Introduction

This is my reflection on the answers provided to us by Dr. Ben-Sachs for our preliminary questions in preparation for one key deliverable of the ADAB project, namely the White Paper on *ethical conduct in argumentative engagements*. As our goal is to make public the exchange between respected scholars/practitioners and the ADAB project, I start with an introductory note on Munāẓara. This is followed by a glimpse into the Ethics Cup/Bowl, its history; procedure, and overall machinery.

In my reflections, I will elaborate on the commonalities and divergences between the Ethics Cup/Bowl and the Munāẓara model [MEM] we imagine. Commonalities include the critique of contemporary dominant models, the emphasis on rewarding virtuous behavior, and the encouragement of cooperation over adversity. Despite their commonalities, both models diverge in what they understand from virtuous behavior; cooperation, and adversality. I will make use of Stevens and Cohen (2020) to discuss the different stances between the two models. Also, in the way we imagine the Munāẓara-debate (what we call the Munāẓara Engegament Model), instead of teams with many members, the Munāẓara debate will be a dialogical, one-to-one debate. Lastly, the ADAB project believes in the interdependence between the act and the agent when it comes to the norms of debating. Therefore, we understand respecting strict turn-taking rules as both an act-based and agent-based consideration (for more on the issue, see Oruç, Üzelgün, and Sadek, 2023). This is because we hold that respecting strict turn-taking rules allows habituating certain virtues such as open-mindedness and sincerity. I will finish my response with a proposal for further collaboration with the Ethics Cup and Dr. Ben-Sachs Cobbe. The proposal involves a project between two parties and their students.

An introductory note on Munāẓara

Ādāb al-Baḥth wa-l Munāẓara is an argumentation theory and debate practice that emerged at the end of the 13th century. Its literary translation would be "manners of inquiry and argumentation" (Oruç 2022) or "protocols for dialectical inquiry and disputation" (Young 2022). Munāẓara was (Kızılkaya 2021) and remains among the instrumental disciplines one must master in their journey to knowledge and virtue. The overall goal in Munāẓara is the manifestation of truth (*iẓhār al-ḥaqq*) (Gelenbevī 1934, p. 32; Āmidī 1900, p.6). To that end, inquirers come up with claims and arguments that justify those claims. Simultaneously,

argumentation refers to an inquiry between two parties, namely the proponent and the opponent[1]. The proponent must argue for her claim while the opponent tests whether

A) the premises are acceptable;

B) the argument is free from any deficiencies, and

C) the claim can sustain in the face of a counter-argument (Oruç, Üzelgün, and Sadek 2023).

It should be noted, however, both parties engage not only in arguments but arguing. In fact, any move ranging from asking clarification for a term to the objection of a premise is detailed in the procedure. The opponent has a right to object to a premise simply by saying "I do not grant your premise". While doing so she does not come up with an argument by herself. In a nutshell, not just arguments but arguing itself is the unit of analysis for Munāẓara and it is a procedural, truth-seeking dialogical encounter between two parties.

In our paper with Dr. Mehmet Ali Üzelgün and Dr. Karim Sadek (2023) drawing inspiration from van Laar and Krabbe's work (2011; 2013), we located three types of critical moves, e.g., objection (*manʿ*), refutation (*naqḍ*), and counter-argument (*muʿāraḍa*). These critical moves signify that

A) Unless incontrovertible a premise needs defense – the domain of objection

B) The argument can not be flawed or fallacious - the domain of refutation

and

C) The argument should withstand opposing arguments,- the domain of counter-arguments.

In Munāẓara ādāb refers not only to the observation of logical and dialectical norms; but also to the praiseworthy norms of conduct and the ethical interactive behavior, as emanating from a virtuous arguer (al-Qarsī 2018, p. 35). The term Munāẓara is equivocally employed to refer to two meanings (al-Āmidī 1900, p. 8): The attribute of a proper arguer (*munāẓir*) and her act. It is the fluidity and even interdependence between the act and the agent that offers valuable insights for a new contemporary debating alternative.

About the Ethics Cup/Bowl and Dr. Ben-Sachs Cobbe,

It was thanks to an emailing list that we learned about the Ethics Cup. Dr. Ben-Sachs was introducing the Ethics Cup as such:

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[1] I believe that the claimant and respondent are better translations, but to avoid any confusion, I use the proponent and the opponent for the time being.

> The Ethics Cup is a tournament in which teams of students match wits with each other in discussing pertinent ethical issues. It's not a traditional debating tournament, and matches aren't won by overwhelming the opposing team. Rather, it's a collaborative effort in which the judges reward sincerity, insightfulness, and the display of central civic virtues such as open-mindedness.

Those knowledgeable about the ADAB project will understand why the Ethics Cup/Bowl is important for us.

The Ethics Cup is an exciting design endeavor in that the participants are invited to an alternative take on arguing/debating. The fact that there is a new design, where "the matches aren't won by the overwhelming opposition team" is in line with our critique of contemporary debating models. We also believe that conceiving the debate as a sport in which parties aim to win over each other distracts the participants from analytical competence and virtuous interaction. Furthermore, we also share the idea that what should be rewarded is "sincerity, insightfulness and the display of central civic virtues such as open-mindedness" The camaraderie between the Ethics Cup and the ADAB project made us get in contact with Dr. Ben-Sachs. He was kind enough to accept our invitation to take part in the Expert Consultation Sessions.

Dr. Ben Sachs-Cobbe organizes the Ethics Cup in St. Andrews. The Cup is modeled after the National High School Ethics Bowl, and it first ran in 2018 under the name "The John Stuart Mill Cup." The Cup has run each year since, with the exception of 2020, and it was renamed "The Ethics Cup" in the fall of 2021. The Ethics Cup is a project of the Centre for Ethics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs, a research center within the Department of Philosophy at the University of St. Andrews. The Cup provides a forum for high school students to engage in ethical debate and encourages the development of critical thinking skills and ethical reasoning. Dr. Sachs-Cobbe, originally from San Diego, California, earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin. Before joining St. Andrews, he held positions as an Assistant Professor/Faculty Fellow at New York University's Program in Environmental Studies and Department of Bioethics and as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the National Institutes of Health (U.S.). At St. Andrews, he teaches classes on subjects such as ethics, political philosophy, and animal ethics. In collaboration with Alex Douglas, Dr. Sachs-Cobbe is currently working on an AHRC-funded project titled "The Future of Work and Income," which focuses on the challenges of the future of work, such as automation and economic inequality, aiming to clarify ethical questions and enable productive discussions on potential solutions. His last book (2021),

entitled *Contractarianism, Role Obligations, and Political Morality* is published by Routledge.

Dr. Sachs-Cobbe's expertise in organizing the Ethics Cup provided valuable insights and perspectives for the ADAB Project team as they developed their own debating format based on the Munāẓara theory and practice. The Ethics Cup's emphasis on ethical reasoning and constructive debate aligns with the ADAB Project's values and goals, making Dr. Sachs-Cobbe's expertise a valuable asset to the project.

The Ethics Cup Procedure

The Ethics Cup procedure is quite similar to the National High Schools Ethics Bowl, which, in turn, is based on the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl. In this subsection, I summarize the Ethics Cup procedure. The rules and regulations of Ethics Bowl tournaments may differ across regions; nonetheless, there is a standardized format that is typically followed in individual rounds (Ladenson 2018). Prior to the competition, participating teams, judges, and moderators are provided with a packet of case studies presenting ethical issues that are to be studied, usually four to six weeks prior to the event. Teams are required to conduct thorough research on the cases and develop well-constructed, logical responses to questions pertaining to the cases.

The Ethics Cup begins with a coin toss to decide which team will present their arguments first (Team A) or if they prefer the other team to present first (Team B). The moderator displays a case that is unknown to both the judges and the teams beforehand. The moderator, then, introduces the case by stating its title and reading out the accompanying questions. Team A has two minutes to discuss while Team B must remain silent. Team A then has up to six minutes to present their arguments with any member(s) allowed to speak. Team B has one minute to discuss their approach to the presented arguments, followed by up to three minutes of commenting on Team A's presentation with any member(s) allowed to speak. After that, Team A has one minute to confer and three minutes to respond to Team B's comments with any member(s) allowed to speak. Judges have up to 10 minutes to engage in a dialogue with Team A, and if desired, 30 seconds of confer time. Judges assess and score Team A's presentation, response, and dialogue, as well as Team B's commentary. In the second half of the match, steps 2 through 11 are repeated with a new case, and the teams reverse positions.

Much like the ADAB project, the Ethics Cup aims to teach virtues in a creative way. In his response, Dr. Ben-Sach writes:

> The Ethics Cup inculcates virtues such as sincerity and truthfulness by allowing the competing teams to argue for the perspective on each issue that they actually believe. As to the other virtues it inculcates, such as civility, tolerance, and intellectual humility, it does so by requiring the judges to score the competing teams based on whether their contributions to the debate embody those virtues.

To achieve the inculcation of virtues, the Ethics Cup specifically alerts its participants that it is virtuous behavior that determines the winner. This is a strategy that we also plan to employ. Now, considering these goals we converge, it seems there is a lot to learn from the Ethics Cup/Bowl. Let's see where the ADAB project and Ethics Cup diverge.

Where do the two models part away?

In the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl tournament, and thus Ethics Bowl/Cup, the presenting and commenting teams are not obliged to take a definitive pro or con position on the ethical issue presented to them. Rather, the teams are expected to carefully and thoughtfully examine the nuances and complexities of the case and to provide well-supported arguments in relation to the issue. It is important to note that the teams are not assigned adversarial roles as they do not present and comment on the same case study and question. However, some have criticized the competitive aspect of Ethics Bowl tournaments, as they are ultimately a form of competition. For instance, some argue that the competitive nature of the tournament can be overly intense (Ladenson, 2018)

For the ADAB project and its Munāẓara Engagement Model, we believe that adversality is one key component of virtue education. We asked Dr. Ben-Sachs whether two teams presenting different issues aim to mitigate conflict. In his response, he writes:

> Ideally, yes. However, sometimes a team will use the Commentary period to present its own position on the same issue instead of commenting on the other team's position on the issue. If a judge notices that a team is doing this, then the judge should penalize the team.

In its attempt to mitigate conflict, the Ethics Cup/Bowl, we believe, misses a vital component of virtue education. However, this is just a conjecture and an intuition that requires further research.

Adversality in Argumentation

Adversality and cooperation have garnered an awful lot of studies. I believe, among them, Stevens and Cohen (2020) offer the most comprehensive distinctions between different forms of adversality. Above I implied that adversality is central to argumentation; but what do we mean by adversality. This is exactly the question Stevens and Cohen aim to answer. Accordingly, they differentiate between four types of adversality: Adversarial behavior, adversarial function, adversarial stance, adversarial function, and adversarial effect.

The first type, adversarial behavior, involves arguers who focus on achieving victory, often at the expense of other objectives, such as truth-seeking or resolving disagreements. These individuals use arguments as a means to obtain personal benefits, primarily by persuading others that their stance is accurate or their proposed solutions are optimal. The second type, adopting an adversarial stance, is characterized by individuals assuming roles that inherently place them in opposition to one another, as seen in fields like law, politics, and debates. Those who adopt this position conform to norms associated with these oppositional roles, typically by either advocating for a predetermined side or countering the side defended by their counterpart. The third type, performing an adversarial function in an argument, involves the process of pitting ideas against each other by posing and responding to queries, objections, and critiques. Lastly, the fourth type, persuasive-adversarial effects, pertains to the intrinsic adversarial nature of argumentation due to its influence on altering beliefs. Given that beliefs are not entirely under our voluntary control, arguments can inadvertently lead to changes in belief, regardless of whether we desire such changes or not.

In an effort to minimize undesirable adversarial behavior, the Ethics Cup model appears to constrain both the argumentative stance and function. In contrast, the Munāẓara-Engagement Model retains these aspects, maintaining the "proponent/protagonist" and "opponent/antagonist" dyad. Additionally, this model encourages antagonists to rigorously scrutinize the positions of protagonists through the use of objections, refutations, and counter-arguments. By preserving these elements, the Munāẓara-Engagement Model aims to foster a more dynamic and interactive form of debate that emphasizes critical examination and discourse between opposing parties.

Conclusion

Both the Ethics Cup model and the Munāẓara Engagement Model (MEM) share notable commonalities, such as critiquing prevailing debate models, prioritizing virtuous behavior,

and fostering cooperation over adversariality. Despite these shared values, the two models diverge in their understanding of virtuous behavior, cooperation, and adversariality, as well as their structure, with the MEM focusing on one-to-one dialogical debates. Given these shared objectives and differing approaches, a collaborative research project between the Ethics Cup and the Munāẓara Engagement Model could provide valuable insights into their respective contributions to human flourishing. This qualitative study would involve both parties and their students, exploring the impact of the different models on fostering virtuous behavior and cooperative learning. Through this collaborative effort, researchers and educators can better understand the nuances of these two debate models and identify strategies to further enhance their effectiveness in promoting human flourishing and ethical discourse in academic settings.

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