Editorial

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Editorial

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We are delighted to introduce the eighth volume of *Perspectives: Dialogues in Philosophy. Perspectives* is a peer-reviewed annual publication, featuring articles, book reviews and interviews covering a broad range of issues and topics in philosophy and related disciplines. *Perspectives* aims to reflect the diverse interests of the graduate philosophy community at University College Dublin, publishing works from various philosophical traditions including analytic and continental. The journal also welcomes submissions in social and political philosophy, history of philosophy, philosophy of cognitive science and ancient philosophy. Our goal is to offer a platform for those in the early stages of research in the academic philosophy, from masters and PhD students to recent graduates, to gain experience of the process of academic publishing at the highest level.

Since 2016, *Perspectives* has been published as an open access journal with De Gruyter Open, a leading open access publisher of 435 journals in various areas and disciplines. Moving the journal to an open online platform has allowed the journal to flourish and to be visible on over 300 online databases, including ProQuest and Google Scholar, and makes it a fully searchable and citable publication. The chance to publish *Perspectives* with De Gruyter Open was made possible by the generous contributions of University College Dublin Seed Funding and the UCD School of Philosophy. Through international calls for paper, the journal has never ceased to elicit high quality submissions that are subject to rigorous blind refereeing. The contributors are not liable for the costs of publishing with De Gruyter Open; all such charges will be borne by the journal.

This year's issue features articles based on some of the proceedings of the 2018 Dublin Annual Graduate Philosophy. This conference is an annual event jointly organised by University College Dublin's and Trinity College Dublin's philosophy departments. The conference that year drew papers that address the theme, broadly construed, of 'Dialogues in Philosophy' whether that be in response to the work of contemporary thinkers, historical figures, or both. By some, the topic was also interpreted as revolving around different contributions to the state of historical or current debates in Philosophy (e.g. philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, continental philosophy etc.). The issue also features an interview with the keynote speaker of the conference Prof. Michaela Massimi. In addition, this issue of the journal includes a submitted paper which fits well with the broad aims of the topic of the 2018 conference.

Broadly, authors addressed issues such as

- The extent to which philosophy ought to be dialogical (questions concerning different methodologies in philosophy are of direct relevance).
- The most influential dialogues in both the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophy.

The motivation for the conference theme and ultimately for this volume of *Perspectives* was that most of philosophy, whether historical or contemporary, is to some extent dialogical. Sometimes this becomes apparent when philosophy is conducted in the style of a direct response to an argument, idea or position. In some cases, thinkers might respond to an established tradition. In other cases, it may be an as yet under-developed position that either needs encouraging or else might be seen to be problematic. In short, philosophy seems to operate only within a philosophical community where thinkers seek recognition for their work and in turn recognise others' work. The aim is, therefore, to spur young academics toward more proactive attitudes in these regards. The aim was achieved through a series of insightful papers from across the philosophical spectrum and the analytic/continental divide.

The issue begins with an interview with the keynote speaker Michela Massimi who is a Professor of Philosophy of Science at the University of Edinburgh and principal investigator for the Eu funded project

'Perspectival Realism'. Massimi discusses, among other issues, the value of European freedom of movement. In particular, she contends that it is misguided to stop freedom of movement and as a result select only elite minds to do research in the UK. Rather, she believes that freedom of movement allows "the best mind" to flourish. In light of this, she discusses the future of research in the UK post-Brexit, the challenges and rewards of interdisciplinary research, shares some thoughts on the history of philosophy and science and our relationship with it, and emphasises the importance of bringing philosophy into the public sphere. She also offers advice for early career researchers and graduate students in philosophy. Furthermore, she is of the opinion that philosophy is born as a dialogue and is essentially dialogical and we must rid ourselves of this ideal of the thinker from nowhere that works in solitude. That is why she thinks it is crucial to work in collaboration with other people. By the same token, she believes that looking for answers in one field gives a one-sided answer. Sometimes, philosophy can be conducted more productively by "bringing in fresh perspectives from other fields". Her philosophical view can be summarised as follows: it is an attempt at resolving the tension between realism, the claim that science gives us access to truths about the world, and perspectivism, the claim that knowledge is historically and socially situated.

The first paper by Deven Burks entitled "Rigor or Rhetoric: Philosopher and Public in Dialogue" addresses the ongoing dialogue between academic philosophy and public policy. The paper considers Leiter's critique of "neoliberal" public philosophy. In particular, one definition of neoliberal philosophy is at stake, namely the practice of rigorous reasoning touching on matters of direct or indirect interest in people *in view of impacting public policy*. Leiter identifies two paradoxes that neoliberal philosophy falls prey to. The first one states that philosophers disagree over questions of public policy. Yet if philosophical reasoning is to impact public policy, uniform agreement among philosophers or in the expert community seems to be required. The second paradox is an extension of the first and posits that "the discursive hygiene" that philosophers generally engage in plays a contingent role in belief-formation about moral and political questions. Thus, the two paradoxes would make it seem that philosophy is incapable of impacting public policy and thus coming up with substantive claims. To support the contingency claim of belief-formation Leiter invokes two psychological mechanisms: tribalism and emotivism. Philosophers broaden concern for others by means of emotions and similarity as opposed to reasons broadly construed. Thus, philosophical reasoning may indirectly capture belief formation. Burks challenges Leiter's view on the grounds that interaction between speaker, place and time and purpose (what he refers to in his paper as site and picture) changes the definition of neoliberal philosophy. Yet Leiter seems to hold that neoliberal public philosophy is prey to two paradoxes no matter the site or the picture. Furthermore, Burks takes issue with the claim that claim that emotivism and tribalism apply to all instances of public discourse. Finally, he shows that even if emotivism and tribalism are true of belief formation this does not completely eliminate responsiveness to the right kinds of reasons.

The second paper by Francesco Brignoli entitled "The Back and Forth Between Habermas and Postmodernism" explores the dialogue between some postmodern thinkers and Habermas. The aim of his paper is to point out the respects in which Habermas is a post-modernist but also emphasise points of divergence between post-modernism and Habermas' thinking. Indeed, Habermas' rejection of metaphysical truths, systematicity in knowledge, the ideal of the isolated autonomous subject and finally "a supra-human reason related to a world spirit" aligns his work with the post-modern project. But there are many respects in which his work goes against postmodern insights, as Brignoli points out. For Habermas, ridding ourselves of metaphysical guarantees does not mean foregoing "the universality of rational standards" in his theory of "communicative action". The latter is premised on the idea that the subject's pretence to validity is constitutive of intersubjective communication. But a postmodernist like Lyotard would argue that these aspirations to validity do not allow for the heterogeneity of language games. Indeed, any appeal to universality, despite its metaphysical ablution, is still a grand narrative. Habermas's retort is that the subject in his critical account is far from being transcendental but is part of a communicative community. In his defence, Brignoli argues that the communication is pluralistic and does not involve one model of legitimacy. Absent universal criteria communication would be doomed. The speaker's utterance must satisfy three criteria for the dialogue to get off the ground: veracity, correctness and truth.

The final paper is entitled "Considering Dispositional Moral Realism" by Prabhpal Singh. It is an attempt at defending dispositional moral realism by challenging several of its main objections. Dispositional moral realism is the view that moral properties are analogous to secondary qualities such as colours and texture in that there are objects that trigger these experiences in us, i.e., they are in some way dependent on real objects. The suggestion is that while moral properties are mind-dependent, they are real, all the same. Thus, this view secures an ontological status for moral properties without being committed to the objectivity thesis. Its basic claim is that a moral property is one that something has if and only if it is disposed to trigger affective "nonmorally-informed" and disinterested agent. One of the main objections that Singh explores is Blackburn's which disputes that there is an analogy between secondary qualities and moral properties. Blackburn argues that there are mechanisms and empirical observations that explain say, colour experiences but there are no such mechanisms for moral experience. Singh responds that the analogy is between for example the ontological status of red and moral properties that turns on the subject's reaction to the object and not merely subjective experience independently of the object. There are further respects in which moral properties are not analogous to secondary qualities. Singh argues that the analogy tenet is not to be mistaken for an identity. Rather, the aim of the analogy is to elucidate the idea that there could be real moral properties without their being mind-independent.

These graduate papers, along with an insightful interview with the conference keynote, provide a fascinating exploration of the key issue of philosophical dialogues which underlies most, if not all, the issues at the heart of both continental and analytic philosophy. We would like to thank the School of philosophy in UCD and the Department of Philosophy.at Trinity College Dublin for their generous support of the conference as well as the publication of this issue of *Perspectives*. In particular, Professors James Miller and Maria Baghramian for their continued advice and oversight. We would also like to thank all our graduate speakers, who travelled from across Europe, and contributed to this wonderful volume of *Perspectives*.

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Research Article

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Rigor or rhetoric: philosopher and public in dialogue

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Abstract: Leiter (2016) charges public philosophy with being "neoliberal". To understand that charge better, I define, in §1, three versions of public philosophy which might be concerned and two pictures of its practice targeted by Leiter. I also compare two deliberative sites wherein those pictures may play out. In §2, I sketch how Leiter's two paradoxes for "neoliberal" public philosophy lead to a revised public philosophy. §3 questions the paradoxes' empirical grounding and scope. Lastly, in §4, I assume Leiter's picture and illustrate how philosophical dialogue, through appeal to personal self-image and "moral perceptions", may still influence public discourse. I conclude that Leiter both over- and understates his case and that his conclusions require greater scrutiny.

Keywords: Public Philosophy, Brian Leiter, Philosophical Practice, Philosophical Dialogue

1. Public philosophy in three definitions, two sites and two pictures

Does public philosophy's "public" quality owe to its pervasiveness in public culture? To philosophical engagement by social elites? To philosophers' success in influencing public decision making? Leiter countenances the first two senses but focuses on the third and surveys the philosophical lay of the land post-war: the rise of research universities, expansion of higher education, emergence of a new professional class of salaried philosophy professors. This socio-economic context prompts contemporary demands on philosophy to be public – making a distinct contribution to the market and societal division of labor – as another outgrowth of the "neoliberal" logic driving the capitalist world-order. For Leiter, this "neoliberal" public philosophy is prey to two paradoxes which preclude a philosophical market contribution. Ultimately, he advocates a more realistic public philosophy which a.) allows for philosophers' lack of substantive conclusions and public's rational shortcomings and b.) pursues its course independently of market pressures.

Understanding Leiter's striking claims requires unpacking just what the paradoxes of public philosophy undercut and safeguard. Though underdeveloped in his polemical account, this point is charitably developed here by offering three definitions of public philosophy, two discursive sites for public philosophy and two pictures of the first definition. I begin with three definitions of "public philosophy" whereof basic elements are found in the paper. Leiter's critical target is:

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(D1) "Neoliberal" public philosophy[1] is the practice of bringing rigorous philosophical reasoning (e.g. deductive argument, conceptual analysis, appeal to linguistic usage or intuition) to bear on more or less urgent matters of direct or indirect interest to persons or groups in society with the aim of impacting public policy.

"Neoliberal" denotes a "way of thinking that has dominated the capitalist world completely since the 1980s, in which every human activity justifies itself by its contribution to something for which there is demand in the marketplace" (p. 51). Hence, **(D1)** supplies philosophical rigor to meet a demand for philosophical expertise, whether internal (university assessing "impact") or external (public or private sector seeking expert opinion).

Despite its focus on this "neoliberal" strand, Leiter's discussion suggests that **(D1)** does not exhaust public philosophy. He gestures towards, without labelling, two alternate definitions, the first being:

(D2) "Broad" public philosophy[2] is the practice of exposing members of the public to rigorous philosophical reasoning (e.g. deductive argument, conceptual analysis, appeal to linguistic usage or intuition, etc.) and general philosophical conclusions on a range of topics of "public interest" with the aim of promoting critical reflection on the public's part.

As Leiter suggests that only **(D1)** is paradoxical, I assume that it follows from his position that **(D2)** is unaffected by the paradoxes. I question this assumption in §3.

The second alternate definition encapsulates Leiter's preferred version of public philosophy. Despite giving no clear definition, he is committed to:

(D3) "Narrow" public philosophy[3] is the practice of deploying forms of philosophical rhetoric (e.g. evocative description, historical understanding, causal explanation, critical genealogy, utopian appeals, etc.) to bear on more or less urgent matters of direct or indirect interest to persons or groups in society independent of any aim to impact public policy.

(D3) is filled out from Leiter's conclusions and is "narrow" insofar as a practical, chastened public philosophy finds solid footing: first, by decoupling "public philosophy" and "public policy" (p. 62); second, by recollecting rhetorical practices from past philosophers of public stature, e.g. Marx and Nietzsche (p. 64). Understanding what **(D1)** gets wrong helps define aims and manage expectations for **(D3)**.

Vagueness in **(D1)** poses interpretive obstacles. While the definition indicates what the "neoliberal" philosopher seeks and which discursive means she employs, it leaves indeterminate where she speaks, whom she addresses and how and whether she and addressees interact. The "neoliberal" engages in "public debate" (pp. 53, 55, 62), "public discourse" (pp. 59, 62, 63) or "moral thinking in the public sphere" (p. 62) and addresses simply "the public" (pp. 51, 64). Is that discourse uni-, bi- or multidirectional? Is there opportunity for default-and-challenge interactions? Do speakers, participants, etc. claim (philosophical) expertise? Is a specific goal sought (e.g. consensus, convergence of opinion)?

Perhaps Leiter foresees this vagueness, but his examples do not close the gap (cf. the Salaita case at pp. 55-57). I thus propose two discursive sites which Leiter's critique addresses and wherein its reach is assessed:

(S1) A "pedagogical" discursive site involves a (more or less) formal unidirectional exchange between a public philosopher and an audience comprising philosophical lay persons, public officials, experts, stakeholders, etc., with interaction (mostly) confined to questions and answers and taking place within a limited timeframe. This site aims at educating and informing the audience.

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1 If "neoliberal" is Leiter's term, "neoliberal public philosophy" appears just once (p. 64). "Neoliberal" also qualifies "way of thinking" (p. 51) and "rationalization" (p. 62). Leiter is explicit that this specific view is "paradoxical" (pp. 51-2).

2 "Broad" is my term. Leiter alludes thereto when remarking that "philosophy is relevant and significant to anyone – including presumably members of the 'public' – who want to know what is true or to know what they do and do not know, but that is obviously not what is meant by 'public philosophy'" (p. 51). This last point is disputable.

3 My term. Leiter endorses something similar: "Those concessions by a radical skeptic like [American Legal Realist] Jerome Frank about rational decision-making about practical questions should remind us that even in the sphere of emotional reaction and Tribalism, discursive hygiene can still exert pressures. Public philosophy can contribute to those pressures" (p. 63).

> **(S2)** An "interactive" discursive site involves a formal or informal bi- or multidirectional exchange between a public philosopher and an audience comprising philosophical lay persons, public officials, experts, stakeholders, etc., with interaction taking shape as presentations followed by questions and answers or a feedback session of comments and challenges, etc. and taking place within a (more or less) limited timeframe. This site aims at a joint learning experience for philosopher and audience.

This neither exhausts the range of possible discursive sites[4] nor maintains that a discursive site cannot be alternately pedagogical and interactive. These rough-and-ready distinctions merely supplement Leiter's account.

Finally, I give two standard pictures of **(D1)** to suggest how "neoliberal" political philosophy may be practiced in **(S1)** and **(S2)**:

> **(P1) Naïve**:[5] Public philosophy involves using abstract reasoning to generate substantive (normative) principles which straightforwardly apply to personal or group problems.

> **(P2) Sophisticated:**[6] Public philosophy involves using abstract reasoning to distinguish unlike arguments, concepts, cases, etc. and to bring clearer into view underdetermined norms, aspirations, ideals, etc. and their range of applicability, without straightforwardly resolving personal or group problems.

To illustrate how **(D1)** differs between discursive sites and pictures, consider two philosophers, Albertine and Bernadette. Albertine discusses healthcare rationing in **(S1)**. This "pedagogical" exchange foresees a presentation from Albertine before opening the floor to questions from public officials, etc. Albertine's presentation works from the norm of fairness to argue for a healthcare lottery and grounds her claims in her philosophical expertise. Her answers insist that fairness is our predominant concern and a healthcare lottery its only suitable institutionalization. Albertine's takeaway concerns her success in persuading her audience that fairness and a healthcare lottery yield the best solution in healthcare-rationing.

In contrast, Bernadette discusses this subject in **(S2)**. This "interactive" exchange takes shape as a roundtable or moderated discussion. Bernadette's opening identifies competing norms, e.g. efficiency, fairness and maximin, to argue for a balanced allocation strategy, but she does not consider that her philosophical training lends her any special "authority" (cf. Rawls, 2007, pp. 1-2). Moreover, Bernadette remains sensitive to novel uses and unforeseen shortcomings of those norms which subsequent contributions reveal and in light of which her initial survey must be supplemented. Bernadette's takeaway lies in contributing to discussion of a multifaceted issue and jumpstarting "collective intelligence" (Landemore 2012) to test possible solutions against differently weighted priorities.

Clearly, the discursive site and the picture of public philosophy influence the shape of **(D1)**. If Albertine's and Bernadette's sites are switched, the tenor and stakes change considerably. Albertine's takeaway consists in identifying lingering questions and concerns which fairness and a healthcare lottery must overcome to be the most broadly convincing solution. Bernadette's takeaway lies rather in showing her audience the importance of approaching healthcare rationing from different perspectives. Wherefore my charitable efforts to supplement Leiter's view by highlighting how interaction between speaker, place, time and purpose alters outcomes (Table 1). Yet Leiter's paradoxes would undercut **(D1)**, whatever the site or picture.

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4 Consider hearings collecting expert testimony to inform problem-solving or think-pieces generating societal uptake of a philosophical question by the "maxi-public" (Suiter and Reuchamps, 2016).

5 My term. I broadly share Leiter's polemical view here. Even if no "neoliberal" public philosophers practice the "naïve" picture, Leiter's first paradox targets it. Though an "empty" concept, this picture may echo Daniels's (1996, pp. 334-338) report on "principlism" and Beauchamp and Childress's (1979) four bioethics principles.

6 My term. I am more hesitant to follow Leiter here (see §3). "Sophisticated" reflects this picture's being more adequate despite falling short of Leiter's preferred picture. More philosophers second **(P2)**. See Williams's (1994) views about moral philosophy and Daniels's (1996) comparison of top-down versus bottom-up approaches.

Table 1: Outcomes of site-picture interaction

	(P1) Naïve	**(P2) Sophisticated**
(S1) Pedagogical	Persuasion	Diversity education
(S2) Interactive	Persuasion enhancement	Collective intelligence

2. Leiter's two paradoxes

Two paradoxes concern **(D1)** qua contribution of "philosophical insight or knowledge or skill to questions of moral and political urgency" in a community (p. 51). The first posits that philosophers disagree over such questions. Because impact on public policy ordinarily requires uniform, widespread agreement in the expert community, what expertise philosophers "offer can not *[sic]* consist in any credible claim to know what is good, right, valuable, or any other substantive normative proposition that might be decisive in practical affairs" (p. 53). If philosophers cannot offer credible knowledge claims on substantive matters, one must reconsider Albertine's insistence in **(S1)** that fairness is our only concern in healthcare rationing and a healthcare lottery its only suitable institutionalization. Advancing **(P1)**, she holds that substantive normative principles straightforwardly generate solutions to society's problems. Yet her insistence seems misplaced, absent knowledge claims on substantive matters. By casting doubt on such claims, the first paradox undermines **(P1)** and Albertine's version of **(D1)**.[7]

This leaves untouched Bernadette's version thereof and **(P2)**. Bernadette's credibility hinges not on a knowledge claim of substantive matters but on the skilled deployment of reasoning and abstract theory to distinguish cases and explicate implicit norms, etc. Nonetheless, Leiter undercuts **(P2)** by extending the first paradox.[8] He grants that, even without widespread agreement or substantive normative knowledge, philosophers offer "a *method* or *way of thinking*" (*idem*.). From a set of beliefs, philosophers work out rational commitments, e.g. believing *x* commits one to *y*, not *z*. This "discursive hygiene" involves "parsing arguments, clarifying the concepts at play in a debate, teasing out the dialectical entailments of suppositions and claims" (*idem*.). The paradox arises from such hygiene's, philosophers' nominal contribution, playing "an only erratic, and highly contingent, role in how people form beliefs about matters of moral and political urgency" (p. 55).

Thus, Bernadette's contribution is no less built on sand. If her intervention's form does not engage the processes behind belief- and attitude-formation and does not stimulate concerted reflection, problematization and collective problem-solving, Bernadette's approach of parsing competing notions and remaining sensitive to novel uses is unsuited for, even irrelevant to, her sought outcomes. From the lack of fit between her intervention's form and the mechanisms guiding belief- and attitude-formation, it follows that the second paradox undermines **(P2)** and Bernadette's "neoliberal" approach.

If the two paradoxes can be sustained, **(D1)** is inadequate to the purpose of impacting public policy. Thus, public philosophy must be reconceived, with something like **(D3)** falling out of Leiter's view. Yet more is needed to sustain the paradoxes. Leiter must both elaborate the mechanisms guiding belief- and attitude-formation and – or so I contend – bulwark **(D2)** against those mechanisms.[9] I consider that elaboration before returning to "bulwarking" in §3.

Leiter elaborates those mechanisms through two psychological phenomena: emotivism and tribalism. Emotivism limits public philosophy as "discursive hygiene": "Ethical disagreements are at bottom a function of disagreement in attitudes, rather than disagreements about beliefs" (p. 53).[10] In addition, "the connection

7 Rather, this paradox undermines a picture of "neoliberal" public philosophy similar to **(P1)** as Leiter does not explicitly endorse **(P1)**.

8 Note 7's caveat also concerns **(P2)**.

9 Two reasons for this qualification. First, Leiter nowhere explicitly recognizes **(D2)**. Second, the paradoxes purportedly affect only **(D1)**, public philosophy concerning "questions of moral and political urgency" (p. 51). Generally, Leiter sees no need for bulwarking.

10 Leiter cites Stevenson's (1963) "The Nature of Ethical Disagreement".

between particular facts and our attitudes is just a contingent *psychological/causal fact*" such that, "if our beliefs change, our attitudes often change too" (p. 54). Accordingly, public discourse concerns two kinds of conflict. If between beliefs, conflict ends through convergence between beliefs through appeal to reasons. If between attitudes, conflict admits of no clear-cut solution as attitudes are less reason-responsive.

This seemingly warrants the conclusion that no rules govern the *necessary* transformation of and causal interaction between beliefs and attitudes. Take two examples.[11] One belief may provoke change in another belief or attitude without one's being aware thereof. Likewise, one may mistakenly attribute change in one belief to another belief or attitude. There is no available conceptual apparatus for reliably tracking and predicting those causal connections. Does Leiter nonetheless exaggerate this claim about the absence of rules?

Two points on Leiter's behalf. First, nowhere does the author state that no rules govern "changes in belief about the logical or inferential relations between beliefs or between beliefs and attitudes" (p. 55). While this conclusion seemingly follows from his observation that discursive hygiene operates "through causal channels we do not yet understand very well" (p. 63), "no rules" only appears when recalling Foot's (1958) criticism of Stevenson. If Leiter remarks that "Stevenson had it exactly right" about the contingent, psychological character of belief-changes (p. 55), this does not strictly commit him to "no rules".

Second, Leiter could admit the existence of rules governing "changes in belief about the logical or inferential relations between beliefs or between beliefs and attitudes" while maintaining that, practically speaking, none are available. It suffices that such changes be causally overdetermined. Even allowing rules, it is hard to know which explains a given change,[12] without appealing to one's "pro- and con- attitudes about the kinds of arguments that influence attitudes" (p. 54).

An example to clarify. Eva believes that the electoral system is unjust due to her moral beliefs about autonomy, religious beliefs about temporal power or social attitudes about democratic politics. To change this larger belief, one tries several strategies: appealing to ethical considerations counter to her moral or religious beliefs (*e.g.* the temporal-spiritual power divide is necessary), to unethical considerations about her self-interest (*e.g.* the electoral system best preserves her (group's) freedom of belief) or to opposed social attitudes (*e.g.* a sense of public service). If she then believes the electoral system just, this change has several prima facie explanations, whereof only some predicate discursive factors. The change might owe to non-discursive factors, such as sociological determinants (e.g. tipping points) or cognitive biases (e.g. elaboration likelihood model). Moreover, Eva may be unaware of or mistaken about the belief provoking the change.

Resultantly, neither Eva nor interlocutor nor observer can conclusively ascribe the change to philosophical reasoning's discursive factor (e.g. ethical considerations) rather than other discursive factors (e.g. self-interest or social attitudes) or non-discursive factors (e.g. biases). Leiter could mount the defense that, while it may prove possible retrospectively to advance different hypotheses regarding the change, this affects only his account's details, not its substance.

With "emotivism" comes "tribalism", a psychological phenomenon consisting in "the propensity of creatures like us to identify with those 'like themselves,' and to view others as unacceptably different, deficient, depraved, and perhaps dangerous", which ensures that "prejudice and bias are dominant forces in human life" (p. 59). Tribalism's impact on discursive hygiene and public discourse is threefold. First, as Leiter remarks, the person tracks not the inferential relation between beliefs, attitudes and reasons but her similarity with interlocutors. Second, similarly remarked, she is predisposed to divergent discursive stances towards similar and dissimilar interlocutors. To the degree that she is more likely to accept a similar person's beliefs, attitudes and reasons as good and deem the latter a rational actor or locus of human dignity, she is also more likely to dismiss a dissimilar person's beliefs, etc. as bad and to view the other as irrational or without dignity. Third, unremarked by Leiter, her beliefs, attitudes and reasons are most

11 Though not Leiter's, they are consistent with his account.

12 A parallel lesson comes from political science's institutionalist literature exploring "rules" governing institutional change (cf. Hall and Taylor, 1996). Given multiple explanatory models, a phenomenon might be explained by one, several or even none (cf. Schmidt, 2010). The history of ideas seems analogous.

responsive to pressure from those similar to herself, yet the latter are least likely to pressure her, perhaps due to self-sorting or group polarization (Sunstein 2002).

Another example. Evelyn believes that a progressive income tax is just, whether for moral reasons about fairness, religious reasons about charity or social attitudes about wealth. At the level of belief- and attitude-formation, following tribalism, she judges the taxation system fair insofar as it benefits those similar to herself and penalizes the dissimilar as the former deserve her moral concern. At the discursive level, were another to challenge her belief that the taxation system is just or her supporting attitudes or reasons, Eva's likelihood of engagement turns on that person's similarity.

In sum, if "moral change depends fundamentally on the emotional attitudes" and "these attitudes tend in a strongly Tribalist direction" (p. 60), discursive hygiene must overcome attitudinal recalcitrance *and* sensitivity to (dis)similarity. Despite vigorous critique, Leiter maintains that public philosophy, differently arrayed, can move forward. One can hold without contradiction that a.) philosophers ought to apply theory to urgent matters and b.) philosophers are more likely to broaden persons' regard for others by appealing to emotions and similarity, not inferential connections between beliefs, attitudes and reasons. Discursive hygiene may indirectly track belief- and attitude-change, and law practice suggests that logical entailments can constrain attitudes when rationalizing one's position (pp. 62-63). Rhetoric does not obviate rigor, yielding a revised version of **(D3)**:

> **(D3*)** "Lucid" public philosophy[13] involves using a.) abstract reasoning to generate substantive (normative) principles, to distinguish unlike arguments, etc., to bring into view underdetermined norms, etc., in the hope that this may constrain acceptable attitudes *and* b.) rhetoric to engage non-discursive, emotional or similarity-based factors underlying belief- and attitude-formation, independent of any aim to impact public policy.

Like **(D3)**, **(D3*)** is inconsistent with **(D1)**, focused on influencing public policy. Unlike **(D3)**, **(D3*)** clarifies what role abstract reasoning plays in public matters and how to deploy philosophical rhetoric to influence belief- and attitude-formation.

To illustrate **(D3*)**, consider another philosopher, Christiane, participating in **(S1)** on healthcare rationing. Christiane adopts a threefold strategy regarding her audience. First, she identifies competing norms, e.g. efficiency, fairness and maximin, to formulate a balanced allocation strategy. Second, she recognizes that others desire principles to justify their beliefs and that, should no felicitous principles emerge or there be conflict with overarching legal or technical rules, they are amenable to revising that belief. Third, she appeals to emotions to elicit opposed affective reactions.

3. Two difficulties: empirical grounding and critical scope

I return to two critical questions set aside. First, does Leiter overstate his claim that public discourse is subject to emotivism and tribalism? Second, does Leiter understate the paradoxes' scope? Should he be worried about bulwarking **(D2)** against the two paradoxes undercutting **(D1)**?

Regarding the first, Leiter's evidence that public life is insensitive to discursive hygiene considers actual conditions, not how persons might perform under more favourable, though still realistic, circumstances.[14] More significantly, the author's evidence lacks systematicity. Supporting his emotivism claim, he sometimes references moral psychology findings about the sources of moral judgment and motivation (pp. 57-59), favoring affect-motivation or affect-morals internalism. At others, the evidence is observational: the Steven Salaita controversy; Hindu nationalist fabrications; the argumentative merits of Peter Singer's (1975) animal liberation case and his international reception; Legal Realist judicial practice (pp. 55-57, 61-62, 63).

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13 Though mine, "lucid" captures Leiter's attitude towards his preferred public philosophy as cognizant of discursive hygiene's difficulties in public settings. As I am reluctant to accept Leiter's entire position, I do not endorse **(D3*)** though §4 asks what it might look like.

14 Perhaps emotivism and tribalism might be diminished, even neutralized, in improved deliberative conditions, such as mini-publics or deliberative polls (Fishkin, 2009). Similarly, the scientific community has seemingly developed procedures which curtail emotivism's and tribalism's influence on judgment.

Motivating his tribalism claims, Leiter deploys mixed considerations: selectionist explanations from the natural selection literature; historical narrative about the post-war world-order and the Marxian species-being ideal (pp. 60, 59).

I briefly suggest two ways wherein Leiter's claims about emotivism may lack sufficient warrant. First, more time should be spent developing the interrelation between "social intuitionist" moral judgment, moral-emotional processing and sentimentalism (pp. 57-59). The empirical findings which the author cites as warrant for his emotivist picture make somewhat different claims about the connection between affect, reasons and motivation. The social intuitionist model affirms that affect shapes all reasons adduced for a judgment.[15] The cited work on moral-emotional processing maintains that affect shapes one's initial motivation but perhaps not subsequent motivations and may not shape all kinds of moral reasoning equally. Finally, the sentimentalist account supports the view that all motivations are shaped by affect. It would have been fruitful to explore to what extent these findings are mutually reinforcing and whether they prove too much, just enough or too little.

Second, one could oppose further observational evidence to Leiter's own. If there are public discourses wherein participants advance arguments structured by abstract reasoning and hold one another accountable on grounds of consistency, etc., the public is not wholly insensitive to discursive hygiene (though not highly sensitive).[16] Leiter would undoubtedly reply that such evidence is compatible with emotivism inasmuch as consistency affects not how participants form their beliefs but, instead, how they relate the reasons adduced for their affective responses. Nonetheless, Leiter's view of the public is easily overstated.

Concerning the second question, whether **(D2)** resists the paradoxes undercutting **(D1)**, Leiter may understate his case on two counts. First, it is unclear why the two paradoxes do not impact **(D2)**'s use of discursive hygiene. One possible explanation, not advanced by the author, consists in limiting emotivism's and tribalism's reach to "people's beliefs about matters of moral and political urgency" (p. 57). While this insulates **(D2)** from emotivism and tribalism, empirical findings may not back this explanation. Does not "urgency" also reduce the distinction to one of degree? Regardless, if it were plausible – as I think – that the public is insensitive to discursive hygiene not solely in urgent moral or political matters but to discursive hygiene *tout court*, the second paradox would likewise affect **(D2)**. Leiter would need to counter that affect does not influence judgment about mundane moral judgments, reality, knowledge, beauty, etc. Otherwise, mundane practical reasoning, metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics, etc. are no less susceptible to the two paradoxes, wherefore a daunting scope problem.

This problem conceals a second worry. If emotivism shapes, minimally, belief- and attitude-formation about moral and political matters, the two paradoxes apply (more weakly) to discourse between philosophers. Leiter seems aware thereof: "That this rather obvious point [that Singer's claim that suffering per se is abhorrent, regardless of species, is a matter of brute moral attitude] is not much acknowledged in the philosophical literature should make even philosophers wonder what role discursive rationality as opposed to other forces are playing in their arguments" (p. 61). Combined with a lack of "rationally obligatory" beliefs (p. 62), this acknowledgement makes the paradoxes' restriction to public dialogue curious, inviting some philosophical prejudice. Absent acknowledgement, philosophers might seem rational superbeings, masters of discursive hygiene, rather than fallible creatures having studied abstract reasoning. There is a place for exposing the public to specifically philosophical virtues, e.g. discursive hygiene, through strategies like growing school philosophy programs.[17]

Tribalism seems equally problematic for philosophers. Considerations of similarity may factor into the philosophical equivalent of ideological purity tests, in terms of one's intuitions (regarding one's answer to, say, Putnam's (1975) Twin Earth experiment or Goldman's (1976) fake barn case) or one's political leanings.

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15 Leiter cites Haidt's (2001) experiment involving a hypothetical case of incestuous sex to test the extent to which affect and post hoc rationalizing contaminate participants' moral judgments. To my mind, Leiter's interpretation does not countenance the importance of socially constructed norms and commitments in explaining the participants' negative moral judgments.

16 As one conference participant noted, debate surrounding Ireland's May 2018 abortion referendum showed that the public did not simply emote but also gave arguments reminiscent of "guerrilla philosophy".

17 Leiter would rightly maintain that the suspicion is mistaken and favor expanding the discipline. His account implies a difference of degree, not kind, between philosophers and philosophical lay persons.

Similarly, one worries about clientelism in hiring or conference invitations. Answering this worry requires a disciplinary sociology beyond this paper's scope.[18] Whatever its prospects, I am reluctant to accept Leiter's full account of lay reasoning and public philosophy. On one hand, without a complete empirical story regarding affect, motivation and reasons, weaker versions of the author's critique may leave room for neoliberal **(D1)**. On the other, if emotivism and tribalism infect other judgments, Leiter's paradoxes undercut **(D2)** like **(D1)**, leaving the scope problem. On reflection, this outcome seems unacceptable.

4. Public philosophy after Leiter's paradoxes: Two tactics

To briefly explore what **(D3*)** looks like concretely, I temporarily grant that Leiter has matters right. This means that: a.) on reflection, his approach accurately describes and introspectively fits everyday experience; b.) emotivism and tribalism withstand common objections (e.g. the Frege-Geach problem).[19] Using Stout's work, I sketch two tacks which a philosopher might employ under **(D3*)** to influence public discourse.

The first consists in accepting post-hoc rationalization and managing discursive expectations. Stout's (2010) typology of opposition to same-sex marriage serves a similar purpose (p. 533). The beliefs of religious opponents to same-sex marriage may be analyzed by the role which reasons play in rationalizing their opposition. "Sadistic homophobes" use religious rationalization wittingly to cover emotional attitudes motivating their opposition. Their opposition does not track reasons, so they will not react to pressure from reasons. Like "trolls", they are playing a game, not seeking better informed, adequate beliefs. Consequently, public philosophy, either as discursive hygiene or rhetoric, cannot reach them.

"Unwitting homophobes" unknowingly use religious rationalization to cover the emotional attitude motivating their opposition. Their opposition does not track reasons, but they may react to pressure from the right kind of reasons since they are hateful but unaware of their rationalizations as such. They consider themselves "decent" or "reasonable" and desire to continue regarding themselves thusly, providing an argumentative foothold for rhetorical pressure appealing to their "decency" or "reasonableness" (or interaction with a person whom they condemn).

Lastly, "well-intentioned opponents", though not homophobic, have a negative emotional attitude and find religious teachings a plausible explanation. "Reasons are playing a greater role in the formation of [such opponents'] political position in the first place" (*idem*.). Accordingly, even if mistaken about their reasons, well-intentioned opponents track reasons rather than (or in addition to) affective responses or similarity. Hence, they are more responsive to pressure on those reasons. One could "show them that their scriptural reasons for opposing same-sex marriage fail to cohere with other commitments they hold with equal or greater confidence" (*idem*.). Public discourse can accommodate post-hoc rationalization provided that interlocutors distinguish ill-intentioned, mis-intentioned or well-intentioned opponents and adjust expectations and tactics (Table 2).[20]

Table 2: Anti-homophobia discursive strategies

	Homophobic?	Aware of rationalization?	Successful engagement?
Sadistic homophobe	Yes	Yes	None
Unwitting homophobe	Yes	No	Pressure on self-image
Well-intentioned opponent	No	-	Reason-giving

18 For one attempt, see Rhode's (2017) finding that articles in leading philosophical journals practice persuasion (rather than inquiry or discovery) dialogue. Leiter himself cites Brandt (1959) (p. 54).

19 Leiter is aware thereof (p. 54, n. 8).

20 Notably, interlocutors could call attention to the role which non-discursive factors play in upstream belief-formation. For mis- or well-intentioned opponents, this includes gender distinctions and their relevance to the division of labor and inheritance rules (pp. 533-534). Indeed, social structure changes may further dialogue more than public philosophy's discursive tactics.

In the second tack, one takes an instrumental view of discursive hygiene: successfully applying rhetorical pressure depends partly on discursive hygiene. The interlocutor may draw on discursive hygiene to gain knowledge of the person's inferential commitments whereby she identifies emotional appeals likely to generate rhetorical pressure on the person's beliefs, attitudes or reasons.

Such appeals might consist in exchanging "moral perceptions". Stout (2004) scrutinizes the Edmund Burke-Thomas Paine controversy over democracy and custom (pp. 216-224). Whereas Burke paints readers a vivid word-picture of Marie Antoinette's suffering at revolutionary hands, Paine prepares a detailed account of the poor's living conditions. Through intimating their readers' rational commitments, both Burke and Paine could noninferentially lead readers to their own inferential connections concerning proper treatment of the parties. While emotional attitudes constitutive of moral perception are "noninferential, they are inferentially connected to moral passions, like awe and pity, and the actions for which they serve as warrant" (p. 217). Inferential relations unearthed by discursive hygiene provide discursive grip on non-discursive factors underlying beliefs, attitudes and reasons. Accordingly, even if emotivism and tribalism are principally constitutive of attitude- and belief-formation, this does not preclude responsiveness to the right kinds of reasons, with a role for "discursive hygiene".

4. Conclusion

After outlining two standard pictures of **(D1)**, "neoliberal" public philosophy, I followed how Leiter's two paradoxes, through emotivism and tribalism, undercut those pictures across two discursive sites. This yielded **(D3*)**, a "lucid" version of narrow public philosophy. I then questioned **(D3*)** at the level of its empirical grounding and scope. Finally, developing Leiter's position, I illustrated two positive discursive tactics useful to **(D3*).** In so doing, I reached two conclusions why Leiter both over- and understates his otherwise striking case. First, though suggestive, the empirical evidence on affect, motivation and reasons which Leiter marshals is less than systematized. Without a more complete empirical story, his position is not inconsistent with weaker versions of **(D1).** Second, if other judgments are not insulated from emotivism and tribalism, then the paradoxes undercut both **(D1)** and **(D2).** If securing **(D3*)** entails jettisoning or curtailing **(D2)**, broad public philosophy, Leiter's vision of public philosophy requires greater scrutiny.[21]

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Research Article

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Considering Dispositional Moral Realism

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Abstract: My aim in this paper is to consider a series of arguments against Dispositional Moral Realism and argue that these objections are unsuccessful. I will consider arguments that try to either establish a dis-analogy between moral properties and secondary qualities or try to show that a dispositional account of moral properties fails to account for what a defensible species of moral realism must account for. I also consider criticisms from Simon Blackburn (1993), who argues that there could not be a corresponding perceptual faculty for moral properties, and David Enoch (2011), who argues that Dispositional Moral Realism does not most plausibly explain the difference between moral disagreements and disagreements of mere preference. Finally, I examine a novel criticism concerning the relationship between the diverse variety of moral properties and the range of our normative affective attitudes, arguing that the view has no problem accounting for this diversity.

Keywords: Moral Realism, Metaphysics, Dispositions, Normative attitudes.

1. Introduction

Proponents of Non-Naturalist Moral Realism argue that irreducible moral properties are real parts of the world, and fit within the ontology of the universe in such a way that makes objective moral truths possible (Schafer-Landau 2003; Cuneo, 2007; Enoch 2011). On these views, moral facts, properties, and values are *sui generis*, meaning they exist uniquely and independently of any other set of facts or properties. Views which conceive of moral properties in this way face 'queerness' challenges from skeptics and anti-realists such as J.L. Mackie (1977). Anti-realists argue that because moral properties must be intrinsically and categorically prescriptive, they cannot be objective, and are therefore ontologically problematic. However, there is one species of Moral Realism, called Dispositional Moral Realism, which is best situated to address such ontological challenges. Sometimes called a response-dispositional or response-dependent view (Johnston 1989; van Roojen 2015), the basic claim of this view is that a moral property is a property something has if and only if it is disposed to bring about certain affective attitudes in fully non-morally informed, impartial, disinterested, consistent, and otherwise normal observers, agents, or subjects under normal conditions (Brower 1993; van Roojen 2015). The view emerges out of John McDowell's analogy between moral properties and secondary qualities (McDowell 1998). On this view, moral properties are dispositional properties. If moral properties are dispositional in nature, they can be understood as non-objective, yet still real, and therefore do not suffer from a strange ontology.

Dispositional Moral Realism is a species of the genus Moral Realism. I take any view that can be properly called a Moral Realist view to be characterized by the following three claims: (i) moral language has cognitive value, meaning that moral judgments are propositions capable of being true or false, (ii) at least some of our moral judgements are true, and (iii) the truth or falsity of any given moral judgement is not contingent upon any group's or individual's attitude, preference, or opinion towards it. Philosophers

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who call themselves moral realists are usually committed to something resembling this trio of claims. Whatever alternate or further claims one makes will depend upon what sort of realist one is. In any case, moral realists hold that at least some of the moral judgments we actually make are true. Because at least some of our moral judgments are true, there must be something for them to be true of. This is where moral properties come in. True moral judgements pick out moral facts, properties, and values.

Some forms of Moral Realism, such as Robust Realism (Enoch 2011), hold that moral facts and properties are completely independent of agents, and their stances and attitudes towards those facts and properties. Moral properties are non-causal entities, and exist independently of any other set of facts or properties. Dispositional Moral Realism differs from Robust Realist positions in that, on the Dispositional view, moral properties relate to the affective attitudes of the right kind of agents in the right circumstances. For the dispositional realist, moral properties have causal efficacy. This causal efficacy is due to moral properties standing in relation with certain kind of agents. Moral properties are disposed to bring about certain affective attitudes in the right agents in the right circumstances.

2. Mackie's Skepticism & McDowell's Analogy

J. L. Mackie argues for skepticism about the existence of moral properties. For Mackie, objective moral facts and values do not exist (1977, 15). There is nothing in the fabric of the world like a moral fact, property, or value. Mackie's skeptical position amounts to an error theory about ethics. Since there are no such things as moral facts or properties, there cannot be anything like a moral truth, for there is nothing for our moral sentences, statements, and judgements to be true of. If there is nothing for our moral language to be true of, then all moral language must be false. Though we may think and speak of moral properties as if they were a part of the fabric of the world, this is all in error, hence, Ethical Error Theory (1977, 48-49).

Mackie argues that if there were such things as objective moral facts and properties, they would have to be entities of an incomparably and essentially different kind than any other in the universe. This is because such properties would have to have a necessary connection to reasons for action, for they are intrinsically and categorically prescriptive properties. Mackie's 'argument from relativity' (1977, 36) appeals to the widespread variation of moral codes between cultures and persons as a reason for skepticism about the objectivity of morality. Additionally, Mackie's 'argument from queerness' (1977, 38) makes the claims that moral properties, if real, do not operate the same way as other properties. Moral properties appear to require a special faculty if we are to be aware of them. This apparent requirement for a special faculty for moral properties to be epistemically accessible suggests a metaphysical problem for moral properties. It is a problem of how intrinsically and categorically prescriptive properties could fit into the ontology of the world. Because moral properties must be intrinsically prescriptive normative properties, they are unlike any other set of properties. This is what motivates Mackie's skepticism, and ultimately leads to the anti-realist conclusion that objective moral properties do not exist.

Mackie's argument relies on the assumption that realism implies objectivism. By 'objective' moral properties, Mackie seems to mean 'mind-independent and categorically normative' properties that in no way depend upon the stances of agents or subjects. Mackie conflates the 'objective' with the 'real' in a way such that if something were non-objective, it would not be real. That is to say that realism about morality implies objectivism about morality. It is one thing to say that a property, or set of properties is objective or non-objective (including the subjective), and another to say whether that property or set of properties exists or not. There is reason, I think, to distinguish between the objective and non-objective on one hand, and the real or unreal on the other. There is room in the ontology of the world for non-objective, yet real moral properties. I mention this because Mackie begins by rejecting the objectivity of morality, and ends with anti-realism about morality. So, Mackie's argument relies on the assumption that realism implies objectivism. One can be a realist without being an objectivist in Mackie's sense. Mackie overlooks the possibility of realism without completely mind-independent moral properties. Dispositional properties are on kind of property that are not completely mind-independent, yet are still real, and about which correct and incorrect judgments are made.

For John McDowell, subjective properties are those properties which can only be fully explained in terms of how they affect subjects (McDowel1 1998, 114). The secondary qualities of sensory experience are one such sort of subjective property. The experiences of seeing red, or hearing a horn, or touching a table are not fully explained without mention of precisely how that experience looks, sounds, and feels to and for the subject. This means that for an object to be understood as being red, or hard, means for it to look red and feel hard (McDowell 1998, 133). Secondary qualities (like colour and texture) are understood as features of the phenomenal character of a subject's perceptual experience. Such qualities are in one sense subjective, in that they are properties only fully understood in terms of how they affect subjects, yet we would not want to exclude them from the ontology of the world.

Secondary qualities like colour and texture could not be features of our experiences if there were not some object to elicit that experience. It is not the case that phenomenal experience of secondary qualities itself constitutes those secondary qualities. Rather, it is the effects on subjects which differentiate secondary qualities from primary qualities. There must still be something in the object which presents it as looking red, or feeling hard. This would be an objective feature of the object (such as a certain atomic structure, for example). Given that there must be some object that makes possible certain perceptual experiences, and that the experience is only fully explainable with mention of the subject's phenomenal experience, secondary qualities must be real parts of the fabric of the world, despite being in some sense subjective properties.

Secondary qualities are not objective in Mackie's sense, but it does not follow from this that they are not real. The subjective property as a feature of phenomenal character is there in the world precisely because there are creatures in the world that can have that phenomenal experience, namely us (Taylor 2003, 307). There are after all, correct and incorrect attributions of secondary qualities, so we cannot be in the sort of error Mackie suggests when we make judgments about secondary qualities.

McDowell suggests an analogy between moral properties and secondary qualities. Specifically, the ontology of moral properties is analogous to the ontology of secondary qualities. Though moral properties may not be objective in Mackie's sense, that is, not min-independent, it does not follow from this that they are not real, or that there is no moral truth. The mistake the error theorist makes is to think that if moral properties exist, they must be objective or mind-independent. But we have seen that this is a confused understanding, for there can be non-objective entities which are just as much a part of the world as tables, chairs, rocks, or any other real entities. In the same way one can make true statements about objective mind-independent entities, on can make true statements which refer to non-objective but real entities, like colours.

The error theorist fails to distinguish between two sorts of subjectivity. On one hand, things like preferences and desires are certainly subjective and mind-dependent. They are determined entirely by the particular mind of a particular subject. On the other hand, there are those entities which are mind-dependent, but not dependent on any particular mind. Secondary qualities are these sorts of properties. Moral properties can be understood in a similar way. It does not follow from them not being mind-independent that they are subjective in the first sense, or that they are not a part of the fabric of reality, as Mackie might put it. Simply put, realism does not imply mind-independence. If this is the case, then Mackie presents a false dichotomy in his conception of the ontology of the universe, for there can be things that are real yet non-objective. So, we can distinguish general moral realism from moral objectivism. The former is the view that there are moral values not contingent upon any group's or individual's attitude, preference, or opinion towards it, while the latter is the view that moral values exist in a way that makes no reference to any features of agents whatsoever (DeLapp 2009, 4).

McDowell's secondary quality analogy gives rise to a particular form of Moral Realism, called Dispositional Moral Realism. Again, the basic claim of this view is that a moral property is a property something has if and only if it is disposed to bring about certain affective attitudes in fully non-morally informed, impartial, disinterested, consistent, and otherwise normal observers, agents, or subjects under normal conditions. On this view, moral properties are dispositional properties, and stand in relation to agents' and subjects' moral sensibilities. By moral sensibilities I mean the features of agents and subjects which qualify them as moral agents. If it is the case that moral properties are dispositional properties, then

they fit well within a standard scientific ontology, and therefore are ontologically respectable, rather than 'queer' or strange (Brower 1993, 248).

3. Some Objections

3.1. Blackburn's Criticism

Because the view emerges from an analogy between moral properties and secondary qualities, one may attempt to defeat the view by trying to establish a dis-analogy between the two sets of properties. Simon Blackburn (1993, 160) provides one such objection. Not only is something like colour experience explainable in terms of empirical observation, we can also point out the mechanism which make this possible. It is our eyes and our visual systems. Our eyes are the mechanisms of colour experience. What could be said to be the mechanism of value experience? If a person is blind, we can say there is a faulty faculty of vison. But in the case of 'moral blindness', what mechanical fault can we point to? When people fail to be moral, it is difficult to point out in non-normative terms where the fault lies. We can be easily made aware of impairments in our sensory faculties. The case is not so clear with defects of moral character, nor is there any clear moral mechanism for us to examine for damage (1993, 160).

Furthermore, if our perceptual systems were altered in such a way that all things that appeared red now appeared blue, we would then have to say that 'redness' no longer existed in the universe (1993, 60). After all, a thing being red is only fully explained with reference to it looking red to us. But, if we cannot be affected in this way, then redness is not real. But the same is not true for moral properties. If we were all to adopt the attitude that, say, the killing of innocent children was morally permissible, it would not become so. Instead, we would say that we have in some way deteriorated. Blackburn thinks this is where the analogy falls apart.

However, the problem Blackburn raises rests on a mistake. The sort of change that occurs when we can no longer experience redness is a change in our receptive capacities to see red, and not a change in the ontological status of red. Similarly, a change in our moral receptive capacities is not enough to determine the ontological status of moral properties. The problem with Blackburn's criticism is that it confuses the phenomenological with the ontological. In the case of alteration to our perceptual system, we can accept that there is a change both in how we experience and in the ontology of the universe. However, in the case of mere change in everyone's moral beliefs, it is only a change in the phenomenological. This is because we can still be wrong about what value is for creatures like us. Being the sorts of creatures with moral sensibilities does not mean we always make correct judgements. Such is the case with secondary qualities as well. If some red object is in a poorly lit room, such that a person seeing it would judge it to be, say, purple, I would not want to say that there is something faulty in the person's perceptual mechanisms. Such a person does not take into account how the lighting affects the colour appearance of the object. As far as the object's properties are concerned, those primary properties which would elicit an experience of red are perfectly intact. Our perceptual judgments alone do not determine the ontological status of secondary qualities. Similarly, mere change in our moral phenomenology alone would not determine the ontological status of moral properties.

One may pose Blackburn's objection another way. If when looking at a red apple one was to claim it was blue, the immediate intuition would be that their perceptual faculties were defective in some way. In the case of moral properties, what is the defect in the person who misattributes goodness, or wrongness to an action or state of affairs? Take for example cases of moral disagreement. When two people have contradictory moral views about the rightness or wrongness of an action, we might say at least one of them must be incorrect. But, if moral properties relate to these two agents' sensibilities, then at least one of them must be in some ways impaired. This impairment would be analogous to vision impairment in a person who attributes blueness to the red apple.

But, I do not think it is so difficult to identify such a shortcoming in one who makes an incorrect moral judgment. The shortcoming we can point to is a cognitive one. The 'mechanism' which errs when we make

incorrect moral judgements is no mechanism at all. Instead, it is the cognitive faculties which allow us to practice rational deliberation. Moral judgements are products of a certain deliberative process, specifically products of the processes of moral and practical deliberation. We think about what we take to be morally considerable and valuable when taking on the project of moral or practical deliberation, thus engaging our faculty of practical deliberation. And it is here where we can identify the source of the problem. We are not infallible when it comes to the project of moral deliberation and practical reason. So, it is easy to see why and how we sometimes make mistakes. If the making of moral judgments is necessarily connected to the project of practical deliberation, then a fallible faculty or process of deliberation explains why we sometimes make incorrect moral judgements. Perhaps there is issue with referring to errors in practical deliberation as 'shortcomings' or 'impairments' given that we are fallible by our very nature, and referring to our reflective capacities as being housed in a 'mechanism'. But, all that is required is an explanation of why and how it is that we make incorrect moral judgements. The answer is that we are imperfect when it comes to such projects. We needn't commit ourselves to the language of 'impairment' when speaking of our less than perfect deliberative capacities and processes.

3.2. Further Dis-Analogy Criticisms

Still, there is further disparity between moral properties and secondary qualities. Secondary qualities cause us to have certain experiences. The seeing of a red apple elicits the phenomenal experience of redness. We have access to that which elicits this experience of redness. The property within the object makes possible for us a certain phenomenal experience. There is some primary property of the apple which makes it the case that I will have an experience of redness when I look at it. However, an analogous primary property is absent for moral properties.

A serious problem for Dispositional Realism has to do with how moral properties, if they are dispositional properties like secondary qualities, are grounded. As discussed earlier, secondary qualities are predicated on primary qualities. In addition to the existence of creatures with perceptual faculties, the existence of secondary qualities is grounded in the existence of primary qualities which give rise to them. It is the objective property in conjunction with subjects which gives rise to secondary qualities. Secondary qualities are grounded in non-dispositional mind-independent properties, and if moral properties are like them, they to must be grounded in some non-dispositional mind-independent properties. After all, the attraction of Dispositional Realism is that it makes moral properties ontologically respectable by putting them on the same footing as secondary qualities.

The first thing I will say concerns the purpose (and limitations) of the analogy with secondary qualities. It is not that moral properties *are* secondary qualities, nor is it is not that the metaphysics of morals is identical to the metaphysics of secondary qualities. The analogy between moral properties and secondary qualities is to show that moral properties can be real features of the ontology of the world without being mind-independent. It is in this way the two sets of properties are on the same footing. That moral properties are unlike objective properties due to their being intrinsically normative is no reason to think they are unreal, for there is room in the ontology of the world for non-objective properties.

As far as the grounding of these properties goes, I have said that we can think of moral properties as dispositional properties, and it may be argued that this requires an account of how they are grounded. This assumes that all dispositional properties need to be grounded on some non-dispositional mind-independent property, and therefore any defensible account needs to provide an explanation for this. However, this is not the case. It does not follow from some dispositional properties being grounded in non-dispositional mind-independent properties that all dispositional properties are. Furthermore, it is not clear to me that they need to be grounded in this way. The important feature of dispositional properties is their relationship with subjects, not in how they are grounded. Moral properties can still be dispositional without going into a story of whether or not they are grounded in some other non-dispositional mind-independent properties. What is important for Dispositional Realism is that moral properties are the sort of properties that would affect informed, impartial, disinterested, consistent, and otherwise normal observers, agents, or subjects

under normal conditions. It is a mistake to think that they can only be such properties if they are grounded in some non-dispositional mind-independent properties, for the may not need to, and thinking so overlooks the more important relational nature of dispositional properties.

As mentioned, such properties do not require the actual existence of subjects. They differ from other sorts of dispositions in that moral properties, being normative, do not merely elicit certain attitudes, but *merit* them (McDowell 1998, 148). To distinguish meriting from merely eliciting, we can say that to merit a certain attitude means for the adoption of that attitude to not be guaranteed. We ought to have a certain attitude even if we do not actually have it. Consider the example of fearfulness. Something can still be fearsome, meaning that it deserves to be feared, without actually instilling fear in anyone. It would not make sense to talk about something as fearful without reference to features of subjects that could feel fear, but there need not be any actual feelings of fear for the thing to be worthy of our fear. Moral properties are like this. They do not *merely* elicit certain responses. Instead, certain attitudes are owed. And they are owed independently of whether or not the subject ends up actually adopting them. When an agent fails to adopt the appropriate attitude, it means their moral receptive capacity is not right. Such an agent is not the right kind of agent, or is not in the right conditions.

The distinction between eliciting and meriting may look like it creates a further problem for Dispositional Realism, as it is a dis-analogy between moral properties and secondary qualities. But there may yet be a normative nature to judgements about secondary quality experience. When a normal observer sees a red apple in normal circumstances some sort of judgement would be merited. The experience of redness is elicited and a judgment of redness is merited. An observer who experiences the apple's redness would seem to be doing something wrong if they were to have the experience of redness but make a judgment of something other than redness. This suggests that perhaps even elements of secondary quality experience merit some sort of attitude from normal observers. If that is the case, then the distinction between eliciting and meriting is not a problem for the analogy between moral properties and secondary qualities. And as already mentioned, it does not follow from moral properties being intrinsically normative, or not objective, that they do not exist.

3.3. Enoch's Criticism

David Enoch contrasts response-dispositional views with his own Robust Realist view. Enoch argues that the Robust Realist view (the view that there are irreducible and mind-independent moral properties) can more plausibly explain the distinction between different sorts of disagreements, and therefore has more 'plausibility points' (2011, 35) when compared to response-dispositional views like Dispositional Moral Realism. Enoch argues that the Robust Realist is able to more plausibly explain the distinction between moral disagreements and disagreements of mere preference (2011, 32). The difference for the Robust Realist is that morality is impartial, as it operates on a standard where norms are independent of persons and their responses, whereas preferences are completely dependent upon the particular subject. But someone who thinks that moral facts require reference to the affective attitudes of subjects cannot explain this distinction as effectively as the Robust Realist.

The Dispositional Realist might only be able to describe the difference between moral disagreement and disagreements of mere preference in terms of the affective attitudes of an agent. But the preferences one has are also themselves attitudes, which are purely in the subject. The problem for response-dispositional views like Dispositional Realism is that they must explain why the responses agents have to moral situations are somehow normatively special in a way that responses to preferential situations are not. Positions that focus on the affective attitudes of agents risk sounding like Subjectivist positions, as such attitudes are located within the particular subject, and such views do not have much to say when trying to explain *why* the responses to morality are normatively special over and above mere matters of preference. Dispositional accounts of morality are sometimes thought to be a sort of Subjectivism (van Roojen 2015) rather than Realism. Preference or belief-based accounts of moral properties are typically considered mind-dependent accounts, while Dispositional Realism is not, despite its focus on affective attitudes. So, it looks

like the territory is carved up in a way that it should not be. Dispositional Realism is split up with other mind-dependent views when it perhaps ought to be categorized as a sort of Subjectivist account given the references to affective attitudes. However, it is a mistake to group Dispositional Realism with Subjectivist accounts of morality.

The mistake is to think that it is moral properties are identical or reducible to subjects' affective attitudes. If this were the case, then morality would not be impartial. But, like the Robust Realist, the Dispositional Realist also holds that morality is impartial, and that moral disagreement is like factual disagreement. The difference with Dispositional Realism and Enoch's Robust Realism is that Robust Realism conceives of moral facts as completely mind-independent, with no reference to subjects. While Dispositional Realism does concern itself with the responses of subjects, the view is not that morality *depends* upon certain responses, nor is it that moral properties are identical or reducible to those responses. For Dispositional Moral Realism, moral properties are still categorical imperatives which are not dependent upon and individual's or groups' stance towards them. Instead, moral properties are properties which *would* bring about certain responses in informed, impartial, and otherwise normal subjects in normal circumstances. Consider that if Enoch's impartiality argument applies to response dependence accounts of morality, then it applies to response dependence accounts of color. But disagreements about color are exactly the kind that it is appropriate to stand one's ground on. Dispositional Moral Realism differs from Robust Realism by assigning moral properties causal efficacy, but maintains in common that moral properties are categorically normative properties and that morality is impartial. So, Enoch's impartiality argument is not a problem for the view.

Moral properties are external to subjects, but do relate to subjects in that they would bring about certain affective attitudes in the appropriate kinds of subjects in normal circumstances. Affective attitudes do not constitute moral reality, but demonstrate how it is possible to be in touch with it. Since, a moral property is a property that would bring about certain affective attitudes in normal subjects in normal conditions, and not a property that is identical or reducible to those affective attitudes, and the criteria for normal subjects and normal conditions is not dependent on anyone's preferences or opinions towards them, the view should not be confused with a sort of Subjectivism. If that is the case, then Dispositional Moral Realism does not lose plausibility points, as there is no reason to think it cannot explain the distinction between factual disagreement and disagreements of mere preference. The view is still a realist view on which morality is impartial, and therefore accounts for different sorts of disagreement just as other realist views have.

3.4. The Diversity Criticism

Another problem for the view is what I call the 'diversity problem'. The diversity problem is that Dispositional Realism would have to account for a diversity of affective attitudes in order to account for a diversity of moral properties. We ordinarily distinguish among a wide variety of moral properties such as the right, the good, the just, the fair, the wrong, the bad, and so on. A defensible view of moral properties needs to do justice to the wide varieties of moral properties. So, if Dispositional Realism is a defensible view, then it must be able to account for the wide diversity of moral properties. The thought is that there must be a distinct affective attitude for each distinct moral property. However, one might think the range of our actual attitudes is not fine-grained enough to correspond with the range distinctions between the varieties of moral properties. If so, the Dispositional Realism cannot explain the difference between distinct moral properties, and is therefore false.

It is not clear that there needs to be distinct affective attitudes which correspond to the distinct moral properties. On the Dispositional Realist view, there is no commitment to a 1-to-1 correspondence between moral properties and affective attitudes. The only commitment is that moral properties would bring about certain affective attitudes in the right kinds of agents in normal circumstances. There is no claim about moral properties bringing about or being paired with any specific attitudes. It may be the case that some moral property is appropriately paired with a variety of normative attitudes. This would explain why people respond to normative situations differently even when they make the same normative judgments in those situations. For example, witnessing a murder may result in shock, fear, anger, or any other negative

normative attitude, yet all of these responses are consistent with judging the murder to be wrong. Each of these attitudes is appropriate given the action or state of affairs at hand. There is a variety of attitudes one can appropriately adopt in response to a single moral situation. So, the diversity problem can be solved by denying the need for a 1-to-1 correspondence between moral properties and affective attitudes, and accepting that a variety of attitudes may be appropriate for any given moral situation. But, this may be unsatisfactory, for it matters which set of attitudes are appropriate responses to which situations.

Even if there needed to be a 1-to-1 correspondence between distinct moral properties and distinct attitudes, the diversity problem can still be dealt with. Those who maintain this objection may say that our normative attitudes are not fine-grained enough to correspond with a wide range of distinct moral properties. But this is not true. We have a very diverse range of normative attitudes. This is made evident by the range of social normative reactive attitudes that exist between the extremes of resentment and gratitude. These extreme attitudes are reactions to the normative features of other persons, actions, or states of affairs. One may adopt an attitude of resentment if they are wronged or an attitude of gratitude if they feel especially appreciative of something. The two are distinct reactive attitudes at opposite ends of a spectrum of normative attitudes. It is not as though these are the only normative attitudes people can adopt. Most of the reactive attitudes people adopt exist in-between these two extremes (Strawson 1962). For example, if a person is slightly inconvenienced, as opposed to wronged outright, they may not be resentful, only disgruntled, in most cases. Similarly, if a person is on the receiving end of a kind gesture, they may not show the utmost gratitude, but nevertheless be thankful. Additionally, we can recognize appropriate or inappropriate reactions to certain situations (such as overreactions or apathetic responses). This illustrates that there is a large set of distinct discernable normative attitudes that exist between the extremes of resentment and gratitude. And, because there are plenty of less extreme attitudes that exist in this space, each one of these can correspond with the distinct moral properties between the morally right and the morally wrong. Our ability to respond with and recognize distinct appropriate or inappropriate reactive attitudes to certain situations is evidence that it is not the case that our attitudes are not fine-grained enough to account for a diversity of moral properties. So, our actual normative attitudes are fine-grained enough to account for the wide and diverse range of distinct moral properties.

Of course, one can accept that there is a wide range of distinct normative attitudes, but maintain that these distinct attitudes are not fine-grained *enough*. But, I suspect they can never be fine-grained *enough* to convince an opponent otherwise. It is clear that normal agents do not adopt the same attitude when they are wronged than when they are merely inconvenienced, or when they are kindly gestured towards than when they are given great help and benefit. There being different phenomenal experiences in different normative situations is evidence of that. Take the difference between the phenomenology of ethical deliberation and the phenomenology of moral deliberation. This difference is evidence of distinct normative attitudes. Beliefs about moral issues are not beliefs that tend to leave much room for compromise, whereas beliefs about the ethical more generally do have more leg room. For example, a person may deliberate between becoming a school teacher or an accountant by weighing the pros and cons of each career path. This would be a clear example of ethical deliberation, but is in no obvious way moral. That is because the moral is an instance of the ethical that is uniquely concerned with notions of duty and obligation (Darwall 2018, 552). Our moral beliefs tend not to budge, while our ethical beliefs more generally often shift and move as we try to arrive at conclusions and produce action through deliberation. Goodness might be paired with an attitude of favouring, better-ness with an attitude of favouring-more, rightness with an attitude of obligation, etc. Because we actually adopt attitudes like favouring and favouring-more, our actual normative attitudes do correspond with the diversity of moral properties. The difference in the phenomenology of ethical and moral disagreement indicates that we actually adopt different normative attitudes in different normative situations. Therefore, accounting for the diversity of moral properties is not a problem for Dispositional Moral Realism.

4. Conclusion

I have argued that certain objections against Dispositional Moral Realism are unsuccessful. Opponents of the view may try to reject it on the grounds that moral properties are neither secondary qualities, nor analogous to them. However, McDowell's analogy is meant only to demonstrate that moral facts and values do not suffer from a strange ontology. Additionally, though moral properties relate to subjects' affective attitudes, they are neither identical nor reducible to those attitudes, so the view is not a kind of Subjectivism. Furthermore, the wide range of our actual normative attitudes means that the view has no problem accounting for the diversity of distinct moral properties. If the view is to be rejected, it should not be for any of the objections considered here. I conclude that the considered arguments against Dispositional Moral Realism are unsuccessful.

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Research Article

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The back and forth between Habermas and postmodernism

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Abstract: This paper aims to investigate the dialogue between some postmodern thinkers (mostly Lyotard, Rorty and Vattimo) and Habermas' criticism in light of a different conception of dialogue itself. Therefore, we shall first give an account of how Habermas establishes his neomodern discourse (1985) in a very close dialogue with the key concepts of postmodernism: the subject and its social role, language and the concept of philosophical truth and the postmodernist view of history (Lyotard, 1979, Vattimo, 1974, 1985, 2009; Rorty, 1989; Bauman, 1993). Secondly, dialogue will be addressed as a structural difference between Habermas' universal normative ethic of discourse (together with Karl-Otto Apel, 1983) and the postmodern local and linguistic pluralism, emancipated from any metaphysical ratio. In the end, it will be argued that philosophy ought to be dialogical in line with Habermas' view, within the foundation and normativity of dialogue. Postmodernist dialogue in philosophy and in society displays instead many shortcomings if understood as a pluralist linguistic game of interpretation.

Keywords: Habermas, Postmodernism, language, truth, dialogue

1. Habermas and postmodernism

The following research is willing to show the importance of the dialogue between Habermas and the wide philosophical phenomenon of postmodernism: the relevance of this comparison stems from the fact that both sides responds each other's criticisms seriously, creating an interesting and constructive debate. The pivotal work where Habermas reacts to postmodernism and all his forerunners[1] is undoubtedly *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*[2] of the 1985, besides an earlier speech entitled *Modernity versus postmodernity*, which he prepared as a *lectio* for receiving the *Adorno Prize* in 1980 (1981b). The German philosopher focuses his position in the debate on the critical reformulation of the potential modern emancipation, such as the one claimed by the Enlightenment against tradition and authority[3], but adapted to the present problems (Matustik 1989, p.144). The main goal is to recover what has survived of the modern project for a fair critique towards its deformed realization, so that in the *Discourse* we have, on one hand, a theory of modernity and, on the other, a theory of the modern pathology (Honneth, 1981). Modernity is to be rescued through the new radical theory of communicative action (Zoeller, 1988; Hohendhal, 1991; Powell, 2002; Merawi, 2012).

1 On the German side, mostly Nietzsche, Heidegger, Adorno and Horkheimer and, on the French one, the poststructuralist Derrida and Foucault.

2 From now on, we shall refer to the English translation *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1987), Polity Press, Cambridge.

3 For instance, Habermas refers directly to Kant's fundamental *What is Enlightenment?* (1784).

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Communication is based on those instances of *intersubjectivity* that Habermas "identifies at various stages of the philosophical discourse of modernity" (Zoeller, 1988, p. 154) within a presupposed world of common certainties and meanings laying behind the everyday communication, or *Lebenswelt* (life-world) (Zurn, 2011; Merawi, 2012). Thus, Habermasian *rationality* is saved from the Enlightenment's legacy and grounded on language and communication. The dialogue matured during different stages: in the wake of his Frankfurter predecessors Adorno and Horkheimer in the notorious 1947 *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Habermas harshly confronts the pretensions of instrumental reason to reach metaphysical truths and totalities (Habermas 1987, pp. 119-120). In the seventies Habermas differed however from the pure dialectical negation which pointed to the rational utopia of modernity and embraced a philosophical shift of paradigm ((Zoeller, 1988): having criticized a subject-centred reason inherent in an isolated subject and a supra-human reason related to a 'world spirit', that is a philosophy of consciousness, he agreed instead with the poststructuralist Derrida and Foucault about their preference for a *linguistic paradigm*. However, it is exactly when Habermas shifts his philosophy towards a communicative rationality and a universal pragmatic in his theory of the communicative action[4], that the agreement breaks down (cf. Habermas, 1986, Vol. 1, p. 144):

> Habermas shares with contemporary French theory the preference for a linguistic paradigm, yet he clearly does not support an understanding of language in which words function as a chain of signifiers for which a signified can never be established with certainty. (Hohendhal 1991, p. 133).

The theory of communicative action could not work with such postmodernist conception of communication, making consensus and understanding impossible. Indeed, Habermas (1986, Vol.1, p. 175) states that language is a *medium* that enables self-validating emancipation but also the recognition of the other's pretence of validity and aims at an intersubjective *understanding*. This happens because of a common background of resources and experiences called 'lifeworld', that has embedded action theory in rationalisation processes. We can thus see which kind of rationalisation and emancipation Habermas saves from modernity: it is the one that fits individual personalities with their own inner system of language (linguistic competence and self-validating resources) but inserted in the communication processes of the lifeworld, bringing with it the possibility of empirical verification and rational regulation of one's validity claims (1986, Voll. 1, p. 250 ff.). This is where the gap with postmodernism becomes irretrievable: Habermas is indeed persuaded "that the universality of rational standards can be maintained in a theory [in this case, the one of communicative action] that no longer invokes metaphysical guarantees" (Zoeller 1988, p. 155).

Since publishing the impressive *Theory of Communicative Action* Habermas has dialogued with many different positions. As we noted earlier, with the first generation of the Frankfurt school and with French post-structuralism, as well as with several philosophies of the 20th century, even those that do not employ the notion of 'postmodernism', but that are engaged in a critique against modernity and any form of modern rationality. Postmodernism nevertheless gains its own 'identity' thanks to the 1979 report on the postmodern condition by Jean-Francois Lyotard[5]. We consequently focus on the debate between Habermas and postmodernist philosophers *after* Lyotard's work. Merawi (2012), following Anderson (2005), argues an important distinction: postmodernity is the general phenomenon that affects the perception of knowledge and society in which our past metaphysical truths are put in doubt, while postmodernism indicates all those theoretical attempts to describe this new condition. Lyotard accounts the crisis of the 'grand-narratives' that gave a framework for the functioning of history and science, and the collapse of those meta-narratives that had legitimized them. In the introduction of his masterwork, he claims:

> Is legitimacy to be found in consensus obtained through discussion, as Jürgen Habermas thinks? Such consensus does violence to the heterogeneity of language games. And invention is always born of dissension (1984, p. xxv).

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4 Referring to the first volume of *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (vol. 1: *Handlungsrationalität und gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung*), from now on considered in the Italian translation *Teoria dell'agire comunicativo*: *razionalità nell'azione e razionalizzazione sociale* (1986), il Mulino, Bologna.

5 From now on there will be considered the English translation '*The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge*' (1984), University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Therefore, if on the one hand, Habermas accounts for *neo-conservative* forces, which delude themselves about postmodern emancipation from rationality, on the other, Lyotard states that Habermas' communicative theory is nothing but another grand narrative (1984, p. 60). Many critics have identified the loss of the *repressive* modern rationality and the liberation of the 'local' plurality as common traits between Lyotard and other postmodern thinkers (Vattimo, Latour, Rorty, Bauman), to which we will return. The universalistic ideals of self-legitimation of human knowledge have fallen:

> [Science] then produces a discourse of legitimation with respect to its own status, a discourse called philosophy. I will use the term 'modern' to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a meta-discourse of this kind making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative (Lyotard 1984, p. xxiii).

This is where the dialogue between the parties intensifies: Lyotard can be rightly considered a dividing line, or even a schism, along the complex post-nietzschean criticism to modernity. The French philosopher defines the postmodern as "incredulous towards metanarratives" (1984, p. xxiv) and insistently invokes *the end* of the modern project, which "has to be liquidated" (p. 111)[6]. This clearly comes out in Rorty's reading of the debate (1984), that is from a postmodern point of view itself, and thereafter, on the other side of interpretation, in Matustik (1989). At the beginning of his article Rorty states something that we have already accounted: "anything that Habermas will count as retaining a 'theoretical approach' will be counted by an incredulous Lyotard as a 'meta-narrative'.

Every philosophy that abandons such an approach will be counted by Habermas as 'neo-conservative'. Rorty urges thus that Habermas attaches great importance to preserving a standard rational criticism[7] contained in the Enlightenment's project, generating another universal philosophy addressed to defend liberal western democracies[8]. On the contrary, Lyotard declares the demise of the seeking of 'universal' consensus and validity inside the political and everyday dialogues. Furthermore, to Habermas' claim about the idea of the 'better argument' within communicative performances[9], Lyotard (and Rorty speaking for him) objects the misunderstanding that "humanity as a collective (universal) subject seeks its common emancipation through the regularization of the 'moves' permitted in all language games, and that the legitimacy of any statement resides in its contribution to that emancipation" (Lyotard 1984, p. 66). The issue is not so much about the new Habermasian meta-narrative rather than about its quest for *legitimacy*, namely the abovementioned consensus which would homogenize to one validity the cultural narratives underneath. To drop the idea of legitimacy entails the 'end of philosophy' and the 'end of truth' for many postmodernist thinkers (Blanchot 1959; Rorty, 1989; Latour, 1991; Vattimo, 1985), as argued recently by Mordacci (2017, p. 46 ff.). To free the language and the desire of communication an overcoming of the philosophical tradition is necessary, because it "sees the attempt to provide metanarratives, even metanarratives of emancipation, as an unhelpful distraction from what Dewey calls 'the meaning of the daily detail'" (Rorty 1984, p. 43).

Few years later, in 1989, Matustik engages the debate between Habermas and postmodernism, delivering a strong response to Rorty's critique. Matustik starts recalling Habermas' distinction, Kantian in origin, between three spheres of claim and adjudication that he includes in the project of modernity as one of the most relevant achievement:

> Kant puts the concept of a reason that divide up into its moments, the unity of which now has only a formal character. He separates the faculties of practical reason and of judgment from that of theoretical knowledge, and he places each of them on its own foundation. In thus grounding the possibility of objective knowledge, moral insight and aesthetic evaluation, critical reason not only assures itself of its own subjective capacity, not only make perspicuous the architectonic of reason, but also takes over the role of a supreme judge, even in relation to culture (Habermas 1987, p. 18-19).

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6 The concept itself of 'end' often manifests within postmodernism in general, as we will clarify soon.

7 Different from a 'social criticism' merely addressed to 'praxis of negation', as intended by the *Dialectic* of Adorno and Horkheimer (1947), who in fact abandoned any theoretical approach.

8 Rorty instead agrees with Lyotard to drop this universality and save the local plural consciousnesses and knowledges (Cfr. Rorty 1989, p. 84-85).

9 As we will deepen in the next paragraph within the concept of 'dialouge'.

These three spheres of rational correctness and authenticity have been also accounted by Zoeller (1988) as part of Habermas' metacritique against postmodernism. They rebuild indeed the autonomy of reason and rational criticism, even though within the new Habermasian philosophy of the subject bended to the necessity of *social* reason: the subject is part of a communicative community and not of the transcendental spirit. However, postmodernism responds that blurring the edges between the three spheres, as accused by Habermas, is not a problem unless Kant is taken "too seariously" (Rorty 1984, p. 37). Giving up these instances of autonomy, correctness and authenticity of reason is not much a loss rather than an income for the postmodern era.

2. Dialogue and dialogicity

Habermas starts thus the debate with postmodernism through a new rationality that redeems the theory of modernity in a critical sense. Before writing the *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1987), where he systematically answers to the many facets of the anti-modern thought, Habermas had already included the discussion on modernity as a fundamental topic in the *Theory of Communicative Action* (cf. Honneth, 1981). A new communicative rationality in fact, claiming to be a universal pragmatics, could identify as pathological social phenomena such as the one that Marx and subsequently Weber called 'reification'[10]. Even considering its good achievements, this critical theory will no longer consider the modern heritage as an absolute and indisputable success.

What thus leads the present research to focus on the debate between Habermas and postmodernism is the assumption that the same communicative theory, namely the conception of 'dialogue' itself, generates disagreement. We need to understand the relationship between the Habermasian critical theory of modernity and the conception of communicative rationality, approaching in the end the practice of discourse ethics. The theory of communicative action deviates from metaphysical truths and a purely instrumental reason, as it was charged by postmodernist thinkers[11]. This instance of rationality is instead autonomous, as already shown by dividing the three Kantian spheres, but at the same time the communication (or dialogue), upon which this critical theory focuses, is *pluralistic*, because it presents different ideas of legitimacy. Habermas' approach can be rightly defined as practical and pluralistic in that this theory has to be verified not according to an external truth (historical or metaphysical), but by the same 'communicative agents' who at once verify in practice the effectiveness of communication itself (i.e. of the critical theory).

There is nevertheless an important aspect of unification within Habermasian philosophy of the many methods and 'legitimacies' cast by agents, that is a *science* that pragmatically reconstructs the universal structures of communication, valid in every possible communicative situation. This formal, or universal, pragmatics does not refer to the possession of a particular knowledge but how its communicative rationality works: "rationality has less to do with the possession of knowledge than with how speaking and acting subjects acquire and use knowledge" (Habermas 1984, p. 8). Reconstructing these universal rules, the Habermasian critical theory shows us how a subject can rationally become a competent social actor, in the context of intersubjective communication. The competence and awareness in managing the universal pragmatics firstly comes to light when agents perform speech acts[12]. Question is: what does this theory entail at the end of the communicative process?

Habermas claims that if agents rationally follow the universal rules of communication, then they will have a mutual comprehension of reasonableness and acceptability of speech acts. Thus, the aim of persuading the 'opponent' does not matter so much as the hearer's understanding of the reasons that the speaker provides to support his utterance. Speaker's claims are open both to justification and criticism, made autonomously

10 Which relates to the issue of the Weberian 'iron cage' which worried the first Frankfurt generation, although Habermas is not willing to accept their extreme negation, finding instead a way out in critical theory of modernity read through the communicative paradigm (Habermas 1986, ch. 2).

11 Claiming that Habermas brings an unchanged rational criticism since the Enlightenment heritage (Rorty, 1989).

12 Habermas derived the speech act theory from Searle (1969,1979) making some adjustments. For further comparison see Dietz-Widdershoven (1991).

by participants. The dialogue succeeds whenever the hearer recognizes that the speaker's utterance has good reasons to be accepted, reasons that satisfy three basic validity claims: veracity, correctness and truth. Accomplished these conditions, the speech act may be considered valid, even though, as mentioned before, validity has nothing to do with fact-stating speech acts limited to an empirical truth, such as in positivist theory. It is instead associated to a wider *social* idea of truth, in that a communicative action is not based on a semantics of representation rather than on the possibility of mutual understanding of truth conditions.

Thus, to sum up the answer to our previous question, this formal pragmatics is addressed to reconstruct the functioning of a communicative action, namely of that practical attitude oriented to mutual comprehension and social cooperation[13]. The Habermasian theory of meaning of speech acts is not much related to grammatical or logical correctness[14], rather than to a *social* sphere of validity determined by the dialogical context and their consequent acceptation or not.

As mentioned earlier regarding the theory of modernity and which 'good' rationalization should be recovered, Habermas introduces the concept of 'lifeworld' to understand how a social framework establishes its own acceptability conditions: "through this communicative practice they assure themselves at the same time of their common life-relations, of an inter-subjectively shared lifeworld. This lifeworld is bounded by the totality of interpretations presupposed by the members as background knowledge" (1984, p. 13). This contextual marker ties up communicative rationality and action (Powell, 2002), systematizing life-forms, or universal pragmatics, which are daily taken for granted inter-subjectively in day-to-day interactions and make certain speech acts acceptable or otherwise.

In a sense, the multiplicity of perspectives based on this common background could fall within a relativistic point of view such as the postmodern one, where neo-skepticism denies any shared truth. Habermas seems to avoid this problematic outcome theorizing the recognition of a *better argument* by those agents who rationally follow the universal structures of communication and practically accept or deny the superiority of an argument over another. This 'noncoercive coercion' (Matustik 1989, p. 172) is what has been delegitimized by postmodernist argumentation, dissolving the three validity claims (veracity, correctness, truth) that a 'better' argument should satisfy.

Within his *Moralbewußtsein und kommunikatives Handeln* (1983)[15], where the discourse ethics is developed in comparison with Karl-Otto Apel, Habermas *completes* his previous theory of communicative action (Agazzi, 1985; Meisenbach, 2006), investigating the moral requirements that were marginally touched and implementing the universality of ethics within the true, just and veracious communication – in a word, valid – while rejecting the ethical *ultimate foundation* of Apel (1980)[16]. In the third essay, Habermas (1990) reiterates the 'fundamental principle of universalization' (U) as the first rule of argumentation in a practical discourse, where the principle acts like a bridge (*Brückenprinzip*) because it makes possible consensus among all the participants when the issues can be established in their *joint* interest (Heller 1985). The foundation of a dialogue ethics however brings to a new form of the principle (U) that Habermas calls (D). The latter expresses the foundation of an ethics discourse and takes for granted the choice of valid norms:

> But once it has been shown that (U) can be grounded upon the presuppositions of argumentation through a transcendental-pragmatic derivation, discourse ethics itself can be formulated in terms of the principle of discourse ethics (D), which stipulates: only those norms can claim to be valid that meet (or could meet) with the approval of all affected in their capacity as participants in a practical discourse (Habermas 1990, p. 93).

Thus, (D) stipulates the basic idea of a moral theory although it is not part of the pragmatic regulation of discourse and it is not a rule of argumentation. The derivation of (D) from (U) means that a theory of morality in discourse may be derived from non-moral premises, from the pragmatic rules reconstructed within the

13 In which thus language is no longer intended as a medium as such, but has a telos of mutual understanding.

14 We are talking in fact about a *communicative competence* in a given social context, not just a grammatical one such as in analytical philosophy of language.

15 From now on, we refer to the English translation '*Moral consciousness and communicative action*' (1990), Polity Press, Cambridge.

16 Cfr. Habermas (1990), p. 82 ff. For further reflection on the discourse ethics see Meisenbach (2006).

use of language in every possible situation. This key point of the theory of communicative action shows how connected are social coexistence and individual maxims on the one hand, and the pragmatic theory of meaning on the other. Social cooperation depends in fact on the agents' communicative rationality that, through self-correction and self-learning, enables the intersubjective approval of universal validity claims. We may also see the peculiarity of principle (D), as expression of the communicative attitude, as reflected in Habermas' reformulation of the Kantian categorical imperative:

> Rather than ascribing as valid to all others any maxim that I can will to be a universal law, I must submit my maxim to all others for purposes of discursively testing its claim to universality. The emphasis shifts from what each can will without contradiction to be a general law, to what all can will in agreement to be a universal norm (Habermas 1990, p.67).

There is eventually one last connection to consider: because the Habermasian issue of communicative rationality is inherited from the unfinished modern project, the rescue of modernity becomes in Habermas an ethical task (Matustik, 1989).

This idea of a discourse ethics undoubtedly falls apart within the postmodernist view of language games and local plurality. The first main contrast is the expulsion of rational *consensus* as the ultimate purpose of a dialogue. For Lyotard, for instance, Habermasian consensus is nothing but a violence against the heterogeneity of language games: establishing a common thread for the later postmodernist thinkers, he seeks only irresolvable disagreement as possibility of invention. In this regard, postmodernism answers to Habermas on the dialogical and ethical matters, deriving from the end of the modern project the aforesaid 'end of truth' and 'end of philosophy'. Postmodern dialogue starts after all from the failed quest for truths, especially in philosophical discussion, both in metaphysics and in intersubjective communication. Deprived of its privilege of 'fostering knowledge and achieving certainties', philosophical discussion gets downgraded to one of the multiple possible *narrations* expressed with a linguistic game, where difference *as such* represents the only sureness.

We may easily find examples in the farewell to dogmatic truth in Vattimo (2009), where the conflict among interpretations makes room for the struggle for persuasion, or in the 'liberal irony' of Rorty (1989), who states that 'after philosophy' there will remain only the contingency of language and no longer claims to truth. What is left of philosophical exchange are narration[17], irony, poetical metaphors and above all *lies*:

> [...] It is more and more evident to everyone that 'the medias lie', that everything becomes a game of non-disinterested and not necessarily false interpretations, but precisely oriented according to different projects, expectations and value-based choices (Vattimo 2009, p.7, my translation).

This new conception of dialoguing clearly affects the postmodern subject, who looks at the world with disillusion and without further ethical tasks. Reduced to irrational communication, the subject is caught in the cross-fire of equally-legitimized discourses. As long as postmodernist nihilism eradicates truth and principles from philosophy, we witness the end of a single modern ethics, as much as of an ethics of discourse. There are instead many discourses of morality (Vattimo, 1974; Rorty, 1989): aporetic and non-universalizable, plural and ambivalent moralities (Bauman, 1993). This does not mean at all that the possibility of postmodern dialogue itself disappears: language in fact remains for Vattimo the foundation of thought. For instance, recalling Heidegger's conception of Being and Gadamer's hermeneutics Vattimo dialogues with Rorty, stating that "Being is nothing but the Logos interpreted as dialogue, (*Gespräch*) as the actual discussion among people" (2005, p. 58). In this sense, each one's language is shaped through a *tradition* in which it is thrown, reflecting the condition of Dasein (being-there) (Vattimo, 2009). Consequently, a dialogue is a situation where an event of interpretation occurs and different horizons-traditions merge (Harris, 2016), creating a new enriched Being: "We don't agree because we have found the very essence of reality, but we say that we have found the very essence of reality when we agree" (Vattimo, Rorty, 2005, p.58).

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17 Another relevant resemblance may be found in Derrida's process of 'deconstruction', where truth is withheld and the distinction between the philosophical text and the narrative one is criticized.

The goal here is to avoid the resurrection of another Kantian *a priori*, showing instead, thanks to the hermeneutical process, the historicity of the same rules that every dialogue follows, meaning their contingency based on different traditions. There is no longer an "objective Logos of the nature of reality" (2005, p. 59), nor a truth as correspondent to this reality. There is instead the possibility of agreement as a sort of reestablished *continuity* of the Logos, after it has been broken when the horizon (or form of life) of one speaker has encountered the novelty of the Other. What thus remains in support of the success of a dialogue is not a rational acceptability of rules of argumentation or the existence of a better argument, rather than an instance of charity performing during the dialogue.

Having reached the conclusion of this paper, we may admit that, beyond the debate between Habermas and postmodernism, philosophy has always had the duty to be dialogical, whether following normative principles or not. However, as soon as postmodernist philosophers have created this problematic *relativist* situation, namely when they have fallen in to what Habermas called 'performative contradiction', dialogue seems to be contradicted in society and philosophy. A serious reflection on philosophical *dialogicity* (its property of being dialogical) is then necessary. Even though other attempts have tried to rehabilitate the postmodern dialogue (see for instance Brewer, 1983; Arnett, 2016), the death of truth reveals a dangerous contradiction with, on the one hand, the premise that in philosophical dialogues each participant states (what s/he believe to be) his/her own truth and, on the other, the coherent acceptance that there is no truth. Moreover, no ethical regulation of any linguistic exchange brings to the aforesaid relativism, but we should observe that the violence of truth as claimed by postmodernism, in the shape of the better argument within a regulated dialogue, would be nothing compared to the violence of persuasion in a 'free' dialogue, linguistically or non-linguistically performed. This paper assumes at least two focal points: within Habermas' theory of communication and discourse ethics there is still the task of saving the good 'dialogicity' of philosophy, which has been forgotten by postmodernism; within his argumentation of modernity then Habermas defends the *reasonableness* of such dialogicity, anticipated in earlier works. Dialogue should be established within a framework of normative commonality and social community, that is the autonomous acceptance of inter-subjective rules of the discourse and the recognition of the Other as socially committed to the dialogue. The so-called 'independence', sometimes translated in 'loneliness' (cfr. Bauman, 1999), would only lead to a world of incomprehensibility and irresponsibility for what we say.

This research does not aim to totally justify the acceptability conditions of speech acts and thus their explanation of the validity basis of social order. The goal is rather to underline how, linking the dialogical phenomenon and the meaning of speech acts to the social coexistence, dialogue itself gains a major conceptual dignity within philosophical inquiry, while postmodernism makes us surrender to its dissolution.

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Research Article

Peter West, Michela Massimi

Interview with Invited Speaker Michela Massimi, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*

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Abstract: Michela Massimi is a Professor of Philosophy of Science at the University of Edinburgh and was the keynote speaker for *Philosophy as a Way of Life*. She is currently the PI for an ERC-funded project 'Perspectival Realism. Science, Knowledge, and Truth from a Human Vantage Point.' Massimi has extensive experience working on interdisciplinary projects and has frequently engaged in public philosophy. In this interview, she discusses the future of research in the UK post-Brexit, the challenges and rewards of interdisciplinary research, shares some thoughts on the history of philosophy and science and our relationship with it, and emphasises the importance of bringing philosophy into the public sphere. She also offers advice for early career researchers and graduate students in philosophy.

Keywords: Philosophy, Academia, Perspectival Realism, Interdisciplinarity

1. Your own career is a perfect example of the benefits of European freedom of movement and you have worked on multiple international research projects including your current European Research Council funded project 'Perspectival Realism. Science, Knowledge, and Truth from a Human Vantage Point'. In your experience, how valuable is international collaboration in academia, and philosophy more specifically? *(And do you have any concerns about what the academic landscape will be like in the UK after Brexit?)*

International collaboration is key to scientific research and academia more generally. The idea that freedom of movement is a problem, instead of being a precious resource, flies in the face of today's scientific landscape where many highly successful international collaborations are made possible precisely by freedom of movement (think of the thousands of scientists coming from all over Europe and working together at the ATLAS and the CMS experiments at CERN, just as one example). The same applies to philosophy. My current ERC-funded project in philosophy of science has a team that over the past 4 years has consisted of two Americans, one Romanian, one Italian, one British, one Polish citizen, in addition to myself with double Italian/British citizenship. We are—for all intents and purposes—citizens of the world. And the other thing to bear in mind is that the myth that the UK should stop freedom of movement but be able to retain and continue to attract the 'best minds' to UK universities flies also in the face of the fact that often enough the 'best minds' are themselves the product of freedom of movement: these are people who have had the opportunity to travel across different countries, go through different educational systems, acquire a portfolio of skills, knowledge, and diversified experience. No one is born to be a 'best mind' (the myth of the lone genius coming to study in the UK). But anyone can become a 'best mind' thanks to freedom of movement, among other enabling factors.

2. Could you explain what 'Perspectival Realism' is and what the aims of the project are?

Perspectival realism is the name of a philosophical view that aims to combine realism about science with

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perspectivism. Realism is the view that says that science is in the business of telling us a true story about nature. Perspectivism is the view that stresses how our scientific knowledge is historically and culturally situated. The two have often been seen as in tension with one another: if our scientific knowledge is situated and perspectival, how can it ever be knowledge of the world *as is?* The overarching goal of the ERC-funded project is to address this tension and to show how it is possible to reconcile the two views. More details about the project can be found on the website: www.perspectivalrealism.org.

3. You've worked on many collaborative research projects (and have been Principal Investigator for a number of those). What do you think is the benefit to philosophers of working in collaboration with others?

There is a deeply rooted tradition of thinking of philosophy as a lonely exercise: the philosopher thinking long and hard about some questions (in the proverbial armchair, preferably). The reality is quite different. Philosophy, back to its Socratic roots, was born as a dialogue among interlocutors guided by the desire for wisdom. Leaving aside the debate about wisdom vs. knowledge, the fact remains that philosophy has a collaborative and dialogical nature: we build theses and arguments latching on the works of other philosophers, criticising, advocating, developing, or advancing existing views (without necessarily reducing the whole history of philosophy to a 'footnote to Plato', of course ☺).

4. Your own work is largely interdisciplinary. What do you think the dangers are of philosophers (or scientists) working in isolated fields? Why should philosophers be motivated to engage in interdisciplinary research?

I think there is a lot to be gained from doing interdisciplinary research: often enough answers to old philosophical questions can be found by bringing in fresh perspectives from other fields. And the other way around: sometimes old debates in philosophy can shed new light on questions concerning contemporary debates in other fields. In my work, I have tried to explore this two-way-street engagement between philosophy and the sciences (especially physics). Old questions about realism in science, for example, can be illuminated by looking at contemporary physics and modelling practices in the search for 'what is real' in cutting-edge areas such as Beyond Standard Model physics and cosmology. And vice versa: in other work, I have looked at how (for example) Kant's view on the laws of nature might be relevant to contemporary debates on the metaphysics of science.

5. A lot of your recent work focuses on Kant. What is it that sets Kant apart from other historical figures? Why are there plenty of 'Kantians' but very few (for example) 'Platonists', 'Thomists', or 'Cartesians' today? *(Or perhaps simply 'what do you think is the appeal of Kant to contemporary philosophers?')*

Kant has been a defining feature in our philosophical history. He published extensively in areas as diverse as theoretical philosophy, practical philosophy, philosophy of nature, political theory, aesthetics, and many more. In a way it is the vast corpus of Kant's texts and his philosophical versatility in different fields that set him aside from other philosophers and continues to be a treasure trove for scholars in different fields. But, one might argue, so did also Aristotle, and in a way Plato too, among others: they too wrote extensively on a variety of topics and areas. Back to your question, 'Why there are so many Kantians today compared to, say, Platonists or Aristotelians?'. I think the answer is 'sheer historical contingency'. Kant is historically more proximate to us than, say, Plato or Aristotle. He has influenced our more proximate philosophical history (from nineteenth-century Hegelianism and Marxism, to Marburg neo-Kantianism at the turn of the last century). Kant's legacy is historically still 'alive and well' compared to that of authors who are more remote in our past history.

6. Along with colleagues from Edinburgh, you were an editor and author of *Philosophy and the Sciences for Everyone* (2014). You've also engaged in public philosophy including appearances on the BBC's 'In Our Time'. How important do you think it is that philosophy continue to be pitched at the general public? And what does the public stand to gain from engaging with philosophy?

I see philosophers as public intellectuals that should contribute to public discourse. The difference between philosophy and other fields is that we do not just learn a topic and become experts on that topic. It would be very sad if this were all that motivates us to go into philosophy (and, incidentally, along the same lines I do not think that a doctor goes into medicine just because she wants to learn a topic). Philosophy is meant to equip us with the ability to think critically and to engage with others. As I see it, engaging non-academic audiences is an intrinsic feature of being a philosopher (although I am aware this is very much a minority view in the field!). If we succeed in making people stop for a moment in their busy lives and think and reflect on some issues (whatever they might be), that is success enough for philosophers, I think.

7. A lot of your own work focuses on the history of philosophy and science. What do you think are the benefits of understanding the history of these fields? And do you think the history of science is just as important as the history of philosophy?

I come from Italy where the education I received at all levels from primary school to secondary school and university was very historically oriented. And when one has to learn in detail ancient Roman and ancient Greek history at the age of 14-15, one does not necessarily realise the importance of this historical exercise (I remember at the time I thought it was tedious). It was only later, when I was in my 20s, that I started to understand and appreciate the importance of history (history of science and history of philosophy being the two fields I have worked on). We are our history: our current science and philosophy are part of an ongoing and never-ending historical process. This is not a platitude – it is a profound thought that, if taken on board, can change radically the way we think about problems in contemporary science and philosophy.

8. I'd like to ask a question about metaphysics (the future of metaphysics was one of the central issues thrown up during our conference in April). Pure metaphysics is perhaps the field of philosophy least susceptible to the influence of interdisciplinary research. Do you have any thoughts on how to best go about doing metaphysics (understanding and exploring the fundamental nature of things)?

Well, think again of Aristotle, and the relation he saw between metaphysics and physics. Or think of the young Kant, whose engagement with the sciences of his time (he published several essays on natural science) continued to inform his lectures on metaphysics in the Critical period and his reflections on what he called the 'nature' of things or 'real grounds' (something on which I have written recently). Many today would say that to do genuine metaphysics, one needs to engage with physics (think of Tim Maudlin as a case in point). Questions about fundamentality and essentialism can be illuminated by looking at physics and what physics tells us about fundamental particles and natural properties, just to mention one example. And there is an entire movement called 'metaphysics of science' that is interested in exploring precisely this relation.

9. Looking forward, what are you working on now? What brought you to this?

I am busy at the moment delivering on my ERC-funded grant on perspectival realism. I am co-editing two volumes, one for Routledge entitled *Understanding Perspectivism. Scientific challenges and methodological prospects* that has just been published fully open access in June 2019 and co-edited with Casey D. McCoy. And another one coming up in the autumn 2019 and co-edited with Ana-Maria Cretu for Springer entitled *Knowledge from a Human Point of View*. Most importantly, I am writing my long overdue next monograph on perspectival realism which I hope to publish over the next two years – stay tuned!

10. Finally, do you have any advice for young philosophers today?

Follow your philosophical instincts and let them guide you to find your way in the field. It might well be that your philosophical instincts take you far from well-trodden paths. Do not be afraid to follow them and to be in a minority view or in a niche area. I had that feeling very often when I was going through

my undergraduate and postgraduate education. This feeling still haunts me at times. Philosophy has its trends and fashions like any other field. There are topics that all of a sudden become trendy: sometimes it is enough that an influential name in the field publishes on article in a top journal on topic X, and next you know a flurry of papers and citations appear on topic X and a new trend starts in no time. Sadly, the metric-obsessed (institutional and publishing) system of 'impact' constantly draws our attention to those 'trendy' cases. But we should remember that the lasting contributions in philosophy have often come from people who did not follow well-trodden paths, who departed from the philosophical orthodoxy of the time, and that were not regarded 'trendy' in their own time (think of Hume who did not even get an academic Chair). The real 'impact' in philosophy is measured on a scale of centuries and millenia, not on the 2-year basis of the Thomson Reuter Citation Index and related 'trendy' storms in teacups. Here is my advice to the graduate students in philosophy today: aim high, work hard, think of yourself and your work as an ongoing dialogue with the great questions that have captivated philosophers for centuries and see how you can contribute to that dialogue. Do not let the ebb and flow of the 'trends' affect your trajectory wherever it is going to take you. The journey will be intellectually rewarding and worth the efforts (regardless of what the metrics might say).