" is an empirical statement, and if true, an empirical truth. But "Man is a rational creature" is not an empirical statement. Rather, for us, human beings, it is a dialectical truth.

The difference between the two statements is not one of logical form. Both are synthetic, logically contingent and hence carriers of information about the world. The difference follows from the fact that when arguing about the truth of these statements, we find ourselves in wholly different positions, depending on whether it is the truth of the one, or the truth of the other, which is being disputed.

We cannot reasonably deny that man is a rational creature.

True, given what we know as a result of the progressive accumulation of anatomical, physiological and bio-chemical data, we cannot reasonably deny that man is an animal creature either. But that does not make the latter proposition a dialectical truth. We can easily imagine circumstances in which it would indeed be very reasonable to refuse to believe that man is an animal creature. After all, there have been times and there are cultures still in which "enlightened opinion" was or is in favour of such a refusal. Moreover, why should all these "scientific data" matter?

On the other hand, however, one cannot, as a human being, imagine circumstances in which it would be reasonable for a human being to believe man is not a rational creature - not a creature endowed with rational abilities ("reason"), such as the ability to conceptualize, to construct logical complexes, propositions and norms, to interpret signs and to identify with some measure of success the meanings they carry; the ability to judge and to think, to apply the knowledge of the distinction between true and false, logically valid and logically invalid, desirable and undesirable, *f a c i e n d u m* and *e v i t a n d u m*; the ability to "size up" (W.L. Matson's term), devise plans and carry them out or drop or revise them, and so on.

It would be unreasonable to refuse to believe man is a rational creature, not because of evidence, which might or might not strike us as relevant, nor of conjectures and hypotheses, which might or might not appear to be self-evident, but because of the existential situation created by the question itself: whether to believe man is a rational creature or not to believe it. There are perhaps, as Nietzsche warned us, no eternal facts. Still, that "I" and "you" are rational creatures is the one and only inescapable, necessary, fact in all arguments, and is untouched even by the objection that the argument itself may be illusory: *as an objection* that remark is but one move in the argument, although it may of course not be intended to be an objection, but

then it is no longer part of the argument - as when it is intended to be the equivalent of "Get lost". Brought to light by our argument, i.e., by the *a c t i v i t y* itself of arguing, it is in no way dependent upon what our arguments qua propositions are: it is a dialectical truth that "You" and "I" are rational.

But that it is, in this sense, a necessary fact that we are rational, does not in itself constitute a reason why we should recognize it as such, why we ought not to deny it. We cannot *r e a s o n a b l y* deny it, but we *c a n* deny it. Why should this inability to reasonably deny it signify that we *ought not* to deny it? Again the answer is strictly dialectical in nature: the question is self-answering. We ought to be reasonable, to respect our rational nature, i.e. we ought to use our rational abilities and use them correctly, according to their immanent laws: that we ought to believe only what is true, and ought to desire only what is desirable, that we ought to make our judgments carefully, taking into account all the relevant considerations, that we ought to respect the distinction between validity and invalidity in making inferences, by seeking the former and avoiding the latter, and that we ought to apply the conclusions of correct inferences from true premisses in devising our plans of action.

It is apparently within our power to be unreasonable, but we cannot reasonably deny we ought to be reasonable. Whatever reasons I may give you for denying with me that we ought to be reasonable, they'd better be good ones, i.e. reasons which will make you (and me) understand why we ought not to be reasonable - propositions which you ought to judge to be true and appropriate and conclusive. But if I could find such reasons, if I could convince you that we ought not to be reasonable, I would in the same breath have convinced you that my "reasons" are not to be taken to be propositions whose acceptance should be followed by

the acceptance of my conclusion, or at least, propositions whose acceptance should incline you, given our common background knowledge, to accept my conclusion. I cannot reasonably argue that we ought not to be reasonable - and neither can you. It is easy to deceive ourselves into believing we are arguing reasonably, by accepting the conclusion on the grounds that we ought to be reasonable, when the conclusion is that we ought not to be. As soon as this incongruence, this dialectical contradiction, is pointed out, we should admit that we cannot reasonably refuse to believe we ought to be reasonable.

Can't I object that this does not prove we ought to be reasonable? Of course I can - only I should not go on to argue that there can be a reason why we should conclude we ought not to be reasonable. I can choose not to argue, but once the choice is made I can only stick to it or repudiate it - and I do not stick to it by getting into an argument, trying to prove or make it plausible that my choice was the right choice to make. There is and can be no justification for my refusal or denial. I should not even go on to ask why there should be a justification, or, maybe, why I should look after my reputation as a bona fide person. A flat refusal to justify my refusal is all I can permit myself.

As soon as I attempt to justify my refusal, as soon as I say "Well, we ought not to be reasonable, and here is why...", I identify the validity of that norm as problematic, as a problem, something to think about. But by admitting there exist problems, which is not the same as having problems (possibly without being aware of them or without being aware that what I have are problems), I give myself the command "Be reasonable: care for truth, care for consistency, beware of falsity, critically evaluate your premisses...". While I am aware of something as a problem, my norm a facienda (for to think is to act) is

"You should think, deliberate to the best of your abilities whether it is best to do A or to do B". In most cases, the answer is not given to me - otherwise there would be no problem. But in one case, the case under consideration, to ask the question is to answer it, viz. when the "problem" is whether I should think correctly, judge carefully, seek the truth, act on the best advice, etc. To assume this is a problem is to accept the norm that I ought to be reasonable.

The question, whether I should think or reason correctly and from true premisses, whether I ought to be reasonable and respect my rational nature, is indeed self-answering. The point is not that it is self-contradictory in this case to say, that a) we are dealing with a question and b) the answer is negative. We should not presuppose that the norm, that we ought not to let contradictions go uncorrected, is valid. Rather the point is that putting the question presupposes answering it - it is therefore a relation between actions which is decisive here. In fact, putting the question is answering it positively. The relationship is an identity: there is but one act. If I say A one day and not-A the next, I may be contradicting myself; I may also be correcting myself. In any case, there are two separate intentions to consider, and the question is whether there has been a change of mind between the occurrence of the first and the occurrence of the second. If that is the case, we have to cancel the first statement, at least for purposes of logical evaluation. But with respect to the question, whether we ought to be reasonable or not, it is impossible to answer it at a later moment in the negative, with the intention of cancelling the positive answer "given" at the same moment the question was asked: to do so would destroy the question, and hence also the second answer as an answer to that question. The issue is not whether we ought to avoid contradictions; it

is a matter of mere logical analysis that, if you want to reason correctly, you should avoid contradictions. But our question is whether we ought to reason correctly, whether we ought to make use of our rational abilities. And that question is self-answering. In the sense, then, that this "question" is for each of us the ultimate question, the answer to it is the ultimate answer - the first principle.

Thus, not only can we not reasonably deny we ought to be reasonable, meaning that we ought not to deny it, if we want to be reasonable; but also we cannot even maintain it is permissible not to want to be reasonable, for when we think of that as a meaningful piece of information, an answer to a question, we see it is an answer destroying the question itself. Once the question is raised of the validity of the norm, that we ought to be reasonable, there is but one answer: it is valid. To dispute its validity is to recognize its validity. But if it is valid, then we ought to be reasonable, ought to respect our rational nature. It is pointless to ask why. There is no way in which one can cast doubt on its validity. One cannot even consciously refuse to raise the question of its validity, for then the question would have to be there already. One can only refuse to think about it: here is a normative rule one can break but cannot contest.

This first principle, that we ought to be reasonable, holds for you as well as for me, for if it holds for me, it must necessarily hold also for you - who are my alter ego in this attempted dialogue. To take a dialogue seriously is to take the other, the "you" seriously; the dialogue will not appear even potentially successful if one does not look upon the other as one whom one can indentify with, without relinquishing one's own identity - an alternative ego; or if one does not present oneself as an alternative ego to the other. This holds true whoever "you",

whoever "I" may be, as long as "you" is someone whom "I" can talk to and who can talk back, as long as the "you" is someone who could be the opposite number of the "I" in a dialogue - the writer or the reader, the speaker or the hearer. "You" and "I", being each an "I-You", ought to be reasonable - i.e., we ought to be reasonable.

2. The fundamental principle of morality

There are, then, at least two dialectical truths. The first is that you and I are rational creatures; the second that you and I ought to be reasonable. Because of the second, we can say not merely that we cannot reasonably deny the first, but also that we ought not to deny it. If these dialectical propositions are errors, they are irrefutable errors: there is no way for men qua rational creatures to find out what is wrong with them, just as there is no way for men qua rational creatures to cast doubt on their truth. The buck of nihilism stops here; non-tautological, yet irrefutable, these propositions are true sub specie rationis humanae. And that is all we should wish for, when doing philosophy.

As I have remarked already, these truths hold for every "I" and every "you", hence for every "I-You". But who is an I-You? The application of a concept is a distinct matter, and this is no place to go into the difficulties. Let us agree that, at least, every human being ought to respect himself or herself as the rational creature he or she is. But then it follows that every human being ought to have the opportunity to respect himself as a rational creature. As a matter of fact, being a rational creature is having the opportunity to respect one's rational nature, but as being a rational creature depends on the fulfilment of certain conditions, some of which can be affected by human action, and as one can be deprived of such opportunities without being deprived of one's rational nature, this implied norm means more

than that every human being ought to have a rational nature - it means that all human beings ought to respect not only their own, but also every other human being's rational nature. Every human being ought to take care not to destroy or impair any human being's opportunity to be reasonable (which is necessarily also an opportunity to be unreasonable).

This conclusion, that every human being ought to respect every human being, himself as well as others, as the rational creatures they all are, I call the fundamental principle of morality. It is fundamental in the logical sense: capable of serving as the axiom of morality - but it is not fundamental in the sense of dialectical reasoning, as we have seen. I call it a m o r - a l principle, not only because there are precedents, but also because the O u g h t of the fundamental principle is the absolute and unconditional Ought without which the rules of morality would not only be "words without the Sword", but arbitrary words as well.

Not wishing to go into the question of applying the dialectically established norms and their logical implications to the context of transitive actions, I cannot here dispel the misgivings the reader might have about the moral significance of these precepts of reason. But I can point out that no incongruence is involved in saying the moral is the reasonable, the moral life the intelligent life. The moral point of view is not just another point of view, different from, but otherwise on a par with, say, the point of view of the individual egoist or of the national security zealot.

It has been said that the question "Why should I be moral?" is not self-answering when the 'should' which occurs in it is not taken "in the moral sense"; that, in that case, it is a request for a r e a s o n (not a motive) why one should adopt the moral point of view rather than any other. But in that case

one has already "adopted" the point of view that one ought to be reasonable, and hence has already committed oneself to everything that is implied by it - including the norm that one ought to respect every rational creature's rational nature. The failure to notice the existence of dialectical truths in the realm of the Is as well as of the Ought does not imply the non-existence of these truths or of the connexion between reason and morality.

One important consequence of our arguments should be pointed out: it is quite possible to fail to respect oneself as a rational creature without failing to respect any other rational creature as such, but it is not possible to fail to respect another without failing to respect oneself. This is so because by failing to respect another as a rational creature one acts against the moral Ought, and to act against the moral Ought is to fail to respect oneself as a rational creature: the moral Ought is not an arbitrary, conditional Ought - or rather, if it is conditional, it is conditional only on the existence of rational creatures.

Lack of space forbids me to discuss some of the implications of the existence of non-tautological but non-falsifiable dialectical truths, especially for the methodology of the sciences of human action.¹ I will conclude this short reminder of the fact that the two propositions which have played such an outstanding role in the shaping of Western philosophy are still valid starting-points, with a short discussion of the logic of common morality.

3. A dialogical approach to the logic of common morality

I shall adopt a Lorenzen-Lorenz dialogical approach to the logic of common morality. Such an approach is not only, in some sense, the most "natural"; it is also, in view of my preceding discussion, the most fitting. Let me first introduce the following formulae:

- F1) $fxy =:$ x fails to respect y as a rational creature
- F2) $fxy/dx\alpha =:$ by doing α , x would fail to respect y qua rational creature.²
- F3) $Pdx\alpha =:$ it is (morally) permissible that x does α
- F4) $Fdx\alpha =:$ it is (morally) impermissible that x does α
- F5) $Odx\alpha =:$ it is (morally) obligatory that x does α
- F6) $Rdx\alpha =:$ x has the right to do α
- F7) $\bar{R}dx\alpha =:$ x does not have the right to do α
- F8) $Ddx\alpha =:$ x has a duty to do α

Assuming that "failing to respect someone as the rational creature he or she is" is not an incoherent concept, we may adopt the following attack-defence rules:

| | A | | B | | A |
|------------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|------------|-------|
| (1) ³ | fxy/fxy | :: | I give up | :: | |
| (2) ⁴ | $fxz/-fxy$ | :: | I win | :: | |
| (3) | $fxy/dx\alpha$ | ::: ::: | ? $dx\alpha$ | ::: ::: | fxy |

The third rule stipulates that there are two ways to challenge a statement of the form F1: the challenger may choose whether he wants the other to explain just how doing α would amount to failing to respect another as a rational creature, or whether he will try to disprove the other's thesis in the particular case under discussion.

In view of my previous remark that it is impossible to fail to respect oneself when one is not respecting another, the following should also be accepted as a Win-position for the Logical Validity Proponent in a Lorenzen-Lorenz dialogue:

- (4) $fxy \quad :: \quad fxx$

Let me now turn to the deontic modalities P and R : obviously, in order to challenge the thesis that some action is morally permissible, it is sufficient to show that, by doing that action, one would fail to respect at least one person or rational creature qua rational creature. Thus we have:

$$(5) \quad Pdx\alpha \quad :: \quad fxa/dx\alpha \quad ::$$

If the challenger succeeds in defending $fxa/dx\alpha$, he has established that doing α is morally impermissible for x . But he has not established that x has no right to do α .

$$(6) \quad Rdx\alpha \quad :: \quad fxa/dx\alpha \quad :: \quad x = a$$

It is morally impermissible to fail to respect oneself as a rational creature, but that cannot mean that one does not have the right to do that. (Remember that to have the opportunity to respect oneself is also to have the opportunity not to respect oneself, and that we ought to respect every other person's opportunity to make his own choices.) Here the challenger has to show that the actor fails to respect a n o t h e r person.

The other rules need even less comment

$$(7) \quad Fdx\alpha \quad :: \quad Pdx\alpha \quad ::$$

$$(8) \quad \bar{R}dx\alpha \quad :: \quad Rdx\alpha \quad ::$$

$$(9) \quad Odx\alpha \quad \begin{matrix} \vdots \\ \vdots \\ \vdots \end{matrix} \quad \begin{matrix} Fdx\alpha \\ Pdx\alpha \end{matrix} \quad \begin{matrix} \vdots \\ \vdots \\ \vdots \end{matrix}$$

$$(10) \quad Dax\alpha \quad \begin{matrix} \vdots \\ \vdots \\ \vdots \end{matrix} \quad \begin{matrix} \bar{R}dx\alpha \\ Rdx\alpha \end{matrix} \quad \begin{matrix} \vdots \\ \vdots \\ \vdots \end{matrix}$$

A Lorenzen-Lorenz Proponent should be able to defend the following initial positions against all attack-strategies; for all x and y ,

- (i) $Ffxy$ (and $O-fxy$)
- (ii) $Ffxx$ (and $O-fxx$)

i.e. an LLP should be able to defend the fundamental principle of morality.

$$(iii) \quad Pdx\alpha \equiv \sim(\exists y)(fxy/dx\alpha)$$

$$(iv) \quad Rdx\alpha \equiv \sim(\exists y)(y \neq x \ \& \ fxy/dx\alpha)$$

$$(v) \quad Pdx\alpha \equiv \sim Fdx\alpha$$

$$(vi) \quad Rdx\alpha \equiv \sim \bar{R}dx$$

$$(vii) \quad Odx\alpha \equiv (\exists y)(fxy/\sim dx\alpha) \ \& \ \sim(\exists y)(fxy/dx\alpha)$$

$$(viii) \quad Ddx\alpha \equiv (\exists y)(fxy/\sim dx\alpha \ \& \ x \neq y) \ \& \ \sim(\exists y)(fxy/dx\alpha \ \& \ x \neq y)$$

$$(ix) \quad Odx\alpha \rightarrow F\sim dx\alpha$$

$$(x) \quad Pdx\alpha \rightarrow Rdx\alpha$$

$$(xi) \quad Ddx\alpha \rightarrow Odx\alpha$$

$$(xii) \quad Odx\alpha \rightarrow Pdx\alpha$$

$$(xiii) \quad Ddx\alpha \rightarrow Rdx\alpha$$

Notice that we do not have as defensible initial positions:

$$(xiv)* \quad Pdx\alpha \vee P\sim dx\alpha$$

i.e. moral perplexity is not ruled out, and

$$(xv)* \quad Fdx\alpha \rightarrow P\sim dx\alpha$$

The consistency of a normative system does not imply that a person should never find himself perplexed: it may be morally impermissible to do a given action and morally impermissible not to do it. As Donagan, following Aquinas, notes: "A moral system is inconsistent only if it allows the possibility that, without any wrongdoing on his part, a man may find himself in a situation in which he can only escape doing one wrong by doing another: that is only if it allows the possibility of perplexity *s i m p l i c i t e r* [as opposed to perplexity *s e c u n d u m q u i d*]." ⁵Let us introduce the predicator "...is morally irreproachable", to be used with respect to persons according to the following attack-defence rule:

$$(11) \quad Mx \quad :: \quad fxa \quad ::$$

then we do have, not only that $Mx \equiv \sim(\exists y) fxy$, but also the following

$$(xiv) \quad Mx \rightarrow (Pdx\alpha \vee P\sim dx\alpha)$$

and

$$(xv) \quad Mx \rightarrow (Fdx\alpha \rightarrow P\sim dx\alpha)$$

so that the morally irreproachable person need not ever be morally perplexed. Also, of course

$$(xvii) \quad (Fdx\alpha \ \& \ dx\alpha) \rightarrow \sim Mx$$

In direct analogy to (11) we may formulate the following:

$$(12) \quad Lx \quad :: \quad fxa \quad :: \quad x = a$$

with "...is law-abiding" (or some other appropriate formula) for "L..."

NOTES

- (1) Cf. F. van Dun, "Het epistemologisch statuut van de wetenschappen van het menselijk handelen" (The epistemological status of the sciences of human action) in Tijdschrift voor Sociale Wetenschappen 24, 2, 1979, pp.181-192.
- (2) Or: "if x would do α , he would fail to respect y qua rational creature". I shall not go into the matter of defining the adequate attack-defense rules for conditional statements of the form p/q (if q would be true, p would be true) since that would take me too far afield. For my purpose the attack-defence rules numbered (1), (2) and (3) may suffice.
- (3) I.e., if A states that x , by failing to respect y , would fail to respect y , and his opponent B has no other alternative except to challenge A 's last statement, B has to concede defeat. Given an adequate attack-defence rule for statements of the form p/q , this rule would obviously be redundant.
- (4) I.e., if A can be forced to state that x , by not failing to respect y , would fail to respect some rational creature z , his opponent B may claim victory. The rationale for this rule is that, on the assumption that the system of common morality is coherent, it is impossible that the mere fact that x does not fail to respect y should be adduced as a reason for explaining why he fails to respect someone else. Note that this implies that our formulae should be taken to refer to the action a s d e s c r i b e d. Clearly, my shooting M may be described (rather implausibly) as my not failing to respect M - but that it can be so described does not make it morally permissible. An action is morally impermissible iff there is one true description of it under which it is impermissible.
- (5) Alan Donagan, The Theory of Morality. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 1977, p.145.