

**Towards a Munāzara-Inspired  
Ethical Argumentation and Debate Model**

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## Preface

This paper constitutes the fifth Output of *Adab in Dialogue: Developing Argumentative Virtues in a Divided World* (ADAB), a [John Templeton Foundation](#) funded project conducted at the [Munazara and Argumentation Ethics Research Center](#). ADAB seeks to offer a theoretically grounded and practically feasible alternative to the widespread competitive, adversarial and sometimes applause-driven debate models. The hope is to inspire and help train cooperative arguers befitting a contemporary world marked by polarizing, extremist and exclusionary discourse. To that end, ADAB revisits the seven-centuries old Islamic discipline that synthesized Muslim spiritual ethics and Aristotelian analytics: *Ādāb al-Baḥṭh w al-Munāzara*, the manners of inquiry and argumentation. ADAB builds on *munāzara*'s emphasis on the virtues and the manners of debate to put forward the *Munāzara Engagement Model* (MEM), which invites critical evaluations while being conducive to respectful and egalitarian cooperation between contending parties. The aim of this paper is to lay out the theoretical grounds for MEM, which constitutes the central intervention ADAB makes with regard to the relationship between argumentation and ethics generally, and virtuous argumentative practice more specifically. MEM also serves as the blueprint for a Preliminary Protocol designed for structured debate practices. The paper draws on several resources of the ADAB project. These include a series of [expert consultations](#); knowledge accumulated through the [translation of three munāzara manuscripts](#); the [Position Paper](#) on debate practices; reflections gathered in ADAB's *International Symposium on Argumentation and Debate: Traditional Munāzara and Contemporary Practices* (19-21 January 2023).

## Introduction

Our driving motivation in this paper is to establish the important role of ethics in the *theory* and *practice* of argumentation. We consider argumentation to be an essential medium for adequately formulating and addressing personal or collective disagreement, and we construe it broadly as an activity between two or more people involving, in the least, an exchange of reasons, where 'reasons' refer to considerations and factors that count in favor of, or against, holding a certain belief, doing a certain action, or developing a certain attitude (see Lewiński & Mohammed, 2016; van Eemeren et al., 2013).<sup>1</sup> Our hope is to make a contribution in remedying what seems to be an increasing distrust in argumentation amidst its misuses in discourses of polarization, extremism and exclusion.

The paper is divided into two parts. Part I seeks to establish a place for ethical considerations in the landscape of argumentative norms. In so doing, the paper takes an initial but firm step towards the theoretical integration of ethics and argumentation. The primary, though not only, audience of Part I is contemporary argumentation theorists generally, and those working on argument assessment more specifically. In Part II we shift gears to focus on the practice of argumentation in a particular sphere of communication: intervarsity competitive debate. Part II draws the implications of Part I's integration of ethics and argumentation on debate practice, and spells out the practical foundations for training cooperative arguers befitting the contemporary

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<sup>1</sup> The use of 'argument' and 'argumentation' in reference to, say, a couple fighting or to a single individual reasoning with herself are, thus, excluded.

world.<sup>2</sup> The primary, though not only, audience of Part II is debate practitioners, judges, and coaches.

Inspired by and drawing on the seven-centuries old Islamic discipline that synthesizes Muslim spiritual ethics and Aristotelian analytics, *Ādāb al-Baḥth w al-Munāzara* (the manners of inquiry and argumentation), the paper puts forward a *Munāzara Engagement Model* (MEM) as a theoretically grounded and practically feasible alternative to intervarsity competitive debate. MEM is intended to encourage and facilitate constructive rather than divisive critical encounters among contending parties. Instead of trying to overwhelm one's opponent and consequently reducing the critical discussion to a series of rebuttals, our remedial proposal encourages cooperative yet confrontational encounters – ones that enlarge critical discussion to acknowledge and assert the contributions of the “opposition” while simultaneously challenging it. MEM constitutes ADAB's input on the relationship between ethics and argumentation, and serves as the blueprint for a Preliminary Protocol specifically designed for intervarsity debate practice.

Before delving into the body of the paper, it would be helpful to identify the specific locus of our *munāzara*-inspired contribution to the relationship between ethics and argumentation. The predominant normative assessment of argumentation in modern argumentation theories relies either on norms of reasoning (the soundness and validity of arguments), or on norms of discussion (the rationality of the argumentative procedure), or on norms of persuasiveness (a balance of ethos, pathos, and logos given a certain purpose). Neither of these norms, however, makes a direct and explicit reference to ethical obligations, dispositions, or intentions. With the recent normative turn to virtue and the rise of virtue argumentation theory (Aberdein and Cohen 2016),<sup>3</sup> the picture is starting to change. Virtue argumentation gives priority to agential-norms over other argumentative norms, and the dispositions and skills of arguers take the center stage. Although our *munāzara*-inspired contribution has a close affinity with virtue argumentation, it does not exactly fit the terms within which the latter is discussed in the literature. While the tools we extract from the *munāzara* tradition bolster virtue argumentation theory, they simultaneously undermine one of its pillar commitments; namely, the priority of agent-based norms over act-based norms. In any case and for the most part, contemporary argumentation theory distances argumentative norms from considerations such as ethical obligations, dispositions, and intentions. It is not our intention to undermine the connections some argumentation theorists make between ethics and argumentation nor, for that matter, the ethical justifications and benefits of debating. Our claim, instead, is that an investigation into the *munāzara* tradition will bring forth peculiar ethical considerations that the theory of argumentation and the practice of debate have yet to consider and adequately account for.

To make explicit the nature of such ethical considerations, let us take a quick look at the complex and multiple ways in which ethics relates to argumentation: The subject matter of an argumentation might be an ethical issue, say whether abortion should be legal; the motivation of an arguer could be ethical or not, such as when one argues in bad faith with the intention to deceive or manipulate; argumentation could affect human well-being, for instance, the

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<sup>2</sup> While argumentation is present in various spheres of human communication, for considerations of time and space, the paper only addresses competitive debating. With that said, ADAB believes that this paper's tools and lessons can be tweaked, adapted or upgraded to other communicative spheres.

<sup>3</sup> See Aberdein 2014 for a bibliography of works on virtue and argumentation.

consequences of an argumentation could be detrimental or beneficial to one's psychology or that of others, and under certain circumstances some types of arguments can be propagandist or lead to anti-pluralist forms of populism (Müller 2017; Mounk 2018). Other than the subject matter of an argumentation, motivation of an arguer, and the consequences of an argumentation, sometimes the argumentative engagement itself is ethical. Consider how the giving and asking for reasons could promote inclusion and individual autonomy or equality among participants (Habermas 1996, 1990); or how a speaker's epistemic credibility might be affected by power relations (Fricker 2007). We can add to the list empirical studies that show how certain conditions, personal or institutional, can have an effect on how arguments unfold or on our ability to reason. For example: that group diversity impacts polarization (Sunstein 2000), or that bias and heuristics can adversely affect our ability for rational inference (Evans 2004; Mercier and Sperber 2011). Finally, the various ways that ethics relates to argumentation could overlap, pull in opposite directions, strengthen or undermine one another.

That ethics and argumentation are related and that their relations can be complex and entangled should come as no surprise. After all, the exchange of reasons is a crucial component of our communication, and ethics pervades the personal, social, legal, and political spheres where communication is indispensable. The paper, to be sure, won't be able to address the relationship between ethics and argumentation in all its complexity. The good news, however, is that we do not need to do so because we are primarily interested in *how arguers could behave in argumentative encounters in more or less ethical ways*. That is, in order for us to introduce and discuss the contributions of munāzara to argumentation theory and their implications on debate practice, it is sufficient for us to approach the relationship between ethics and argumentation from the angle of participants' behavior generally, and their (un)ethical conduct specifically.

We believe that the term "ethical argumentation" captures best munāzara's ethical contributions, that is why we use it in the title instead of the more common term "ethics of argumentation." Ethical argumentation is concerned first and foremost with ethical considerations pertaining to *the dynamics of the interaction between arguers – the unfolding of each arguer's choices of critical moves vis-a-vis the choices of the other – as constitutive of the phenomenon of argumentation*. Accordingly, an adequate study of ethical argumentation cannot only look at whether and how the norms of reasoning, discussion, and persuasion relate to ethics. It must further look at participants' duties, obligations, and attitudes that get generated as participants encounter one another in an argumentative situation.

In what follows, we will show that MEM is characteristic in the particular way in which it embeds ethical considerations in its procedural rules. The paper will (1) extract munāzara-tools for the ethical conduct in argumentative encounters; (2) draw the outlines of a framework for applying these tools in competitive debate practice; and (3) suggest a Preliminary MEM Protocol as one instantiation of said framework. In the process, the paper will make explicit (a) the sort of theoretical contribution munāzara makes to the normative landscape of contemporary argumentation theory, as well as (b) how contemporary debate practice can benefit from operationalizing a more ethically oriented argumentation.

## Historical Snapshot

Although the origins of contemporary argumentation theory, *munāzara*, and competitive debate trace back to the dialectics of Plato and Aristotle (their resistance to the Sophists in particular), these disciplines are disconnected in modern scholarship (Jacobs 2020, Oruç 2022).

An enduring influence of the philosophical discourse of ancient Greece is evident in contemporary argumentation theory (Krabbe 2013). The relativistic nature of the Sophists' approach to truth and its associated pedagogical attitude, attracted powerful criticisms to salvage a robust conception of practical wisdom and objective truth. Most notably, Socrates ignited an intense intellectual debate that survives to this day (Blake 2023). In stark contrast to the Sophists, the Socratic philosophical method gives paramount importance to the pursuit of knowledge, rather than personal benefit, via cooperative argumentative dialogues. Plato (1969) built upon this Socratic commitment to posit truth-seeking as central to any philosophical practice, including that of debate and argumentation. Subsequently, Aristotle (1989; 2002) crafted syllogistic logic and contextualized dialectics in relation to logic and rhetoric. With Aristotle, the domain of truth gets bound to demonstrative logic, and dialectics becomes concerned with the rational defense of a given position (cf. refs to Lille people). In his *Topics*, Aristotle (2006) codified dialectical theory and practice, and in doing so lays the foundational cornerstone of contemporary argumentation theory.

Switching to the Islamic tradition, initially the Islamic sciences evolved independently of Greek philosophy. By the 14th century, however, when al-Samarqandī wrote the first epistle with the term *munāzara* in its title and where he incorporated Aristotelian theories into the existing scholarship on *jadal* (1934; 2014), ancient Greek thought was already being discussed, sometimes adopted and sometimes dismissed. Up to that point, *jadal* was primarily concerned with addressing juridical and theological problems faced by Muslim scholars. The influence of Greek philosophy on Muslim peripatetic philosophers, such as al-Fārābī (2012) and Ibn Sīnā (2008), had a strategic impact on the shift from *jadal* to the new discipline of *munāzara*. Early *jadal* scholars approached argumentation primarily as a truth-seeking endeavor, but with the contributions of Muslim peripatetic philosophers, there was a turn to an Aristotelian understanding of dialectics. On that understanding, syllogistic structure and the defense of argumentative positions supersede the pursuit of truth. That is, methodologically, the domain of truth-seeking was held to be Aristotelian analytics. Eventually, peripatetic philosophers came to hold that the content of syllogism is different in analytics than in dialectics. The content of the latter was “*endoxa*”, while that of the former was incontrovertible premises. Al-Samarqandī's innovative theory of *munāzara*, as offering a new grammar of argumentation, draws on the Muslim adaptation of Aristotelian analytics to invigorate truth-seeking beyond the juridical and theological scope and in a field-independent fashion. *Munāzara* was, thus, conceptualized as a dialogical syllogistic endeavor wherein parties aim at the manifestation of truth, justice, or reality (*iẓhār al-ḥaqq*) through ethical conduct.

Intersiversity debate is a much more recent phenomenon. In the 20th century, it was heavily influenced by and modeled on British Parliamentary and Policy Debate models. Often dubbed “academic debates,” those models acknowledge the participation of university students as well as the intellectual heritage of Plato's and Aristotle's Academy (Aikin 2011). Serving as some sort of a sport for the promotion of civic engagement and human flourishing, contemporary debates also embody a robust ethos of intellectual discourse and are often presented and defended in reference to ethical considerations. Contemporary debate practice is above all educational in that it emphasizes the potential benefit to debaters and the community at large.

Against this rough historical background, the historical depth of ADAB's suggested MEM as an alternative to competitive debate is made explicit. Spanning seven centuries of scholarly practice and hundreds of individual works (Oruç et. al. 2023), a *munāzara*-inspired debating model in conversation with contemporary argumentation theory, could breathe new life into debate practice.

## Part I: Theory

Part I establishes the theoretical ground upon which MEM, an alternative model for competitive intervarsity debate practice, stands. Section 1 presents the normative landscape of contemporary argumentation theory. Section 2 raises the challenge of integration for normative theories of argumentation. Section 3 puts forward a munāzara-inspired response to the challenge of integration and makes explicit its contribution to ethical argumentation. Part II draws the practical implications of munāzara's contribution to ethical argumentation on structured debate.

### 1. The normative landscape of contemporary argumentation theory

The publication of Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's *La Nouvelle Rhétorique*, in 1958 marked the "renaissance" of modern argumentation theories (Rigotti and Greco 2019, 131). Thirty two years later, Joseph W. Wenzel's 1990 seminal article "Three Perspectives on Argument: Rhetoric, Dialectic, Logic" synthesized a wide range of debates about argument to show that "[a]ll arguments can be regarded as rhetorical, dialectical, and logical phenomena" (Wenzel 1990, 9). The point is that rhetoric, dialogic, and logic do not represent different kinds of arguments but, instead, correspond to different points of view on one and the same thing: the phenomenon of argumentation. The rhetorical view looks at argumentation and sees a process through which persuasion occurs, the dialectical view looks at argumentation and sees procedure as a method of critical decisions and problem-solving, and the logical view looks at argumentation and sees "products people create when they argue" (Wenzel 1990, 9).<sup>4</sup> Naturally, when a certain perspective assesses an argument, its attention goes to the norms corresponding to what it sees when looking at argumentation. Thus, rhetoric focuses on norms of persuasiveness (process-based norms), dialectic on norms of critical discussion (procedure-based norms), and logic on norms of soundness and validity (product-based norms). In this sense, the goodness of argument is perspective-dependent. Although the different perspectives study the same phenomenon of argumentation, each approaches it from a particular angle that foregrounds certain features and, as a result, relegates other features to the background without necessarily denying them. In this way, perspectivism enables argumentation theorists to zoom in and out on the phenomenon of argumentation to better understand and evaluate it (Wenzel 1990, 10).

The relationship between process-, procedure-, and product-based norms is subject to disagreement in argumentation theory. With the turn to dialectics, the criteria of logic were deemed insufficient for normative theorizing. Building on the ambiguity between product and process in the case of fallacies – that fallacies could relate to the form or content of argument as product, or to the process of argumentation (van Eemeren 2015, 4) – pragma-dialectics developed an entire research program where argumentation is evaluated against the ideal of a critical discussion that determines the normative criteria for the rationality of the argumentative procedure. Formal logic's measurement of the goodness of argument on the basis of validity (form) and incontrovertibility of premises (content), can no more dominate argument assessment (van Eemeren 2009, 140; see also: Lewiński and Mohammed 2016). This shift from *argument as*

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<sup>4</sup> Argument as "product" refers to argument1, or the set of propositions made out of premises leading to a conclusion (O'Keefe 1977, Biro and Seigel 2006). Argument1 is contrasted with argument2, or the activity of arguing where products (argument1) are being traded.

*product to argument as procedure* has set in motion a remarkable and commendable expansion in the intellectual scope of argumentation studies.

Nevertheless, normative theorizing remained within the confines of process-, procedure-, and product-based norms, all of which belong to the *act of arguing*. Act-based norms, however, do not exhaust the normative landscape. With the more recent turn to virtue (Aberdein and Cohen 2016), the *agent of the argument* moved center stage in the understanding and evaluation of argumentation. Guided by the footsteps of virtue ethics and virtue epistemology (Aberdein 2020, 98), Cohen (2007) and Aberdein (2010) kick-started a still growing discussion on virtue argumentation theory. Virtue ethics and virtue epistemology explain, respectively, ethical features of actions and epistemic performance in terms of properties of the agent. Similarly, virtue argumentation answers the cogency question, “What makes an argument good?”, in terms of agential properties. Virtue argumentation theorists do not deny the presence and importance of act-based norms, but maintain that the direction of explanation goes *from* the agent *to* the act. Virtue argumentation theory is agent-based in the specific sense that it prioritizes the agent over the act of arguing – that is, the direction of analysis goes from the agent to the argument rather than the other way around. Thus, they reject defining the virtuous arguer in terms of the good argument, and instead define the good argument as the argument that the virtuous arguer (typically) makes (Cohen, 2008, Aberdein 2018). With the rise of virtue argumentation theory, there is increasing pressure to shift, once again, the focus of argumentation studies, this time the shift is from the act of arguing to the arguer. We will have more to say about virtue argumentation theory in the following two sections. For now we just want to note that contemporary argumentation theory operates within a rather strict dichotomy between agent- and act-based norms of argument assessment (Godden 2016), and it is common practice to prioritize one type of norms over the other (Bowell and Kingsbury 2013; Aberdein and Cohen 2016).

In sum: there are two main categories in the normative landscape of contemporary argumentation theory: agent- and act-based norms. The second of these is constituted by the trilogy of process-, procedure-, and product-based norms. With no one defending normative monism, we can say that contemporary argumentation theorists recognize the existence and legitimacy of different types of norms. They disagree, however, on the importance and role of different norms, their relationships, and whether some are more foundational than others. Such normative pluralism, as we shall argue in the following section, calls for an integration of the norms of argumentation.

## **2. The challenge of integration**

Although Wenzel’s perspectivism has been criticized (Blair 2012; Kock 2009; Johnson 2009), there is a sense in which some form of normative perspectivism remains operative behind the scene, so to speak. The indication for that is the fact that different argumentation theorists pursue their divergent interests in the assessment of argument without feeling that they are stepping on each other’s toes. This is especially the case with act-based norms where perspectivism seems to function as the meta-structure of normative debates, which in turn permits rhetoricians, dialecticians, and logicians to pass their perspectival judgments about the goodness of argument without discrediting the norms of other perspectives. When it comes to the separation between the act of arguing and the arguer, the division is more acute. To the extent that defenders of the virtue approach hold that virtue argumentation theory is a genuine alternative to existing theories



of argument assessment, they must give priority to the arguer over the act of arguing (Aberdein 2010; 2016). On the other hand, act-based theorists insist that whatever the role of the arguer is in the assessment of argument, it is ultimately cashed out in terms of argumentative norms pertaining to the act of arguing.<sup>5</sup>

Whether we are dealing with different act-based norms, or with the dichotomy between act- and agent-based norms, normative judgments in argumentation studies face a problem when different norms are not in agreement, i.e., when one norm deems an argument good while another deems that same argument bad. It is in cases of conflict between norms that disagreements about the relationships between these norms become explicit and should no longer be ignored (Oruç, *forthcoming*). Normative pluralism recognizes *multiple* and *legitimate* norms of argumentation each of which has *a particular normative weight* to be accounted for. Short of qualifying every normative judgment in cases where norms conflict with “according to *this* perspective or *that* norm,” normative pluralists should articulate the relationship between norms when assessing the phenomenon of argumentation as a whole and not merely an aspect of it.

One way for the pluralist to proceed is to reduce, explain, or make subordinate different argumentative norms to one fundamental norm. The challenge here would be to show that the fundamental norm in question can account for our practices of evaluating argumentation and that nothing of value has been lost in the process. We do not find this path attractive because it effectively dilutes normative pluralism to the point of rendering it merely decorative. The debate between virtue argumentation theorists and their critics is a case in point.

According to the defenders of the virtue approach to argumentation, if agent-based norms do not take priority over act-based norms, then virtue argumentation “would be merely ornamental” (Aberdein 2010, 170). That is, when the virtuous arguer is explained in terms of the goodness of the argument, such that the virtuous arguer is an arguer who is disposed to conduct argumentation with good arguments, virtue argumentation becomes a derivative of, and at best a complement to, traditional accounts of the good argument. Virtue argumentation, as currently presented in the literature, has a core commitment to the priority of agent-based norms over act-based norms.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, those who oppose the virtue approach, might very well appreciate the efforts of virtue theorists to define the virtuous arguer (Aberdein 2016, 2021), and to develop (Cohen 2005) and refine (Aberdein 2010, 2014) a taxonomy of the virtues and vices of the virtuous arguer, while insisting that none of this is sufficient. They could hold, for instance, that the virtuous arguer is at best an indicant of, a sign-post for, “evaluate *this* argument,” and claim that whatever “goodness” such evaluation might reveal will be due to features pertaining to the act of arguing without any reference to the arguer. As far as act-based theorists are concerned, there is no indication for thinking that the goodness of the argument of a virtuous arguer is not reducible to logical properties, procedural rules of an idealized critical discussion, or rhetorical processes. Their implicit demand is for an element that belongs to the act of arguing but is not reducible to act-based norms, and that is dependent on agential dispositions that are “overwhelmingly likely” (Aberdein 2018, 4) to manifest in good argument.

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<sup>5</sup> For more on this debate and our *munāzara*-inspired contribution to it, see Oruç, Sadek and Küçükural 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Virtue theorists, however, differ in what they consider to be the implications of that commitment on the need for, and features of, an argument assessment framework (Pagliery 2015; Oruç, Sadek and Küçükural 2023).

In short, while virtue theorists take agent-based norms to be fundamental, their critics take act-based norms to be fundamental. Irrespective of which side one takes in this debate, as long as one reduces, explains, or subordinates different argumentative norms to one fundamental norm, their claim of being normative pluralists is an empty claim – what is the significance of recognizing that agent-based (or act-based) norms have a role to play in argument assessment, while maintaining that such role is reducible to, or can be fully explained with, or is always trumped by, act-based (or agent-based) norms?

An alternative way for the normative pluralist to proceed is to maintain that argumentative norms coexist without holding that there is one fundamental norm. Such coexistence allows argumentation theorists to make use of norms whenever deemed appropriate. The worry here, however, is self-serving eclecticism – choosing, consciously or not, the norm that best suits our narrow interests when assessing arguments. The worry can be expressed in terms of the stability of this alternative. If we accept the coexistence of norms without spelling out the conditions for their independence and/or interaction, we might accidentally slip into privileging one norm over another on arbitrary or self-serving grounds. In short, normative pluralism cannot stop at asserting the coexistence of norms, it ought to do better than that. Over and above asserting the coexistence of argumentative norms, normative pluralism must *reflect upon and articulate the interconnections between coexisting norms*. This is the challenge of integration.

To recap: to the extent one is a genuine normative pluralist (i.e., they accept *multiple, irreducible, and nonimpotent* argumentative norms), they need to face the challenge of integration in order to avoid self-serving eclecticism and be able to pass evaluative judgments on the phenomenon of argumentation as a whole. If one were to ignore the challenge of integration, they should, at the least, abstain from assessing the phenomenon of argumentation whenever argumentative norms are in conflict. And if they, nonetheless, pass a judgment, they must be warned that their judgment inevitably expresses a particular way of integrating conflicting norms, albeit still unknown to them. Assessing arguments with conflicting norms without explicitly addressing the challenge of integration is a form of *evaluative short-sightedness* that the argumentation theorist must avoid.

### **3. A munāzara-inspired response to the challenge of integration**

Having laid out the normative landscape in contemporary argumentation theory and raised the challenge of integration, in this section we draw on the tradition of munāzara to make headway in meeting the challenge of integration. To fully and adequately meet this challenge requires developing a framework that spells out how different argumentative norms influence and interact with one another, and under which conditions one norm can silence or override another, and why. Our hope is to make progress on that front by introducing two argumentative norms that are based on two components of argumentation that munāzara scholars have discussed: “sequencing” (the ordering of arguers’ critical moves) and “derailments” (diversions from intended procedure). The key point is that a proper understanding of these components entails understanding the interdependence between procedure and agent. Thus, assessing argumentation using sequencing- and derailment-based norms, relies on criteria that integrate the agent and the procedure and transcend the strict dichotomy between act- and agent-based norms.

This is the longest and most substantial section. We will explicate our munāzara-inspired response to the challenge of integration in four steps: After some foundational clarifications (3.1), we give an executive summary of the interdependence between the arguer and the act of arguing (3.2). We then introduce sequencing- and derailment-based norms (3.3), and unpack munāzara's contribution to ethical argumentation (3.4).

### 3.1. Foundational clarifications

Munāzara's ultimate aim is *izhār al-ḥaqq* (Gelenbevī 1934, 37), the manifestation of truth or justice or reality – hereafter, manifestation of truth –, and relies upon a distinctive turn-taking regulatory procedure for the exchange of reasons that serves its aim. The most natural place to start developing a munāzara-inspired framework of integration is to conceive of the purpose of argumentation in terms of the manifestation of truth as munāzara scholars understood it. With that said, however, times have changed and our point of departure calls for some clarifications and qualifications.

Given that the understanding of truth in contemporary contexts is more heterogeneous and contested than ever before, we can no more rely on a shared concept of truth. However, rather than stop relying on the concept of truth altogether, we rely on it at the metatheoretical level of argument evaluation exclusively, and hence remove it from the level of the theory for evaluating argument. Let us explain. When the concept of truth is operative at the level of the “theory of evaluation,” it would be one among other criteria for evaluating arguments, and would for instance serve as a requirement for the adequacy of arguments' premises. This is not the level where we place “truth” when talking about the “manifestation of truth” as the goal of argumentation. On the level of the “theory of evaluation”, and as far as the adequacy of premises is concerned, we would rather think in terms of “acceptability” – that is, the requirement for the adequacy or premises is that it must be rational for the relevant parties to accept the premises of the arguments being exchanged (Bondy 2010). On the other hand, when the concept of truth is operative at the “metatheory” level of argument evaluation, it serves as the purpose that different criteria for evaluating arguments are guided by and expected to satisfy (Bondy 2010).<sup>7</sup>

It is not “truth” as such, however, that is the purpose of evaluative criteria. Rather, it is the *manifestation* of truth. This emphasis on the “manifestation” element in “the manifestation of truth” is intended to direct our attention towards the *dynamics of interaction between arguers* – how munāzara's procedural constraints and recommendations make possible and facilitate the manifestation of truth. The “manifestation of truth” as the purpose of argumentation implies, first, orienting our focus away from the exploration of the nature of truth and its constraints on arguments as products, and, second, towards the *seeking* of true knowledge and the methods we need to employ in order to test and acquire such knowledge. In redirecting our focus from truth to *truth-seeking*, we take our lead from munāzara scholars' recognition that mastering logic and producing cogent arguments is neither the only nor the most important consideration for the manifestation of truth. This explains those scholars' reliance on a strict dialogical procedure that regulates the critical moves of contending parties at different junctures of an argumentative

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<sup>7</sup> That is how Bondy puts it: “By ‘theory of evaluation’ I mean the set of criteria that a theory provides us with for evaluating arguments. By ‘the metatheory’ in terms of which the theory of evaluation is worked out, I mean the broader theory of argument, including reference to what it is that the criteria for argument evaluation are supposed to accomplish, in which the theory of evaluation is articulated.” (2010, ft. 3)

encounter (Tāshkubrīzāda 2012, 7; see also Taia and Oruç 2021); a procedure that was designed to assist parties in how they approach and carry out argumentation as a joint endeavor towards a common goal. In short, the manifestation of truth requires cooperative interaction, and cooperation, broadly construed, is the overarching *value* of argumentation (see Stevens and Cohen 2019).<sup>8</sup> The words of Gelenbevī, the Ottoman mathematician, logician, and theologian are most fitting here: in the process of argumentation “it is not important through whose voice truth manifests” (1934, p. 33).

Furthermore, and in line with the requirement for cooperative interaction, the manifestation of truth calls for a shift from “arguments” to “what arguers *do* with arguments” in the study of argumentation.<sup>9</sup> Discussions among munāzara scholars included topics such as *when* should an arguer (protagonist or antagonist) deploy *which* of the various legitimate moves at her disposal, and what sort of behavior counts as a *violation of good argumentative conduct*. In such discussions, the unit of analysis was not individual arguments as a logician would have it, but arguers’ steps, tactics and ploys; in short, argumentative moves (al-Āmidī 1900, p. 7). Consequently, arguers were required to abide by a strict turn-taking that regulates their moves at different junctures of the argumentative encounter, and were blamed for breaching certain procedural rules.

Thus, munāzara procedure is move-based, and the regulation of moves was in the service of the manifestation of truth. To illustrate, and lay the grounds for what follows, consider the role of the antagonist. Scholars have designated three *types* of legitimate responses available to the antagonist in her encounter with the protagonist. Each of these types of moves questions the merits of a different aspect of the protagonist’s argument and, hence, are *critical* moves. The antagonist’s legitimate moves are: objection (checks the acceptability of premises in the protagonist’s argument), refutation (examines the validity of the protagonist’s argument), and counter-argument (challenges the sufficiency of the protagonist’s argument for the claim she is defending). Scholars, as we will see in 3.2, disagreed on the way in which an antagonist should sequence her critical moves in order to best assist in the manifestation of truth.

Finally, the requirement of cooperative interaction and its associated regulatory move-based procedure have implications on the *sort of agent* that is fit to be counted as a practitioner of munāzara; to be a munāzir or arguer. The “arguer” is neither a “quarreler” (mujādil) nor a “power-flexor” (munāzi’). Arguers, unlike quarellers and power-flexors, are committed to the manifestation of truth and, thus, value cooperation and strive to align their behavior with the demands of such commitment. Quarrelers, on the other hand, aim to silence their opponents with fallacious but effective reasoning, deceptive tricks, and disingenuous conduct. Similarly, the power-flexors’ goal of showing and projecting dominance avails them of moves, tactics, and maneuvers prohibited for arguers (al-Jaupūrī 2006, 17). To be an arguer requires the intention, willingness, and competence to value and abide by procedural constraints for the sake of

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<sup>8</sup> We say “broadly construed” because cooperation here supports several interpretations including adversarial-cooperation. Although we say more about this below, we won’t be able to elaborate on it. For more details please see Oruç, Üzelgün, and Sadek 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Note the subtle difference in emphasis between the shift from the “act of arguing” to the “agent of the argument”, on the one hand, and the shift from “arguments” to “what arguers do with arguments,” on the other hand. Both are agential (from the act to the agent) but the second is more explicitly specific in its reference to the actions of the agent, which as we shall see is directly and inextricably related to the dispositions of the agent.

manifesting the truth; it requires participants to develop the dispositions (*malaka*) of being a *munāzir*.

### 3.2. *Interdependence of agent and procedure*

Although *munāzara* scholars were in agreement on the aim and values of *munāzara*, they disagreed on *how* to best promote it. As we just mentioned, they disagreed on the best way for the antagonist to sequence her critical moves. For example, after listening to the protagonist's argument for a certain claim, should the antagonist respond by first raising an objection, a refutation, or a counter-argument? There are three sequences of critical moves that scholars have recommended in the literature:<sup>10</sup>

1. Objection → Refutation → Counter-argument
2. Refutation → Objection → Counter-argument
3. Objection → Counter-argument → Refutation

These are fascinating debates that we have only recently started to investigate their philosophical foundations and tease out their implications for contemporary argumentation theory (Oruç, Üzelgün, and Sadek 2023; and Oruç, Sadek and Küçükural 2023).<sup>11</sup> We will now give a concise summary of select findings of that investigation, followed by a brief elaboration on the interdependence between the agent and the procedure in Sequence1.

All three sequences are recommendations for the antagonist to contribute to the cooperative manifestation of truth in the best way possible. What sets them apart is *how* they do so. An examination of the justifications that scholars provided for preferring one sequence over another, reveals that each sequence is grounded on a specific *interpretation* of the overarching value of argumentation. Each of these interpretations is embodied in the sequence it grounds, and that sequence expresses and promotes the interpretation that grounds it. Sequence1 is based on cooperation as coalescence and expresses/promotes coalescent-cooperation; Sequence2 is based on cooperation as reliability, and expresses/promotes reliable-cooperation; Sequence3 is based on cooperation as efficacy, and expresses/promotes adversarial-cooperation.

Moreover, coalescence, reliability, and efficacy subsist in a symbiotic relationship with the arguer. Each of these values makes normative demands on the antagonist. These demands get satisfied when the antagonist implements the corresponding sequence. That is, adherence to a particular recommended sequence requires that she chooses to deploy the right type of critical move at the right juncture of the argumentative encounter, and that she does so for the right

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<sup>10</sup> Sequence1 is prescribed by Jurjānī (d.1413) (al-Jaupūrī 2006, 76–77); Sequence2 by Mullā Ḥanafī (d.1496) (2014, 40–41); and Sequence3 by Sāqaqlizāde (d.1732) (al-Āmidī 1900, 60).

<sup>11</sup> That *munāzara* scholars raised the question of sequencing and took it seriously enough to debate it over generations, is especially significant given the rather surprising fact that contemporary argumentation scholarship has not yet adequately examined sequencing as a central component of argumentation despite the predominance of dialogical and dialectical approaches. Two exceptions can be noted here. The first is Lumer's epistemological approach, which mentions sequencing even though, and somewhat ironically, it neither has a dialogical aspiration, nor is interested in regulating a "definite sequencing of moves" (1988, p. 461). According to Lumer, prescribing sequences should be avoided given their complexities (Lumer 1988, p. 457). The second is van Laar and Krabbe's inquiries into critical reactions (Krabbe and van Laar 2011; van Laar and Krabbe 2013; van Laar 2001). We find these inquiries to be a helpful step in the right direction but they do not go far enough. By and large, sequencing as a central component of argumentation remains a blind spot in contemporary argumentation scholarship.

reason, the manifestation of truth. When the antagonist is successful, she realizes the value corresponding to the sequence in question and, hence, fulfills her duty in the cooperative interaction, a duty that follows from her commitment to the manifestation of truth. In order to succeed, however, the antagonist needs to possess certain virtues. We have associated a pair of virtues to each of the recommended sequences: patience and humility (Sequence1); diligence and open-mindedness (Sequence2); and, agonism and strategy (Sequence3). Without some degree of these pairs, the antagonist might not be able to successfully perform her role in contributing to coalescent-, or reliable-, or adversarial-cooperation.

Furthermore, and crucially, it is through the recurrent practice of a particular sequence that the antagonist gets to learn how to exhibit the virtues associated with that sequence during argumentative encounters. Because coalescence, reliability, and efficacy, restrict the antagonist's choices of available critical moves in specific ways, the antagonist in training struggles as she learns how to restrain herself so that she adheres to the respective sequences. Over time and with repetition, she develops the associated virtues required for implementing a recommended sequence. In addition and simultaneously, this antagonist in training comes to internalize coalescence, reliability, and efficacy as argumentation values embodied in their respective sequences. Thus, the values of argumentation justify recommended sequences, and guide the antagonist's choices by serving as a normative source for the restrictions that she is required to observe. And, as she struggles in observing these restrictions, she develops and exhibits the virtues required for adhering to sequences that embody argumentative values.

Finally, and given that sequencing belongs to the procedure while virtues belong to the agent, when we combine the symbiotic relationship between the values of argumentation and the arguer, on the one hand, with how recommended sequences concretize these values of argumentation, on the other hand, the dynamics of the interdependence between procedure and agent is fleshed out. For consideration of space we will only briefly elaborate on such interdependence in Sequence1.

Start by noticing that the ordering of Sequence1 (objection → refutation → counter-objection) progresses from the weakest to the strongest critical move. Objection is weakest in that it is a mere request for clarification that calls for some support to one of the protagonist's premises (al-Āmidī 1900, p. 29; see also Krabbe and van Laar 2011, p. 213). The antagonist, however, must submit evidence for her refutation. And although a successful refutation is not powerful enough to deny the protagonist's claim (al-Samarqandī 1934, p. 126), it does require the protagonist to either undermine it or offer another argument in support of her original claim. Finally, counter-argument is a direct attack on the protagonist's claim, and calls upon her to either show that the counter-argument contains unacceptable premises (by raising an objection) or suffers from some deficiency (by raising a refutation).

Through such progressive unfolding, the antagonist gives the protagonist an opportunity to reflect on and identify weaknesses in her premises, followed by an opportunity to reflect and identify mistakes in her reasoning. Only now can the antagonist show the protagonist that even though she has acceptable premises and a deficiency-free argument, she has not yet established that her claim is sufficiently credible. Had the antagonist begun with a counter-argument, the protagonist's opportunity to unravel weaknesses and mistakes would have been bypassed.

Thus, Sequence1's progressive unfolding opens up a communicative space of disagreement within which the protagonist is permitted and assisted by the antagonist to reflect on the acceptability of her premises and the deficiencies in her reasoning. Protagonist and antagonist are joined in a collaborative endeavor to assess the worth of the premises, the cogency of the reasoning, and the dialogical plausibility of the claim. That is a *coalescent-cooperation* that merges contenders for the sake of achieving their common goal. However, and this is key, in order for the antagonist to be able to open such communicative space, she must exhibit some degree of patience and humility. Without these virtues, she may not succeed in sticking to weakest → stronger → strongest unfolding when she has at her disposal knock-down moves from the very beginning. Furthermore, it is through the recurrent practice of Sequence1 that an agent learns how to exhibit patience and humility in their argumentative encounters.

Now, coalescence does not merely serve in the justification of Sequence1 as the best ordering of the antagonist's moves for the manifestation of truth. Coalescence gets concretized through the antagonist choices of moves at different argumentative junctures, which together constitute the progressive unfolding in Sequence1. In this sense, coalescence is embodied in, and expressed by, Sequence1. There is, thus, a strong connection between coalescence (value) and its corresponding sequence (procedure). There is further a symbiotic relation between coalescence (value) and the antagonist (agent). On the one hand, the antagonist realizes coalescence by implementing Sequence1, which in turn requires her to be patient and humble. Coalescence, on the other hand, makes normative demands on the antagonist. These demands get satisfied when she sticks to Sequence1 by deploying the right move at the right time. As she struggles to do so, she develops patience and humility.

### *3.3. Sequencing-based and derailment-based norms*

We saw in Section2 that to the extent that one is a genuine normative pluralist (i.e., they accept multiple, irreducible, and nonimpotent argumentative norms), they need to face the challenge of integration in order to avoid self-serving eclecticism and be able to pass (non-shortsighted) evaluative judgments on the phenomenon of argumentation as a whole. What this requires the pluralist to do is not only assert the coexistence of argumentative norms, but also to reflect upon and articulate the interconnections between them. Our contribution in making headway in meeting this challenge is to introduce *sequencing-based* and *derailment-based* argumentative norms. This counts as progress in meeting the challenge of integration because sequencing and derailments reflect the interdependence between the arguer and the procedure, and when we evaluate argumentation against sequencing-based and derailment-based norms we would be relying on normative criteria that integrate agent-based and act-based norms.

Since we have already introduced sequencing, let us begin with sequencing-based norms. Keeping with the case of the antagonist, the question is: against which norm are we going to assess whether an antagonist fared well in the way she orders critical moves in a given argumentative encounter?

Every ordering of moves is the result of a series of choices by the antagonist in question. These are choices concerning *when* to deploy *which* critical move. In addition to choosing the appropriate critical move at different junctures of an argumentative encounter, we could include

choosing the appropriate recommended sequence for a particular argumentative situation. Munāzara scholars have not really discussed that type of choice, and it might well be the case that some scholars thought of their preferred sequence as the best recommendation for *all* argumentative contexts. We are not committed to that. We acknowledge, instead, that good argumentative conduct in different contexts might require implementing different recommended sequences. Therefore, an arguer's ability to discern which recommended sequence fits better a particular argumentation situation is another aspect of good conduct in argumentative encounters. These are choices concerning *which sequence* is best in *what context*. To illustrate, in contexts where parties share considerable common grounds, it might be more feasible and beneficial to adhere to Sequence1, realize the value of coalescence, and seek coalescent-cooperation. Whereas, in contexts of deep disagreement, it might be more feasible and beneficial to adhere to Sequence2, realize the value of reliability, and seek reliable-cooperation. Sequence2, unlike Sequence1, does not begin with checking the acceptability of premises, where the impact of deep disagreements is highest. Instead, it makes acceptability-checking conditional upon reliability-checking in order to filter out inferentially unreliable arguments, which is most fitting in contexts of deep disagreements (Oruç, Sadek and Küçükural 2023).

The antagonist in question chose a sequence to adhere to in a particular context (one kind of choice) and, consequently, chose when to employ which critical move (another kind of choice). Both kinds of choices are involved in good “sequencing.” What is important to realize is that argumentation values are at the core of both kinds of choices. An antagonist fares well in her ordering of critical moves when (a) she chooses the sequence that expresses/promotes the interpretation of cooperation most pertinent for the particular argumentative situation, and (b) she chooses the right move at the right time (i.e., adheres to the sequence she chose) out of her commitment, and with the intention, to realize the argumentation value embodied in that sequence. But, we just learned that argumentation values get concretized in the sequences they ground, and that they stand in a symbiotic relationship with the arguer. Coalescence, reliability, and efficacy account for the interdependence between procedure and agent that sequencing displays. A good argumentation is one where, among other things, the antagonist adheres to sequences that express and promote these values. Each of these values is a different interpretation of the overarching argumentative value of cooperation and can, thus, be considered sequencing-based norms that satisfy the manifestation of truth as the ultimate goal of argumentation.

What about derailment-based norms? We mentioned that munāzara scholars discussed when should an arguer deploy which move (sequencing) as well as what sort of behavior counts as a *violation of good argumentative conduct*. The latter concerns derailments from the intended procedure. Munāzara scholars understood derailments in terms of character failures and referred to them as argumentative vices. Several such vices have been identified, but four are most prominent: (i) doubting an incontrovertible premise without offering a supporting argument is considered arrogance (*mukābara*) (Āmidī 1900, p. 58); (ii) insisting on a claim without offering a supporting argument is classified as subjugation (*taḥakkum*) (Cevdet Paşa 1998, p. 112); (iii) counter arguing a not-yet-defended claim is described as usurpation (*ğaşb*); and (iv) counter arguing a protagonist's claim right from the get-go is labeled as hastiness (*'ucül*) (Cevdet Paşa 1998, p. 112).



Derailments, like sequencing, relate to the procedure and the agent, and exhibit the interdependence between the arguer and the act of arguing. Also like sequencing, derailments are ultimately in the service of cooperation, albeit from a different angle. On our account, derailments are violations of procedural constraints (not those of sequencing strictly speaking) that are meant to preserve an *equal reciprocal relationship between the antagonist and the protagonist*.<sup>12</sup> When these constraints are breached, cooperative truth-seeking is undermined. A simple but clear set of examples here would be cases where an arguer behaves with arrogance or hastiness, subjugates, or usurps as a result of abusing their social rank, academic standing, structural prejudice, or social bias. Reciprocal equality preserves the overarching value of cooperation and serves the ultimate goal of manifesting the truth.

It is rather expected that untrained arguers would have a tendency to undermine reciprocal equality when they are cornered, feeling intimidated, or attached to their position. The arguer in training struggles as she learns how to restrain herself in order not to diverge from the intended procedure. The point of derailments is to help ensure that the arguer does not put herself, her way of thinking, or her opinion, first and in a way that does not do justice to the equal status of the contending party, her way of thinking, or her opinion. Thus, reciprocal equality in argumentative encounters makes demands upon arguers to listen carefully and with compassion or empathy to the opinions and arguments of her contender in order to be fair-minded, ask the right questions, and raise the right challenges. Arguers, unlike quarrellers or power-flexers, struggle to observe these limits and do so out of their commitment for reciprocal equality as a condition for cooperative truth-seeking. It is through such struggle that they develop the capacity to restrain their behavior so that they do not block, distort, or undermine cooperative truth-seeking. Reciprocal equality demands attentive listening, which is required in order for arguers not to exhibit derailment-vices.

Reciprocal equality accounts for the interdependence between procedure and agent that derailments display. A bad argumentation is one where, among other things, arguers repeatedly, and maybe intentionally, breach the procedural constraints that make possible and enhance cooperative truth-seeking. Reciprocal equality as a condition for the overarching argumentative value of cooperation is undermined by such derailments, and can, thus, be considered a derailment-based norm that satisfies the manifestation of truth as the ultimate goal of argumentation.

A final note. With sequencing-based and derailment-based norms in view, we can see how sequencing and derailments could strengthen as well as weaken virtue argumentation theory. We saw that act-based theorists might recognize agent-based norms but won't give them direct and primary importance. Virtue argumentation theorists could respond by relying on sequencing and derailments as central components in the phenomenon of argumentation that: belong to the act of arguing, are not reducible to the act, correspond to the arguer's dispositions, and contribute to the goodness of argumentation. Such components could strengthen virtue argumentation theory's position in the debate about argumentative norms, since the only way out of their critics now is to deny the relevance or importance of sequencing and derailments for the assessment of

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<sup>12</sup> This is indicated by the etymological roots of *munāzara*. Please see the table "Etymological Notes" at the end of this section.

argument. The thing, however, is that sequencing and derailments undermine the core commitment to prioritize the agent over the act of arguing. This is so because sequencing- and derailment-based norms transcend the dichotomy between agent- and act-based norms, which implies that by accepting the relevance and importance of sequencing and derailments for the assessment of argument, we have simultaneously accepted that an argument assessment framework that strictly separates act- from agent-based norms, or that prioritizes one over the other, is at best one-sided and incomplete. One way for the virtue argumentation theory to preserve its claimed status of a genuine alternative to existing theories of argument assessment, is to let go of that core commitment and present itself as an approach to argumentation that integrates the norms of argumentation into a single framework rather than just another perspective on argumentation in contrast to the logical, dialectical, and rhetorical (Oruç, Sadek and Küçükural 2023).

#### 3.4. *Munāzara's contribution to ethical argumentation*

Other than helping us develop an integrative normative theory of argumentation, sequencing and derailments give us access to ethical dimensions embedded in the phenomenon of argumentation. Sequencing- and derailment-based norms impose requirements and make demands on arguers' dynamic interaction in argumentative encounters; they are norms of ethical argumentation. By way of better capturing *munāzara's* contribution to ethical argumentation, let us differentiate between the two types of ethics that sequencing- and derailment-based norms exhibit.

Sequencing-based norms exhibit an *ethic of cooperation*. Each recommended sequence is based on a value that represents a particular interpretation of the overarching value of cooperation (coalescence, reliability, efficacy), and by sticking to a recommended sequence, the antagonist expresses and promotes the corresponding type of cooperation (coalescent-cooperation, reliable-cooperation, adversarial-cooperation). An essential part in the antagonist's cooperation with the protagonist is to implement a recommended sequence. In this sense, the ethical requirements that sequencing imposes (determining the choices of which recommended sequence to adhere to, when to deploy which critical move, and struggling to adhere to sequences) can be understood in terms of an ethic of cooperation.

Derailment-based norms, on the other hand, exhibit an *ethic of reciprocity*. The four vices of arrogance, subjugation, usurpation, and hastiness are based on reciprocal equality, which is a condition for cooperative truth-seeking. By observing procedural constraints that undermine reciprocal equality, arguers make possible and promote the manifestation of truth. This in turn requires arguers to distance themselves from, and struggle against, behavior that instantiate derailment- vices for the sake of cooperative truth-seeking. Such distancing and struggling, require not only that arguers *refrain from* doubting incontrovertible premises before asking for clarifications (arrogance), insisting on a claim without supporting it (subjugation), counter-arguing a not-yet-defended claim, counter-arguing a claim before asking for the argument that supports it (hastiness), but also that arguers *listen to* each other attentively in order to encounter one another's perspectives with care and justice. Without such listening, arguers won't be able to get what their contenders are saying correctly and accurately. Such listening requires a certain ability to be fully present throughout the argumentative encounter and to be connected to one's contender without bias or prejudice. Only in this way will an arguer be ready and prepared to adequately receive, and be satisfactorily prepared to engage with, her contender

and their ideas. In this sense, the ethical demands that derailments make (refraining from breaching procedural constraints and attentive listening) can be understood in terms of an ethic of reciprocity.

Together, the ethic of cooperation and the ethic of reciprocity, constitute the ethics of *munāzara* and its contribution to ethical argumentation. This contribution has an external and an internal dimension. The ethic of cooperation is manifested externally in the choice of a recommended sequence and the deployment of critical moves accordingly, and internally in the struggle to adhere to sequences out of a commitment to the manifestation of truth. The ethic of reciprocity is manifested externally in the observance of procedural constraints, and internally in the struggle not to breach these constraints and in attentive listening out of a commitment to the manifestation of truth. We can, thus, say that the external dimensions of the ethics of *munāzara* are instantiated in *procedural-regulation* while the internal dimensions are instantiated in *self-regulation*. Further, it is the arguers' commitment to the cooperative manifestation of truth that informs her argumentative behavior so that it is in line with the restrictions that the ethics of *munāzara* imposes. Neither sequencing- nor derailment-based norms are properly met through mere rule-following. Arguer's intentions, motivations, and aspirations are ineliminable parts of the picture. Arguer's conduct in accordance to procedural rules should be the result of the relevant dispositions (rather than luck or duplicity), and she should be behaving out of an awareness of, and commitment to, the values concretized in sequences (Oruç, Sadek and Küçükural 2023) and the reciprocal equality that gets undermined through derailments.

To highlight the characteristic features of *munāzara*'s contribution to ethical argumentation, it is worth concluding with a quick look at ethical argumentation in contemporary argumentation theory.

Consider pragma-dialectics' most relevant aspect for ethical argumentation, its "Ten commandments for reasonable discussants" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2003, Chapter 8). The intended function of these commandments is to guide the conduct of arguers in argumentative engagements. They represent pragma-dialectics' acknowledgment of the role of the agent as a second-order condition for critical reasonableness. However, pragma-dialectics' commitment to the externalization principle reduces that role to the agent's externalized acts. What this translates into is that the arguer's states of mind (intentions, motivations, aspirations) are noumenal and the study of argumentation is not to deal with them. The externalization principle "means that we target the public commitments entailed by the performance of certain language activities" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2003, 53). It calls on argumentation theorists to refrain from dealing with the arguer's states of mind since these are not readily accessible to others. Accordingly, argumentation theory's sole focus should be on externalized acts (speech act) rather than assumptions about the arguer's state of mind. Consequently, the agent can no longer serve as an eligible basis for a theory of argumentation. In short, while pragma-dialectics recognizes a role for the agent in ethical argumentation, such a role is ultimately irrelevant as far as the assessment of argument is concerned.

The external dimension of the ethics of *munāzara* satisfy the externalization principle. But if we were to only account for what that principle allows for, we would be missing the ineliminable and necessary internal dimension for ethical argumentative conduct. In contradistinction to

pragmatic-dialectics’ sidelining of ethical guidance to arguers’ behavior, virtue argumentation makes direct and explicit reference to considerations relevant for the ethical guidance of arguers’ behavior, the virtues. Still, we think that virtue argumentation falls short with respect to ethical argumentation. What it lacks, is to figure out how virtue-considerations manifest or get reflected in the actual norms of reasoning and discussion. While virtue argumentation gives a direct and explicit role to the virtues in the assessment of argument, it remains insufficient for not indicating how one can move from the act of arguing to argument assessment on the basis of argumentative virtues (for more, see Oruç, Sadek and Küçükural 2023). Sequencing- and derailment-based norms can remedy this failure. But, as we already mentioned, this comes at the cost of abandoning the commitment to prioritizing agent- over act-based norms.

### Etymological Notes

The discipline of *Ādāb al-Baḥṭh w al-Munāzara*, the manners of inquiry and argumentation, is typically referred to as *munāzara* or *‘ilm al-ādāb*, both of which indicate its ethical dimensions. The English translation of these terms fails to reflect their nuanced layers of meaning. Some translations of *munāzara* include 'dialectical disputation' (Young 2015), 'disputation' (Arif 2020), and 'argumentation' (Oruç 2022). And translations of *‘ilm al-ādāb* include 'etiquette' (Belhaj 2016), 'manners' (Taiari 2023), 'applied ethics' (Faytre 2018), 'protocols' (Young 2015), and 'virtuous conduct' (Oruç 2022). Each of these translations captures a layer of that discipline. The fact that *Ādāb al-Baḥṭh w al-Munāzara* can be referred to as the 'science of argumentation' as well as the 'science of manners' alludes to its multifaceted ethical underpinnings. Here, etymology can be helpful.

Every Arabic word originates from a root that takes on different forms, each with a nuanced meaning. The term *‘munāzara*’ finds its roots in *‘nazīr*’ and *‘nazar*.’ *Nazīr* means 'counterpart' or an 'equal in rank or knowledge.' *Nazar* indicates 'facing the other party,' or 'anticipating' in the sense of respectfully waiting for one’s contender to perform their role (Taiari 2023, Oruç 2022, Young 2015, 43), or 'insightful thinking' – where “insight” is a translation of *“baṣīra”*, which Taskoprüzade explains with an analogy: while seeing occurs with eyes, insight occurs with heart (Taiari 2023), but *baṣīra* can also mean having thorough knowledge of the issue being debated. This linguistic derivation portrays *munāzara* as a collaborative endeavor between equals engaging in thoughtful debate. It further emphasizes the ethical principle of *intizār* or respectful waiting, where each participant patiently allows the other to make their points before responding.

Turning to the term *ādāb*, we see a complicated and context-dependent history (Arif 2020). Nevertheless, *ādāb* is typically associated with an action or role. There is the *ādāb* of eating, of praying, and of professional roles such as scribe or judge. This elasticity explains why some highlight the professional aspect and translate it as 'protocols' (Young 2015), while others lean towards 'etiquette' or 'manners' (ref). Arif, on the other hand, avoids translating the term altogether. Instead, he discusses its ontological and epistemological implications by way of acknowledging the importance of *ādāb* in Muslim civilization. There is also the strategy of Faytre who notes that although 'etiquette' and 'manners' may be good literal translations, the contemporary understanding of the term aligns more with 'applied ethics'. *Ādāb* as applied ethics resonates with the 18th-century Ottoman scholar, al-Qarsī, who construed *ādāb* in terms of the duties necessary for fruitful disputation, requiring both practical and epistemic virtues (*faḍā’il*) (2018, 35). In this vein, *ādāb* encapsulates the “competence (*Ṣalāḥ*) and excellence (*kamāl*) of the rational soul (al-Qarsī 2018, 35).

*Munāzara*’s multifaceted ethical underpinnings explains how it came to serve as an attribute (*sifat*) of the arguer (as opposed to *mujadil* and *munāzi*’), as well as the name of the discipline itself (Gelenbevi, 1934, 32). This ambiguity is not merely semantic. It embodies the intricate interplay between *qāwā’id* (rules) and *malaka* (dispositions) (Āmidī 1900, 8; Gelenbevi 1934, pp. 35-38). Notably, the term *qāwā’id* signifies the procedural aspect of the discipline – the established principles and guidelines that govern the process of argumentation. Whereas *malaka* denotes the cultivated virtues and competencies of the arguer, reflecting the ethical aspect of *munāzara*. This dual conception – rules and dispositions – reinforces the intertwining of ethics and procedures inherent to *munāzara*.

## Part II: Practice

As noted in the “Historical Snapshot” table (above), although contemporary argumentation theory, *munāzara*, and competitive debate can be traced to the same origins, they are disconnected in modern scholarship (Jacobs 2020, Oruç 2022). Such a disconnect may make some readers wonder whether the interests of the intended audiences in Part I (contemporary argumentation theorists) and Part II (debate practitioners, judges, and coaches) are too divergent to be coherently addressed in the same paper. The most relevant element of our forgoing discussion for appeasing this concern is the idea that *munāzara* is move-based (3.1). To put it differently, dialectics in *munāzara* is not reducible to the norms of critical discussion as is the case with pragma-dialectics, but extends to the “syntax” of argumentative interactions; that is, the *arrangement* of arguers’ moves contributes to the goodness of argumentation. Thus, the practice of debate, which necessarily involves a “syntax” is intimately connected with the norms that govern such syntax. We now spell out in practical terms what this means for the practice of debate.

### Introduction:

In Part I, we established the theoretical grounds upon which the *Munāzara* Engagement Model (MEM) stands. We argued that to the extent contemporary argumentation theory accepts multiple, irreducible, and nonimpotent argumentative norms (normative pluralism), it needs to face the challenge of reflecting upon and articulating the interconnections between norms (challenge of integration), in order to avoid self-serving eclecticism and be able to pass non-shortsighted evaluative judgments on the phenomenon of argumentation as a whole (Sections 1 and 2). We also argued that the tradition of *munāzara* offers tools for making headway in meeting this challenge. Building on *munāzara* scholars’ discussions of sequencing and derailments, we developed sequencing-based and derailment-based norms for evaluating argumentation. We showed that these norms account for the interdependence between procedure and agent, and that they respectively manifest an ethics of *munāzara* that combines an ethic of cooperation and an ethic of reciprocity (Section 3).

That virtues guide procedural choices or sequencing, and that procedural choices underscore ethical concerns, are key elements binding intervarsity debates to argumentation theory. The argumentation process in competitive debate designs is impacted by a variety of contextual and structural factors that shape the process, unconsciously or by design. Stevens (2019) considers the ways in which procedure can be organized to the advantage and disadvantage of the debaters involved, underscoring the taken-for-granted element of the ethics of argumentative engagement:

...I realize that I could continue this exchange in different ways. For example, I could help you try to find your reasons. I could also press on, refusing to help, laying out my own arguments and demand that you come up with yours. [...] I want to argue that in this situation, I face a moral problem that we should take seriously. The way I will behave next will have an impact on the structural design of our argument—on the way we argue with each other, whether we deliberate together or enter an argumentative sparring match. I argue that the way in which we argue has a morally relevant impact on the outcome of the argument and the experiences of the arguers along the way (Stevens 2019, 694)

This quote offers a useful parallel to thinking about different debate models: models such as the Ethics Cup and, to an extent, the preliminary munāzara model (MEM) discussed here, exemplify exchanges geared to “help you find your reasons,” while the main, widely practiced contemporary debate formats represented by the Parliamentary and Policy formats exemplify procedures wherein debaters “press on, refusing to help, laying out (their) own arguments and demand that you come up with yours.” This point of view is acknowledged by debate coaches as well, with attention drawn – with a direct quote from Theodore Roosevelt, in this instance – to the public image of the competitive debater: “to educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society” (quoted in Nenadović, 2023).<sup>13</sup>

By way of a brief recap or introduction, parliamentary formats (of which there are derivatives such as the World Schools Debate, Asian Parliamentary, and American Parliamentary) are a globally practiced, less research-intensive, broad-coverage engagement that tends to emphasize the debater’s rhetorical delivery and all-round knowledgeability. Policy debate and its derivatives (Lincoln-Douglas, Public Forum, Cross Examination) are almost exclusively U.S. based formats, and emphasize rigorous, in-depth research preparedness and utilize legal terminology such as “prima facie moves,” “presumption,” and “burden of proof.” In fact, it is the Affirmative debater’s (in Parliamentary, the equivalent would be the “Government”) burden to “prove” that the presumption– the value or policy status quo of the motion– is “guilty”; i.e.,

Most debate coaches introduce the term "presumption" to their student charges as a negative position by which one could argue that the *status quo* was presumed to be "innocent" and had to be proven "guilty" before the judge could vote for the affirmative--that the "burden of proof" is on the affirmative. (Duvanel-Unruh 1998, 56)

If the debater is challenging the status quo, or offering a policy reform as an Affirmative debater in policy formats, she needs to make her accusation against the normative state of things or of understanding of an issue, and defend it– this is called fulfilling the burden of proof, because she is proving there is a problem or insolvency in the current framework. Presumption is divided into two kinds: “natural” and “artificial” (Rutledge 2000), in which the former represents the “natural

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<sup>13</sup> Nenadovic continued her speech with the proposition that debate coaches and practitioners should apply the principle of “Do no harm” (Minute 27:20).

state of things for establishing the preferred standard of judgment”<sup>14</sup> while the latter represents the norm as decided (i.e., agreed upon consciously and situated in time and context) then imposed by law, to “prevent ties”<sup>15</sup>. The Affirmative burden to successfully address the presumption in her opening speech, under threat of losing to the Negative or Opposition constitutes the first procedural move in debate— whether court-based or parliamentary. While it is easy to take this move for granted because it appears to be a given, the academic debate community has drawn attention to the implicit issues and unfair burden this obligation imposes, especially in the parliamentary format.

Attention is drawn to the nature of the burden placed on policy or resolution advocates, in the awareness of the benign institutional intention of providing a more level playing field; two exemplary reasons foregrounded are to counter the head-start afforded to the Affirmative or Government debaters who give the opening speeches, as well as the advantage they have in “being able to choose the case area which the opposition must attack to meet its burden of rejoinder or clash, presumably with less of a chance of preparation”<sup>16</sup>. In case debates, the Proposition has the right to bring its case of choice, and the Opposition learns about the case during the tournament. This means that, in the case debate format, the opposing teams do not have time to prepare, and will remain mostly as the testing side, i.e., doubting, rebutting, refuting the Proposition’s case points. However, the overall result, according to Rutledge (2000) is a “misapplication” of presumption in that the system is “requiring government teams to attack the status quo even when the wording of the resolution does not mandate such an action”<sup>17</sup>. The persistent problem, he argues, is that in parliamentary formats wherein there is only fifteen minutes of preparation time for a resolution that is announced during the debate and not before, as in policy formats, the team will have minimal unrealistic time “to prepare a case exposing a serious flaw in the status quo and constructing a solvable plan that will overcome the problem without incurring worse effects”<sup>18</sup>.

Significantly, Rutledge (2000) introduces this procedural issue with a note on the general aim of intervarsity debate as the manifestation of truth:

Intercollegiate debate attempts to seek an understanding of truth, at least as it relates to any given debate round, through the dialectic method, a method popularized by Aristotle. In intercollegiate debate two opposing sides debate an issue as defined and confined by the resolution. The resolution is a truth claim. The validity of that truth claim is usually left up to the critic, judge or audience to determine through weighing competing arguments posited during the course of the debate. Since in most such intercollegiate debate contests it is not acceptable to leave the resolitional question unanswered (by allowing a tie), there must be some set of presumptive

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Rutledge 2000

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

guidelines to determine which side prevails especially in close debates. These guidelines center in part on the notion of Burden of Proof, and the countervailing notion of presumption. (Rutledge 2000)

The presumption in this case is specified as the mainly artificial presumption that will break the tie in the resolution under debate. Although the dialectic method in essence points towards joint engagement in the pursuit of truth, it may be the essence of presumption that paves the way for adversariality at the expense of concession, in that judgment must be passed to break the tie in the conflicting resolutions. One side must prevail and become the norm.

Admittedly, the adversarial model has its own benefits and contributions to argumentative conduct, and cannot be judged solely from the perspective of cooperation versus adversariality. The two broadly different approaches obviously structure dispositions as well as behavior, both consciously and subconsciously, while each behavior pattern influences the emotional as well as social-physical experiences debaters have during and after the tournament. This influence points to Stevens' reference to the "moral problem" in question– which in light of its treatment may be understood to be used synonymously with 'ethical problem'– that debaters face during exchange. This problem is what is referenced by this paper's introductory thoughts on "how giving and asking for reasons could promote inclusion and individual autonomy or equality among participants (Habermas 1996, 1990); or how a speaker's epistemic credibility might be affected by power relations (Fricker 2007)."

#### **4. Ethics and contemporary debate practices**

Ethics broadly construed deals with the matter of institutional codes and what rules of good and bad behavior are to be followed (– or not). In intervarsity debates, the ethical component mainly has to do with how debaters conduct themselves in different debate procedures, and what moral consequences – positive and negative – result from each. This question also calls forth the idea of what constitutes the ideal or model debater, and this is an idea dealt with in virtue argumentation approach, owing to the centrality of the idea to the matter of cultivating argumentative virtues. In other words, offering a model to help one learn through practice, imitation, or by example. As a virtue argumentation theory aside, Zagzebski terms this the "exemplarist virtue theory" in her eponymously named book (2017). This is not always seen in a positive light, however; what may be called the imitation pathway, as in following an exemplar persona "What would the exemplar (the virtuous person) do?" is not a reliable path to virtue cultivation (Aberdein 2010). This is an issue for further, future consideration. In the current context, the question is: what virtues are enacted and instituted within intervarsity debating, however?

Given that the expected conduct for most debate models is to "press on" with arguments, counter-arguments, and the critique of key terms across the board, the basic values in



competitive debate are that of *argument extension* and *critical testing*. In competitive formats involving teams on the same side of the debate, such as the Parliamentary, interaction can be further specified as teamwork (See Report<sup>19</sup>). These two values may constitute the first two out of four elements of the comparative value frameworks between intervarsity debating and the proposed MEM, the latter two being *impersonality* and in-tournament *value-detachment*.

Critical testing aligns with the truth-seeking process proposed by the MEM, and has to do with procedural norms designed and revised to facilitate the most constructive argument extension<sup>20</sup> and argumentative interaction between debaters fulfilling the duties of the burdens of proof and of extension. These interactions include parliamentary formats' Q&A sequence: Points of Information (POI), court-based formats' Q&A sequence: Cross-Examinations (CXs), and comment phases. Interaction, queued by the critical testing process, span in turn the spatial, physical, and verbal positioning as well as engagement between debaters v. debaters, debaters v. judges, debaters v. audience. Within the progress of these relationships, even the most adversarial exchanges constitute (potentially) the invaluable "skill" of meaningful interaction.

This idea of meaningful interaction has continually been emphasized in this study, given munazara's investment in cooperative truth-seeking. The issue of whether and to what extent procedural constraints undermine reciprocal equality, dis/allowing arguers to make possible and promote the manifestation of truth, is partially embedded in how many people are in contact and in what structure(s) of contact. The main structure across the formats is that of adversariality.

For all its negative associations, adversariality is a form of strategic cooperation that requires the consent of all parties involved. This skill is embedded in two specific loci, the parliamentary points of information (POI), and the court-based cross-examination (CX), which, if the Ethics Bowl is comment-based, may be considered to be interruption-based and built-in Q&A-based respectively. POI is semi-spontaneous, and initiated by the Opposition in the first and last minutes of the Government's speeches. One point can be made/asked per POI, within the duration of 15 seconds. CX, or Cross-examination, is built into the Policy and LD procedures, and is initiated by the Negative, who may ask "three different types of questions: clarification, perceptual, and strategic."<sup>21</sup> Both Affirmative and Negative are given 3 minutes each to pose their questions and receive their answers.

Parliamentary formats feature teams of two persons each, necessitating the virtue of cooperation on two levels: between the partners in a team, and between the teams themselves. The ADAB position paper, for example, accounted for a prevalent cooperative issue within teams: the move

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<sup>19</sup> Link: <https://munazara.ihu.edu.tr/en/paper-on-debate-formats-6472866c5915f>

<sup>20</sup> Argument extension is an American debate term referring to the duty to form a strong argumentative identity not only through advancing propositions but also through contextualizing, detailing, and thoroughly developing them.

<sup>21</sup> "Tips for Cross-Examination," *DebateDrills.org*

known as “knifing,”<sup>22</sup> wherein the closing government or opposition opts to advance a new line of argument at the expense of the one(s) set out by the opening speakers. This is admittedly to save, to an extent, the unique argument identity of the team (a key element of evaluation), but it nevertheless undermines the credibility of the opening speakers in face of the judges and peers.

In terms of team composition, policy (based) formats are more variable: traditional Policy likewise features two teams consisting of two people each, but the Lincoln-Douglas format, for example, features one on one interaction. Here, there may not so much be the “arguers' commitment to the cooperative manifestation of truth that informs her argumentative behavior,” as delineated in Part I of this study, but the individual struggle to “set traps” for the Aff or Neg, and to make “the opponent destroy their own side” during the cross-examination moves of the debate, wherein the sides are allotted time to ask the opponent questions<sup>23</sup>. This designated time for question-and-answer direct interaction is unique to policy formats, and is absent in parliamentary debate. The constructive potential of this built-in structure is immense, but the interaction is currently associated with this aggressive pursuit of negating a position to advance one’s own. What appears to be at stake here, in general, is the impersonality of debate interactions, and the assumption that there is no room for debaters seeing each other as real, non-abstract people with emotions and deeply ingrained world views that each debater has to account for in her attitude and approach to the argument.

With this being said, it is vital to affirm the nevertheless transformative power of competitive debate as a tool for teaching intellectual virtues, in that, for example, it teaches this skill of ‘negative’ engagement that is, as said, taught widely in competitive debate organizations, by all formats: “Disagreeing constructively is a skill and perhaps the most important intellectual virtue is openness to changing your mind. They are, however, wrong in believing that competitive debate does not teach those things. It does. In spades” (Prentice 2019).

Competitive debate does indeed teach constructive disagreement in spades, mainly through POIs and CXs. This procedure roughly aligns with the “comments” sessions in non-adversarial formats like the Ethics Bowl and Ethics Cup, wherein the interaction is geared towards “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” (Aktar et al. 2023). While the intention is to facilitate constructive interaction, something essential is lost along the way: the skill – and even the necessity – to interact negatively, albeit within certain constraints and values. Stevens addresses the issue entailed by “deliberative/inquiry style

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<sup>22</sup> Aktar et al. (2023), p.7

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.19 - 20

argumentation” within her treatment of the moral consequences of different kinds of argumentative interaction:

I am not convinced that making deliberative/inquiry-style argumentation mandatory would eliminate the problem that the structure of the argument can create morally significant losses by allocating roles to arguers who cannot fulfill them. Though we might intuitively be less inclined to have sympathy, playing a deliberator role might sincerely be forbiddingly burdensome for some arguers. For example, an arguer might be so passionately committed to her conclusion, or the stakes might be so high for her, that she simply cannot concentrate on helping anyone else develop their arguments. Alternatively, she might have an outside obligation (say, a promise) that forbids her from “playing for the opposing team”, or she might risk serious practical losses if she appears as “weak” because she is in a situation in which she needs to display dominance to a surrounding audience to preserve her social standing. Then she might be forced to drop out of a cooperatively structured argument or to risk such a huge loss in ethos that her arguments will not be taken seriously (Stevens 2019, 698)

The case made for arguers applies directly to competitive debaters, for whom the stakes in ethos and reputation-building especially are very high.<sup>24</sup> While the Ethics Bowl deliberative discussion procedure is to an extent a positive, necessary ethical development in theory, in that it bans the aggression associated with traditional adversarial argumentative methods, this development falls short of addressing the very issue it seeks to curtail in practice. Firstly, competitive spirit and the desire to win is culturally embedded in debaters, who may not necessarily follow through with a strictly deliberative method as most societies are conditioned to see this as a sign of “weakness.” This impression operates two-fold where gender and racial elements come into play. Secondly, eliminating the adversarial method circumvents the head-on, intense interaction that is sometimes actually necessary to work through deep disagreements.

In situations where one— as Stevens notes— “needs to display dominance to a surrounding audience to preserve her social standing,” speaking effectively would be the norm. As for listening, an integral part of “cooperatively structured argument,” we renew our contemplation of the value as discussed in the ADAB position paper’s “Closing Remarks”. Namely, we acknowledge that:

... all main formats examined in this paper - BP, WSDC, Policy, LD, and the Ethics Bowl - encourage the virtue and value of listening, i.e., debaters are obliged out of necessity to

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<sup>24</sup> The very real issue of debater credibility was recently discussed by Maja Nenadović, in her 2023 Qatar Debate ICDD keynote speech titled, “Debate as a Tool for Teaching 21st Century Skills in Classrooms and Beyond.” [#ICDD2023](#) | Keynote Speech - Debate as a tool for 21st century teaching skills.

The stakes are especially high for female debaters, as they are subject to the social gender norms of soft-spokenness, a phenomenon likewise taken into consideration by Stevens.

listen closely to their rivals in conviction and persuasion. This is especially true of court-based formats wherein rivals are expected to provide as many arguments for their side as possible, and to address as many counterarguments directed to them as possible, so as to be evaluated positively by tournament judges – and in some cases, the general audience. This virtue, born of procedural necessity, may appear to be ingrained in the debaters, becoming an internalized disposition. However, this analysis needs to take into account another core factor in contest debate, which is that, a majority of the time, debaters do not argue from conviction, they argue the positions assigned to them. The principal goal for most contest debaters is to persuade, but not necessarily to persuade themselves. In such contexts, it may be said that debaters are not essentially listening to themselves and hearing their opposition, as in recognition of positions and offering voice, but are listening and hearing the familiar constructs and positions that they can manipulate (in both the positive and negative senses). ([Position Paper](#))

In this thought-process, the way in which the hypothetical debater listens is linked to the position assigned to her, again stemming from procedural constraints. The design perspective on argumentation suggests that argumentation theory should be a source of design ideas (Jackson 1998; Aakhus and Jackson 2005), as well as a source of tools for analysis and appraisal (Jackson 2015). American Parliamentary debate format’s outstanding innovation “case debate” can be a source of inspiration at this point.<sup>25</sup> Munāzara-inspired designs, the subject of the next section, are meant to offer freer methods of argumentative engagement that uphold the moral dimension of adversarial listening.

## **5. Munāzara-inspired alternatives**

“The term munāzara is rooted in two terms. The first is nazīr, meaning 'counterpart' or an 'equal in terms of rank or knowledge'. The second is nazar, which indicates 'insightful thinking,' *'facing the other party,'* or 'anticipating' in the sense of respectfully waiting for one’s contender to perform their role (Taiyai 2023, page; Oruç 2022, page; Young 2015, 43; emphasis added). This linguistic derivation portrays munāzara as a collaborative endeavor between equals engaging in thoughtful debate. It further emphasizes the ethical principle of intizār or respectful waiting, where each participant patiently allows the other to make their points before responding.

It is clarified throughout the sections above that rather than an independent or exclusively agent-based perspective (e.g. Aberdeen 2010), virtue argumentation may develop more fruitfully in recognition of the interdependence of the argumentative process and the agent (Oruç et al. 2023). This suggests the importance of the process whereby arguments are offered to bring about the goals set for a particular encounter. The argumentative process, regulated by norms to a more or lesser extent, is home to a series of crucial choices that may facilitate or hinder the cultivation of argumentative virtues. This section provides an outline of the options that need to be considered, tested, and innovated for a design work in argumentative encounters.

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<sup>25</sup> For more details and information: <https://munazara.ihu.edu.tr/en/paper-on-debate-formats-6472866c5915f>

The options listed below are considered as the key dimensions for decision in the design of a munāzara encounter. Some of them are consensual among the research group while others refer to a yet completely uncharted territory in the decision process. We start from those that are rather consensual for Munāzara experimentations (5.1 to 5.4) and substantiate our preferences in each dimension. We leave the dimensions that are yet not decided upon (5.5 to 5.9) to the end of this section, as those require more research and experimentation that cannot be covered in this document. This means that the list below is organized in a continuum from the most well-established decision to the most open to debate.

### *5.1. Number of debaters involved in one motion*

The Munāzara Engagement Model offers a one on one debate. In each munāzara, the two participants take the roles of the protagonist (justification, affirmative) and one antagonist (question, negative) in turn.

The one on one model differs from the vast majority of contemporary debate models; it allows for a better fit between argumentative conduct, procedural innovation, and critical/ethical training.

### *5.2. Goal of the argumentative procedure*

Munāzara is an exhaustion-directed debate model. It comprises different goals that belong to different dialogue types (Walton and Krabbe 1995) – inquiry, deliberation, persuasion – but the ultimate goal of the parties is to test the truth of the arguments offered to the given motion. This critical testing goal applies to both participants, i.e., it is their shared goal and responsibility. Their simultaneous idiosyncratic goal is to observe their own conduct in a way to learn from their entrenched habits and liabilities.

One key innovation over the classical Munāzara is to recognize the goal of *manifestation* in relation to the *critical testing* of truth. This transformation represents the reconciliation of the classical Munāzara with contemporary debate models, where the former was (overly) cooperative and the latter are (overly) adversarial. In this regard, the Munāzara Engagement Model is an attempt to balance the cooperative and adversarial ideals of argumentation, and aims to train debaters who will be able to attain such a balance.

### *5.3. Organization/limitation of turns*

Munāzara is an extension-based debate model. This means that the moves of the parties are limited not just by time, but also and mainly by the number of steps that can be taken. By limiting the number of moves each turn, the Munāzara Engagement Model orients the participants to an intense and diligent argumentative interaction, where argument extension is carried out by questioning – at the will of the antagonist – of each move one-by-one.

While taking stock of her work on natural argumentation in everyday conversation, Jackson (2015) offers the view of a debate as “expansion around disagreement”, a sort of a movement pivoting on an initial disagreement “which is situated within a vast terrain of taken-for-granted agreement” (p. 246). Munāzara makes explicit that the mentioned “expansion” – read extension of arguments – is a couples-dance of sorts, where two speakers collaboratively “regard” and

explore the horizons of their disagreement space, trying to land on the vast terrain of agreement without sliding into a quarrel or a power-flexing game.

We are aware that permissive time limits – such as 6 or 8 minutes – are useful for building a “case” with all the benefits of complex argumentative relations, strategies, and styles. It must also be noted however that those benefits fall mostly on the first speaker; and to deal with this advantage, contemporary debate models that operate with permissive time limits employ POIs and cross-examinations (see Section 4), mostly allowed only after the first two minutes of the protagonist's turn, or after the proper turns. In this regard, the Munāzara Engagement Model basically takes all restrictions that apply the antagonist's POIs away, permitting them to question any statement by the protagonist anytime. Thereby, extensions that may otherwise be carried out by the protagonist alone in establishing their case are “opened” along the “dialectical tier” (Johnson, 2003) to the critical reflection of the antagonist.<sup>26</sup>

When considering limitation of argumentative moves, an absolute minimum can be, e.g., one justificatory premise (by the protagonist) or one counterexample (by the antagonist) only. Without due experimentation to compare the affordances of different time constraints, a rudimentary absolute time limit to allow just that kind of minimal moves can be around one minute. Permitting at least the protagonist's initial framing turn to involve more than one inferential move may have its advantages, and empirical work may provide the just time-limitations in accordance with different external objectives.

#### *5.4. Guidelines for argumentative conduct*

As all debate models, Munāzara Model offers a set of rules to regulate argumentative turn-taking. Munāzara's difference is to combine the well-established critical thinking objectives and criteria with ethical conduct objectives and criteria. The basic insights in this regard – from the Munāzara tradition – can be regarded as a set of procedural rules whose breach indicates a degree of proneness to argumentative vices (see Section 3 and Appendix). This certainly does not mean to judge the debaters – persons, broadly – by single argumentative action, nor to equate the derailments from an ideal procedure with argumentative vices. Some useful keywords in the complex connection between the argumentative procedure and virtues/vices may be repetition, acquisition, and edification.

This means to say munāzara has clear pedagogical aspirations and uses. To emphasize once again, munāzara's primary goal is *not* to distribute or cut points according to the observance of a set of procedural rules. It is rather to offer a playground – a dojo – for debaters to observe their own argumentative conduct and liabilities, learn from their mistakes, and train their ethical and argumentative skills, while helping their contender do the same. The guidelines offered are thus flexible to some extent, e.g., they do not apply equally to beginners and advanced debaters. For a basic understanding of such guidelines, see the Ten Commandments of the Pragma-Dialectical school (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004), V-Rules as thick descriptions of virtues (Thorson,

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<sup>26</sup> The main issue regarding the limitation of turns – potentially – to individual moves concerns the “vast terrain” of agreement mentioned above, which grounds both the argumentative interaction and the ethical training. But what happens when the terrain of agreement is not so vast? What will become of an attempt at munāzara when the assumed grounds are not there? We return to this question in the concluding section. For now, it suffices to recognize that decisions on this dimension may vary depending on the depth (Fogelin, 2005) of particular disagreements, in a way to get more permissive in time constraints as disagreements get deeper.

2016), Taskopruzade's Treatise on Ethics of Munāzara (Arif, 2020), and the Appendix to this document.

### 5.5. *Detachment from values*

The virtue perspective embedded in Munāzara is based on the idea that the procedure and the agent are interdependent and co-constitutive. As such, the Munāzara Model presupposes each argumentative move as rooted in the relationship between one's values (commitments beyond one context) and positions (commitments in a particular motion). In other words, MEM can be used to train one's own argumentative behavior and virtues as one's own commitments. The "switch-side" or "role-play" of competitive debate formats does not seem suitable for Munāzara style engagements and cultivation of virtues.

That said, it is difficult to ignore both practical and ethical considerations from the competitive debate practices<sup>27</sup> and from the literature (De Conti 2013) on the issue of value detachment. These lessons basically suggest that a debate model committed to non-detachment is prone to unwittingly contribute to polarization and dichotomization around contested values. The issue of no-detachment from one's values then appears as a risk the Munāzara Engagement Model may test and perhaps eventually refrain from.

There are also serious problems in practical implementation of no-detachment from the perspective of the organizer of any competition. For any choice of topic how does one choose parties that subscribe to opposite sides of the given topic? What if both competitors have an inclination towards the same side? How would one then go about creating neat/clear opposition for the purposes of competition? Further, and perhaps most importantly, when "persons" are involved in debate, together with ideas and positions, the community consequences are largely unknown. Even as an illusion, the notion of value-detachment seems as a principle guiding the debate communities to notions of truth, procedure, and questioning, and the vast intersubjective playground opened with switching sides.

Still, the key assertion in favor of value-detachment – that putting oneself in another's shoes promotes openness and empathy – is questionable. Arguably, it is the very value-detachment and appearance of impartiality that has made the legal profession so notorious. The 21st century lawyer, if human, is derided for a detachment from any concern for the client's guilt, which resembles mercenary callousness. Furthermore, such behavior performed for an extended duration might well entrench apathy for moral viewpoints.

The issue of value detachment requires more attention than can be offered in this document. For the time being, a model of partial detachment is regarded as most suitable for the preliminary Munāzara Engagement Model. This means that the Model being developed is committed in the long run to personalized – or, in person – inquiry and argumentation, but also will employ value detachment as a practice for who needs it (to train the capacity to take the place of the Other). A concrete idea is to start by following existing debate models, employing value-detachment for the introductory level munāzaras, and develop a "personalized" Munāzara for the advanced level, if debaters develop certain basic virtues in facing opponents.

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<sup>27</sup> Please see <https://munazara.ihu.edu.tr/en/abdul-lateef-and-mizan-binti-muhammed>

American Parliamentary debate format's outstanding innovation "case debate" can be a source of inspiration at this point (see [Position Paper](#)). In case debate, the proposition has the right to bring its case of choice and the opposition learns about the case during the tournament. This means that, practically, there will be no need for parties with opposite views – in the case debate format, the opposing team has no time to prepare, and will remain mostly as the testing side, i.e., doubting, rebutting, refuting.

#### *5.6. Regulating sequencing strictly to a greater or lesser extent*

As discussed in Section 3, sequencing of the available argumentative moves is integral to Munāzara. Application of this integral aspect however may depend on the experience of those involved, as well as the circumstances of the discussion – face-to-face verbal exchange, pedagogical exercise, online text-based interaction, mediated debate, etc.

With regard to the experience of the debaters, at the introductory level, sequencing may be seen as an exercise, at the intermediate level it may be applied as a procedural strict rule upon which the debate will be judged, and at the advanced level it may be taken as optional. In other words, at first, sequencing is to be understood and incorporated, next, it should be practiced and differentiated, and finally, the – ethics of – decision to sequence their moves is left to the debater.

With regard to the circumstances, it may suffice to distinguish for the time being online and face-to-face interaction: recognizing that online textual interaction gives the debaters more time and space to reflect on and prepare their moves, sequencing may apply more strictly in online encounters, while the limited resources associated with face-to-face encounters may suggest diminished – and, advanced level – use of sequencing.

#### *5.7. Use opening and concluding stages*

The opening stage of a debate, before the proper argumentation stage, can be regarded as a requirement, especially when the debaters come from different backgrounds and establishing the grounds – points of agreement and thus the precise terms and meaning of disagreement – is a necessity to be able to even have a reasonable discussion.

The concluding stage of a debate, once the argumentative exchange proper is finished, can be regarded as a requirement, especially when debaters are expected to draw lessons from the encounter and their place in it, and share their meta-reflections without any pressure whatsoever by the procedure and the judges.

Both the opening and the concluding stages however pose considerable practical challenges, in terms of organization, time allocation, and evaluation. Take the radical example of online debate, where even the best efforts for the realization of the two stages could not even approximate the interaction required for a mutual understanding and common vision. As it is easy to imagine munāzaras – with different goals – both with and without the opening and the concluding stages, different applications and organizations should be encouraged to experiment with different stages.

#### *5.8. Distinguishing rules for beginners and advanced debaters*



As indicated in sections 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7, the application of many of the discussed choices requires a distinction between debates with regard to the experience involved in them. Three types of debaters – and three set of rules that apply to the debates – may be the simplest way to describe the levels of Munāzara: novice, intermediate, and advanced.

It is not helpful to speculate, without any empirical evidence or observation, about what rules may yield what sorts of pedagogical outcomes. Further, it is not even evident whether the three proposed levels – beginner, intermediate, and advanced – are adequate. While empirical research, testing, and participant observation – at the beginner level – would offer some insights our initial proposal can be summarized as follows: The three sequences mentioned in Section 3 may be introduced and experimented with at the beginner level, Sequence 1 can be obligatory at the intermediate level, and at the advanced level, we could expect our *munazir(s)* to choose their sequences based on situated concerns that can then be reflected upon.

#### *5.9. Deciding the winner, judging, mediating*

Munāzara Model distinguishes itself from other available models especially with regard to the competitiveness involved in debate. The main challenge for Munāzara is setting forth the alternative criteria for earning “points”, distributing them to cooperative and competitive tasks simultaneously, and further, to reward the virtuous moves – or, rather, to penalize the vicious moves. The many variables involved in such a venture require rigorous testing, and to identify the starting points and preliminary variables for such a testing procedure requires further research. Therefore, the testing phase for Munāzara competitions will draw primarily on, and depart from, existing practices. This means to suggest, for starters, working with expert/professional debaters as judges: detailed proposals for testing a pointing system could be achieved with experience in the field and with the expertise in judging. We thus recognize the need to work with expert debaters and coaches, especially with a background on British Parliamentary Format.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper we tried to establish the important role of ethics in the theory and practice of argumentation. Modern argumentation theories rely on norms of reasoning, discussion, and persuasiveness to assess the phenomenon of argumentation, but these norms do not make a direct and explicit reference to ethical obligations, dispositions, or intentions. And in competitive and public debate, the intangible components of argumentative disposition and intention are given a backseat, in contrast to the tangible act-based components of speech and delivery.

In Part I of the paper, we drew on the munāzara tradition to introduce and develop sequencing and derailment as central syntactical-nodes in the complex phenomenon of argumentation, ones that exhibit the interconnections between the arguer and the act of arguing. The paper also showed how sequencing- and derailment-based norms, transcend any strict dichotomy between the agent and the procedure. Consequently, the procedure and the agent are so intertwined that a failure in one is a failure in the other. Crucially, these norms are ethical in character and respectively reflect an ethic of cooperation and an ethic of reciprocity, each of which have an external and an internal dimension. Therefore, just like an argument assessment framework that strictly separates act- from agent-based norms, or that prioritizes one over the other, is at best

one-sided and incomplete, a debate practice that ignores sequencing and derailments would be ignoring both, important tools for evaluating how ethical was a debater's argumentative behavior in a given debate, as well as helpful resources for training debaters to behave in more ethical ways during a debate. This was the subject matter of Part II.

The driving motivation of this paper was to reframe the role of ethics in argumentation as the primary means of addressing disagreement, deep or other. Our suggested munāzara-inspired alternative framework takes shape in MEM, which is designed to nurture both practical and epistemic virtues. This nurturing process promotes intellectual rigor and ethical interaction through the performance of *ādāb*, manifesting practical and epistemic virtues in the conduct of Munāzara. Through this structured procedural approach, MEM aims to create not just a productive platform for debate, but an educational environment that helps debaters attain the dispositions of a *munazir*.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Preliminary MEM simulation guide for novices and judging criteria: <https://shorturl.at/uYZ23>

## APPENDIX

### Preliminary *Munāzara Engagement Model* protocol

1. MEM outlines three main roles: the proponent, the opponent, and the judge. The proponent defends the motion<sup>29</sup> while the opponent questions it.
  - 1.1. For a more robust dialogue, the parties are required to face and address each other, rather than performing on a podium or addressing the judges.
  - 1.2. Allocation of the roles of proponent and opponent is arbitrary, meaning that the debaters do not necessarily hold personal beliefs aligning with the stance they represent. This practice encourages intellectual flexibility and the ability to empathize with multiple perspectives, an essential facet of intellectual honesty.
2. There are two types of motions: practical and epistemic.
  - 2.1. The first motion type focuses on practical matters, addressing questions about what actions should be taken or the best course of action in a specific situation. The questions should in principle be relevant to important societal issues, contemporary events and developments.
    - 2.1.1. These motions should be in the form of policy proposals, such as “We should do...” or “In such circumstances, one should do...”.
  - 2.2. The second motion type deals with epistemic issues, which are largely theoretical, philosophical, or conceptual. These motions aim at gaining a deeper understanding of a clearly delimited and particular subject in a way to clarify the knowledge available on that subject.
    - 2.2.1. These motions should pertain to abstract concepts, academic theories, or complex philosophical questions, and should be in the form of “We believe that...” or “It is reasonable to believe that...”.
3. In the run-up to a *Munāzara* tournament, a list of possible motions is announced in a way to offer the participants some time for initial preparations. The specific motion to be debated in each round is revealed 15 minutes before the round, giving parties time to prepare.
4. A *Munāzara* unfolds over three distinct stages, each contributing towards the cultivation of targeted virtues:
5. *Opening Stage*: should take a maximum of 10-minutes and aim to achieve consensus on the resolution that will provide the basis for the argumentation stage.

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<sup>29</sup> The concept of “motion” comes from the contemporary debate tournament terminology. Well-known alternatives are standpoint, claim, or thesis (see [Position Paper](#)).

- 5.1. The proponent lays the ground for the debate by defining the terms and delineating the specific context of the motion. And what if she takes 9 minutes to do that?
  - 5.2. The opponent engages by asking for clarification or offering corrections, with each discussion move not exceeding 1 minute.
  - 5.3. Both parties then have a 3-minute consultation with each other before jointly presenting their resolution within 1 minute. Clarity and respect are the cornerstones of *ādāb* in this stage.
6. *The Argumentation Stage*: serves as a minutely designed space for developing and engaging with arguments, specifically designed to promote intellectual rigor and precision in analysis, and respectful engagement with the opposing party.
- 6.1. A maximum of 20 minutes is allotted to this stage, and each individual move—be it presenting an argument, raising an objection, or charging a refutation—has an absolute limit of one minute.
  - 6.2. The participants are encouraged to see their turns not as short speeches, but as a space for a move required at the specific juncture of the unfolding debate. They are expected to practice *'ijāz* – the virtue of succinctness – in managing their time, and act according to the requirements of the argumentative encounter.

The stage is initiated by the proponent, who presents an argument for the motion with premises leading to a well-defined conclusion.

The opponent critically questions the proponent's argument. This critical testing may take three main forms: (a) raising an objection to individual premises, (b) charging the overall argument with a deficiency-charge, or (c) introducing a counter-argument to the motion.

Responding to the opponent's moves, the proponent defends their position. If objections are raised, they either (d) uphold their premise against the objection or (e) formulate a new argument for the same motion that is void of the objection. Should an inconsistency-charge be levied against their argument, (f) they present new arguments for the motion that avoid the stated inconsistency. If faced with a counter-argument, the proponent now assumes the role of the opponent, critically testing the offered counter-argument with objections, refutations, and eventually, counter-arguments.

Throughout this stage, the primary goal is manifesting the *ādāb* through the argumentative conduct. To this primary end, the Munazir is expected to remain focused on understanding (*fahm*) the motion and contributing towards a mutual understanding (*tafhim*), rather than on 'winning' or 'exposing' the opposing side.

7. *Concluding Stage*: In this final 4-minute stage, both the proponent and the opponent reflect on the outcomes of the argumentation stage, assessing the strengths of their arguments. Each side is allowed 2 minutes of discussion, during which intellectual honesty, humility and fair-mindedness are of utmost importance as the participants engage in *ilzām* (by the proponent) or *ifhām* (by the proponent), offering a sincere meta-reflection on the argumentation stage. In this stage, participants are neither supposed to offer new arguments nor make a case for why their side of the motion has better arguments. Instead, they are supposed to assess the entire engagement that took place in the Argumentation Stage. Participants can offer their assessment and justify why they think their own engagement, or that of their opponent, is better. Alternatively, they could simply admit defeat or register any change of mind or position.
8. The role of the judge is to oversee the debate to ensure that it adheres to the outlined structure and principles, and to assess the overall Munāzara in its three stages.

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