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Sequencing Critical Moves for Ethical Argumentation Practice: Munāẓara and the Interdependence of Procedure and Agent

Séquençage des mouvements critiques pour la pratique de l'argumentation éthique : Munāẓara et l'interdépendance de la procédure et de l'agent

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Article abstract

The aim of this paper is to highlight an interdependence between procedural and agential norms that undermines their neat separation when appraising argumentation. Drawing on the munāẓara tradition, we carve a space for sequencing in argumentation scholarship. Focusing on the antagonist's sequencing of critical moves, we identify each sequence's corresponding values of argumentation: coalescence, reliability, and efficacy. These values arise through the mediation of virtues and simultaneously underpin procedural as well as agential norms. Consequently, an ambiguity between procedure and agent becomes apparent. This ambiguity hints at the potential for a virtue theory of argumentation that draws on procedural norms.

Sequencing Critical Moves for Ethical Argumentation Practice: Munāẓara and the Interdependence of Procedure and Agent

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to highlight an interdependence between procedural and agential norms that undermines their neat separation when appraising argumentation. Drawing on the *munāẓara* tradition, we carve a space for *sequencing* in argumentation scholarship. Focusing on the antagonist's sequencing of critical moves, we identify each sequence's corresponding values of argumentation: coalescence, reliability, and efficacy. These values arise through the mediation of virtues and simultaneously underpin procedural as well as agential norms. Consequently, an ambiguity between procedure and agent becomes apparent. This ambiguity hints at the potential for a virtue theory of argumentation that draws on procedural norms.

Résumé: L'objectif de cet article est de mettre en évidence une interdépendance entre les normes procédurales et agentielles qui mine leur séparation nette lors de l'évaluation de l'argumentation. En nous appuyant sur la tradition munāẓara, nous créons un espace pour le séquençage dans les publications sur l'argumentation. En nous concentrant sur l'enchaînement des mouvements critiques de l'antagoniste, nous identifions la valeur d'argumentation correspondante de chaque séquence : coalescence, fiabilité et efficacité. Ces valeurs naissent par la médiation des vertus et sous-tendent simultanément les normes procédurales et agentielles. Par conséquent, une ambiguïté entre la procédure et l'agent devient apparente. Cette ambiguïté suggère le développement d'une théorie de la vertu de l'argumentation qui s'appuie sur les normes procédurales

Keywords: sequencing, critical moves, values of argumentation, *munāẓara*, argumentative virtues and vices

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1. Introduction[1]

Having been developed based on several core components—product, procedure, agent—contemporary argumentation appraisal draws on three types of norms. The first and most widely recognized type relates to the notion of good argument (Godden 2016). *Product-based norms* are applied to individual arguments, argument schemes, or inferential relations. Drawing primarily on product-based norms, the epistemological approach to argumentation takes propositions as the unit of analysis (Lumer 2005a, 2005b) and examines their truth or falsity as abstract objects (Biro and Siegel 2006). The second type concerns the act of arguing. *Procedure-based norms* arise from a concern for arguing well (Godden 2016) and not derailing from the requirements of critical rationality (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003). The pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation represents this activity-based approach. Highlighting an ambiguity between the product and the process, this approach does not construe arguments as "mental processes but as made up from statements that create public commitments." (Garssen and van Laar 2010, p. 124). Lastly, the third type of norms pertains to the good arguer. While *agent-based norms* are less established than the previous two types, a sizable and growing debate in argumentation theory emphasizes the arguer as the locus of normativity. However, despite the recent focus on the arguer's virtues and under the assumption that virtues of argumentation only derive from arguers (Aberdein 2010, 2014; Aberdein and Cohen 2016), little is settled as to what agent-based norms are and how they can be scrutinized.

In this paper, we attend to the connection between procedural and agential norms, and our aim is to show their interdependence hence paving the way for the development of a virtue theory of argumentation that draws on the agent's procedural options and choices. We do so by drawing on a largely forgotten theory of argumentation that emerged in the Muslim world at the end of the 13th century: *Ādāb al-Baḥth wa-l-Munāẓara*—literally, the manners of inquiry and argumentation (El-Rouayheb 2015; Belhaj 2016). Our turn to the *munāẓara* tradition

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serves two purposes. The first is to spotlight the *sequencing* of critical moves when discussing the normative foundations of argumentation. The second is to analyze three sequences that *munāẓara* scholars have prescribed for the antagonist to be a good and a virtuous arguer—these are recommendations on how they ought to order their critical moves. It is through the latter analysis that we proclaim the interdependence of procedural and agential norms. There are several steps to this proclamation. After introducing the critical moves considered legitimate in *munāẓara*, we identify the three sequences prescribed for the antagonist to follow (see sections 2 and 3 below). We then examine the justifications that scholars offered in defense of their preferred sequences. Through this examination, we identify the values that ground the respective recommendations. In a last step, we argue that these *values of argumentation* simultaneously bring into play procedural as well as agential norms.

It is rather surprising that despite the predominance of dialogical and dialectical approaches, contemporary scholarship has not yet adequately examined sequencing as a central component of argumentation nor appreciated its normative implications for a theory of argumentation. There are a couple of exceptions, however. 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). In fact, Lumer's claim is that prescribing sequences should be avoided given their complexities (Lumer 1988, p. 457). As we hope to show, there is some space for disagreement with such avoidance, a space that can be productive for further developing a virtue theory of argumentation. 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). Krabbe and van Laar (2011) propose four parameters for understanding and analyzing critical reactions in an argumentative encounter. What interests us here is the focus and illocutionary force of critical reactions. The focus of a critical reaction denotes its addressivity, and it may be a claim or one of the premises. The illocutionary force is the interactional outcome of a critical reaction, such as giving advice or demanding certain action. We find these inquiries to

be a helpful step in the right direction and hope to foreground the untapped potential by taking several further steps. By and large, sequencing is a blind spot in the contemporary argumentation scholarship.

There are four sections to this paper. Section 1 is a rough overview of *munāẓara* that glances over a sophisticated model for argumentative engagements that presupposed complex interconnections between product-based, procedure-based, and agent-based norms. Section 2 introduces and explains the three legitimate critical moves available to the antagonist that the *munāẓara* tradition identified (objection, refutation, and counter-argument). Section 3 examines the justifications *munāẓara* scholars offered in defense of prescribing one sequencing rather than another. In total, we consider three recommended sequences, and by examining their respective justifications, we identify their corresponding values of argumentation (coalescence, reliability, and efficacy). Section 4 argues that values of argumentation are, on the one hand, reflected and expressed in the ordering of critical moves and, on the other hand, enjoy a symbiotic relationship with the arguer. It is here that we flesh out the interdependence between procedure and agent and its contributions for an agent-based theory of argumentation. In the conclusion, we take stock and make use of our looking back at the *munāẓara* tradition by way of suggesting where argumentation theory could further investigate as it looks ahead.

2. *Munāẓara*: Strict procedural norms in service of ethical argumentative conduct

The first work that bears the title *Ādāb al-Baḥth wa-l-Munāẓara* is a 13th century epistle written by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī (1934). Samarqandī (d. 1302) is considered the founder of the *munāẓara* tradition (see Güney 2010; Young 2018) that flourished between the 14th and 20th centuries (El-Rouayheb 2015; Arif 2020). *Munāẓara*—literally meaning 'regarding-together' or 'joint-reasoning'—grew out of *jadal*, a discipline that governed how Muslim scholars conducted their theological and jurisprudential debates. Samarqandī's historic contribution was to remold *jadal* in such a way that its principles can now be applied to a variety of fields of study, including philosophy and law. '*Ādāb*,' '*baḥth*,' and '*munāẓara*' connote agent-based, product-based, and procedure-based norms respectively: '*ādāb*'

indicates virtuous conduct, '*baḥth*' indicates inquiry, and '*munāẓara*' indicates argumentative engagement. Whereas inquiry (*baḥth*) refers specifically to the justification of a conclusion through propositions, argumentation (*munāẓara*) refers to the critical engagement[2] between a protagonist and an antagonist. That said, it is important to note that *baḥth* and *munāẓara* can be used interchangeably (al-Jaunpūrī 2006, p. 12) since an inquiry is not conclusive unless the related moves of the protagonist are tested with the critical engagement of the antagonist (see Johnson 2012, 2003).

Samarqandī's newly developed model was so influential that it quickly dominated how argumentation was construed and practiced (Pehlivan and Ceylan 2015). In this new and field-independent theory of argumentation, arguments were categorized into 'necessary' and 'presumable.' Necessary arguments were those that can be traced back to an incontrovertible starting point, such as sensory perception or unambiguous cultural norms. Many presumable arguments, on the other hand, are 'practical' in the sense that it is not possible to ground them on indisputable foundations. The *munāẓara* literature is divided in its appraisal of presumable arguments. One side admits a multiplicity of truth; in essence, that more than one argument can be valid and sound. The other side, and notwithstanding the lack of proof in matters of presumption, argues that only one argument can be valid and sound (al-Dabūsī 2001).

The underlying goal in *munāẓara* is the manifestation of truth/justice (*iẓhār al-ḥaqq*) (Gelenbevī 1934, p. 37), which should not be construed in strictly epistemic terms. As the 19th century scholar and statesman Cevdet Paşa explains, in *munāẓara*, moving towards the manifestation of truth/justice is more valuable than winning an argumentative exchange where the winner is the one who has the better argument (1998, p. 102; see also Faytre, 2018). It would be misguided

[2] Although Samarqandī treated argumentation as an 'appendage' to logic (al-Samarqandī 2014, p. 500), later scholars emphasized the conceptual differences between the two. Without denying the dependence of argumentation on logic, the point was to insist on demarcating argumentation from logic on the grounds that argumentation's unit of analysis is critical and interactive moves between a protagonist and an antagonist, whereas the unit of analysis of logic is individual arguments (al-Āmidī 1900, p. 7).

to interpret Cevdet Paşa's (1998) claim as implying or harboring a devaluing of inquiry or epistemic values. A more accurate interpretation would be that Cevdet Paşa acknowledges the fundamental role epistemic values have in argumentation while being fully aware that having the better argument is neither the only nor the most important consideration as far as the manifestation of truth/justice is concerned. This raises the question of what *munāẓara* scholars depended on in addition to epistemic values given that the latter is neither sufficient nor primary in moving towards the manifestation of truth/justice.

A defining feature of *munāẓara* that is also at the heart of answering the question at hand is a strict regulatory procedure that determines the moves of contending parties at different junctures of an argumentative engagement (Ṭāshkubrīzāde 2012, p. 7; see also: Taiai and Oruç 2021). To put it differently—using the words of Gelenbevī, an Ottoman mathematician, logician, and theologian—in the process of argumentation "it is not important through whose voice truth manifests" (1934, p. 33). The strict regulatory procedure was intended and designed to ensure that contending parties approach and enact argumentation as a joint performance for the achievement of a common goal.[3] According to this view, without strict procedural norms, the speakers' engagement may turn out to be merely quarreling rather than argumentation. The fairly rigid and detailed turn-taking procedure is used for distinguishing proper from improper argumentative manners and enhancing virtuous conduct. The rules and manners set for the *munāẓara* procedure were thus thought to earn one the title of an arguer (*munāẓir*) rather than a quarreler (*mujādil*) (al-Āmidī 1900, p. 9; Gelenbevī 1934, p. 33). Earning the attribute of a proper arguer required a thorough study of the science of argumentation and a sustained exercise of its procedure to

[3] To put it in Lumer's terms, *munāẓara* incorporates an 'external goal' achieved through meeting product-based norms, as well as an 'internal goal' achieved through meeting procedure-based norms (1998, pp. 445-448). The internal goal concerns the rules of the argumentative encounter (e.g., critically testing a claim C), whereas the external goal concerns the motivation for engaging in an argument (e.g., resolution of a difference of opinion). Corresponding to these two goals, Lumer (1988) distinguishes between the external function of disputation (to cooperatively check a claim via justifying and doubting arguments) and the internal function of disputation (to arrive at a consensus on the acceptability of a claim and the arguments, where acceptability refers to "truth, probability, or verisimilitude" and is determined by the rules of monological argumentation (p. 442).

the point that both product and procedural norms became the arguer's dispositional characteristics (Arif 2020, p. 193).

Even after such a brief presentation of *munāẓara*, one can get a glimpse of a sophisticated model for argumentative engagements that presupposes complex interconnections between product-based, procedure-based, and agent-based norms. In this paper our focus will be on the link between the procedural and the agential. This link is maybe most apparent in how the *munāẓara* tradition conceived of derailments from its prescribed procedures. *Munāẓara* scholars thought of such derailments in terms of character failures and referred to them as argumentative vices. The literature deals specifically with four vices: doubting an incontrovertible premise without offering a supporting argument is considered arrogance (*mukābara*) (Āmidī 1900, p. 58); insisting on a claim without offering a supporting argument is classified as subjugation (*taḥakkum*) (Cevdet Paşa 1998, p. 112); counter arguing a not-yet-defended claim is described as usurpation (ġaṣb); and counter arguing a protagonist's claim right from the get-go is labeled as hastiness (*'ucūl*) (Cevdet Paşa 1998, p. 112).

Accordingly, our focus on the antagonist's sequencing of critical moves in the following sections treats prescribed *munāẓara* sequences as normative blueprints for well-founded inquiry as well as virtuous argumentative conduct. In the next section, we present the different types of critical moves available to the antagonist and introduce the three different sequences that *munāẓara* scholars prescribed for the antagonist to abide by for cogent inquiry and virtuous conduct.

3. Three critical moves and three sequences

Samarqandī (1934) conceived of an argumentative encounter as unfolding over three stages. In the 'opening' stage, basic terminologies are agreed upon; in the 'argumentation' stage, claims are set forth, examined, and defended; and in the 'conclusion' stage, one of the contending parties is compelled to remain silent in the face of a successful defense or attack. Our concern is with three *types* of responses that *munāẓara* scholars have designated for the antagonist in their encounter with the protagonist during the argumentation stage: objection, refutation, and counter-argument. Throughout the paper, we refer to these types of responses as *critical moves*. These moves are critical in the

sense that each calls into question the merits of a different aspect of the protagonist's argument. What are, in more exact terms, these critical moves?

Critical move 1

Objection (*man'*). This move casts doubt on a premise in the protagonist's argument. The illocutionary force of 'objection' is asking for support in defense of one of the premises (al-Āmidī 1900, p. 29; see also Krabbe and van Laar 2011, p. 213). An antagonist could express doubt about one of their opponent's premises without backing it up. That would be a 'sheer-objection' (*man' al-mucarrad*). Alternatively they could opt for doubting a premise together with backing that doubt up. That would be a 'backed-objection' (*man' al-mustanad*). Significantly, *munāẓara* scholars agreed that a backed-objection does not involve an argument; that is, the 'backing' cannot take the form of premises leading to a conclusion. Samarqandī distinguished three forms of backed-objection: questioning-objection, conditional-objection, and corrective-objection. In these cases, the antagonist could, for instance, back her doubt by making an observation, a comment, or introducing a piece of information that questions the acceptability of a premise in the protagonist's argument (al-Samarqandī 1934, p. 126; see. Krabbe and van Laar 2011, p. 213). In short, by resorting to the critical move of objection, the antagonist chooses to engage in checking the acceptability of the premises in their opponent's argument, without offering an argument themselves.

Critical move 2

Refutation (*naqḍ*). Whereas objection addresses the premises of the protagonist's argument, refutation addresses the overall argument—it points to some sort of deficiency that calls into question the merits of the argument as a whole, rather than its individual premises or its conclusion. When advancing a refutation, the antagonist is bound to submit evidence (al-Samarqandī 1934, p. 127). For instance, the antagonist might show that the protagonist's conclusion does not follow from the premises of their argument (al-Samarqandī 1934, p. 127) or that the argument is otherwise fallacious (see. van Laar and Krabbe 2013, p. 204). To be sure, it is logically possible for an argument to be deficient

while its conclusion is true. Thus, the illocutionary force of 'refutation' is not powerful enough to deny the protagonist's claim (al-Samarqandī 1934, p. 126). However, it is powerful enough to corner the protagonist and require that they either overcome the deficiency in question or offer another argument that is free from deficiencies in support of the same claim. At this point, the burden of proof might shift if the protagonist, for instance, engages with the refutation by objecting to it. In short, by resorting to the critical move of refutation, the antagonist chooses to engage in checking for deficiencies in their opponent's argument.[4]

Critical move 3

Counter-argument (*muʿāraḍa*). Unlike the previous two critical moves, 'counter-argument' directly addresses the protagonist's claim or the conclusion of their argument. It calls into question the protagonist's claim by offering an argument whose conclusion is in contradiction with that claim. With this critical move, the antagonist indicates that even though, or irrespective of whether, the protagonist's argument is free from deficiencies, there still is not sufficient evidence to believe or comply with the conclusion of that argument (al-Samarqandī 1934, p. 126). In *munāẓara* terminology, this move implicitly grants the protagonist's *dalīl* (the argument—an evidence or proof) but rejects its *madlūl* (the demonstrandum—what is argued for or proven).[5] Significantly, after the antagonist offers a counter-argument, the burden of proof shifts. The illocutionary force of 'counter-argument' requires the

[4] The reader might wonder about the usage of 'deficiency' instead of 'relevance.' The latter, like 'acceptability' and 'sufficiency,' is in line with the seminal RSA model for evaluating (certain) arguments introduced and defended by Johnson and Blair (2006/1977). Our reason for doing so is simply that *munāẓara* scholars have included certain failures of an argument as a whole that are not a matter of 'relevance.' One example is the charge that an argument implies an infinite regress. Such a charge counts as a refutation since it calls into question the merits of the argument as a whole, rather than its individual premises or its conclusion. Faced with such a charge, the protagonist can either show that this regress is not fallacious or offer a new argument for the same conclusion.

[5] The term *madlūl* has the same root as argument (*dalīl*). Literally, *madlūl* means 'proven.' We translate it as 'demonstrandum,' in essence, what is demonstrated, to convey the idea that what is claimed and what is demonstrated could be separate analytical units.

protagonist to show that the counter-argument contains unacceptable premises (by raising an objection) or suffers from some deficiency (by raising a refutation). In short, by resorting to the critical move of counter-argument, the antagonist chooses to engage in checking the sufficiency of their opponent's conclusion and by doing so the antagonist takes the role of a protagonist.

Munāẓara scholars have further distinguished various subcategories within each critical move and have offered subtle nuances between the different moves and their subcategories. What primarily interests us here are the critical moves and their associated illocutionary forces. Now, as far as argumentative encounters are concerned (rather than, say, quarreling ones), *munāẓara* scholars were in agreement that these three types of critical moves are exhaustive enough to catalog the antagonist's moves. Accordingly, any response an antagonist resorts to that does not fall within either objection, refutation, or counter-argument is deemed illegitimate. In *munāẓara*, the antagonist is only permitted to engage with the protagonist via acceptability-checking, deficiency-checking, or sufficiency-checking. A central point of contention among *munāẓara* scholars, however, concerned the recommended ordering of critical moves: the *sequencing.* They disagreed on how the antagonist ought to arrange the critical moves available to them such that they would be characterized as a good antagonist and a virtuous arguer.

It is crucial to keep in mind that the merits of sequencing hinges on the positioning of the different critical moves with respect to one another. That is, whether the placement of a critical move within a sequence is appropriate, prudent, skillful, vicious, or virtuous depends on the sequential relationships between the illocutionary force of that critical move, on the one hand, and the illocutionary forces of the critical moves that come before and/or after it, on the other hand. In that sense, a justification for preferring one sequencing over another is independent from whatever criteria one uses in order to determine whether a specific individual response counts as a strong or a weak objection, refutation, or counter-argument. In the following section, we will analyze the justifications that different *munāẓara* scholars offered for preferring one sequence over another. Our aim in that analysis is to make explicit values implicit in different sequencing recommendations. The sequences we analyze are:

1. Objection→ Refutation→ Counter-argument[6]
2. Refutation→ Objection→ Counter-argument[7]
3. Objection→ Counter-argument→ Refutation[8]

4. Sequencing and values of argumentation

In the previous section, we distinguished the three critical moves available to the antagonist and listed three recommended sequences that the *munāẓara* literature prescribes. Each sequence is a recommendation for how the antagonist ought to order her critical moves. As already mentioned, *munāẓara*'s strict regulatory procedure was intended and designed to ensure that contending parties approach and enact argumentation as a joint performance for moving towards the manifestation of truth/justice. In this way, the three sequences share the same aim, and in this sense, cooperation is the overarching value of argumentation that normatively grounds the different recommended sequences (see Stevens and Cohen 2019). What sets the recommendations apart, however, is *how* they promote cooperation. In this section, we will examine the justifications that *munāẓara* scholars provided for preferring one sequence over another. It is through such examination that we make apparent the different ways in which each recommendation sought to promote cooperation.

4.1. Justifying sequence 1 (objection→ refutation→ counter-argument)

This first sequencing is presented by Samarqandī (1934) and defended by Jurjānī (al-Jaunpūrī 2006). Samarqandī's (1934) prescription for how the antagonist ought to order their critical moves serves as the backdrop against which subsequent scholars articulated their respective recommendations. Concurring with Samarqandī's (1934) recommendation, Jurjānī confirmed that, after hearing the protagonist's argument, if the antagonist had to make a choice between the three legitimate critical moves, they should begin their critical engagement with

[6] Prescribed by Jurjānī (al-Jaunpūrī 2006, pp. 76-77)

[7] Prescribed by Mullā Ḥanafī (Mullā Ḥanafī 2014, pp. 40-41)

[8] Prescribed by Sāçaqlizāde (al-Āmidī 1900, p. 60)

an objection (al-Jaunpūrī 2006, p. 76). In support of this prioritization of objection, al-Jaunpūrī makes two points: First, unlike refutation and counter-argument, an objection can be raised before the protagonist's argument has been completed. Remember that the antagonist can raise an objection without backing it up. Objection is the least-demanding critical move. It is also the move with the weakest illocutionary force in that it simply requires the defense of a premise—it neither indicates a deficiency in the argument (refutation) nor threatens the claim (counter-argument). Second, and again unlike refutation and counter-argument, objection does not shift the burden of proof (al-Jaunpūrī 2006, p. 76). Al-Jaunpūrī goes on to clarify that according to Jurjanī, the initial duty of the antagonist is to question and seek information rather than to refute or provide a counter argument against her opponent's argument (2006, p. 76).

Starting with an objection, the antagonist attempts to ensure that the building blocks—the premises—of the argument under consideration are acceptable. The antagonist may attend to the argument as a whole and attempt refutation only if the protagonist has dealt with the objections. This is a stronger critical move since it requires that the protagonist either shows that the levied charge is superficial or offers another argument for the same claim. Nevertheless, refutation is not the strongest move since its success does not entail that the protagonist must abandon their claim. In the third and last step of Samarqandī's recommended sequence, and after the protagonist manages to show that her argument has acceptable premises and is free of deficiencies, the antagonist deploys their strongest move (1934, pp. 125-126). Counter-argument is the strongest move because, Jurjānī (al-Jaunpūrī 2006, p. 77) explains, it constitutes an attack not only on the protagonist's claim, but on their argument as a whole. Al-Jaunpūrī reiterates Jurjanī's claim saying, "Since counter-argument both serves as the negation of the argument and the demonstrandum, it is more powerful than refutation in attacking the protagonist's position" (al-Jaunpūrī 2006, p. 77). The idea here is that while a counter-argument directly negates the claim, it simultaneously, though indirectly, attacks the argument since a good argument should withstand counter-arguments. Faced with a counter-argument, the protagonist's only option to maintain her claim is to adopt the role of the antagonist and attempt to show that the counter-argument contains unacceptable premises (objecting)

or suffers from some deficiency (refuting). Failure to do so entails that the argument they originally provided is insufficient and thus they are not justified in continuing to hold onto it. We can represent this justification for sequence as follows:

weakest move→ stronger move→ strongest move

The question is: How does the progressive unfolding of critical moves from weakest to strongest promote cooperation? Samarqandī's recommendation begins with acceptability-checking, followed by deficiency-checking, and ends with sufficiency-checking. When the antagonist begins with an objection, they are questioning the blocks with which the given argument is built. In this way, they give the protagonist the opportunity to reflect on and identify weaknesses in the premises offered. Next, when the antagonist delivers their refutation, they prompt the protagonist to defend the reasoning that underlies their argument as a whole. In this way, they give the protagonist the opportunity to reflect and identify mistakes in their own reasoning process.

This first pair of critical moves (objection→ refutation) alerts the protagonist to their unreasonable premises and deficient reasoning. Had the antagonist begun with a counter-argument, the protagonist's opportunity to unravel weaknesses and mistakes would have been bypassed. It is only after the back and forth dictated by this first pair of critical moves has culminated that the antagonist may deploy their strongest move. Now the antagonist may challenge the protagonist by showing them that even though they have acceptable premises and a deficiency-free argument, they have not yet established that their claim is sufficiently credible.

The progressive ordering of critical moves from weakest to strongest opens up a communicative space of disagreement within which the protagonist is permitted and assisted by the antagonist to reflect on the acceptability of their premises and the deficiencies in their reasoning. Only then are they challenged to defend the sufficiency of their argument. Throughout this process, the antagonist engages the protagonist critically by respectively questioning the merits of their premises, their argument as a whole, and their conclusion. In this critical engagement, the antagonist is working *with*, not *against*, the protagonist. Samarqandī's sequencing of critical moves joins together the protagonist and

the antagonist in a collaborative endeavor to assess the worth of the premises, the cogency of the reasoning, and the dialogical plausibility of the claim. This may be called *coalescent-cooperation*, merging *munāẓara* contenders to achieve their common goal.

4.2 Justifying sequence 2 (refutation→ objection→ counter-argument)

The second sequence is prescribed by Mullā Ḥanafī (2014, p. 40-41). Mullā Ḥanafī does not comment much on the relationship between the second pair of critical moves in Samarqandī's recommendation (refutation→ counter-argument). Instead, his focus is on the ordering of the first pair (objection→ refutation). He argues for a swap: first begin with refutation and then turn to objection before closing with a counter-argument.

Mullā Ḥanafī (2014) criticizes al-Ījī (d. 1355), a proponent of Samarqandī's recommendation, for prioritizing objection over refutation. In his commentary on al-Ījī's short *munāẓara* epistle, he notes that placing refutation before objection is better suited to nature. Ṣabbān (2014), commenting on Mullā Ḥanafī's claim, explains that 'nature' here refers to the rules of argumentation. On his account, while refutation addresses the whole argument, objection addresses the premises, and attacking the argument is the '*faster*' route (Ṣabbān 2014, p. 131; emphasis added). It is the faster route in the sense that the antagonist is not to dwell on doubting premises (acceptability-checking) before first making sure that the argument they are to engage with is reasonable (deficiency-checking). Only after the antagonist ensures that the protagonist's argument as a whole is not fallacious or perniciously flawed do they turn to determining how worthy of adoption the premises are: Check the quality of reasoning first, then engage in determining the acceptability of the premises.

It is important to appreciate that Mullā Ḥanafī's (2014) recommendation for the antagonist is not a rejection of Samarqandī's original contribution. It is an adjustment of it. His lack of attention to Samarqandī's second pair attests to that. Furthermore, had Mullā Ḥanafī not been following Samarqandī's overall framework, it would have made more sense to skip objection altogether. But he does not. Consider the ramifications of beginning with refutation: If, on the one hand, the refutation is successful, then the protagonist is to offer a new argument

for the same claim. Consequently, the opportunity to check the acceptability of the premises of the protagonist's first argument via objection is lost. If, on the other hand, the refutation is not successful, then the protagonist's argument is deemed deficiency-free. Consequently, resorting to objection instead of counter-argument—Mullā Ḥanafī's (2014) recommendation—makes sense only if there is an overall commitment to cooperation. Without such a commitment, and after a failed refutation, it would be prudent for the antagonist to raise a counter-argument and threaten their opponent's conclusion instead of giving them the opportunity to further strengthen their deficiency-free argument by engaging in acceptability-checking. The implication of Mullā Ḥanafī's (2014) adjustment of Samarqandī's recommendation is that it makes acceptability-checking conditional upon reliability-checking. Significantly, the point of this reliability-condition is not to achieve flat prudence or mere efficiency but to filter out inferentially unreliable arguments. With this in mind, we can represent sequence 2 as follows:

filtering move→ weak move→ strong move

Mullā Ḥanafī's (2014) recommendation that the antagonist open with a filtering move expresses the importance he places on inferential reliability. The question is how that translates into the promotion of cooperation. Like Samarqandī's first pair (objection→ refutation), Mullā Ḥanafī's first pair of critical moves (refutation→ objection), function as an alert system for the protagonist. Unlike sequence 1, however, the ordering within the first pair in sequence 2 introduces a filter for assuring inferential reliability. Nevertheless, as in Samarqandī's recommendation, in Mullā Ḥanafī's (2014) sequencing, the antagonist resorts to the strongest move only after both deficiency and acceptability have been successfully checked. The similarities between sequences 1 and 2 should not distract us from appreciating the importance of the subtle adjustment that Mullā Ḥanafī's intervention introduces. Opening with a filtering move distorts sequence 1's progressive unfolding from the weakest to the strongest move and, as a result, diminishes coalescence as a value of argumentation. This is done in the name of reliability and exhibited in the gatekeeping role of the filtering move. Interestingly, the deeper the disagreement between parties, the greater the significance of that filtering move.

Reserving the first slot of the antagonist's sequence of critical moves to a filtering move suggests a variation in the way in which arguers (*munāẓir*s*)* are to cooperate. It is precisely because of its specific arrangement of the antagonist's critical moves that sequence 2 is capable of accommodating the concern for reliability within a commitment to cooperation. We call this *reliable-cooperation*. Unlike coalescent-cooperation, reliable-cooperation accommodates some degree of efficiency since the significance of prioritizing refutation over objection avoids the potential for dwelling unnecessarily on acceptability-checking before ensuring that one is dealing with a cogent argument. Finally, and like coalescent-cooperation, reliable-cooperation is critical and does not abandon the role of the antagonist as an alert-system for the protagonist to revise weaknesses and mistakes. Further, and again, like coalescent-cooperation, in this critical engagement, the antagonist is working *with*, not *against*, the protagonist. The difference between these two ways of achieving cooperation is that the latter prioritizes reliability over coalescence as a value of argumentation.

4.3 Justifying sequence 3 (objection→ counter-argument→ refutation)

The third and last sequence we consider is prescribed by Sāçaqlizāde (al-Āmidī 1900, p. 60). This time the focus is on the ordering of the second pair of critical moves in Samarqandī's original sequencing (refutation→ counter-argument). Sāçaqlizāde, like Mullā Ḥanafī (2014), argues for a swap: like Samarqandī, he prescribes starting with objection, but then recommends directly deploying counter-argument, leaving the last slot in the sequence for refutation.

Interestingly, Sāçaqlizāde's commentator, al-Āmidī (1900), justifies beginning with objection on different grounds than Jurjānī (al-Jaunpūrī 2006) (see sequence 1). Al-Āmidī (1900) makes two points in this regard: First, he notes that objection is the safest move since it does not run the risk of usurpation (*ġaṣb*). Remember that in raising an objection, the antagonist checks the acceptability of the premises in their opponent's argument without offering an argument themselves. Second, al-Āmidī (1900) observes that it is better to start with objection because it addresses the parts that, when combined, constitute the protagonist's argument, that is, the premises. He explains that addressing the parts before addressing the whole is the more natural way to proceed (as opposed to beginning by addressing the whole with refutation)

(al-Āmidī 1900, p. 61) since it allows for an agreement that the building blocks of the argument under consideration are worthy of being adopted. Reserving the first slot of sequence 1 for objection was presented by Jurjānī (al-Jaunpūrī 2006) as the weakest move. Reserving the first slot of sequence 3 for objection, however, is better presented as the prudent move. It is prudent both in an ethical sense in that it avoids an argumentative vice and in the sense that it allows for the establishment of a shared agreement on the parts that constitute the argument under consideration to come first.

Prescribing the deployment of counter-arguments as the second move, however, is rather surprising. What might be the rationale for doing so? The answer lies in the fact that according to Sāçaqlizāde, the primary role of the antagonist is to reject the protagonist's claim (al-Āmidī 1900, p. 60). Hence, once some agreement on the premises is reached, the antagonist is to deploy the most effective arsenal at their disposal. From Sāçaqlizāde's perspective, had the antagonist used refutation instead, they would have deployed an arsenal that, even when successful, falls short in fulfilling their primary task. Counter-argument is the most effective mean to perform the antagonist's role (al-Āmidī 1900, p. 60).

This concern for efficacy pervades sequence 3. Objection is the least demanding critical move. All it requires from the antagonist is to probe the acceptability of their opponent's premises. Although this could be time consuming, and maybe in vain in cases of deep disagreement, this does not make it performatively demanding. Further, and in terms of its efficacy in rejecting the antagonist's conclusion, a successful objection showing that the protagonist's premises are unacceptable pulls the rug out from under the protagonist's argument. Refutation, on the other hand, is highly demanding with little promise in terms of the antagonist fulfilling their primary role. It requires a high level of involvement to anatomize and deconstruct a given argument (Üzelgün et al. 2022), and even when successful, refutation falls short in terms of contesting the protagonist's claim. Instead, it pushes the protagonist to produce another argument for the same conclusion—a new argument for the antagonist to address. In contrast, a counter-argument does not require direct engagement with the protagonist's argument and, if successful, fulfills the task of testing the claim. We can thus represent sequence 3 as:

prudent move→ most-effective move→ least-effective move

The organizing principle in this sequence is efficacy in the performance of the antagonist's role, which is to reject the protagonist's claim. With its valorization of efficacy, sequencing 3 might appear to depart from munāẓara's commitment to cooperation. By placing the most-effective move in the second slot, sequence 3 seems to drive the antagonist into an adversarial stance. The question is how such a stance squares with the promotion of cooperation. The answer lies in the focus on testing the protagonist's claim and thereby an alternative view of cooperation (Stevens and Cohen 2020; Dulith-Novaes 2021). As in modern (legal) argumentation, the contenders are seen to cooperate precisely by performing their respective roles as effectively as they can: the protagonist's role is to defend the claim, and the antagonist's role is to contest it. The working assumption here is that when contenders effectively perform their respective roles, justice will be served. And the more effective the antagonist is in performing their primary role of rejecting the protagonist's claim, the better they serve the joint goal. We can thus speak here of an *adversarial-cooperation*[9] between protagonist and antagonist for the sake of manifesting truth/justice. And the value of argumentation that underlies such cooperation is (performative)-efficacy.

This section examined justifications for the three sequences prescribed in the *munāẓara* literature. All sequences express a commitment to cooperation in engaging with a protagonist's claim. They vary in the way in which cooperation is accomplished. The three variations conform to *Munāẓara*'s goal of manifesting truth/justice and trying to achieve that end via its strict regulatory procedure. What justifies the differences among these variations has been examined based on the values of argumentation underpinning each. Sequence 1 is based on the

[9] To dispel any confusion, it is important to note that while 'coalescence,' 'reliability,' and 'efficacy' correspond to values of argumentation, 'coalescent,' 'reliable,' and 'adversarial' are referred to as the types of cooperation that each sequence promotes. As our analysis moved from values to types of cooperation involved in each sequence, we translated the notion of efficacy (in testing the proponent's claim) into adversarial-cooperation.

value of coalescence, and it expresses and promotes coalescent-cooperation. Sequence 2 is based on the value of reliability, and it expresses and promotes reliable-cooperation. Sequencing 3 is based on the value of efficacy, and it expresses and promotes adversarial-cooperation. In the next section, we discuss the relevance of those values of argumentation in relation to both procedural and agential norms.

5. The interdependence of procedure and agent

Now that we have extracted the values of argumentation, we can delve into how these values display the interdependence between procedure and agent. To put it simply, albeit in an abstract and not very helpful way, one can articulate this interdependence as follows: On one hand, without agents there is no one to comply with argumentative procedures—the agent is a condition for the procedure and hence, the procedure depends on the agent. On the other hand, argumentative procedures allow agents to practice argumentation and with practice they internalize the values embodied therein and become better arguers as opposed to being quarrelers. The procedure teaches the agent and hence, the agent depends on the procedure. Our aim in this section is to flesh out this interdependence to understand its dynamics. This is an intricate task and for the purposes of analytic clarity, it serves us to start by indicating that while the elements in the pairs of sequencing/procedure and moves/agent are constitutively related, they are not identical. That is, sequencing and the moves are, respectively, organically linked to procedure and agent. Sequencing is a component of procedure, and critical moves are basically what the agent chooses when playing the role of arguer. Nevertheless, we can neither reduce argumentative procedures to sequencing, nor the agent to their role as an arguer. With this in mind, we now elaborate on how the values of argumentation connect with sequencing. This will allow us to expand on the relationship between those values and the arguer, and only then will the interdependence between procedure and agent be accurately conveyed.

Coalescence, reliability, and efficacy underpin sequences 1, 2, and 3 respectively. These values, however, do not merely function on a normative, theoretical level. They are embodied in the respective sequences. It is precisely the specific arrangement of the antagonist's critical moves that reflects coalescence, reliability, or efficacy. Values

of argumentation get concretized through sequence preferences. Thus, values of argumentation are *embodied* in sequencing, and sequences *express* values of argumentation. This connection between values of argumentation and sequencing helps us discern a two-directional connection between those values and the arguer. What exactly is this two-directional connection?

Through their choice of critical moves, the arguer implements a sequence, and in doing so, they realize the value of argumentation embodied in that particular sequence. By choosing to begin with objection, then refutation, and then counter-argument, the antagonist invokes coalescent-cooperation by opening the communicative space for coalescence. However, and as we will illustrate shortly, in order for the agent to successfully play their part as an arguer and realize the values of argumentation, they need to deploy certain skills, dispositions, and traits. Arguers realize values of argumentation by implementing sequences, and the implementation of sequences requires the possession of virtues. This is the first direction of the connection between the values of argumentation and the arguer (arguer→ values). Based on this direction of the connection, and since virtues belong to agents and sequences belong to procedure, we say that the agent is a condition for the procedure and, therefore, the procedure depends on the agent.

What about the second direction of that connection, the one that goes from the values of argumentation to the arguer (values→ arguer)? Values of argumentation normatively ground, and are given expression through, a particular sequencing of critical moves. The rationale for recommended sequences is to restrict the choices of the contenders in an argumentative engagement. Values, thus, make normative demands on the arguer—demands that require sticking to the particular roles. In this way, values *guide* the arguer's choices by determining when they ought to deploy which critical move. Being so restricted, the arguer gets to develop the virtues required for the implementation of the sequence in question. As the arguer (in training) repeatedly and over time struggles to comply with a particular sequencing, they internalize the values of argumentation and come to learn the virtues required for implementing that sequence. In short, values of argumentation guide speakers in their argumentative choices, transforming them, through practice, into virtuous arguers. This is the second direction of the connection between the values of argumentation and the arguer. Based on

this direction of the connection, and since sequences belong to procedure and virtues belong to agents, we say that the procedure teaches the agent, and, therefore, the agent depends on the procedure.

An illustration of the aspect of virtue is due. In order for the arguer to be able to arrange their critical moves in accordance with the demands of a particular sequencing, they need to possess virtues. In the case of sequence 1, for the antagonist to be able to open the communicative space that permits and leads the protagonist to reflect on their own premises and reasoning, the antagonist must exhibit some degree of patience and humility. Without these virtues, they may not succeed in sticking to weakest→ stronger→ strongest sequential unfolding when they have at their disposal more effective critical moves. Patience and humility are agential virtues that reveal themselves in the different roles the agent in question occupies—roles such as the 'arguer.' Further, it is through the recurrent practice of sequence 1 that an antagonist learns how to exhibit patience and humility in their argumentative engagements. The same applies to the other two sequences as well. We associate diligence and open-mindedness with sequence 2. In order for the antagonist to implement 'filtering move→ weak move→ strong move,' they need to have some degree of diligence and open-mindedness to be able to momentarily bracket acceptability-checking and focus on the inferential reasoning of the protagonist without losing their goal of cooperating with rather than working against, the protagonist and hence contribute to reliable-cooperation. Finally, we associate agonism and strategy with sequence 3. The antagonist needs to be capable of executing a course of critical moves 'prudent move→ most-effective move→ least-effective move' geared towards rejecting the protagonist's claim irrespective of how they feel about that claim or what they personally think the meaning of manifesting the truth/justice is—calling upon agonism and strategy as virtues. Without some degree of these virtues, the antagonist might not be able to successfully perform their role and contribute to adversarial-cooperation.

6. Conclusion

Let us take stock. Drawing on *munāẓara* literature, we introduced the notion of sequencing as a central component of argumentation. In this

literature, the interdependence between procedure and agent was presupposed. This can be most clearly seen in how *munāẓara* scholars conceived of derailments from the procedure as argumentative vices. Encountering that presupposed interdependence motivated us to unpack it and make it more explicit and systematic. We have, accordingly, examined the justifications offered by *munāẓara* scholars in defense of three recommended sequences of the critical moves available to the antagonist. The outcome of our analysis is that each of these sequences represents a different way of advancing cooperation between parties. Sequence 1 advances coalescent-cooperation, sequence 2 advances reliable-cooperation, and sequence 3 advances adversarial-cooperation. These different forms of cooperation are grounded in the values of coalescence, reliability, and efficacy, respectively. Significantly, these values are embodied in, and expressed by, their corresponding sequences. Values of argumentation get concretized precisely in a particular sequencing of moves. We have then argued that values of argumentation subsist in a symbiotic relationship with the arguer. In *munāẓara*, this relationship is mediated by both sequencing and the virtues. The arguer realizes values of argumentation by implementing sequencing, which requires the possession of certain virtues. Values, on the other hand, make normative demands on the arguer, demands that get satisfied when the arguer sticks to sequencing, and as they do, they develop the virtues required for implementing that sequencing. Given that sequencing belongs to procedure and virtues to the agent, the dynamics of the interdependence between procedure and agent is fleshed out.

Once we get to see that interdependence, we start recognizing and appreciating the ambiguity between procedure and agent, which, in turn, has normative implications on a theory of argumentation. First, when it comes to appraising sequencing as a central component of argumentation, the neat distinction between procedure-based norms and agent-based norms is transformed into a dynamic interdependence. An evaluative framework that prioritizes one of these norms over the other would be problematically reductive as it would leave out an important aspect of what is being appraised. Second, while virtue argumentation has become increasingly influential, it suffers from not yet being able to get a sufficiently clear notion of agent-based norms and how they

can be scrutinized. Fleshing out the interdependence between procedure and agent, we believe, is a promising area of research for virtue argumentation theory to address that deficit. Future work on the development of a virtue theory of argumentation may thus tap into the fruitful interconnections between procedural and agential norms.

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