Primatologists and Philosophers Debate on the Question of the Origin of Morality: A Dialectical Analysis of Philosophical Argumentation Strategies and the Pitfalls of Cross-Disciplinary Disagreement

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Abstract

The paper presents a dialogical approach applied to the analysis of argumentative strategies in philosophy and examines the case of the critical comments to the Tanner Lectures given by the Dutch biologist and primatologist, Frans de Waal, at Princeton University in November 2003. The paper is divided into five parts: the first advances the hypothesis that what seem puzzling aspects of philosophical argumentation to scholars in other academic fields are explained by the global role played by a series of arguments within a broader argumentative strategy, e.g. arguing that a question that seems important is not really worthwhile; the second presents five groups of dialectical operations, making use of concepts and tools from the dialectical dialogical approach (WaltonWalton and Krabbe, Commitment in Dialogue: Basic Concepts of Interpersonal Reasoning, SUNY Press, Albany, 1995), Hubert Marraud's Argument dialectic (Marraud, En buena lógica. Una introducción a la teoría de la argumentación, Editorial Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadalajara, 2020) and from the vast tradition of formal dialectics and dialogical logic. In the remaining three sections, the comments of philosophers Christine M. Korsgaard, Philip Kitcher and Peter Singer to de Waal's Tanner Lectures are analyzed dialectically.

Keywords Dialectical approach · Philosophical argumentation · Argumentative strategies · Argument diagramming

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1 Introduction

What role do arguments play in philosophical discussions? Are there any characteristic features of argumentation in philosophical debates? I do not intend to answer these difficult questions here. However, it seems to me that it is a good idea to approach them by paying attention to discussions between philosophers and scientists from various disciplines, and to examine in detail the contrasts that emerge in the course of the dialogue. In particular, I think it would be promising to focus on discussions that have borderline aspects across disciplines, that is, where what is being discussed is at least partly the province of both philosophers and scholars in other academic fields; and thus, avoid discussions between specialists and laymen, which are generally marred by an atmosphere of misunderstandings from beginning to end.

I believe that a vivid illustration of this type of discussion can be found in the Tanner Lectures given by the Dutch biologist and primatologist, Frans de Waal, at Princeton University in November of 2003. The lectures were commented by Robert Wright, science journalist, and by three noted philosophers: Christine M. Korsgaard, Philip Kitcher and Peter Singer. The lectures, the comments and the response given by Frans de Waal were collected in the book *Primates and Philosophers. How Morality Evolved* (2006).

In his lectures, Frans de Waal presents some of the results of his research on primate social behavior, which is natural for an expert primatologist. But he also aims to dismantle a theory he calls "Veneer Theory", which he attributes to many classical philosophers and to contemporary evolutionary biologists. The attack on Veneer Theory goes hand in hand with the defense of a thesis on the evolution of morality: Human moral behavior is considerably more elaborate than that of any nonhuman animal, but it is *continuous with* nonhuman behavior (De Waal 2006, p. 15). I referred to this case as a good example of discussion in a borderline field, in the sense described above, because de Waal defends a thesis that involves engaging with philosophical positions; moreover, it is worth noting that de Waal not only advances empirical evidence but explicitly presents and discusses arguments of philosophers.

The comments of the three philosophers can, superficially, be divided into two moments: on the one hand, a critique of de Waal's attack on Veneer Theory, and on the other hand, a constructive part, in which they defend theses on the nature of morality and its continuity or discontinuity with nonhuman animal behavior.

In this paper I will focus on the destructive part, heuristically guided by two reasons. The first is that it is a critique of de Waal's critique of Veneer Theory. This implies a reconstruction by the philosophers of de Waal's arguments and, furthermore, the elaboration of their own lines of counter-argumentation. I believe that both tasks (reconstruction and critique of reconstruction) can offer us a clue as to how philosophers conceive of the role of arguments in the cycles of critique and counter-critique.

Second, because of de Waal's puzzling response to the destructive part of the philosophers' comments, despite each of them advancing exhaustive arguments

and counterarguments, de Waal discredits them with the following words in a mocking tone:

> It is good to hear that my "sledgehammer" approach to Veneer Theory (VT) comes down to beating a dead horse (Philip Kitcher) that was silly to begin with (Christine Korsgaard). The only one to have ridden this horse, Robert Wright, now denies having wholeheartedly done so, if at all, whereas Peter Singer defends VT on the grounds that certain aspects of human morality, such as our impartial perspective, appear to be an overlay, hence a sort of veneer. (De Waal 2006, p. 175)

It is puzzling that de Waal does not take the detailed criticism of the philosophers seriously. It seems to me that such an attitude, setting aside possible idiosyncrasies of his personality, cannot be explained by mere incompetence. Nor do I attribute it to the impatience that is often present in deep disagreements (Fogelin 2005). On the contrary, it seems to me that this is a quite normal and characteristic reaction to some argumentative maneuvers that are common in philosophy, but less common in other academic fields. I will try to explain this. I argue that arguments and counterarguments, in addition to their role in justifying standpoints or evaluating reasons (local role), can play a role within a broader strategy (global role), for example, a strategy aimed at focusing the discussion on certain problems, or refining a thesis so that it can be located and contrasted with another family of theses and questions. I will call the global roles: "strategic uses". It appears to me that the puzzled reaction to certain pieces of philosophical argumentation is because we are focusing our attention on the global role played by an argument or series of arguments in the pursuit of an aim proper to philosophical practice (if we were to isolate and examine exclusively their local role, the puzzlement would dissipate). For example, it may be bewildering to the layman the effort and time spent by philosophers to argue, and to do so painstakingly, to show that a standpoint is not even worth discussing or that a question is not worth asking; or contesting the legitimacy of a distinction may seem, to the scholar of another discipline, obsessive attention to niceties and nuances of language; the same applies to the discussion of the type of questions that should be asked in the first place, because they are alleged to be more fundamental; or with respect to arguments against claims, which instead of disqualifying them as false or improbable, which is common in other fields, argue that they are mere "nonsense", "vacuous", "uninformative", "not a real explanation"; or that a given argument "does not constitute a proof", "is not a genuine justification", and so on.

This global or strategic role is difficult to analyze. In the following section I will present, in broad outline, some tools of argument analysis that can shed light on the structure and mechanism of the global role, that is, of the strategic uses of argumentation in philosophy. Subsequently, I will apply these tools to the destructive stage of Christine M. Korsgaard, Philip Kitcher and Peter Singer's comments, i.e., to their examination of de Waal's critique of Veneer Theory.

My aim is to highlight the strategic aspects of the three philosophers' comments, so that I can accurately identify what de Waal leaves out in his response.

2 Dialogic Approach Applied to Argumentative Strategies

If we understand argumentation as "the communicative practice of giving, asking for and criticizing reasons"(Marraud 2013, 12), it seems natural to think that the beginning of any argumentation supposes at least two agents: one who sustains a standpoint, a claim or a thesis, and another who challenges the standpoint, claim or thesis and asks for reasons to support it; these reasons, in turn, could be subjected to criticism, so that the exchange can grow in complexity.

This simple idea: it is a good strategy to reconstruct our arguments on the background of a dialogue between someone who presents a thesis and someone who challenges it, is the common ground of the dialectical approach.

The different theories of the dialectical approach answer differently to questions such as the following: What is the structure of the dialogue? How many types of dialogue exist? What moves are allowed? What are the aims of the dialogue? The characters, who presents the thesis and who challenges it, what obligations do they have? What are their goals?[1]

The approach I will present here makes use of concepts and tools from the dialectical dialogical approach (Krabbe and Walton 1995), Marraud's argument dialectics (Marraud 2013, 2020), and the vast tradition of formal dialectics and dialogical logics. The first thing someone may ask regarding this approach is: while it makes sense to study the exchange of theses and reasons in situations where there is a dialogue, how could it be applied to texts that do not exhibit a dialogical exchange? In other words, how to apply the dialectical approach to texts that are, so to speak, monological? To answer this question, in a first approach, I would like to draw your attention to certain dialogical elements that even monologic texts abundantly contain. If we read any text in which arguments are presented, we will find clues, textual indicators (punctuation marks, connectors, vocabulary that explicitly talks about arguments) about the way it is structured argumentatively, that is, about which statements are functioning as theses, reasons, etc. But we will also find other indicators that give us clues about the dialogic structure. For example, if an author formulates a thesis (and marks it with connectors such as: "therefore", " I hold that…", and so on.) and immediately afterwards gives a paraphrase, another version with other words, we can reconstruct this step as if the author foresaw a possible misunderstanding and, therefore, reformulated her first version of the thesis. Or if the author presents an argument and immediately challenges the truth of one of the premises and, subsequently, gives reasons against that criticism, we can reconstruct these steps as if the author foresees a counterargument and constructs, in turn, another counterargument in response.

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[1] The contemporary dialectical perspective is developed in two main branches or sub-approaches: the dialogical approach and the pragma-dialectical approach. The first was developed by Walton and Krabbe (1995). We can trace its roots to Hamblin's formal dialectics (1970) and Lorenzen's dialogical logic (1969). Its central idea is to study the analysis, evaluation and critique of argumentative exchanges through the design of dialogical games. The second sub-approach, pragma-dialectics, was developed by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984). Its central approach is the study of argumentation through an ideal model of critical discussion, which combines the theory of speech acts and the conception of "reasonableness" of critical rationalism.

More precisely, the dialectical approach studies these various mechanisms of "foreseeing a dialogical exchange" in terms of a dialogue with two characters, proponent and opponent, who are postulated in the reconstruction. This postulation, which might seem artificial and imaginary, is intended to define the dialectical function played by an utterance in the text. A simple way to approach the dialectical functions of our discourse is to highlight the following three aspects:

1. The foreseen move, for example, when the author foresees that there is a counterargument to the argument she has just presented, or that she has been asked to clarify the formulation of her thesis.
2. Commitments and concessions: what is taken for granted, e.g., the author of the text, after presenting an argument, presents a criticism of her own argument, i.e. "foresees a counterargument". Let us suppose that the counterargument does not attack the acceptability of the premises, nor the passage from the premises to the conclusion, but gives stronger reasons for a thesis opposed to the conclusion of the criticized argument. That counterargument, by not attacking the parts of the criticized argument, makes us suppose that the author grants the plausibility of the premises and the validity of their connection with the thesis.
3. The result of the possible exchange and its effect, e.g., if the author foresees a possible misunderstanding of her thesis, the result of responding to that expectation is a reformulation of the thesis that avoids misunderstandings.

So far, I have avoided using technical terms, aspects 1, 2 and 3, taken together, are the constituent elements of every dialectical operation. Each dialectical operation is described by a mini-dialogue that defines the roles of the participants (proponent and opponent), initial commitments (what is taken for granted or presumed to be conceded by the participants), and the various questions and answers (moves) that lead to the outcome.

I will very briefly present a set of basic dialectical operations.

A first group of dialectical operations are those whose purpose is to better understand theses and arguments.

2.1 Group A

2.1.1 Reformulation Operation

The proponent (Prop) holds a statement (let's call it C), which functions dialectically as a thesis (T), the opponent (Opp) asks for clarification of the thesis, asking questions of the type 'What do you mean by T(C)?' or asking for your illustration with an example or its application to a case. The result is a reformulation of the thesis (T'). Its thesis nature is taken for granted and therefore carries the burden of proof. (*), the dialectical obligation to give reasons to justify it, in case it is challenged. The following mini-dialogue captures this simple dialectical operation:

	Prop	Opp
1	T(C)*	
2		What do you mean by T(C)?
3	T(C)′*	

 There is another type of reformulations, the reformulations of scope, which respond to a question of clarification about its obvious implications or extent or scope, which can be inferred from its formulation in those terms.

2.1.2 Starting Operation of the Argumentation

This is the most basic operation. The proponent (Prop) advances a statement (C) that functions as a thesis (she carries the burden of proof *), the opponent makes a pure challenge (Krabbe and van Laar 2013, p. 206), 'T(C)?', asks for reasons without explaining his doubts (the move does not have burden of proof, i.e., she is not obliged to justify by reasons her doubt, the challenge of the thesis). The proponent advances at least one reason, R1,[2] which may be expressed in one or more premises (although the structure may be more complex[3]), and it should be noted that the reason has a burden of proof. I will use the diagrams designed by Marraud (2013) since they are the most suitable for representing complex argumentative structures. The mini-dialogue can be understood as a bottom-up reading of the diagram.

R1	P1			Prop	Opp
		Therefore			
T	C				

	Prop	Opp
1	T(C)*	
2		T(C)*?
3	R1(P1)*	

2.2 Group B

These are operations that develop other parts of an argument, about which it is legitimate to ask.

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[2] To mark the distinction between functional vocabulary and structural vocabulary (i.e., the statements contained in the text), I will use the following notation: "Tn()" for thesis; "Rn()" for reason; "Cn" for conclusion; "Pn" for premise. Thus, for instance, "T1(C)" should be read: the sentence C functions as thesis 1; "R1(P1)": the sentence P1 functions as reason R1; "R3(P1.P2)": the sentences P1 and P2 are premises of the same reason R3.

[3] Other argumentative structures studied by Marraud are: conjunction and disjunction of arguments, meta-arguments (Leal and Marraud 2022).

2.2.1 Request for Concatenation

Since the reasons we advance to defend a thesis carry burden of proof, they can be the subject of pure challenge, i.e., one can ask for reasons that justify some (or all) of the premises. In the simplest case (a reason with a premise), the mini-dialogue is as follows:

			Prop	Opp
R2	P2	1	T(C)*	
	Therefore	2		T(C)*?
R1	P1	3	R1(P1)*	
	Therefore	4		P1?
T	C	5	R2 (P2)*	

2.2.2 Request for Warrant

The request for concatenation asks for reasons to justify a premise, i.e., it doubts that the premise is acceptable (true, probable, plausible, etc.), but grants that it is a reason, in other words, it concedes that the premise functions as a reason for the thesis. However, it might not be clear to an opponent that it is a reason, i.e., she does not see the connection between the premises and the conclusion. The opponent might ask: What does the premise have to do with the conclusion? How do you get from that premise to that conclusion? "How do you get there?" (Toulmin et al. 1984, p. 46),[4] say, it is challenged whether the premise counts as a consideration in favor of the thesis (R1(P1) / T(C)?). The answer to those questions, the justification for the inferential step is the warrant (W).

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[4] It is not common to find explicit warrants, the most common is to find meta-arguments by analogy (Marraud 2016).

		Prop	Opp
	1	T(C)*	
	2		T(C)*?
P1	3	R1(P1)*	
W Therefore	4		R1(P1) / T(C)?
C	5	W	

We may ask: Does the warrant carry the burden of proof? Not necessarily. If the warrant has the dialectical qualification of presumption (+),[5] that is, if it is a principle of common sense, or a truism, or a platitude, and so on, that has to "be granted unless proven otherwise", whoever contests it, has to argue against it (most of the argumentative schemes have the qualification of presumption). If the warrant is not a presumption, it can be the object of a pure challenge, similar to the concatenation operation, whose answer is a Backing (B) of the warrant (Toulmin et al. 1984, p. 62).

Let us now turn to another family of dialectical operations whose purpose is to criticize theses or arguments.

2.3 Group C

2.3.1 Counterconsideration Operation

Counterconsiderations (Cc) are associated with bound challenge to a thesis. Normally, when faced with a thesis, if we disagree with it or it generates doubts in us, we not only limit ourselves to asking for reasons (pure challenge, for example, "what proof do you have that your opinion is true?''), but we explain our doubt; the explanation of the doubt, generally, expresses a counter-consideration. The flip side of a counterconsideration is that it provides the proponent of the thesis with strategic advice, i.e., it tells the proponent the kind of reasons that would overcome his or her reluctance to accept the proposed thesis (Krabbe and van Laar 2013, p. 206). In other words, counterconsiderations narrow down the set of reasons relevant to that specific discussion.

Let it be clear from the outset that counterconsiderations are not counterarguments: arguments against arguments; they are generally directed against theses that have not yet been supported by reasons. Counterconsiderations do not carry the burden of proof, i.e., the opponent is not obliged to justify them with arguments. However, the proponent can respond to them in three characteristic ways:

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[5] The notion of presumption in terms of dialectical obligations: (1) Presumptions are assertions without burden of proof (it is not obligatory to give arguments in their favor when they are challenged). (2) Presumptions are mutable concessions (cancellable concessions): if we abandon a presumption, if we retract it, we have to argue, to give reasons why we no longer accept it (Krabbe and van Laar 2013, p. 202).

1. She can give arguments against the acceptability of the Cc (e.g., argue that it is false). That operation, grants that the counterconsideration is relevant to attack the thesis (negative relevance).

2. Another option available to the proponent is to argue that the counterconsideration is irrelevant to the thesis (attack its negative relevance). It concedes the acceptability of the counterconsideration (e.g., the proponent could say "I grant that it is true what you say, Cc, but it does not affect my thesis at all"). The result is a weighting of the effect that the counterconsideration may have against the thesis (e.g., arguing that "despite Cc the thesis holds", which is why it is so common to find modifiers associated with counter-considerations). The result is thus a weighting of the negative effect of the counterconsideration with respect to the strength of the thesis.

3. Finally, in a special case of counterconsideration, the proponent accepts (concedes) them but this does not have the effect of retracting or abandoning her thesis altogether; instead, the proponent formulates a nuanced version of it. The most common types are counterconsiderations that point to counterexamples, in these cases, (1) the proponent concedes their acceptability (does not argue that they are false), and concedes, in principle, (2) their negative relevance (does not argue that they do not affect her thesis at all), yet the proponent does not abandon her thesis, but changes the modal qualifier (MQ) of the thesis. For example, if she held a thesis with modal qualifiers such as "All…", "Always…" "Necessarily…", etc. the counterexample will result in nuanced versions: "In most cases…", "Generally…", "Possibly". On the other hand, there is another type of counterconsiderations to which one responds with a nuanced version of the thesis: those that must be accepted with caution by the proponent because they imply an ambiguity. The proponent responds with a distinction (C/d) of a key concept of the thesis and gives a reformulated version of her thesis.

There are also meta-counterconsiderations, or second-order counterconsiderations: about the legitimacy of putting forward a certain thesis, or about the optimality of a step-in a given argumentative strategy.

2.3.2 Counterargumentation operations

Objection Operation

I follow Marraud's classification of counterargumentation (Leal and Marraud 2022). An objection counterargument is defined as an argument that attacks the premise of the other argument being criticized. In other words, given an argument, it can be criticized with another argument whose conclusion is an opposite statement (contrary or contradictory) to one of its premises. The opponent sustains a thesis: the negation of a premise of the argument being criticized, for which she carries the burden of proof. By advancing an objection to an argument, the opponent concedes to the proponent that she has a relevant reason to support her thesis ("if the reason

were true, it would support your thesis, the problem is that it is false"). Its dialectical effect is to return to pure challenge of the thesis.

Rebuttal Operation

The Rebuttal is a counterargument that has as its conclusion an opposite (contrary or contradictory) statement to the warrant of the criticized argument. The opponent concedes that the premises expressing the reason may be acceptable (true, plausible, probable, etc.), but does not accept that they count in favor of the thesis, that they are genuine reasons. There are three varieties (Marraud 2017): *plain rebuttal* (does not accept the validity of the guarantee); *exception* (concedes that the guarantee is valid, but argues that in the case of the criticized argument it does not apply); *Disclaimers* (presents reservations to the validity or applicability of the warrant, which seems to me to usually result in nuancing the thesis, not in abandoning the argument, at least in philosophy.). Its dialectical effect is to return to pure challenge.

Refutation Operation

Refutations are counterarguments that have an opposite (contrary or contradictory) conclusion to the thesis of the criticized argument. They are counter-reasons that are weighted as stronger, equally strong or that diminish the strength of the criticized argument. The opponent advancing a refutation concedes to the proponent of the criticized argument the acceptability of the premises and the validity of the warrant of her argument. Its effect is not to erase the argument being criticized. It is conceded that there are reasons in favor of the proponent's thesis, but there are reasons of greater weight (equal weight or diminishing weight) against it.

Finally, let us look at some dialectical operations whose task is to specify the different purposes of argumentative exchanges. These are questions such as: If you have a certain goal, what role does an argument or set of arguments play in order to reach the proposed goal?

2.4 Group D

2.4.1 Structural Strategic Operations

Rigorous Persuasion Dialogue

The proponent makes explicit, *ex concessis*, a number of commitments of the opponent. The opponent's task is to persuade the proponent that she need not accept her thesis, but she cannot advance lines of argument against the thesis. The proponent's task is to show that given the commitments conceded by the opponent she must accept the thesis (Laar 2003, p. 21).

Permissive Persuasion Dialogue

In contrast to rigorous dialogues, here the proponent can formulate counterarguments against the proponent's thesis and try to show that the proponent should retract her initial thesis. (Walton and Krabbe 1995).

Dialectical Sequences (DS)

Dialectical sequences are used to analyze argumentative strategies in philosophy (Galindo 2019). They are generally strategies aimed at resolving questions of demarcation of a philosophical thesis (What makes a thesis worthy of philosophical defense?); they may also be aimed at a global strategy of criticism of a theory: "it is not an explanation", "it is not really informative", "it is not really a theory", etc.; finally, there are other strategies that seek certain specific dialectical effects, for instance, changing the qualification of presumption of a thesis or a question, shifting the burden of proof, etc. They take the form of a sub-dialogue. The DS are defined by three characteristic aspects: initial situation, the goals of their participants and the main aim of the dialogue. We will see examples of dialectical sequences in the following sections.

With these tools I will analyze the comments of Korsgaard, Kitcher and Singer, in that order.

3 Christine M. Korsgaard, the First Commentator: An Erotetic Strategy

In this section I will show that Korsgaard's arguments fall within a family of strategic dialectical operations common in philosophy (Galindo 2019). In particular, it is one of the strategies that dismiss questions, which in principle are qualified as "good questions", in order to redirect the debate towards other "philosophically more interesting" questions. It is a strategy that seeks, in general terms, to change a presumption that runs for or against a question, for instance, the presumption that "this is a legitimate question worth asking and making an effort to answer." Recall what Toulmin says about a thesis that is questioned, but the proponent resists its discussion (Toulmin et al. 1984, p. 102). Likewise, not every question is considered worthy of being answered (or worthy of even being considered). This situation can become acute in philosophy, for many philosophical questions challenge common-sense assumptions. Challenging a presumption is dialectically costly: it carries a burden of proof. And, of course, it is not always easy to argue against common sense opinions or widely accepted theses in a given argumentative field. The philosopher, far from rejecting it, makes use of this situation; but let us take it one step at a time.

3.1 Dialogical Analysis

C. M. Koorsgaard distinguishes two questions that de Waal treats together, but they must be separated (De Waal 2006, p. 98).

Q1: Is Veneer Theory true or false?

Q2: Whether morality has its roots in our evolutionary past, or represents some sort of radical break with that past.

She argues that the philosophically interesting question is Q2. And, as we will see, she will put forward a variety of reasons in favor of dropping Q1. She explicitly states:

> For all of these reasons Veneer Theory seems to me to be rather silly. I therefore want to set it aside, and talk about de Waal's more central and interesting question, the question of the roots of morality in our evolved nature, where they are located and how deep they go. (De Waal 2006, p. 103)

She advances four arguments for this thesis. First, as is common in philosophy, she reformulated the Veneer Theory (VT)[6] in the following terms:

> (VT): This is the theory that morality is a thin veneer on an essentially amoral human nature. According to Veneer Theory, we are ruthlessly self-interested creatures, who conform to moral norms only to avoid punishment or disapproval, only when others are watching us, or only when our commitment to these norms is not tested by strong temptation. (De Waal 2006, p. 99)

Let us consider a dialogical reconstruction of the first argumentation. It starts with an operation of reformulation of a thesis about the relationship, which is established in philosophy, between VT and practical rationality (T1).

The following dialogic sequence was constructed from pages 98–103 of *Primates and Philosophers. How Morality Evolved* (2006). The purpose of presenting it in dialogic form is to make explicit various dialectical moves and obligations. I would like to emphasize that I have tried to be as faithful as possible to the original text; any addition to the text fulfills one of two functions: that of serving as a nexus or link necessary for a readable dialogical articulation of the text, and that of making explicit various dialogical movements: concessions, retractions, request for explanation, request for reason, etc.

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[6] In the subsequent I shall refer to Veneer Theory as VT.

	Prop	Opp
1	T1: VT it is most naturally associated with a certain view of practical rationality and of how practical rationality is related to morality	
2		What do you mean by T1? Request for clarification
3	T1´: what it is rational to do, as well as what we naturally do, is to maximize the satisfaction of our own personal interests. Morality is a set of rules that constrain this maximizing activity	
4		What type of constrain rules does T1' refer to? Scope clarification request
5	Scope (1) of T1´: These rules may be based on what promotes the common good, rather than the individual's good. Or they may, as in deontological theories, be based on other considerations (justice, fairness, rights, or what have you)	
6		Are moral constraints, according to VT, natural like maximizing rationality? Scope clarification request
7	Scope (2) of T1´: VT holds that these constraints are unnatural, are all too easily broken through	

Once these reformulation operations have been carried out and the scope of VT has been explored, Korsgaard records the commitments that de Waal makes in his lectures. De Waal's commitments, according to Korsgaard:

Commitment 1: "accepts the idea that it is rational to pursue his own self-interest" (De Waal 2006, p. 99),
Commitment 2: "but wants to reject the associated view that morality is unnatural." (Op. cit., p. 99),
Commitment 3: "tends to favor an emotion-based or sentimentalist theory of morality."(*Op. cit*., p. 99)

She then puts forward her first line of argument (co-oriented first reason) for the thesis:

T (C): There are a number of problems with VT (De Waal 2006, p. 100)

First sub-thesis C1: "*In the first place*, C1" (p.100).

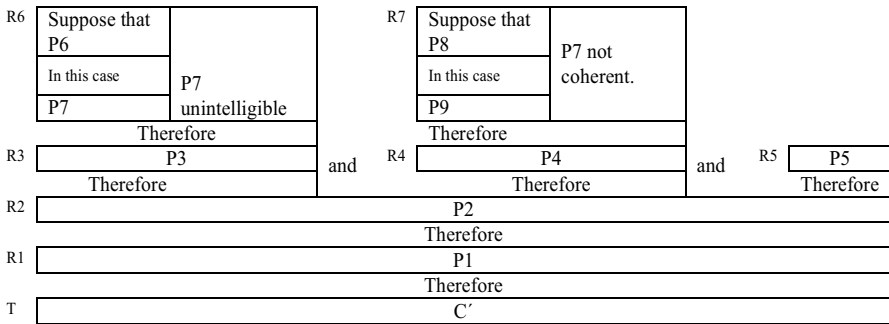|	Prop	Opp
1	T(C1): VT understood according to T1' is problematic	
2		C1? Cc: What about VT's popularity within the social sciences?
		Bound challenge. Counterconsideration. Cc it is ignored and marked in the text by "despite". (*Op. cit*., p. 100)
3	R1 (P1): The credentials of the principle of pursuing your own best interests as a principle of practical reason have never been established	
4		R1? Pure challenge. Request for concatenation
5	R2: (P2) To show that this is a principle of practical rea son one would have to demonstrate its normative foundation. (P3): I can think of only a few philosophers who have even attempted anything along these lines. (**And**) R3(P4): The idea that what people actually do is pursue their own best interests is, as Butler pointed out long ago, rather laughable (This is what Marraud calls a semantic meta-argument (Marraud 2013): a well-known argument is mentioned: "Men daily, hourly sacrifice the greatest known interest to fancy, inquisitiveness, love, or hatred, any vagrant inclination. The thing to be lamented is not that men have so great a regard to their own good or interest in the present world, for they have not enough, but that they have so little to the good of others." (Butler, *Five Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel and A Dissertation Upon the Nature of Virtue*, p. 21.).)	

Diagram:
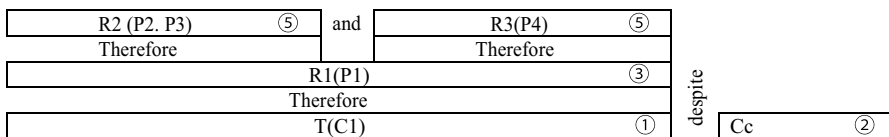
Second co-oriented reason for T(C). It is indicated by "In the second place, …" (*Op. cit.* p. 100).

	Prop	Opp
1	T(C2): It is not even clear that the idea of self-interest is a well-formed concept when applied to an animal as richly social as a human being	

	Prop	Opp
2		C2? Cc: Unquestionably, we have some irreducibly private interests, What about the satisfaction of our appetites, in food and in certain kind of sex, for instance? Counterconsideration
3	D: A distinction is made in reply to Cc of 2 But our personal interests are not limited to *having* things. We also have interests in *doing* things and *being* things	
4		What does D have to do with thesis C2? Request for relevance of the distinction
5	T(C2´)* Reformulation (nuance) It is not clear that the idea of self-interest applies to human beings, many of our personal interests (we fear interests in having things, in doing things, and in being things) cannot be **totally opposed** to the interests of society	
6		C2´? Pure challenge
7	R1 (P1)* Many interests in doing things and being things are unintelligible outside of society and the cultural traditions that society supports	
8		P1? Pure challenge. Request for concatenation
9	R2 (P2)*: The idea that we can clearly identify our own interests as something set **apart from** or **over against** the interests of others is strained to say the least	
		P2? Pure challenge. Request for concatenation
10	**R3 (P3)**[*] You could intelligibly want to be the world's greatest ballerina, but you could not intelligibly want to be the world's only ballerina **And** **R4**(P4)* Even for having things there is a limit to the coherent pursuit of self-interest **And** **R5**[+] (P5)*: Of course, we also have genuine interests in certain other people, from whom our own interests cannot be separated	
11		P3? Pure challenge. Request for concatenation
12	**R6*** Suppositional arguments (*Reductio ad absurdum*) Suppose it were so: P6: that you were the only ballerina Do you agree?	
13		I agree with assumption P6 (concession)
14	In this case P7: if there were only one, there wouldn't be any	

	Prop	Opp
15		I agree that the consequence (P7) of assumption (P6) is unintelligible
16		P4? Pure challenge. Request for concatenation
17	**R7:** Suppositional arguments (*Reductio ad absurdum*) Suppose P8*: you had all the money in the world Do you agree?	
18		I agree with assumption P8 (concession)
19	In this case P9: you would not be rich	
20		I agree that the consequence (P9) of the assumption (P8) is not coherent
21		I grant R5(P5)+ because it has the qualification of presumption (it is an analytical or conceptual truth)

The following diagram summarizes the argument:

Let me now turn to the third reason. It begins with the intensifier: "And yet even this is not the deepest thing wrong with Veneer Theory"(*Op. cit*., p. 101).

	Prop	Opp
1	T(C3): Morality is not just a set of obstructions to the pursuit of our interests	
2		What do you mean by C3? Request for clarification
3	C3´: Moral standards define ways of relating to people that most of us, most of the time, find natural and welcome	
4		What do you mean by C3´? Can you give me an example? Request for clarification by example
5	C3´´: According to Kant, morality demands that we treat other people as ends in themselves, never merely as means to our own ends	

	Prop	Opp
6		¿ C3´´? Cc: Certainly, we do not manage to treat all other people at all times in accordance with this standard. (Counterconsideration)
7	Reply to the counterconsideration (weighting of Cc effects) R1(P1): But the image of someone who never treated *anyone* else as an end in himself and never expected to be treated that way in return is **even more** unrecognizable than that of someone who always does so	
8		P1? Pure challenge
9	R2: Suppositional arguments (*Reductio ad absurdum*) Suppose that: For what we are then imagining is P2: (1) someone who always treats *everyone else* as a tool or an obstacle and P3(2) always expects to be treated that way in return	
10		I agree with assumptions P2 and P3. (concession)
11	In this case P4: (1) What we are imagining is someone who never spontaneously and unthinkingly tells the truth in ordinary conversation, but constantly calculates the effects of what he says to others on the promotion of his projects P5: (2) What we are imagining is someone who doesn't resent it (though he dislikes it) when he himself is lied to, trampled on, and disregarded, because deep down he thinks that is all that one human being really has any reason to expect from any other. Do you agree?	
12		I grant the consequence (P4) of the assumption (P2) I grant the consequence (P5) of the assumption (P3) (concession)
13	In this case P6: what we are imagining, then, is a creature who lives in a state of deep internal solitude, essentially regarding himself as the only person in a world of potentially useful things— although some of those things have mental and emotional lives and can talk or fight back Do you agree?	
14		Yes, I concede that consequence (P6) drawn from (P4) and (P5)
15	It is absurd to suggest that this (P6) is what most human beings are like, or long to be like, beneath a thin veneer of restraint Do you agree?	
		I agree that (P6) is absurd

Suppose that P2	Suppose that P3	
In this case	In this case	
P4	P5	
In this case		
P6		P6 is absurd

<div align="center">Therefore</div>

C3	Against	Cc	<	The image of someone who never treated anyone else as an end in himself and never expected to be treated that way in return is **even more** unrecognizable than that of someone who always does so.

Lastly, let us examine the fourth line of argument put forward by Korsgaard.

	Prop	**Opp**
1	C4: It is also absurd to think that nonhuman animals are motivated by self-interest	
2		C4? Pure challenge
3	R1: *Reductio ad falsum* Suppose that P1: the concept of what is in your own best interests makes sense. Do you agree?	
4		I agree with assumption P1 (concession)
5	In this case P2:(1) the concept of what is in your own best interests *requires* a kind of grip on the future P3: (2) the concept of what is in your own best interests *requires* an ability to calculate Do you agree?	
6		I grant the consequences (P2) and (P3) of the assumption (P1) (concession)
7	They do not appear to be available for a non-human animal P2 and P3. Do you agree?	
8		Yes, I concede that non-human animals do not have the capabilities of P2 and P3
9	R2: Suppositional arguments (*Reductio ad absurdum*) Suppose that P4: *acting* for the sake of your best interests make sense. Do you agree?	
10		I agree with assumption P4 (concession)
	In that case P5: *acting* for the sake of your best interests make sense *requires* the capacity to be *motivated* by the abstract conception of your overall or long-term good. Do you agree with this?	
11		I agree that the consequence (P5) of assumption (P4) is absurd. (concession). Granted that it is absurd, what does it imply for C4? What are the repercussions? Request for clarification of scope

	Prop	**Opp**
12	C4´: The idea of self-interest seems simply out of place when thinking about nonhuman action	
13		By accepting C4' Are you denying that other intelligent animals do things on purpose? Scope clarification request
14	Scope of C4´: distinction (purpose/ wanton) I am not at all inclined to deny that the other intelligent animals do things on purpose, but I would expect these purposes to be local and concrete but not to do what is best for themselves on the whole. In Harry Frankfurt's phrase, wanton: they act on the instinct or desire or emotion that comes uppermost	
15		¿Scope of C4´? Cc: ¿Learning and experience may change the order of their desires so that different ones come uppermost?
16	Request for clarification of Cc: What do you mean by Cc??	
17		Reformulation of the counterconsideration Cc´: the prospect of punishment may dampen an animal's ardor to the point where the animal will refrain from satisfying its appetite
18	Reply to the counterconsideration (weighting of Cc effects). (It is irrelevant to the discussion) *but* that is a different matter than calculating what is in your best interests and being motivated by a conception of your long-term good	

The diagram below depicts steps 1 through 11.
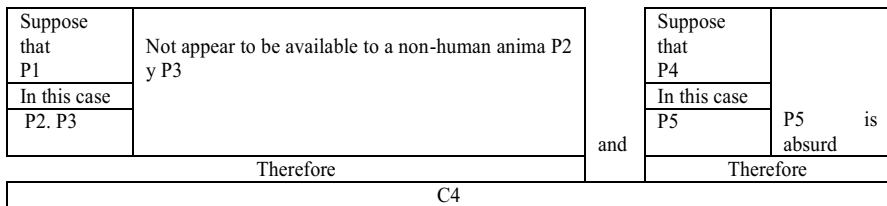
We are now in a position to characterize Korsgaard's strategic use of this series of reductions to the absurd. Remember that she specifically intends to reorient the discussion from Q1 to Q2:

> For all of these reasons Veneer Theory seems to me to be rather silly. I therefore want to set it aside, and talk about de Waal's more central and interesting question, the question of the roots of morality in our evolved nature, where they are located and how deep they go. (De Waal 2006, p. 103)

It provides four co-oriented reasons (each of which is complex, as shown in their respective diagrams). Korsgaard labels Q1 as "silly". What was her point? The point is this: we make evaluative judgments of arguments using loose terms: we may call an argument 'loose', for example; or use expressions like 'not quite right', or 'showing weak points', or 'defective' or 'shaky' or 'missing the point', or 'awful' (Krabbe 2007, p. 60); but, nevertheless, those judgments rest on features that seem more familiar to us: 'confusing premises', 'circularity', 'irrelevance', 'being incomplete', etc. If we introduce the distinction between covering values and contributory values (Chang 1997, p. 5), the relationship becomes clearer. Covering values have multiple contributory values that determine their content. For example, the covering value "philosophical talent", includes contributory values such as: originality, clarity of thought, lucidity, etc. Thus, the covering value "silly question" could include the contributory values defended in the theses of the four co-oriented arguments: C1, C2, C3 and C4. Let us recall: its normativity has not been proven; it has no meaning to apply it, properly speaking, to human beings; it is inconsistent with the concept of personhood; it makes no sense to apply it to nonhuman animals. In summary: it is not worth asking Q1, since it can only be given a manifestly false answer or the question itself is meaningless.

We will now proceed with an analysis of Kitcher's arguments.

4 Philip Kitcher, the Second Commentator. An Exploratory Strategy

Kitcher begins by reformulating the main thesis of de Waal's lectures in these words:

> **De Waal's thesis**: Human morality stems from dispositions we share with other primates, particularly with those closest to us on the phylogenetic tree.

Immediately afterwards, he asked for clarification of the thesis: it seemed to him that it was using vague terms.

> Yet my formulation of his position, like his own, is vague in crucial respects: what exactly is meant by claiming that morality "stems from" traits present in chimpanzees, or that morality is "a direct outgrowth of the social instincts we share with other animals," or that "deep down" we are truly moral, or that "the building blocks of morality are evolutionarily ancient"? (De Waal 2006, p. 121)

He announces his strategy, which, as we shall see below, is also a common procedure in philosophy:

> Kitcher's strategy: "I want to focus the position more precisely by articulating a particular version of what de Waal might have in mind." (De Waal 2006, p. 121)

The section concerning Waal's criticism of VT begins with a second-order counter-consideration:

Cc[1]: "In fact, I think de Waal's own presentation is hampered by his desire to take a sledgehammer to something he conceives of as the rival to his own view. That rival, "Veneer Theory," is to be demolished." (De Waal 2006, p. 121)

Another revealing strategic comment is: "The fact that the demolition is so easy should alert us to the possibility that the real issues have not been exposed and addressed." (De Waal 2006, p. 103).

Like Korsgaard, he begins by making a reconstruction of VT.

(VT) According to Kitcher, VT divides the animal kingdom into two:

A. There are nonhuman animals who lack any capacity for sympathy and kindness, and whose actions, to the extent that they can be understood as intentional at all, are the expression of selfish desires.

B. There are also human beings, often driven by selfish impulses to be sure, but capable of rising above egoism to sympathize with others, to curb their baser tendencies, and to sacrifice their own interests for higher ideals (De Waal 2006, p. 121).[7]

In a first approach, his goal is to give precise content to vague formulas of de Waal's main thesis. To achieve this, he will go through five steps.

1. Find the underlying structure of VT.
2. Open the logical space by asking "What is the opposite theory to VT?".
3. Denounce as wrong a common strategy, "Hume-Smith lure", and give a diagnosis of the error. I will name this step "The bad questions of Hume-Smith lure",
4. It provides a conceptual analysis of "psychological altruism" and, in doing so, unfolds the plurality of theories that may exist combining the different varieties of psychological altruism. This step I will call "Mapping altruism profiles."
5. Given the combinatorics of the theories of psychological altruism and the formal structure of VP-type theories, it is aimed to identify which questions are the correct ones. I will call this last step "erotetic evocation".

Let us go through all the steps.

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[7] Having made this reconstruction, Kitcher offers a first argument against the charge of deviating from Darwinisms that de Waal imputes to T. Huxley.

4.1 STEP 1. Find the Underlying Structure of the VT

	Prop	Opp (De Waal)
1	T (C) The version of VT takes a specific view of the starting point and the end point	
2		What do you mean by C? Request for clarification
3	T(C)´: The starting point (SP) and the end point (EP). Back in our evolutionary past, (SP) we had ancestors, as recent as the common ancestors of human beings and chimpanzees, who lacked any capacities for sympathy and altruism. (EP) Present human beings have ways of dis ciplining their selfish urges, and the theory thinks of morality as this collection of disciplinary strategies	
4		**It is false (SP)*.** Strong negation. We will call it de Waal's Thesis (Tw)*: The real objection to Veneer Theory in this form is that it has the starting point wrong
5	Tw? Is it false (SP)? Pure challenge	
6		R1(P1): It is falsified by all the evidence de Waal has acquired about the other directed tendencies of chimpanzees, bonobos, and, to a lesser extent, other primates
7	A meta-dialogue ("A meta-dialogue is a dialogue about a dialogue or about some dialogues" (Krabbe 2003, 83). This means that the dialogue spoken about in the meta-dialogue is a dialogue of the first order.) is opened: Counterconsideration: What about (EP)? Cc: but he is considerably less clear as to the nature of the terminus. **The vague talk** about "building blocks" and "direct outgrowth"	

The counter-consideration of turn 7 points to the problem that Kitcher wants to solve: making the vague vocabulary precise. Kitcher conjectures the origin of this deficiency in argumentation: "de Waal hasn't thought as hard about the human phenomenon he takes to be anticipated or foreshadowed in chimpanzee social life." (*Op. cit.*, p. 123).

4.2 STEP 2. Open the Logical Space

To start thinking accurately, Kitcher identifies the opposite of VT: "There's a polar opposite of Veneer Theory, one we might call "Solid-to-the-Core Theory" (STCT, for short).

	Prop	Opp
1	T: VT	
2		Not T (STCT)
3	What do you mean by not T?	

	Prop	Opp
4		STCT claims that morality is essentially present in our evolutionary ancestors
5	What do you mean by STCT?	
6		STCT´: takes the terminus of the evolutionary process that yields human morality to be the same as some prehuman starting point

This identification opens the logical space: between VT and STCT, there are "all the interesting positions".

4.3 STEP 3. Bad Questions Leading to the Hume-Smith Lure

Kitcher records de Waal's theoretical commitments: "The sentimentalist tradition in ethical theory, in which, as de Waal rightly sees, Adam Smith deserves (at least) equal billing with Hume" (*Op. cit.*, p.124). He then characterizes a strategy followed by evolutionary ethicists, which he calls the "Hume-Smith lure". Let's look at his dialogical reconstruction.

P1: claim that moral conduct consists in the expression of the appropriate passions,
P2: The sympathy is central to these passions.
P3: Then you argue that chimpanzees have capacities for sympathy,
C: conclude that they have the core of the psychology required for morality.

		Prop	Opp
	1	T(C)*	
P1. P2. P3	2		T(C)? Pure challenge
Therefore	3	R_1(P1.P2.P3)*	
C	4		**P3?** Pure challenge. Request for concatenation

The lure lies in the illusion that it only makes sense to ask for a proof (ask for concatenation) for the premise (P3). If there are worries about what it means to talk about the "central" role of sympathy or the "core" of moral psychology, the primatologist or evolutionary theorist can shift the burden:

Primatologists: demonstrate sympathetic tendencies at work in primate social life;
Evolutionary theorists: show how tendencies of this kind may have evolved.

In sum: the error lies in the fact that Hume-Smith lure only admits challenging the evidence for P3 and takes P1 and P2 for granted.

4.4 STEP 4. Mapping Altruism Profiles

What is left unchallenged are P1 and P2 of the Hume-Smith lure. Kitcher argues that it is required to examine the notion of "psychological altruism."

To explore its varieties, it does the following:

1. He distinguishes three candidates for his analysis of psychological altruism: desires or needs, intentions, and emotions.
2. He focuses on desire, which is sufficient for his purpose, which is to show the multiple versions of psychological altruism.
3. He presents a conceptual analysis; generally, conceptual analyses can be reconstructed as a series of rebuttals that are corrected in terms of counterexamples (counterexamples of necessary condition and sufficient condition). Kitcher does not develop the rebuttals in detail, he only mentions the three necessary and jointly sufficient conditions and illustrates them with an example:

> All this is a way of spelling out the thought that what makes a desire altruistic is a disposition to modify what is chosen in a situation where there is a perceived impact on another, that the modification aligns the choice more closely with the perceived wishes or needs of the other, that the modification is caused by the perception of those wishes or needs, and that it doesn't involve calculation of expected future advantages in satisfaction of standing preferences. (*Op. cit.,*p. 127)

4. Kitcher's deployment of theories is triggered, at first, by distinguishing between paternalistic/non-paternalistic altruism. Paternalistic altruism responds to needs rather than wants; non-paternalistic altruism does the opposite.
5. Finally, Kitcher identifies four dimensions of altruism: (a) intensity, (b) range, (c) extent and (b) skill. With these he was able to construct various theories: a vast multiplicity of theory: "Even if we ignore the complications of elaborating a similar approach to emotion and intention, and even if we disregard the distinction between paternalistic and nonpaternalistic altruism, it's evident that psychological altruists come in a vast array of types"(*Op. cit*.,p. 129).

He invites us to think about the multiple combinations:

If we think of a four-dimensional space, we can map "altruism profiles" that capture the dis- tinct intensities and different skills with which individuals respond across a range of contexts and potential beneficiaries. Some possible profiles show low-intensity responses to a lot of others in a lot of situations; other possible profiles show high-intensity responses to a few select individuals across almost all situations; yet others are responses to the neediest individual in any given situation, with the intensity of the response proportioned to the level of need." (*Op. cit.,*p. 129)

4.5 STEP 5. Erotetic Evocation

Combinatorial explosion confronts us with a skeptical scenario: "Until we have a clearer view of the specific kinds of psychological altruism chimpanzees (and other nonhuman primates) display, and until we know what kinds are relevant to morality, it's premature" (*Op. cit*.,p. 129). But it does give us a clue as to how to start asking precise questions and avoid de Waal's vague language. What are the questions worth asking (in stark contrast to the Hume-Smith lure):

> Q1: Which, if any, of these altruism profiles are found in human beings and in nonhuman animals?
> Q2: Which would be found in morally exemplary individuals?

In very general terms, it is a scheme of erotetic evocation (Wiśniewski 1995): We start from a series of assumptions (P1: The Structure of theories: the starting point and the end point. P2: The multiple altruism profile), which raise information-seeking questions.

P1: The Structure of theories: the starting point and the end point. P2: The multiple altruism profile
Therefore
Which of these altruism profiles are found in human beings and in nonhuman animals?

 In summary, the strategy to clarify the vague discourse on the "building blocks" and "direct consequence" of de Waal's thesis is not that of the "Hume-Smith lure", but an earlier one: the typology of psychological altruism profiles and the structure underlying the presupposition[8] of the questions about the evolutionary process of morality (the starting point and the end point).

5 Peter Singer, the Third Commentator. Self-refutation Strategy

Another characteristically philosophical procedure (from Plato to Nagel) is frequently used in discussions against relativists and sceptics, that is, finding inconsistencies, but of a specific kind. The charge of inconsistency to which I refer does not consist in showing that someone held 'p' and, say at another time, held 'not p' (like a philosopher in two different papers or books), for we might call that a mere inconsistency, and the proponent can reply by saying that they have changed their mind. Nor is it a reduction in the sense of extracting remote consequences involving the self-contradictory statement 'p and not p'. (Galindo 2019). The charge is: "apply what you hold to be true to your own thesis and you will see that it is false".

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[8] A fundamental fact about questions is that they all have presuppositions. A presupposition of a question is a proposition that is implied by each and every one of its direct answers, whether correct or incorrect. In other words: the way in which a question is posed makes some answers admissible and others not. All questions have various presuppositions that may or may not be true. The question " What is the cause of the universe?" presupposes, for example, that in fact the universe has a cause (Rescher 2001, p. 22).

It resembles, Johnstone (1952, p. 493) tells us, the kind of criticism we make of ourselves: "Do I meet my own standards?", a similar criticism can be made of a philosophical thesis or theory. Or as we shall see, in Singer's case, the charge to de Waal could be: "Your theory has the same flaw you denounced in the VT, so let's not be so harsh with some of its defenders." It is part of a series of philosophical strategies whose purpose is to show that the opposing party has not taken the position defended or the criticisms it has made seriously enough.

Let's follow the analysis step by step. Peter Singer begins by recording the substantive agreements between himself and de Waal (De Waal 2006, p. 141):

A1: In *The Expanding Circle*, published in 1981, I argued that the origins of morality are to be found in the nonhuman social mammals from which we evolved.
A2: I rejected the view that morality is a matter of culture, rather than biology,
A2´: or that morality is uniquely human and entirely without roots in our evolutionary history.
A3: The development of kin altruism and reciprocal altruism are much more central to our own morality than we recognize.

However, it identifies a pseudo-expressed propositional agreement[9]:

4: De Waal rightly rejects the view that all of our morality is "a cultural overlay, a thin veneer hiding an otherwise selfish and brutish nature."

Against (4), Singer advances a second-order counterconsideration Cc^1:

Cc^1: Yet because he fails to give sufficient weight to differences he himself acknowledges between primate social behavior and human morality, his dismissal of the Veneer Theory is too swift and he is too harsh with some of its advocates (De Waal 2006, p. 141).

As a first step in his strategy, Singer introduces a distinction between two different theses:

R1: Human nature is inherently social and the roots of human ethics lie in the evolved psychological traits and pat- terns of behavior that we share with other social mammals, especially primates.
R2: All of human ethics derives from our evolved nature as social mammals.

Singer accepts the first claim (R1) and rejects the second (R2). But it seems that de Waal accepts both. Let us look at the dialogical chart:

	Prop (De Waal)	Opp (P. Singer)
1	T: VT must be rejected	
2		I agree with T

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[9] There is a verbal agreement on T_0 between A and B. However, "T_0" does not mean the same thing for A and B. When, in different moves, A makes reformulations Tn $(n > 0)$ and B agrees with Tn, we will say that there is pseudo-expressed propositional agreement (Cf. Naess 2005, vol. 7, 66).

	Prop (De Waal)	Opp (P. Singer)
3	T because R	
4		What do you mean by R? Do you mean R1 or R2?
5	R2: All of human ethics derives from our evolved nature as social mammals	
6		I disagree with R2 (in step 2 there is a pseudo-expressed propositional agreement)

Turns 1–6 describe the substantive disagreement between Singer and De Waal. Singer begins with a critique of some of de Waal's historical assertions, which we will omit here.

Let us begin with the reconstruction of the central argument. He initiates his discussion by recording some of de Waal's theoretical commitments. Singer is guided by this strategic clue: "That the problem "Veneer Theory" seeks to address is not to be dismissed lightly is perhaps best shown by de Waal's own remarks on Edward Westermarck." (*Op. cit.*, p.143).

Theoretical commitments assumed by De Waal (*Op. cit.*, p.143):

C1: "The most insightful part of Westermarck's work," is that in which he tries to distinguish the specifically moral emotions from other emotions.

C2: Explains that the difference between the moral feelings and "kindred non-moral emotions" is to be found in the "disinterestedness, apparent im- partiality, and flavour of generality" shown by the former.

C3: It is only when we make general judgments of how anyone ought to be treated that we can begin to speak of moral approval and disapproval. It is in this specific area, famously symbolized by Smith's "impartial spectator," that humans seem to go radically further than other primates.

C4. Morality likely evolved as a within-group phenomenon in conjunction with other typical within-group capacities, such as conflict resolution, cooperation, and sharing.

C5: Universally, humans treat outsiders far worse than members of their own community: in fact, moral rules hardly seem to apply to the outside.

The argument should be reconstructed as Rigorous Persuasion Dialogue:

	Prop	Opp
1	T1: We have an evolved nature, which we share with other primates, that gives rise to a morality based on kinship, reciprocity, and empathy with other members of one's own group	
2		I grant T1 (by C4). Concession
3	T2: Central to our current notion of morality is that it is *only* when we make these general, impartial judgments that we can really begin to speak of *moral* approval and disapproval	
4		T2? Pure challenge

	Prop	Opp
5	R1 (P1): The best way of capturing what is distinctive about the moral emotions is that they take an impartial perspective, which leads us to consider the interests of those outside our own group	
6		I grant R1(P1) (by C1, C2, C3). Concession
7	T3: Yet the practice of this more impartial morality is "fragile."	
8		I grant T3 (by C5). Concession
9	A meta-dialogue is opened: Cc[1]: T1, T2, T3 ¿Doesn't this conception come very close to saying that the impartial element of morality is **a veneer**, laid over our evolved nature?	

The same problem that de Waal criticized in VT is presented again, but now in his own theory. Singer shows that the theoretical commitments made by de Waal lead him to a very similar version of VT. His critique becomes self-referential because de Waal failed to identify the distinctive element of morality: rationality, in Singer's view which he will defend later. Such self-referential strategies aim at denouncing false assumptions (Galindo 2019).

6 Conclusion

I have analyzed the critical part of the comments of three philosophers, Korsgaard, Kitcher and Singer, to Frans de Waal's Tanner Lectures. I used as a tool of analysis the dialogical approach applied to argumentative strategies, which makes use of concepts and techniques from the dialectical dialogical approach (Walton and Krabbe 1995), Hubert Marraud's (2013, 2020) argument dialectics, and formal dialectics and dialogical logics.

I have emphasized that Frans de Waal's response to the philosophers conceals the strategic elements of the argument they deployed against him. My hypothesis is that these strategic elements are difficult for laymen to grasp because they pertain to professional objectives of the field in question. This gives us a clue as to where to look for answers to abstract metaphilosophical questions about distinctive aspects of philosophical argumentation.

We can now wonder about the similarities and differences between the three philosophers with respect to their arguments. At first glance, they seem to disagree on everything, although they direct their criticisms at the same target: de Waal's arguments against VT. Disagreement among philosophers is to be expected; there are no surprises. However, I contend that, under closer scrutiny, they agree on the rationale. Recall that Korsgaard labels question Q1 "silly," her complicated series of *reductio ad absurdum* against the legitimacy of VT are intended to focus the debate on question Q2, a question that, she argues, has philosophical and empirical value. In the same vein, Kitcher uses a strategy to give precision to the vague terms that cloud de Waal's assertions. This strategy consists in exploring the *desiderata* of certain types of theories on the evolution of morality and denouncing the lure into which many have fallen or gone astray. All this in order to seek what are the right questions to

ask. Similarly, Singer argues that Waal's own theory falls into a version of VT precisely because it does not ask accurately about the constitutive element of morality. In short: all three philosophers contest de Waal's argumentative strategy: it is a bad idea to defend the evolutionary continuity of morality between nonhuman animals and humans on the basis of a critique of what de Waal calls "Veneer Theory".

Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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