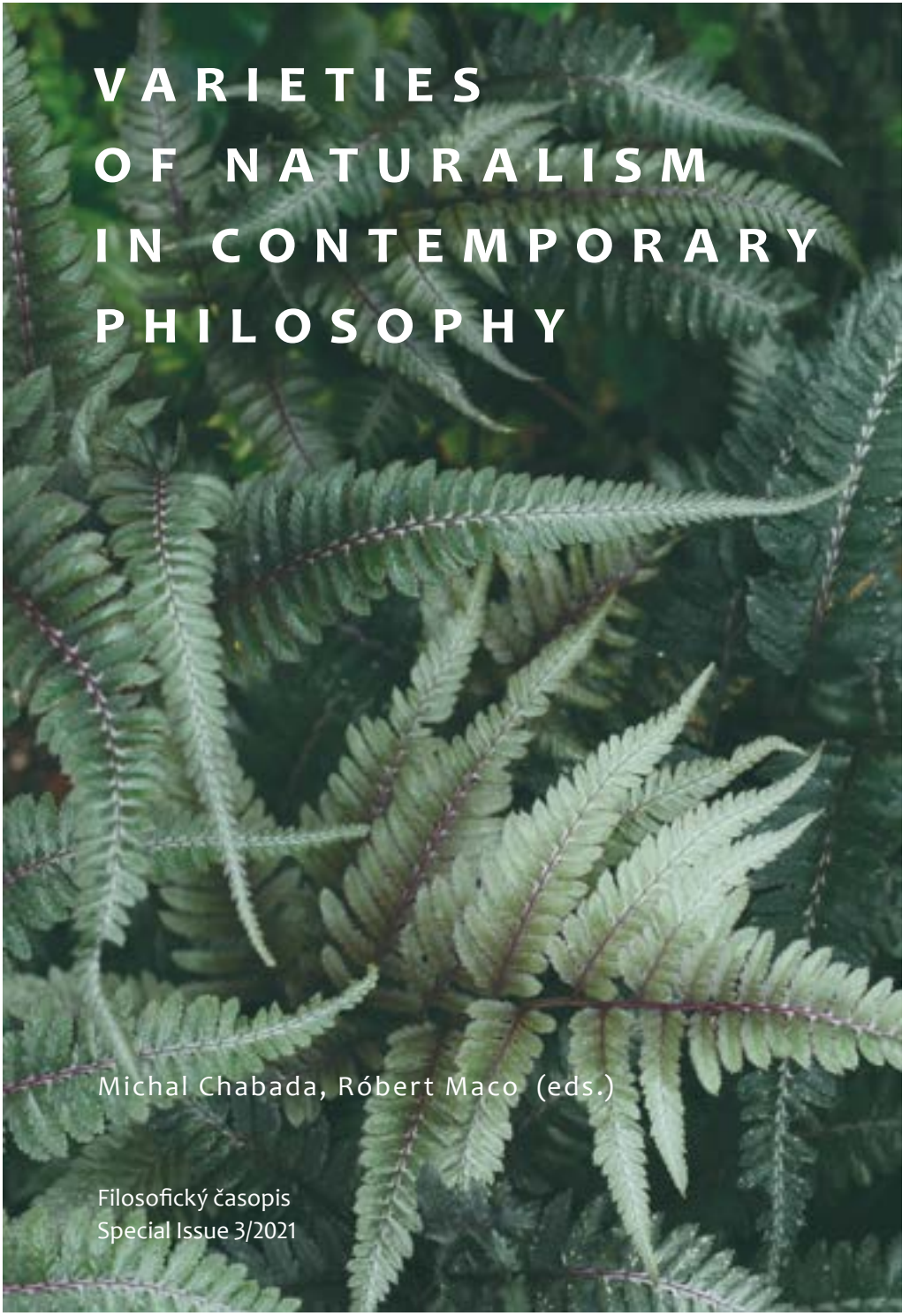
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OF NATURALISM
IN CONTEMPORARY
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Edited by
Michal Chabada, Róbert Maco

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Contents

Editorial

It is fairly plausible to argue that naturalism as a general philosophical attitude or a way of approaching philosophical questions dominates contemporary academic philosophy. The strong impact of naturalism is manifest both in the field of theoretical philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of mind) and practical philosophy (meta-ethics) as well as in meta-philosophy. Of course, this does not mean that all contemporary philosophers consider themselves naturalists. Intriguing and often passionate discussions about the naturalisation of various segments of the world or about the consequences of naturalism for the status of philosophy stem from the fact that despite the large number of philosophers in the naturalistic camp there are also numerous notable dissenting voices that object both in detail and in general to the naturalistic approach to solving traditional or new philosophical problems.

What makes such a discussion all the more important is the fact that naturalism itself is by no means easy to grasp as a homogeneous phenomenon. There is a whole spectrum of different versions of naturalism, from strictly scientistic ones, which are close to or even merge with the former materialism and physicalism, to liberal or humanistic variants of naturalism, which have much in common with more traditional forms of philosophy. The term "naturalism" itself can also mean fundamentally different things depending on the context, as can sometimes be seen, for example, when comparing the ways in which the term is used within theoretical and practical philosophy. Only very roughly and inadequately can we define naturalism in a positive sense as a call for a closer connection between philosophy and the natural sciences, and in a negative sense as a refusal to accept supernatural entities, dualism, foundationalism, and philosophy understood as an a priori activity of knowing the world "from the armchair" of conceptual analysis.

From what has been said so far, it is clear that coping with naturalism, whether by further developing and refining its more or less ambitious programme or by criticising its alleged weaknesses, is a highly topical task. The contributions collected in this special issue of the Philosophical Journal aim to take on this task and to elucidate, defend or critically assess contemporary philosophical naturalism from multiple angles. Through the contributions included, the reader can become acquainted with a wide range of topics related to naturalism, ranging from problems of ethics, feminist epistemology, metaphysics and philosophy of science to detailed analyses and critiques of naturalism from the perspective of contemporary theistic philosophy or non-naturalistic pragmatism.

In his essay Michal Chabada proposes to interpret moral facts as facts of life, using a cognitivist naturalistic approach inspired by Philippa Foot's work *Natural Goodness*. After outlining the main reasons for the non-cognitivists' rejection of the existence and observability of moral facts, the author reconstructs Foot's account of natural normativity, which includes natural historical judgments that can then be used to identify a good or defective individual as an exemplar of a life form. On this basis it is possible to build a type of evaluation that does not depend on our subjective preferences or emotional states. In conclusion, the article argues that only in areas that directly or indirectly concern life does it make sense to speak of moral goodness or evil, and that life facts are moral facts.

The essay by Mariana Szapuová offers a critical analysis of selected feminist epistemological projects that take their starting point from Quine's proposal for the naturalisation of epistemology. The author seeks to identify points of convergence between feminist and naturalistic approaches to the problem of knowledge and science, emphasising the fruitfulness of epistemological strategies involving the collaboration of philosophy with empirical science. The aim of the essay is to argue in favour of the view that the naturalistic perspective is particularly convenient for those feminist epistemological projects that aim at critical reflections on science.

The key question raised by Róbert Maco in his contribution to the special issue is how philosophy can remain a relevant force in the domain of knowledge dominated by contemporary science. He sees the answer in the adoption of a naturalistic position, the main thrust of which would not be endless quarrelling over internal metaphilosophical issues within the naturalistic movement, but rather a greater emphasis on the concrete participation of philosophy in contemporary scientific research. Maco's conclusion is that the real (not merely verbal) accomplishment of the naturalistic turn in philosophy presupposes a change in the process of educating future philosophers.

Andrea Fábiková scrutinises the main premise of Plantinga's well-known evolutionary argument against naturalism, i.e. the claim that the probability of reliability of the cognitive faculties developed in the process of unguided evolution is low. She argues that all the thought experiments offered by Plantinga to justify this thesis suffer from a common defect – they disregard the condition of evolution or fail to take it into account properly. In the last part of the essay, the author presents arguments in favour of the thesis that, regardless of the difficulties that scientific approaches may have in explaining mental causation, they do not justify Plantinga's conclusion that in a naturalistic world there would be no mental causation whatsoever.

Paul Giladi in his essay proposes a programme for future critical responses to naturalism. After providing a topography of contemporary critical approaches to the Placement Problem, he gives an overview of his own critical responses to naturalism and replies to his critics. In the final thematic part of his paper, he focuses on four areas of future research on critical responses to naturalism: the first is a challenge set by Antonio Nunziante concerning the historical and political aspects of American humanism and naturalism; the second involves centring and combining decolonial and queer theoretic discursive formations to enhance critical theoretic responses to naturalism; the third emphasises the need to bring Hegel and Otto Neurath into direct debate on anti-foundationalism, pragmatism, and the (dis)unity of science; the fourth focuses on developing a critique of sexology's scientific naturalist framework for making sense of sexual arousal.

The first four essays are the result of the work of members of the research team associated with the grant APVV-18-0178 *Naturalism as a universal philosophical programme*. The special issue also includes five book reviews that are directly or indirectly related to the topic of naturalism in contemporary philosophical debates.

Michal Chabada, Róbert Maco
(visiting editors)

Moral Facts as Facts of Life[1]

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Abstract:
This article seeks to interpret moral facts as facts of life using the cognitivist naturalist approach set out by Philippa Foot in her *Natural Goodness*. It outlines the main features of the non-cognitivist rejection of the existence and observability of moral facts. It then reconstructs Foot's conception of the natural normativity that is articulated in natural historical judgements, which can then be used to define a good or a defective individual with regard to what is exemplary of a life form. Hence Foot highlights a type of evaluation that is not dependent on our pro/con attitudes or emotional states. Practical rationality is tied up with the word 'good', which obtains its content from manifestations of the human life form and is aimed at the good life. This article shows that it is only in spheres that directly or indirectly concern life that it makes sense to talk of moral goodness or badness and that facts of life are moral facts.

Keywords: moral facts, natural good, life, practical rationality, P. Foot

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The question of whether moral facts exist and are epistemically accessible is a 'bone of contention' between cognitivist and non-cognitivist meta-ethical theorists. Philippa Foot analyses the nature of moral facts and moral judgements by referring to the (human) life form, that is, nature, as a means of avoiding supranaturalism, moral anti-realism and non-cognitivism. The aim of this article is to present Foot's conception of moral facts based on an analysis and reconstruction of her argumentation in *Natural Goodness*. The thesis of the article is that moral facts are facts of life, and I am led to it by Foot's statement that '*life* will be at the centre of my discussion, and the fact that a human action or disposition is good of its kind will be taken to be simply a fact about a given feature of a certain kind of living thing"[2] To empha-

1 This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under Contract No. APVV-18-0178.

2 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*. Oxford, Clarendon Press 2002, p. 5 (hereafter *Natural Goodness*).

sise this I wish to highlight something else Foot said, which is that her interest in ethics was motivated by the reports of the crimes against humanity in the Nazi concentration camps.[3] I believe that this is also the lens through which we should interpret Foot's cognitivist and naturalist realist reasoning that moral norms are objectively natural because they are grounded 'in facts about human life… [that is] on the life form of our own species'.[4] It explains the importance of human dignity in her ethical thinking.

In this article I will proceed as follows. First I will outline the discussion on moral facts in non-cognitivist approaches. Then I will introduce Foot's understanding of the difference between secondary, natural goodness and her conception of natural normativity which is generally framed in value judgements on all living things. I go on to explain human moral goodness in more depth, and Foot's understanding of practical rationality and its relationship to objective good, which is what facts of life mean. In the conclusion I look at Foot's moral realism from the perspective of hermeneutic naturalism, as proposed by T. Hoffmann.

1. Moral Reality in Non-cognitivism

The rejection of moral facts and hence the notion that moral judgements are true or false is in essence a non-cognitivist approach. One of the models of non-cognitivism is emotivism.[5] Following on from logical positivism, which holds that physicalist language is a universally meaningful language,[6] statements such as 'stealing is bad' or 'justice is good' are neither normative nor analytic, nor can they be analytically, scientifically or empirically verified or deduced from other empirical sentences. Normative sentences have no em-

3 Voorhoeve, A., *Conversations on Ethics*. Oxford, Oxford University Press 2011, p. 91. This article is a modified version of the following studies: Chabada, M., Philippa Footová o prirodzenej normativite [Philippa Foot on natural normativity]. In: Szapuová, M. – Nuhlíček, M. – Chabada, M. (eds.), *Veda, spoločnosť a hodnoty* [Science, society, and values]. Bratislava, Univerzita Komenského 2019, pp. 147–175; Chabada, M., Prirodzené a morálne dobro alebo zlo: prístup Philippy Footovej [Natural and moral goodness or badness: Philippa Foot's approach]. *Filozofia*, 79, 2020, No. 9, pp. 747–759.

4 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 24.

5 Emotivism was preceded by the ideas of D. Hume, 'according to whom morality does not affect what is but what ought to be, is bound up with human desires and human behaviour… In accordance with his emotivism Hume located basic morality in the sphere of human feelings, passions and desires. The capacity for moral judgement, the capacity to distinguish between virtue and sin, good and bad is rooted in the emotional element of human nature'. – Szapuová, M., Fakty a hodnoty: poznámky k Humovmu zákonu [Facts and values: notes on Hume's law]. In: *Veda, racionalita a hodnoty* [Science, rationality, and values; CD-ROM]. Bratislava, Stimul 2016, p. 91.

6 Carnap, R., Die physikalische Sprache als Universalsprache der Wissenschaft. *Erkenntnis*, 2, 1931, No. 1, p. 443.

pirical content, are devoid of meaning[7] and do not refer to any kind of objective reality. According to A. J. Ayer, they convey feelings, and as such cannot be true or false.[8] Thus value judgements are stripped of their intersubjectively binding force, [9] thereby confirming the gulf between moral judgements and descriptions, values and facts, and 'is' and 'ought'.[10] The semantic status of moral judgements is *de facto* comparable to the meaning of interjections (Ah!, Ow! or Yuck!).[11] Moral judgements do not simply express the feelings of the person uttering them but are a means whereby the speaker attempts to causally influence the emotions of the other person in an effort to nudge them into action.

The second version of non-cognitivism is projectionism, which holds that we project our pro/con attitudes onto the world through moral judgements. 'We continually coat the world in our pro/con attitudes and naively think the content of our projections is the content of true moral judgements through which we articulate objective moral reality in the natural world.'[12] We are making a radical mistake if we think that by making moral judgements we are expressing moral reality. All moral judgements are in principle false beliefs because there is no such thing in the world as objective moral fact on which their truth could be based. Moral fact is not just ontologically but also epistemologically *queer* because we have no empirical experience of it and cannot scientifically describe it.[13] Non-cognitivist approaches have an inherently empirical view of morality because they assume that only empirical scientific judgements can be true and articulate the reality of the natural world. Empiricism is the measure (and scientific dogma) of morality.[14]

This rejection of the truth value of moral judgements is associated with the instrumental understanding of rationality.[15] Moral reality and knowledge thereof do not necessarily motivate (we know what the right thing to do is, we just don't feel like doing it) and so we have to seek motivation in the non-cognitive human sphere (in wishes or desires). As Hume claims, 'Reason

7 Carnap, R., Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache. *Erkenntnis*, 2, 1931, No. 1, p. 237; Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*. Berlin–Boston, Walter de Gruyter 2014, pp. 61–62 (hereafter *Das Gute*).

8 Ayer, A. J., *Language, Truth and Logic*. London, Penguin Books 1936, p. 104.

9 Ricken, F., Die Rationalität der Moral. In: Hoffmann, T. – Reuter, M. (eds.), *Natürlich gut. Aufsätze zur Philosophie von Philippa Foot*. Heusenstamm, Ontos Verlag 2010, p. 194 (hereafter Die Rationalität).

10 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 8; Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 14.

11 Pauer-Studer, H., *Einführung in die Ethik*. Wien, Facultas Verlag 2020, p. 207 (hereafter *Einführung*).

12 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 52.

13 Ibid., p. 55.

14 Ibid., p. 57.

15 Pauer-Studer, H., *Einführung*, p. 252.

is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them'.[16] But then we run the risk of moral motivation being reduced to the fulfilment of subjective desires of various kinds (including thereby vile ones). The function of reason is narrowed down to knowledge and identifying the most appropriate means of achieving goals, 'which are expressed in agentic (subjective), volitional, conative, affective and appetitive cues'.[17] Rational instrumentalism leads ultimately to ethical subjectivism 'for in practice it would be irrational not to break moral norms if that enabled us to realise our subjective goals of action'.[18]

Foot's defence of the cognitivist and naturalist realist position requires her, in her theory of ethics, to define the ontological nature of moral fact as objective and morally acceptable goals of action that serve as the criteria for deciding whether moral judgements are true or false. Since she also critically departs from non-cognitivism, she has to explain her conception of practical rationality and especially moral rationality, motivation and how these are intertwined with the moral fact that sets out the objective limits of what is morally acceptable.

2. Goodness and a General Framework for Nature

Foot's first step in constructing her cognitivist and naturalist realist ethics is the semantic analysis of the concept of *good*. She starts from Peter Geach's distinction between predicative and attributive adjectives. The meaning of a predicative adjective, such as *red,* characterises an object independent of the type of object involved. The answer 'X is a red car' can be meaningfully broken down into 'X is a car' and 'X is red'. But the meaning of attributive adjectives, such as 'big', is dependent on the thing it is describing. For example. 'X is a big fly' cannot be meaningfully broken down into 'X is a fly' and 'X is big'. Attributive adjectives take their meaning from their relationship to the type of object. 'Only with recourse to the characteristic size of species members can the answer, that for X it is a big fly, be in any way meaningful.'[19] Geach considers the adjective 'good' to be attributive[20] as it is only in relation to the substantive that it acquires its meaning. Foot draws on Geach, as in

16 Hume, D., *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge. Oxford, Clarendon Press [First edition 1888; reprinted] 1967, p. 415.
17 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 19.
18 Ibid., p. 33.
19 Halbig, C., Der Aristotelische Naturalismus als Metaethik. In: Hähnel, M. (ed.), *Aristotelischer Naturalismus.* Stuttgart, J. B. Metzler Verlag 2017, p. 121 (hereafter Der Aristotelische Naturalismus).
20 Geach, P., Good and Evil. *Analysis*, 17, 1956, No. 2, p. 34 (hereafter Good and Evil).

'Whether a particular F is a good F depends radically on what we substitute for "F".'[21] 'So the word *good* can always be replaced with *good qua* A.'[22] This attributive understanding of the word good is aimed against George Moore who, Foot argues, uses the word good predicatively[23] and she is critical of his metaphysical use of the word good, i.e. of the fact that he investigates it in isolation from everyday language use. The solution is to wrest them 'back "from their metaphysical to their everyday use".'[24] Hence Foot draws on Wittgenstein's therapeutic function of philosophy that entails explaining the everyday use of normative concepts and their relations.[25]

If the meaning of the adjective *good* depends on the type of object, then we cannot consider it a means of expressing a 'pro-attitude'[26] nor convert it into a recommendation or expression of a mental state,[27] hence this reasoning runs counter to the non-cognitivist approach. Foot's account basically 'combines the descriptive understanding of good, or the cognitivist understanding, of judgements in which the word "good" is the attribute (which renders the judgement true or false), with Geach's thesis that the adjective ('good') is no less natural than the entity it is modifying (cars, flies etc.)'.[28]

Foot distinguishes between primary (natural, intrinsic and autonomous) good and secondary or extrinsic good. To do so she relies on Aristotle's ergon argument that 'serves as the convergence point and helps systematise her multi-layered thinking'.[29] Secondary good 'is goodness predicated to living things when they are evaluated in relationship to members of species other than their own'.[30] A knife is a good example of its kind as it fulfils the function it was designed for. And a dog is good in the sense that it serves the needs of its owner. In these examples the objects are seen as means of achieving their purpose, which she considers to be external and set by no-one else.[31]

21 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 3.
22 Hamann, F., Die Formen des Guten nach Aristoteles. In: Hamann, F. – Heuer, P. (eds.), *Die ontologischen Grundlagen der aristotelischen Ethik*. Leipzig, Leipziger Universitätsverlag 2019, p. 157 (hereafter Die Formen des Guten).
23 Geach, P., Good and Evil, p. 35.
24 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 3. – Foot cites L. Wittgenstein: 'What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use'. Wittgenstein, L., *Filosofická zkoumání* [*Philosophical research*], § 116. Praha, Filosofický ústav AV ČR 1993, p. 65 (hereafter *Filosofická zkoumání*).
25 Fritz, A., Philippa Foots Begründung praktischer Rationalität. *Theologie und Philosophie*, 85, 2010, No. 1, p. 5 (hereafter Philippa Foots Begründung).
26 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 25.
27 Ibid., p. 37.
28 Halbig, C., Der Aristotelische Naturalismus, pp. 121–122.
29 Fritz, A., Philippa Foots Begründung, p. 1.
30 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 26.
31 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 130.

In relation to intrinsic natural good Foot says: 'features of plants and animals have what one might call an "autonomous", "intrinsic", or as I shall say "natural" goodness and defect that may have nothing to do with the needs or wants of the members of any other species of living thing… it depends directly on the relation of an individual to the "life form" of its species.'[32] Intrinsic goodness is basically something that only living things have and only 'if they fulfil the criteria derived from that species'.[33] Natural goodness is dependent on the life form, which exhibits the features of its physical constitution, typical behaviours and life habits of that species.[34] Natural goodness is essential to the extrinsic and instrumental use and evaluation (if we want to get a cow to produce more milk we need to know *what* a cow is, i.e. we have to know what life form it is and its intrinsic natural goals, to which milk production is related). Intrinsic natural quality is basal and extrinsic quality is evaluated on that basis.[35] In living creatures natural goodness is to do with self-preservation and reproduction, which are goodnesses that are not dependent on the wishes of another species and in fulfilling these the individual flourishes.[36]

Natural historical judgements (NHJs) are made about the life form, also known as Aristotelian categoricals (ACs).[37] These judgements are teleological in structure and speak 'of the life cycle of individuals of a given species.'[38]

32 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, pp. 26–27.

33 Halbig, C., Der Aristotelische Naturalismus, p. 122.

34 The term life form is therefore wider and more comprehensive than the term biological species, as is particularly evident in the case of humans.

35 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 132. A C. Halbig states, individuals who are defective in the primary sense (e.g. overfed pigs that cannot breed) are good in the secondary sense (for the food industry). – Halbig, C., Der Aristotelische Naturalismus, p. 123.

36 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, pp. 31, 33.

37 'ACs indicate the present state of evolutionary development and imply relatively stable characteristics that are captured in this image.' – Halbig, C., Der Aristotelische Naturalismus, p. 122. The representantives of neo-Aristotelian naturalism accept biological naturalism, because "morality must be considered a constituent of human nature and, vice versa, that human beings are a part of the natural world… The three key propositions of Aristotelian naturalism establish that: (1) it is essential for all living beings to belong to a species, (2) the species to which they belong is determined by a number of functions, (3) these functions determine whether an individual is a good specimen of a species, fit to lead a flourishing life. Species membership, the number of functions which determine a species' nature, and the evaluative content of the species membership form what can be called the 'evaluative-conceptual structure' which applies to all living beings. To the extent to which this evaluative-conceptual structure applies to humankind, the latter is also part of the rest of living nature. Given that a good human specimen or flourishing human life can be determined by referring to the human species and the functions that define it, ethics becomes a part of a certain account of human nature." – Wild, M., Was ist biologisch am Aristotelischen Naturalismus? In: Hähnel, M. (ed.), *Aristotelischer Naturalismus.* Stuttgart, J. B. Metzler Verlag 2017, p. 93 (hereafter Was ist biologisch am Aristotelischen Naturalismus?).

38 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 29.

Their logical form 'The S is/has/does F' represents a teleological nexus[39] of movements and states where the ultimate formal goal is characteristically to *succeed* or *flourish* or specifically live a *good life.* The material content of the formal telos depends on the life form of the individual it exemplifies.[40] Identifying a species or life form, F indicates the states, activities and movements that the typical example of the species *usually* or *generally* manifests. This type of judgement is a separate logical category, the universality of which is 'qualitative normality', and hence allows for exceptions, its truthfulness not being falsified by the fact that individual S isn't or hasn't or doesn't do what exemplary members of species F usually are, have or do. Neither does the logical form of these judgements imply that if S isn't, hasn't and doesn't F then it isn't an example of the species. True NHJs explicate the life form in terms of the nature of the examples,[41] by exhibiting 'patterns of natural normativity'[42] that enable us to determine the natural quality or defect of the example of the life form. 'If we have a true natural-history proposition to the effect that S's are F, then if a certain individual S – the individual here and now or then and there – is not F it is therefore not as it should be, but rather weak, diseased, or in some other way defective.'[43] If individual E of form L is/has/does F perfectly, i.e. it accomplishes the (biological) functions (fulfils its ergon) stemming from the life form, then it is a normal example of form L and so flourishes, that is, leads a successful life according to exemplary form L. The method for determining whether the individual is a good or defective example of the life form is as follows. The first premise is the general descriptive statement (NHJ), the second premise is a statement about that particular individual and the conclusion tells us whether the individual is judged to conform to the way of life typical of that species. Let us look at an example: 1. (general) premise = NHJ/AC: bees announce that they have found a source of nectar by 'dancing'; 2. premise: this bee has found a source and is not dancing; 3. conclusion: this bee is *naturally defective*, or is a *bad* example of the species, that is, it *isn't* how it *ought* to be.[44] Hence the conclusion is normative: the unit of measurement it is judged against is not extrinsic to the individual 'but is based on what the individual necessarily and fundamentally

39 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, pp. 116–119.
40 Ibid., p. 123.
41 Hoffmann, T., Tugend und Gedeihen: Philippa Foots Naturalismus der menschlichen Vernunft. In: Hähnel, M. (ed.), *Aristotelischer Naturalismus*. Stuttgart, J. B. Metzler 2017, p. 156 (hereafter Tugend und Gedeihen).
42 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 38.
43 Ibid., p. 30.
44 Ibid., pp. 33–37.

is, that is, it is a member of a particular living species'.[45] Natural normativity is objectively ontological, a certain type of general and objective manifestation. These manifestations are exhibited by living things who achieve their purpose on that very basis, i.e. naturally thrive according to their form.

Hence we can formulate natural norms and thereby list the types of contingent qualities and defects that 'depend essentially on the form of life of the species to which an individual belongs.'[46] Foot is convinced that she has found a single general logical framework (*special grammar*) for evaluating judgements that are valid for all living beings (plants, animals and even humans).[47] On this basis she shows that we are dealing with a use of the word 'good' that non-cognitivism cannot explain[48] and that norms are based on the realities of the natural world.[49] NHJs are hybrid in nature, are both descriptive and evaluative and combine descriptions of the life forms of species with propositions evaluating individuals. These evaluations are intertwined with reality; the descriptive judgements justifies the evaluative judgement.[50]

If on the basis of this logical framework we can determine naturally defective examples of a particular life form then we can also determine what is naturally good or bad for an example of that life form and so we know what members of a species need in order to flourish that is, to lead a successful life. 'So if we can judge that the E form of L is *as* the E form of L naturally defective, or bad, then we must be able to judge what is naturally bad *for* the

45 Halbig, C., Der Aristotelische Naturalismus, p. 123.

46 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 35.

47 Ibid., p. 26.

48 Ricken, F., Die Rationalität, pp. 197–198; Halbig, C., Der Aristotelische Naturalismus, p. 121.

49 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, pp. 36–37.

50 If we "find natural normativity in the whole domain of living being *qua* membership in a biological species and *qua* biological function," the question arises of the place of this consideration in modern biology? "Many critics have answered this question in the negative; even worse, they have argued that Aristotelian naturalism relies on an entirely pre-modern and obsolete biology, namely on Aristotelian biology." – Wild, M., Was ist biologisch am Aristotelischen Naturalismus?, p. 95. – There are approaches that render "modern evolutionary biology compatible with Aristotelian biology: Aristotelian teleology can be understood in terms of the aetiological theory of functions." But this is "highly controversial". – Wild, M., Was ist biologisch am Aristotelischen Naturalismus?, p. 99. Also Ph. Foot says, that "the word 'function' as used here is not to be confused with its use in evolutionary biology." – Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 32. – According to M. Wild, "Aristotelian naturalism is not biological in the sense of biologism… is not biological in the sense that it makes no reference to any external facts of modern biology… Aristotelian naturalism is satisfied when it can pursue a naïve and commonplace notion of biology… Unlike many other naturalistic positions, Aristotelian naturalism does not distinguish itself by proximity to the natural sciences, nor by materialistic physics nor by an emphasis on the continuity between humans and animals… Presumably, the notoriously vague term "naturalism" would have been abused less if neo-Aristotelians had renounced it altogether." – Wild, M., Was ist biologisch am Aristotelischen Naturalismus?, pp. 104–105.

E form of L *as* the E form of L.'[51] This 'good for' is expressed as an *Aristotelian necessity* (AN), on which the realisation of the natural goodness of the individual depends.

> These 'Aristotelian necessities' depend on what the particular species of plants and animals need, on their natural habitat, and the ways of making out that are in their repertoire. These things together determine what it is for members of a particular species to be as they should be, and to do that which they should do.[52]

If hares for examples are to fulfil their natural goodness (grow and reproduce), they need good grass. Grass is good in the sense that it is related to the intrinsic goodness of the hare. 'The concept of natural good is primary in that it contains within it a species-specific standard, with which good can be evaluated in the secondary sense as well… All other goods are in some way teleologically related to the primary form of good.'[53] It is through the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic good that the individual achieves its formal goal, i.e. it flourishes, leads a successful or good life, the substance of which depends on the exemplary life form.

3. Human Goodness

The substance of a thriving or successful life as the formal purpose of all living things depends on the life form that the individual exemplifies. If in sub-rational beings the content of natural normativity is simple and not too difficult for defective individuals to learn, then the question is whether that same evaluative structure holds when we turn from plants and animals to consider people.[54] Foot believes that the logical structure is just as valid when evaluating human actions and that in this type of evaluation function and purpose are interlinked,[55] regardless of whether we are talking about sub-rational creatures or humans. 'Thus if a good knife is one that fulfils its *ergon* well, then a good person is someone who performs their *ergon* well.'[56]

If the natural goodness of plants and animals relates to the biological cycle of self-preservation and reproduction,[57] the question is whether and to

51 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 134.
52 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 15.
53 Hamann, F., *Die Formen des Guten*, pp. 162, 169.
54 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 38.
55 Ibid., p. 40.
56 Fritz, A., Philippa Foots Begründung, p. 6.
57 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 42.

what extent human natural goodness is related to the biological cycle. According to Foot, human natural goodness and a successful life are not necessarily predicated on reproduction and self-preservation. The decision not to have children is not in and of itself bad because other components of goodness (work requirements or beliefs) may justify a rejection of family life.[58] Living a good life is more complicated in people because they are capable of sacrificing their life in pursuit of a value or truth. 'The teleological story goes beyond the reference to survival itself.'[59] This shows that human goodness extends beyond goodness based on the biological cycle.[60]

To know what human goodness is, we have to look at 'how human beings live: in other words, what kind of living thing a human being is'.[61] It means that we have to describe the human life form that serves as the standard for determining natural goodness or badness. True descriptive NHJs tell us about how people live,[62] for example that people make clothes and build homes or get round the rules, trust one another or recognise rights. This enables us to pin down *what* people are.[63] In describing what people are, that is, explicating the human life form, Foot takes inspiration from L. Wittgenstein who stated: 'Commanding, questioning, recounting, chatting, are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing'.[64] Influenced by Elizabeth Anscombe, Foot understands these impulses both linguistically and ontologically, that is, as the essential manifestations of people as such, which can be refined through culture.[65] We have true descriptive statements on the human life form that demonstrate what human goodness and reality are, that there are certain things people can and cannot do,[66] for example that people can only achieve their goals through cooperation or that a promise is in essence a means of cooperation. It follows from this that 'Hu-

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., p. 43.

60 As T. Hoffmann says: 'for humans it is not unnatural or anti-natural for a person to sacrifice their life "on the altar" of their convictions (e.g. Socrates) and neither is it unnatural or anti-natural for a person to decide to be celibate based on their beliefs (e.g. a Roman Catholic priest). If we consider activities that have no reproductive purpose to be unnatural or anti-natural, then we are disproportionately reducing the ultimate purpose of human beings to that of sub-rational living things. We would not be viewing people as an example of a rational life form but as an example of a sub-rational animal and so we would be depleting our understanding of the human life form.' – Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 216.

61 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 51.

62 Ricken, F., Die Rationalität, p. 200.

63 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 49.

64 Wittgenstein, L., *Filosofická zkoumání*, § 25, p. 25.

65 Hähnel, M., Von der Spezies zur Lebensform (und wieder zurück?). In: Hähnel, M. – Noller, J. (ed.), *Die Natur der Lebensform. Perspektiven in Biologie, Ontologie und praktischer Philosophie*. Paderborn, Brill–Mentis 2020, p. 46.

66 Ricken, F., Die Rationalität, p. 201.

man good is *sui generis*',[67] and concerns primarily the goodness or defective nature of 'rational will'[68] i.e. the will through which decisions are made using reasoned knowledge. Practical rationality (rational will) is the human life form that contains intrinsic standards for determining whether a specific person is a good or defective example of their rational life form. The use of practical rationality is human natural goodness; if defective, it is human natural badness. Good and defective rational will are also morally good and bad.

If we say a particular person is good, we are not judging their physical state and movements in terms of self-preservation and reproduction; we are assessing their intrinsic quality in accordance with the human life form.[69] Moral quality therefore concerns the quality of thinking and acting, the quality of the person's character, which is in no sense directly proportionate to physical health.[70] Anyone who believed it was would not consider humans to be examples of the rational life form but of the sub-rational life form, as did the Nazis and slave owners.[71] Human actions and desires are therefore realised independently of practical rationality. These independently set goals function as reasons for acting, which is the sphere of *reasons* as the sphere of freedom.[72] If people can freely realise their practical rationality then we have the essential condition for flourishing or for a successful life. Natural human goodness is therefore a quality rational will and badness is a defective rational will; quality actions are voluntarily and informed, defective actions are involuntary and uninformed.[73] If we consider these characteristics within the framework of natural normativity, a person is exemplary of their life form if they apply practical rationality flawlessly, while if they cannot make proper use of it they are a bad example. It is also the case that if a person does not use their rationality properly, that is bad for them and vice versa.[74] Knowledge and free will are characteristics of the human life form and are essential to a successful or good human life. Let us look at an example that is identical in form to the one about bees above. The first premise is the NHJ: people generally enter into relationships voluntarily and for certain reasons;

67 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 51.
68 Ibid., p. 66.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, pp. 152–153.
72 Hoffmann, T., Tugend und Gedeihen, p. 158.
73 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, pp. 69–70.
74 Hoffmann, T., Tugend und Gedeihen, p. 156. – This is consistent with Aristotle's view that is encapsulated in his 'ergon' argument: human ergon (function) is mental activity performed using reason. A good example of the human life form is one who is rationally active, i.e. a reasoning person who achieves his or her intrinsic purpose and hence a specific means of flourishing and of living a successful life. – Aristoteles, *Etika Níkomachova* 1098a 2–18. Trans. A. Kříž. Praha, Rezek 2009, pp. 32–33 (hereafter *Etika Níkomachova*).

second premise: Peter enters into a relationship 'blindly' or under pressure; conclusion: Peter realises his human life form in a defective manner, that is, he does not act in the way he ought to. For humans, then, it is naturally good to exercise practical rationality, to be rational in character and to think and act rationally; to be naturally bad means being irrational, being irrational in character, and thinking and acting in an irrational manner.[75]

If the actions and desires of human beings are freely realised practical rationality, that is, the human beings freely set goals and seek ways to achieve them, then this definition of practical rationality is compatible with the instrumentalist definition typical of non-cognitivism. Foot asks the same question as Willard Quine before her: 'What then would be so important about practical rationality?'[76] If practical rationality is the same as instrumental rationality, many criminals would be perfect examples of the human life form because they freely set their goals and seek and use suitable means to achieve them.[77] We cannot of course ignore the importance of instrumental rationality as an essential condition of practical thinking. According to Foot, moral action is 'part of practical rationality'[78]; hence there is more than one form of practical rationality. That is why it would be a mistake to explain moral actions using a different form of practical rationality, such as instrumental rationality, i.e. to elevate one over the other or reduce one to the other. The various parts of practical rationality exist on the same level.[79] 'We should not think in terms of rival theories, but of the different parts of practical rationality, no one of which should be mistaken for the whole.'[80] In terms of form, the structure of moral judgements is the same as those in instrumentalist rationality, but the moral content concerns 'facts of human life'.[81] Foot rejects the neo-Humean conception of non-cognitivism that holds that the goal of practical reason is to maximise the fulfilment of the agent's wishes and preferences. Moral action can be reasoned even when it is directed against the wishes and desires of the agent.[82] Unlike animals, who pursue the good thing they see, people pursue 'what they see as good'.[83] An action is not good because it is desirable but because it is good, i.e. the moral value of an action does not depend on rational choice and concerns real life. There is

75 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 157.
76 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 62.
77 According to Aristotle, practical thinking that is not related to good is shrewdness and not reasoned. – Aristoteles, *Etika Níkomachova* 1144a 26, p. 150.
78 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 9.
79 Ricken, F., Die Rationalität, pp. 194–195.
80 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 13.
81 Ibid., p. 18.
82 Ricken, F., Die Rationalität, p. 196.
83 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, pp. 22–23, 56.

a 'conceptual connection'[84] between good actions and rational actions just as there is an 'intrinsic link between moral goodness and reasons for action.'[85]

Foot adopts an *ex negativo* approach when defining the limits of moral good, i.e. based on what we consider to be bad and defective in everyday life and on what prevents us from flourishing and achieving a successful human life. The first candidates are the various manifestations of physical or mental violence, unnecessary pain, suffering and frustration[86] that *Aristotelian categoricals* posit as conditions for achieving a formal purpose. Good reason to act is independent of the contingent motivation of the agent but concerns the natural reality of the human life form,[87] and hence the realities and characteristics that play a causal teleological role[88] in the life of the individual in relation to the realisation of the life form. These realities include 'physical characteristics (developed articulatory and sensory organs essential to the acquisition of speech and therefore communication and cooperation) or mental abilities (fantasy, memory) and the need for trust, respect, recognition and affection',[89] since achieving a successful human life is directly or indirectly dependent on these. On this basis we can view ethical reality as both natural and objective. Examples of moral and natural wicked deeds include the crimes committed against humanity and human dignity in the concentration camps and gulags, which Foot considers the impetus for her ethics and which she frequently mentions in her *Natural Goodness*. 'If we know that a certain behaviour causes another person unnecessary suffering then it necessarily follows that it is bad and wrong […] these facts represent objective reasons for a value judgement'[90] that is either true or false. As R. Spaemann aptly put it: 'It is precisely in the deepest humiliation that we may find the greatest expression of what we understand by the term dignity.'[91] The human form is therefore both rational and living, a rationality that is embedded in life and all that is in some way connected to life, that has moral meaning and serves as the basis of true or false moral judgements. Foot does not dispose of instrumental rationality but relates it to morally relevant objective goals that are directly or indirectly connected to life.

84 Ibid., p. 65.
85 Ibid., p. 64.
86 Ibid., p. 78.
87 Fritz, A., Philippa Foots Begründung, pp. 9–10.
88 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, pp. 33–34.
89 Ibid., pp. 43–48.
90 Brázda, R., Etika ctností a přirozenost dobra [Ethics of virtue and Natural Goodness]. *Pro-Fil. An Internet Journal of Philosophy*, 6, 2005, No. 1, p. 3.
91 Spaemann, R., Menschenwürde und menschliche Natur. In: Rothhaar, M. – Hähnel, M. (eds.), *Normativität des Lebens – Normativität der Vernunft?* Berlin–Boston, Walter de Gruyter 2015, p. 38 (hereafter Menschenwürde).

Human beings are a good example of their life form because they are rationally practical and pursue an objectively good life. Practical rational thinking concerns the nature of the goal, the means to achieve it, and an assessment of the context of the particular situation within which the actions take place. The rules that stem from this practical thinking take the form of generic moral judgements that are *universally* and *generally* applicable, and thereby allow for and recognise exceptions.[92] If an objectively good goal is being pursued and morally good means are selected to conduct a reasoned and sensitive assessment of the context of the situation, then that action is morally good in its entirety.[93]

The basic virtue of rational will is prudence, which is an essential prerequisite for the acquisition of the remaining moral virtues. The virtue of prudence must be accompanied by the virtue of love, which concerns the reality of human life as an objective moral reality. An individual human being is a good representative of the human species if that person voluntarily fulfils their goodness and the goodness of others based on rational thinking, thereby meeting the criteria of natural normativity in full.[94] The virtue of love is a sufficient condition to achieve a good life and forms the basis of the other moral virtues (friendship, loyalty, justice, courage, moderation and so on), which are in some way a form of it, and are anchored in the realities of human life as the *eo ipso* of moral realities.[95] It is only because we share a common life form that we are able to understand the tendencies of other people and are able to judge conflicts of interest and settle them fairly.[96]

The virtues of prudence and love make us good people and enable us to perform our intrinsic ergon well. Hence Foot confirms Geach's view that human beings need virtues to realise their life form in the way that a bee needs its sting.[97] Humans are a good example of their species if they act voluntarily on the basis of valid reasoning in relation to objective good, select the appropriate means, taking account of the situational context, and insofar as they can fulfil their needs and the needs of others,[98] thereby achieving their ultimate goal of a successful or good life. "Virtues are something that can transcend the well-being of individuals, and that contribute to the flourishing of the species."[99]

92 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 180.
93 Akvinský, T., *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 18, a. 4 ad 3.
94 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 108.
95 Ibid., pp. 44–45.
96 Spaemann, R., Menschenwürde, p. 38.
97 Foot, P., *Natural Goodness*, p. 44.
98 Hoffmann, T., Tugend und Gedeihen, p. 159.
99 Wild, M., Was ist biologisch am Aristotelischen Naturalismus?, p. 95.

4. Conclusion

We can conclude that Foot's ethics are not supra-naturalistic because her causal theological conception of moral realities does not extend to metaphysical entities existing in the overarching ontological sphere. The characteristics of moral judgements can be explained through recourse to human nature. Knowledge of moral realities does not require special cognitive abilities (intuition); experience, reflection on practices and our everyday use of moral concepts will suffice.

Non-cognitivist approaches reject the existence of moral reality and the truthfulness of moral judgements on the grounds that they are incompatible with the scientific naturalist description and interpretation of the world through which science presents the ontology of the world,[100] that the latter's methodology is the 'highest path to truth'[101] and that its language is the only meaningful one. This conviction is also seen as naturalistic, which leads to the notion that scientific naturalism is the measure of everything (*scientia mensura* naturalism).[102] On this view of scientific naturalism, natural reality is that which can be expressed in the causal nomological vocabulary of science and everything that lies outside the scientific view of nature is more or less an ontological obscurity.[103] The natural and naturalness are therefore held to be almost identical to the scientific. To save the 'objectivity' of moral discourse, moral reality is depicted as our projection onto the world, giving it a quasi-real existence. We might say that 'ethical non-cognitivism is merely the moral philosophical reverse of this epistemological and ontological medal with its empiricist scientific views of the natural world gleaming brightly on the front.'[104]

In conclusion, I would like to turn to the hermeneutic naturalism project that Thomas Hoffmann tackles primarily in his *Das Gute* and which corresponds to the assumptions and intentions of Foot's ethics. Hermeneutic naturalism[105] is based on a critical view of the scientific naturalistic interpreta-

100 'Science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not.'– Sellars, W., *Science, Perception, and Reality*. London–New York, Routledge–Kegan Paul–Humanities Press 1963, p. 173; 'The world is as natural science says it is.' – Quine, W. V. O., Structure and Nature. *Journal of Philosophy*, 89, 1992, No. 1, p. 9.

101 Quine, W. V. O., "Naturalism; or, Living Within One's Means". *Dialectica* 49, 1995, No. 2–4, p. 261.

102 Keil, G., Metaphysischer, szientifischer, analytischer und Aristotelischer Naturalismus. In: Hähnel, M. (ed.), *Aristotelischer Naturalismus.* Stuttgart, J. B. Metzler Verlag 2017, p. 45.

103 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 66.

104 Ibid., p. 60.

105 Hermeneutic naturalism is an example of 'soft' or 'liberal naturalism' as P. F. Strawson calls it. – Strawson, P. F., *Scepticism and Naturalism: Some Varietiepp.* New York, Columbia University Press 1985, pp. 1–2.

tion of the world and the claims of its vocabulary to be universally applicable and meaningful.[106] There are several reasons for challenging the assumptions of scientific naturalism. The first is the distinction between analytic/synthetic judgements questioned by Hilary Putnam, which runs parallel to the fact/value dichotomy, in his criticism of the narrow conception of what a fact is and in his observation that factual descriptions and judgements can and indeed must be connected.[107] The second reason is Nancy Cartwright's view that scientific laws are *ceteris paribus* laws. 'Natural laws articulate the dispositions of physical objects that are updated under certain normal circumstances and when nothing untoward happens that would interfere and prevent the dispositions from being updated.'[108] The terms 'nothing untoward happens', 'nothing interferes with the dispositions' and 'ordinary circumstances remain the same' are indicative of a teleological normative vocabulary.[109] This leads to the conclusion that scientific language is not basal, that science is not a basal ontology of the world, but that our everyday linguistic practices are a basal language that contains a basal ontology.[110] I think this view is similar to P. F. Strawson's approach and his descriptive metaphysics project that attempts to specify the most general features of the conceptual structures of our everyday and pre-philosophical use of language and our perceptions of the world around us without us having to abandon or replace it with a model that provides a better, more ideal explanation of the conceptual structure[111] with its own ontological implications: if we can grasp the basic structures of our language, we can grasp the fundamental structures of the world.[112] Hermeneutic naturalism is similar; we could even call it descriptive or common-sense naturalism, as it is about explaining the most general structures of our everyday moral and life practices, what they relate to and where their limits lie.[113]

The project of hermeneutic naturalism proposes a change in ontological perspective. The scientific physicalist naturalistic approach should be replaced with another image of the natural world and our being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-Sein*).[114] 'Hermeneutic naturalism is not based on the scientific

106 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, pp. 69–70.
107 Putnam, H., *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press 2004, pp. 14–27; Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 70.
108 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 71.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid., p. 78.
111 Zouhar, M., Metafyzika a referencia [Metaphysics and references]. In: Strawson, P. F., *Indivíduá* [Individual]. Bratislava, IRIS 1997, pp. 9–10.
112 Runggaldier, E. – Kanzian, C., *Grundprobleme der analytischen Ontologie*. Paderborn–München–Zürich, Ferdinand Schöningh 1998, p. 44.
113 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, p. 81.
114 Ibid.

concept of nature and does not attempt to convert the language of our everyday practices into a different one that is assumed to be more universal, final and more basal. Hermeneutic naturalism is based… on nothing other than our everyday practices.'[115] According to Hoffmann, hermeneutic naturalism is a kind of 'golden middle way' between Platonic supra-naturalism and scientific naturalism.[116] In our practices of experiencing, thinking, talking and acting, the everyday banality hides the most important things[117] in human natural history[118] that constitute basal ontology and ethics. Our everyday practices are conceptually structured; we perceive our world in primarily practical terms; in practice the natural world appears as a whole. We are naturally initiated into these holistic practices; we have a practical understanding of the norms, relationships, habits that we unconsciously observe, non-thematically and unproblematically.[119] The world in which we naturally live reveals itself in and through our everyday, natural linguistic practices, showing itself to be a world that exists independently of us. The holistic practices of our being-in-this-world create the conditions and basis for the subsequent scientific revision and critique. It is the non-thematised and implicit backdrop to our being-in-the-world, which is broader and richer than the scientific causal nomological description of nature and the world. 'This practical discovery is a conspicuously non-conspicuous condition that we fail to notice because – as Wittgenstein noted – it is right in front of our eyes'.[120] Moral fact may appear to scientific naturalism be a curious ontological entity, but it is unproblematic from the perspective of hermeneutic naturalism. The hermeneutic naturalist interpretation of the world is not just basal but also more content-rich than the scientific naturalist view of the world. A special category of our implicit and practical knowledge is our knowledge of living creatures articulated in generic judgements (NHJ) that express the organised unity of all living movements and states, their mutual relationships, elements and stages, i.e. the living teleological nexus[121] whose ultimate formal goal is characteristically *success, flourishing* and specifically *the good life* with the material substance of the formal telos depending on the life form of the individual exemplifying it.[122]

115 Ibid., p. 82.
116 Ibid., p. 83. This hermeneutic naturalism project relies primarily on Heidegger (*Being and Time*), Wittgenstein (*Philosophical Investigations*), H. G. Gadamer (*Truth and Method*) and J. McDowell (*Mind and World*).
117 Wittgenstein, L., *Filosofická zkoumání*, § 129, p. 68.
118 Ibid., § 25, p. 25.
119 Hoffmann, T., *Das Gute*, pp. 89–93.
120 Ibid., p. 101.
121 Ibid., pp. 116–119.
122 Ibid., p. 123.

If the natural goodness and badness of an example of a life form are determined by the extent to which it perfectly or defectively manifests its life form, then this natural goodness or badness does not relate only to the specificities of the given life form but to the shared characteristics of all life forms, which is life itself. My own view is that moral thinking occurs spontaneously only when it reflects on problems that directly or indirectly concern life. 'In the sphere of that which is not living, nothing is right or wrong.'[123] If ethics cannot get by without the word 'good', it cannot get by without the word 'life', which is central to the ethics of Philippa Foot. On that basis we can understand her ethics as one of the versions of ethics that respects life and human dignity.

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123 Spaemann, R., Menschenwürde, p. 39.

Quinean Inspiration in Feminist Epistemology: On the Potential Alliance between Naturalism and Feminism[1] [2]

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Abstract:
This article focuses on a critical analysis of some feminist epistemological initiatives that have been inspired by W. V. O. Quine's project to naturalise epistemology. It identifies the points of convergence between feminist and naturalistic approaches to the problem of knowledge and science, as well as the means whereby the similarities between these two approaches are reflected at the meta-epistemological level. It also looks at the empiricist focus of naturalising feminist approaches in order to highlight the fruitfulness of this epistemological strategy evolving in collaboration with empirical science. This aim of this study is to argue in favour of the view that the naturalistic perspective is particularly suited to feminist epistemological projects that offer critical reflections on science.

Keywords: naturalised epistemology, W. V. O. Quine, feminist epistemology, values, the subject of knowledge

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Introduction

The aim of this article is to identify and explore the points of convergence between W. V. O. Quine's project to naturalise epistemology and some feminist epistemological theories in order to support the argument that the naturalistic perspective is particularly suited to feminist thought on science. In

1 This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under Contract No. APVV-18-0178.
2 I thank the anonymous reviewers of Filosoficý časopis for their insightful comments and suggestions that helped me to reflect further on some issues.

pursuing this aim, I will proceed as follows: I will briefly outline the starting points and main features of feminist epistemology in order to identify the feminist epistemological projects that I think display the hallmarks of Quine's motives and inspirations, especially his project to naturalise epistemology. I then shed light on some of the points in Quine's naturalised epistemology that serve as inspiration for a number of feminist epistemological strategies. In the next part of the article, I attempt to identify the points of convergence and affinities between naturalised and feminist epistemology and to elaborate on the problems for which naturalised epistemology provides fruitful and appropriate insights. In the conclusion, I argue in favour of the view that most feminist epistemological projects aimed at critical reflection on science *de facto* apply a naturalistic strategy.

Feminist Epistemology

Feminist epistemology began taking shape as part of the feminist philosophical initiatives of the latter half of the 1970s. This branch of feminist thinking about knowledge and science, frequently associated with the critique of mainstream epistemology and philosophy of science, is now a rich and extensive set of philosophical theories, critically aimed at a variety of philosophical problems of scientific knowledge, often associated with efforts to rethink or reinterpret basic concepts that have played a role in the emergence of the traditional philosophical theories of science, such as rationality, value neutrality and the objectivity of science.

Feminist epistemological theories, initially targeted at the critique of certain theories in the special sciences (chiefly life sciences, anthropology or psychology), drew on – and continue to draw on – the experience of female scholars who identified a prevailingly one-sided mainly masculine perspective and signs of androcentrism in a number of scientific theories in their own disciplines.[3] Alongside these feminist research programmes, there were also epistemological strategies for investigating the assumptions and ideals of science, the image of science and its conceptual framework, as well as issues concerning the link between science/knowledge and power. Within these strategies, criticism was focused on both the notion that science was neutral and autonomous, a separate sphere of human wisdom that was not

3 See e.g. Hubbard, R., Have only men evolved? In: Harding, S. – Hintikka, B. M. (eds.), *Discovering Reality. Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology and Philosophy of Sciences*. Dordrecht, Reidel 1983, pp. 45–71; Haraway, D., Primatology is politics by other means. In: Bleier, P. (ed.), *Feminist Approaches to Science.* New York, Pergamon Press 1988, pp. 77–119; Bleier, R., Sex Differences Research: Science or Belief? In: Bleier, P. (ed.), *Feminist Approaches to Science.* New York, Pergamon Press 1988, pp. 147–165.

subject to historical, cultural, social and political influences, and on the traditional ideals of scientific knowledge such as objectivity, value neutrality and pure rationality. But I should stress here that the feminist epistemology of today is not a monolithic, homogenous entity but rather a collection of diverse theories[4] which vary in the extent to which they are critical of science, the kinds of solutions that they recommend and the overall philosophical background from which they have emerged. I wish to emphasise that these theories did not develop in an intellectual vacuum; quite the opposite, they were inspired by a number of philosophical movements or theories and entered into various alliances. For many scholars, postmodernism was a strong source of inspiration, but there were other well-known theories that emerged within analytic epistemology on which they drew as well. For example, feminist epistemologists engaged in intensive debates on naturalised epistemology and naturalised approaches to the problem of science.[5]

Quinean Inspiration in Feminist Epistemological Projects

Quine's epistemology, or philosophy of science, has proved an important inspirational source in feminist epistemological thinking.[6] Let us now look more closely at the main points of convergence between feminist epistemological projects and certain elements of Quine's theory, and note some of the philosophical problems on which feminist epistemologists took inspiration from Quine in their theorising and solutions, especially his project to naturalise epistemology, outlined in his well-known article 'Epistemology Naturalized' published in 1969.[7]

4 The most widespread of these, although not entirely adequate to today's circumstances, is the typology of feminist epistemological approaches compiled by Sandra Harding in her classic book *The Science Question in Feminism* published in 1986, in which she distinguishes three main streams of feminist philosophical thinking about knowledge and science: feminist empiricism, feminist theory of standpoints and feminist postmodernism. On this see, Szapuová, M., Otázky feministickej teórie a kritiky vedy: na ceste k problematike žien vo vede [Questions in feminist theory and the critique of science: towards the problem of women in science]. In: Heczková, L. (ed.) – et al., *Vztahy, jazyky, těla* [Relationships, languages, bodies]. Praha, Ermat 2007, pp. 72–91.

5 A summary of these discussions that took place at the end of the 1980s was published in e.g. Nelson, L. H., A feminist naturalized philosophy of science. *Synthese*, 104, 1995, No. 3, pp. 399–421 [accessed on: 25. 2. 2021]. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/20117440?seq=1.

6 Following Quine, who does not distinguish between epistemology and philosophy of science, that is, he uses the term epistemology in the broader sense to include philosophy of science, in this article I will use the two terms interchangeably.

7 Quine, W. v. O., Epistemology Naturalized. In: Quine, W. v. O., *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays.* New York, Columbia University Press 1969, pp. 69–91 (hereafter Epistemology Natural-

In my view, the important elements of Quine's thinking on scientific knowledge that can be identified as points of convergence or inspiration in feminist epistemological theories are: 1) his thesis on the underdetermination of theory by evidence and holistic view of science, which a number of feminist scholars rely on, or take inspiration from, in developing their arguments in favour of seeing science as value-bound and in resolving the bias paradox, 2) the justification of the need to redefine the subject or agent of knowledge and science, 3) the emphasis on the importance and relevance of empirical research on knowledge and science

Before delving into these, I should note that Quine's legacy finds popular support among feminist scholars who favour the empirical approach to questions of knowledge and science, especially regarding evidence. However, insofar as feminist empiricism is concerned, the concept of empirical evidence is much more extensive, experience is conceived as entailing corporeality, life experience and life forms and so on. Unlike modern forms of empiricism, such as logical empiricism, in which experience is seen as something that can be captured in observational statements, supporters of feminist empiricism reject the possibility of pure, unprocessed experience, emphasising that experience is always processed and shaped by conceptual schemas, language and discourse, and that these last three are historically and socially embedded and moulded.

The most developed and most influential theories of empirically oriented feminist epistemology are probably, in my view, H. Longino's[8] theory of social empiricism and L. H. Nelson's[9] theory of naturalised empiricism. Both, however, reject some features of traditional empiricism, primarily the epistemological individualism that is associated with it. As Nelson puts it, 'science is not a solipsistic enterprise' [10] but is social in nature and is a specifi-

ized). This article served as important inspiration for many subsequent initiatives aimed at the naturalisation of epistemology that have now grown to represent an extensive multi-pronged and influential epistemological strategy that has attracted many supporters, as well as critics of course. Quine's article serves as the basic reference point for the present discussion.

8 See e.g. Longino, H. E., *Science as Social Knowledge. Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry*. Princeton, Princeton University Press 1990 (hereafter *Science as Social Knowledge*); Longino, H. E., *The Fate of Knowledge*. Princeton, Princeton University Press 2002 (hereafter *The Fate of Knowledge*); Longino, H. E., Usmerňovanie sociálneho obratu vo filozofii vedy [Navigating the Social Turn in Philosophy of Science]. *Filozofia*, 64, 2009, No. 9, pp. 312–323.

9 See e.g. Nelson, L. H., *Who Knows. From Quine to a Feminist Empiricism.* Philadelphia, Temple University Press 1990 (hereafter *Who Knows*); Nelson, L. H. – Nelson, J. (eds.), *Feminist interpretations of W. V. Quine*. University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press 2003.

10 Nelson, L. H., *Who Knows*, p. 277.

cally organised human activity. Longino stresses that knowledge production takes place through scientific collaboration: 'scientific knowledge is, after all, the product of many individuals working in (acknowledged or unacknowledged) concert'.[11] The two also share the view that science cannot be reduced to the set of theories that created it, without taking into account the practices and activities involved.

One important element of the naturalised approach to knowledge and science that is particularly appealing to feminist epistemology is the attempt by naturalists to describe, grasp and explain important aspects of the way science 'functions'[12], that is, the actual processes whereby scientific knowledge is generated via specifically organised human practices. Feminist scholars also consider aspects of the way in which scientific knowledge intervenes in everyday life and gender relations at society level (for instance through the fact that scientific knowledge is frequently used to legitimate the unequal standing of women), and so it is entirely logical that their attention should centre on the means and processes whereby knowledge is produced. Since naturalised epistemology seeks to be an empirically appropriate explanation of science, it is eminently suited to feminist attempts to understand or even transform the functioning of science.

As is well known, Quine rejects the view that epistemology is a priori a purely theoretical enterprise aimed at the analysis of epistemic terms and language or scientific methods. He is critical of Carnap's quest to translate or reduce all sentences about the world to observational terms or sense data, thinking it doomed to failure. As Fogelin stresses, Quine's project to naturalise epistemology 'arose primarily from his critical reflections on the work of the logical empiricists, most notably Rudolph Carnap'.[13] His view is that insofar as scientific knowledge is concerned, epistemology should not strive for a 'rational reconstruction', since in his eyes every such attempt has been destined to failure. Instead, he calls for an empirical inquiry into how we create our theories of the world, from common beliefs to sophisticated scientific theories. When applied to science itself, this entails focusing attention on investigating the various types of activities and practices that create, justify and legitimise scientific knowledge – and it is exactly this type of inquiry that sheds light on those processes and practices that cannot be described using epistemic terms alone, for they involve not only purely cognitive pro-

11 Longino, H. E., *Science as Social Knowledge*, p. 67.

12 See Potter, E., *Feminism and Philosophy of Science. An Introduction*. New York, Routledge 2006, pp. 5–6.

13 Fogelin, R. J., Aspects of Quine's Naturalized Epistemology. In: Gibson, R. F. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Quine.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2004.

cesses but also social processes and activities. In Quine's view, investigating knowledge means above all investigating the agent of knowledge, the inquiring subject; hence it should entail the empirical study of how humans produce theories through the stimulation of sensory receptors. The central question here is how is it possible that human beings acquire their beliefs about the world based on the stimulation of their senses, which are the only source of these beliefs. Drawing on the empiricist tradition, Quine explores the relationship between experience and our theories of the world. Hence epistemology becomes a separate chapter of psychology and therefore natural science. 'It studies a natural phenomenon, viz., a physical human subject. This human subject is accorded a certain experimentally controlled input – certain patterns of irradiation in assorted frequencies for instance – and in the fullness of time this subject delivers as output a description of the three-dimensional external world and its history.'[14]

Quine's attempt to naturalise epistemology is a meta-epistemological project; naturalisation, in his view, entails empirical research, whether of the cognitive processes generally or the specific processes involved in the creation of scientific knowledge.[15] A number of feminist philosophers, interested primarily in the ways that scientific knowledge is created and legitimised and whether knowledge production practices are influenced by some interests and values, and if so which ones,[16] propose that feminist epistemology should be developed as part of naturalised epistemology. They argue that naturalist epistemological thinking is suited to the purposes of feminist philosophy because it allows for a new way of analysing and thinking about various problems that are central to the work of feminist epistemologists. For example, research can be focused on the social context in which beliefs are created, on the role not just of cognitive but of social and cultural values in the processes of knowledge production[17]. The naturalist perspective also opens up a way for reconceptualisation of old epistemological issues relating to the question about who knows, that is, the subject of knowledge. Here the naturalistic approach means moving away from abstraction and

14 Quine, W. v. O., Epistemology Naturalized, pp. 69–91, esp. p. 83.

15 It is important to note that Quine does not consider science and 'common sense' to be two distinct spheres but rather part of a single continuum.

16 And, for example, whether this is affected by the patriarchal framing of culture in which science is situated or serves to legitimise the unequal standing of women in society and so on.

17 Cognitive values are most often defined as those that help to achieve the goal of science, while non-cognitive values include moral, political, cultural or religious values and are simply referred to as social values. On the relationship between cognitive and non-cognitive values in science see more in Szapuová, M. Kognitívne a nekognitívne hodnoty v normatívnej štruktúre vedy [Cognitive and non-cognitive values in the normative structure of science]. *Filosofický časopis*, 68, 2020, No. 4, pp. 535–551.

idealisation and concentrating on the actual processes of knowledge creation, which always take place within a specific social and cultural context, and on the agents, who are groups of people rather than individual subjects, and adopting a collaborative approach, working closely alongside empirical researchers of science, scientific institutions and scientific practices. Conceived in this way, epistemology is not directed at the ideal notion of science but at 'living science, produced by real, empirical subjects. This is an epistemology that accepts that scientific knowledge cannot be fully understood apart from its deployments in particular material, intellectual and social contexts'.[18] It is an approach that many scholars refer to as social or socialised epistemology and consider part of naturalised epistemology. Interestingly, H. Kornblith, a contemporary proponent of naturalised epistemology, suggests that the sociology of knowledge deserves careful attention because investigating the social factors involved in the knowledge processes is fundamental to the naturalistic approach to epistemology.[19] The well-known critic of naturalised epistemology, B. Stroud, also thinks empirical research approaches form part of naturalised epistemology as 'studies in the sociology, economics, and politics of knowledge could also be called "naturalistic epistemology" too'. [20] Similarly, F. Schmitt in the introduction to his Socializing Epistemology lists feminist epistemology, or feminist philosophy of science, among the sources of this project – alongside the sociology of science and naturalised epistemology.[21]

Underdetermination of Theory by Evidence[22] and the Holistic View of Science

As I have indicated, one of the core interests of feminist thinking on science is to shine light on the often hidden, but nonetheless powerful, patriarchal assumptions and values embedded in many scientific theories. Feminist cri-

18 Longino, H. E., *The Fate of Knowledge*, p. 9.

19 See Kornblith, H., A Conservative Approach to Social Epistemology. In: Schmitt, F. (ed.), *Socializing Epistemology. The Social Dimensions of Knowledge.* Lanham, Rowman–Littlefield 1994 (hereafter *Socializing Epistemology*).

20 Stroud, B., The Charm of Naturalism. *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 70, 1996, No. 2, pp. 43–55, esp. p. 47.

21 See Schmitt, F. (ed.), *Socializing Epistemology*, p. 3.

22 The other kind of underdetermination, highlighted by Quine – the underdeterminacy of translation – is primarily approached by feminist epistemologists in the context of Quinean holism, and, together with the underdetermination of theory by empirical evidence thesis, it supports a kind of fallibilism. See e.g. Nelson, L. H., Who Knows. From Quine to a Feminist Empiricism. In: Nelson, L. H. – Nelson, J. (eds.), *Feminist interpretations of W. V. Quine*. University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press 2003, pp. 59–95 (hereafter Who Knows. From Quine).

tique of the science/values dichotomy frequently hinges on Quine's holistic view of science, and it is precisely the naturalistic perspective that shows that this dichotomy is not grounded in scientific practices and so is hard to defend. A number of scholars rely on Quine's thesis on the underdetermination of theory by empirical evidence as a theoretical tool for explaining how these values and interests make their way into science. According to this thesis, scientific theories are not fully determined by evidence, and this means, among other things, that observations can only provide evidence in conjunction with other, frequently unreflected, underlying hidden assumptions or values, and 'given the scope for choice in background assumptions, no methodological principle forbids scientists from selecting their background assumptions on account of their fit with social and political values'.[23] Hence Quine's proposition that that there 'gaps' between the theory and the empirical (sensory) evidence can be drawn upon in attempts to explain how value attitudes and beliefs make their way into an emerging theory. One such example is L. H. Nelson's analysis of the popular 'man the hunter theory' in primatology and anthropology. It summarises the findings of several feminist analyses of this theory to reveal a number of androcentric biases and shows how these serve ideological and political aims, that is, they explain and defend the prevailing gender-based division of labour as natural, immutable and eternal. In discussions of whether this theory or its counterpart, the 'woman the gatherer theory' is adequate, the view has long prevailed that the issue cannot be decided merely on the basis of empirical evidence. The 'gaps' between the evidence and the theory provide room for culturally determined beliefs and prejudices to interfere with theoretical decisions, but, according to this critique, those beliefs and prejudices fall outside the framework of empirical controls.[24] The epistemological question regarding evidence loses its abstract, purely theoretical character here, and/or solving it leads to manifest political consequences, as Nelson, who argues in favour of feminist empiricism, shows.[25] Nelson argues that feminist research and feminist critique of science clearly demonstrate that culturally conditioned beliefs, including politi-

23 Anderson, E., Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science. In: Zalta, E. N. (ed.), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [accessed on: 1. 3. 2021; Spring 2017 Edition]. Available at: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-epistemology [s. p.].

24 See Nelson, L. H., *Who Knows*, pp. 238–239.

25 The term feminist empiricism was introduced into feminist epistemology via the original typologies of feminist epistemology by S. Harding in her pioneering *The Science Question in Feminism* (1986), which remain influential to this day. Harding's feminist empiricism belongs to the more conservative stream and is not sufficiently distanced from the scientism of logical empiricism. I wrote about the problem of empiricism in feminist epistemology in Szapuová, M., Problém empirizmu vo feministickej epistemológii [The problem of empiricism in feminist epistemology]. *Filozofia*, 27, 2002, No. 6, pp. 393–404.

cal beliefs and beliefs about gender relations, can and should be subjected to empirical controls or tests. For the feminist critique of science, it is important to assess the ideas on sex/gender and politics present in scientific theories based on the evidence. And the evidence shows that 'women's activities are central to the dynamics of human social groups, and that androcentrism has distorted cross-cultural studies, animal sociology, and evolutionary theory. There is evidence that indicates that male dominance is neither natural nor universal, that research into sex differences is wrongheaded, and that current divisions in power by sex/gender are not based on, or justifiable on the basis of, biology'.[26] This view of the problem of empirical evidence presupposes a holistic approach to scientific knowledge and recognition of the fact that science as a whole, and the various theories, does not constitute an autonomous sphere existing independently of the social and cultural environment, and that the evidence for any theory consists in part of other theories and, to some degree at least, common beliefs and experiences, which include beliefs about sex and gender and the hierarchical organisation of gender relations. Nelson argues that the evidence, in light of which we can reject the background assumptions of the 'man the hunter theory' as unsubstantiated and implausible, consists of the common experiences of the activities of women and also of contemporary research in primatology, history and anthropology.

At this point, it is worth noting that the position of social constructivism (in the sense of anti-realism), focusing on the social nature of both the processes and results of scientific knowledge, is widespread and popular in current feminist debates on science. But naturalised feminist epistemologies, relying on Quine's underdetermination thesis, do not appear to be shifting towards anti-realism or relativism; the broad understanding of empirical evidence, as I have already mentioned, that includes normative beliefs and life practices, enables us to obtain a realistic account of science. Finally, as Quine points out, '(w)hat the empirical under-determination of global science shows is that there are various defensible ways of conceiving the world' , while '(i)n the case of the systems of the world (…) reality exceeds the scope of human apparatus in unspecifiable ways.'[27]

Quine's holistic view and his critique of the concept of science as it evolved within neopositivism,[28] is considered by numerous scholars to be adequate

26 Nelson, L. H., *Who Knows*, p. 249.

27 Quine, W. v. O., *The Pursuit of Truth.* Cambridge, Harvard University Press 1992, pp. 101, 102 (hereafter *The Pursuit*).

28 Especially in his famous 'Two Dogmas on Empiricism', in which he rejected the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements and verificationism.

for feminist purposes and for one of its important agendas, the critique of the sharp distinction between the context of discovery and the context of justification.[29] The strategy for determining when an area of epistemological interest can only be a context of justification, introduced by neopositivist philosophy of science, meant the 'delegitimisation' of any kind of attempt to philosophically reflect on the role of social and cultural norms and values or personality factors in scientific activity. The question regarding the presence or influence of values and interests in the scientific sphere was thereby rendered not only irrelevant but also illegitimate, and such issues were relegated to psychology of science, or the history and sociology of scientific knowledge. As I have already noted, one of the core themes in feminist reflection on science is to identify and reveal androcentric biases both in specific special scientific theories or research programmes (mainly in life sciences but also in some social sciences), as well as in the traditional ideals and norms of scientific knowledge, such as the ideals of the objectivity and rationality of science, and its neutrality and autonomy. In this context it is worth noting that Quine's rejection of foundationalism is in many ways similar to the feminist critique of the modernist ideals of objectivity and scientific rationality.[30]

The place and importance of values in science has become an area of great debate in recent decades, not just in feminist epistemology, but in the much broader context of post-positivist and neopragmatic philosophy of science.[31] In relation to his critique of the fact/value dichotomy, H. Putnam states that, 'the concern of exact science is not just to discover statements which are true, or even statements which are true and universal in form ('laws'), but to find statements that are true and relevant. And the notion of *relevance* brings with it a wide set of interests and values'[32]. Although Quine does not problematise the distinction between facts and values, quite the opposite, it seems that on this issue he inherited the neopositivist tradition in the sense

29 This principle holds that only the context of justification – meaning the procedures and methods for testing and justifying hypotheses is subject to rational reconstruction – determines the sphere of science and constitutes the area of philosophical interest.

30 Antony, M. L., Quine as Feminist: The Radical Import of Naturalized Epistemology. In: Nelson, L. H. – Nelson, J. (eds.), *Feminist interpretations of W. V. Quine*. University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press 2003, pp. 95–153, esp. p. 99 (hereafter Quine as Feminist).

31 See e.g. Putnam, H., *The Collapse of Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays*. Cambridge–London, Harvard University Press 2002; Marchamer, P. – Wolters, G. (eds.), *Science, Values and Objectivity*. Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press 2004; Kincaid, H. – Dupré, J. – Wylie, A. (eds.), *Value-free science? Ideals and illusions*. Oxford, Oxford University Press 2007; Lacey, H., *Is science value free? Values and scientific understanding*. London, Routledge 1999.

32 Putnam, H., *Reason, Truth and History*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1981, p. 137.

that he thinks moral, social and political values have no place in science and should be left at the door of the scientific institution or laboratory, as one might say; nonetheless, his holistic view of science does allow for the interpretation that value judgements are admissible. As he states in this well-known passage from his 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism', which can be regarded as a classic statement of Quinean holism: 'The totality of our so-called knowledge or beliefs, from the most casual matters of geography and history to the profoundest laws of atomic physics or even of pure mathematics and logic, is a man-made fabric which impinges on experience only along the edges. Or, to change the figure, total science is like a field of force whose boundary conditions are experience (…) No particular experiences are linked with any particular statements in the interior of the field, except indirectly through considerations of equilibrium affecting the field as a whole. '[33] This fabric of knowledge and beliefs may contain value judgements that – like factual judgements – can be tested against experience as a whole. 'The unit of empirical significance is the whole of science'[34], Quine asserts, which can be taken to refer within the (broad) meaning of science, the 'theory of the world', to the entire set of appropriately justified beliefs about the world, including not just purely descriptive but also normative beliefs.[35] This theory of the world contains sentences/beliefs about physical objects, logical and mathematical sentences as well as beliefs about historical events, psychological phenomena, right and wrong behaviours, and numerous beliefs that are normative and descriptive at the same time.[36] In this context, J. Nelson, for example, argues in favour of a holism which clearly includes our theories of the world, including value beliefs, and it is precisely because we do not exclude these from holistically conceived theories of the world that they are tested against experience and evidence.[37]

Insofar as the feminist critiques of the fact/value dichotomy are concerned, these are often based on research in specific scientific areas or scientific theories, which shows that the context of justification is not immune to influences from outside science either. Hence, where this dichotomy between the context of discovery and the context of justification is used to support the argument that scientific knowledge is autonomous, unencum-

33 Quine, W. v. O., Two Dogmas of Empiricism. In: Quine, W. v. O., *From a Logical Point of View. 9 Logico-Philosophical Essays.* New York, Harper–Row 1963, pp. 20–47, esp. p. 42.
34 Ibid., p. 42.
35 Nelson, J., The Last Dogma of Empiricism? In: Nelson, L. H. – Nelson, J. (eds.), *Feminist interpretations of W. V. Quine*. University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press 2003, pp. 307–335, esp. p. 317.
36 Ibid., p. 319.
37 Ibid., p. 321.

bered or unaffected by the cultural and social environment, individual and group interests, and frequently prejudices and stereotypes, it is shown to be ineffective because not even the context of justification is resistant to these influences. As L. H. Nelson reasons, 'Quine's arguments for holism undermined the plausibility of any such distinction.'[38] In the light of her interpretation of Quine, the naturalisation of epistemology opens up space for empirical inquiry into 'the context of discovery' and thereby also for exploring the ways in which personality, but also wider social and cultural factors, can influence not only the means of knowledge production, but also theoretical content. Similarly, as Quine's thesis on the underdetermination of theory by evidence indicates, the assumption that 'pure' facts exist unencumbered by theoretical postulates is at the very least problematic, as is the doubtful conviction that there is some sort of 'purer' empirical evidence confirming a hypothesis. The testing and verification of scientific hypotheses always take place against a backdrop of both theoretically and culturally conditioned assumptions about 'the way things are' and against our shared 'theory of the world'. Feminist epistemology is of course primarily interested in how the presence of culturally formed beliefs in science about, for instance, the order of the natural or social world (e.g. the 'naturalness', necessity and immutability of existing gender relations or the 'naturalness' of the prevailing gender division of labour) subsequently become entangled with the entire process of scientific knowledge, leaving their mark on its results. The feminist critique of science has also shown how social and cultural factors as well as everyday awareness, common beliefs and stereotypes enter into the processes of scientific inquiry, affecting the results. To some extent, this critique overlaps with Quine's notion of the interlinkage between scientific knowledge and common beliefs.

Some scholars think the naturalisation of feminist epistemology promises to overcome the bias paradox that is rooted in the tension between feminist critique of androcentric bias in science, on the one hand, and the rejection of the ideal of subjectivity, on the other. Exposing androcentric bias is one of the aims of feminist research, but feminist philosophy is critical of the ideals of impartiality and objectivity – stating that the ideal of objectivity is a distortion in itself, an expression of male or patriarchal bias, and serves to protect those who thanks to their position in the structure of power relations are leaders, that is, men. But how can one criticise 'male bias' while not assuming that impartial objectivity is both possible and a positive value? In other words, 'If we don't think it's good to be *im*partial, then how we can object to

38 Nelson, L. N., Who Knows. From Quine, pp. 59–95, esp. p. 60.

men's being *partial*?'.[39] If we reject impartiality and claim that bias is everywhere and cannot be eliminated, does that not lead us to unrestrained relativism? The point of the naturalistic approach in regard to whether impartial knowledge is at all possible is to inspire us to treat it as an empirical question to be answered using empirical psychology and the cognitive sciences. Equally on the basis of empirical research it is possible to show that partiality is not necessarily negative or that not every bias leads to knowledge distortion.[40]

As I have noted, naturalised epistemology holds that there is no assumption-free position from which the ideal agent of the knowledge creation process could begin 'from zero' as it were. As Quine proposes, we should look at the relationship between science and empirical data from a naturalist perspective as 'an input–output relation within flesh-and-blood denizens of an antecedently acknowledged external world, a relation open to inquiry as a chapter of the science of that world'[41] and inquiries into knowledge should focus on the research of the people who are doing the inquiring. Here empirical inquiry becomes relevant as it shows that 'seeking the truth' cannot be separated from human needs, interests, emotions, or even prejudice and bias, which is good reason to reject the ideals of objectivity and neutrality. Such an approach enables a new means of conceptualising partiality: if partiality is in fact everywhere and cannot be eliminated, then not only must we give up on neutrality as an epistemic ideal, but we also have to ask what epistemological value partiality has.

The Subject of Knowledge in the Naturalistic Perspective

Quine's naturalised epistemology also tackles the issue of the subject or agent of scientific knowledge. In his perspective, we are no longer concerned with investigating the 'relationship between science and empirical data', but with investigating the subject or the agent accumulating the scientific knowledge,[42] and so the focal point is also on research findings on the processes whereby knowledge is created and on the agents. This shift in attention towards empirical research findings on knowledge and science leads to interesting results, including on how feminist epistemological analyses deal with

39 Antony, M. L., Quine as Feminist, pp. 95–153, esp. p. 100.

40 A different solution to the bias paradox is offered by D. K. Heikes, who studies the paradox not only from the perspective of feminist epistemology, but also from the perspective of Putnam's internal realism – her view is that the solution posits a new conception of rationality not merely as a means of representing the world but as a means of linking human interaction with it. See Heikes, D. K., The bias paradox: why it's not just for feminists anymore. *Synthese*, 138, 2004, No. 3, pp. 315–335.

41 Quine, W. v. O., *The Pursuit*, p. 19.

42 Antony, M. L., Quine as Feminist, pp. 95–153, esp. p. 99.

the question of the agent of knowledge (and science). As I have already noted, feminist epistemology, taking inspiration from naturalised epistemology, focuses on the subject, which rarely behaves as the ideal 'truth seeker'. The concentration on the specific, the particular, and the emphasis on the importance of empirical research represent one of the points of contact between naturalist and feminist epistemology. But while the human subject studied in naturalised epistemology is in Quine's words a 'natural phenomenon', in feminist approaches the social nature of the subject is accentuated, by which is meant its collective nature and its embeddedness in the fabric of social relations and cultural meanings. Subjects that participate in the creation of knowledge must be seen as the 'result' of numerous mutual interactions and dialogues taking place between the individual agents. The collaborative and interactive nature of knowledge creation takes place in epistemic communities that can be understood in this sense as the subject of scientific work, while scientific collaboration extends beyond what is normally meant by teamwork; scientific collaboration includes mechanisms such as peer reviews, decisions about research funding through the (collegial) assessment of scientific projects and the various forms of scientific communication that promote science. In this sense, one could say that the primary subject of the work or the primary agent of knowledge creation is the epistemic community.[43] This collaborative side of scientific knowledge production should be linked to its objectivity. In line with feminist authors inspired by Quinean ideas, I would like to emphasise that in doing feminist epistemology as an emancipatory project one should not abandon the concept of the objectivity of science or a realistic account of the world in which we live.

One of the arguments in favour of the naturalist approach states that the problem of epistemic communities cannot be approached merely on the basis of purely normative approaches; what is needed is empirical investigation. In these matters, epistemologists or philosophers of science should turn to anthropological and social studies of science, to research into scientific practices. In science studies, empirical factors are used to determine who belongs to a community, such as institutional factors as departments, professional organisations, the reality that these people read and publish in the same journals, go to the same conferences, work together on research projects and read each other's work.[44] Hence the related point that 'an ad-

43 In epistemological thinking and feminist epistemology, the term 'epistemic community' is used primarily in relation to questions regarding the agent(s) of knowledge creation. It is therefore a possible response to the question 'who is doing the inquiring'.

44 See Nelson, L. H., Empiricism without dogmas. In: Nelson, L. H. – Nelson, J. (eds.), *Feminism, Science and Philosophy of Science.* Dordrecht–Boston–London, Kluwer Academic Publisher 1996, pp. 95–121.

equate representation of scientific practices must situate scientists in their communities and situate these communities in the larger and partially overlapping communities of clients, funders, consumers, and citizens that sustain them'.[45]

In Place of a Conclusion

The thesis, which forms one of the basic assumptions in the majority of feminist approaches to science, according to which science should be seen as a social enterprise, relies on empirical evidence. It is supported by empirical arguments provided by scholars of sociology, history and ethnography of science and a large number of case studies in which feminist researchers, scientists and historians of science give a detailed analysis of scientific theories, concepts or research, frequently from areas of science relating to nature, psychology and others, in order to show that behind their reported objectivity, impartiality and neutrality lie many prejudices against women. The dispute between philosophical theory of science and the empirical studies of science, in the sense of Quine's project, is losing its justification, in the same way as the normative/descriptive dichotomy in approaches to knowledge and science is being lost, as I have tried to show using feminist epistemological analyses focusing on the agent of science as my example. The assumptions that lie at the centre of various feminist accounts of knowledge and science, such as the assumption that there are specifically female forms of knowing and seeing the world, or the assumption about privileged epistemological positions of marginalised groups, or the assumption about the epistemic significance of gender should be subjected to evidential tests. These should be viewed as empirical hypotheses that have been generated in the framework of feminist research (empirical research into the most diverse aspects of women's lives) and feminist practices, and their viability should be assessed using the same criteria employed to judge other empirical hypotheses, such as their explanatory force, capacity to predict the direction of practice, their contribution to a better understanding of or the redefinition of the concepts of evidence, cognitive agent and objectivity.[46] I have tried to show that feminist epistemological research, or at least a significant part of it, has developed and is still developing in collaboration with empirical investigations into knowledge and sciences, and is inspired and informed by them. The links between feminist epistemological thinking and the special sciences are frequently manifest in some sort of personal affinity; many

45 Longino, H. E., *The Fate of Knowledge*, p. 37.
46 Nelson, L. H., The Very Idea of Feminist Epistemology. *Hypatia*, 10, 1995, No. 3, p. 43.

female scholars whose work has become important for the development of feminist thinking about science are or were active in some of the special sciences.[47] Insofar as feminist investigation of science and scientific practices is concerned, in light of the above it is my belief that it is possible to articulate a stronger thesis in which feminist epistemology/philosophy of science is considered a chapter in its own right in (social) science.

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47 The following are perhaps worth mentioning: Evelyn Fox Keller, who studied theoretical physics and later molecular biology and the history of science; Ruth Bleier, whose field was neurophysiology research; Ruth Hubbard, professor of biology at Harvard University; Donna Haraway, who can be placed in the postmodern stream of feminist thinking and did a PhD in biology.

Naturalism and the Task of Philosophy[1]

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Abstract:
There is a plethora of naturalisms in contemporary philosophy. Instead of sorting out diverse past or present variants of this philosophical movement this article aims to define in three relatively simple points a version of naturalism that I consider as the most auspicious way for philosophy to remain a relevant and significant force in the domain of knowledge dominated by contemporary science. The tripartite definition of naturalism that is presented deliberately does not claim to be original, but seeks to capture in a concise and clear way the common core of the naturalistic mind frame. The point of the article is to point out the need to reduce internal metaphilosophical disputes within the naturalistic movement in favor of a greater emphasis on the concrete participation of philosophy in current scientific research. The claim is that the real (not only nominal) realization of the naturalistic turn in philosophy necessarily presupposes a change in the process of the education of future philosophers.

Keywords: naturalism, science, immanence, methodological naturalism, ontological naturalism, philosophical attitude

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Many recent articles on naturalism open with a statement about its dominant influence in contemporary (especially theoretical) philosophy, but then frankly admit[2] that it is not at all an easy task to come up with a satisfactory definition of naturalism.[3] Some authors take this state of affairs as a chal-

1 This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under Contract No. APVV-18-0178.

2 See, for example, Ritchie, J., *Understanding Naturalism*. Stocksfield, Acumen 2008, p. 1.

3 Frequent use of "isms" is one of the characteristic features of philosophical discourse. The more heterogeneous and inconsistent an academic discipline is in terms of basic beliefs and methods of thinking, the greater the need to create shortcuts to make it easier to navigate the discussions. However, as is well known, this way of creating philosophical terminology also has its disadvantages, especially when it comes to philosophical terms denoting not only a specific aspect, but overall positions (worldviews) that include many aspects: ontological, epistemo-

lenge and seek to classify and clarify different types of naturalism. The phrases that tend to be coined in this way by adding specific adjectives to the term "naturalism" provide some light, but also further emphasize the breadth and heterogeneity of the naturalistic movement in contemporary philosophical thinking.[4] On the other side of the aisle, authors who are inclined to be critical of the naturalistic way of thinking do not hesitate – which is quite understandable – to make this vagueness or ambiguity a starting point or even a significant part of their critique of the naturalistic approach. Both strategies are to some extent legitimate and may be beneficial (depending on the specific implementation), but in this article I will not be inspired by either of them. Although the content of this work will be a certain defense of naturalism and a certain critique of naturalism, which, of course, assumes that we know exactly what is semantically hidden by the term, I will not aspire to solve the problem of definitional ambiguity through attempts at detailed interpretation and classification, nor will I use the mentioned ambiguity as an easy target for criticism.

As is clear from the title of this article, I will primarily be concerned with answering the question of what the function of philosophy is if we lean towards the side of its naturalistic understanding. Since I am not so much concerned with a systematic examination of the historical phenomenon of philosophical naturalism but rather with the problem of how to do philosophy today in a way that makes sense, I will begin with a brief introduction to the version of naturalism that seems to me to be the most interesting and promising.

The aim of this first part of the article is not to be original in defining naturalism. Just the opposite. As will be seen, the features by which I will define naturalism can be easily found in several past or present authors. What we need is not the creation of ever new notions of naturalism, but rather the establishment of some functional definition that can serve as a starting point

logical, and ethical. Since a resolute solution to this problem, consisting of rejecting "isms" and focusing exclusively on specific philosophical claims and arguments, is difficult to implement for practical reasons, we have to maneuver cautiously with the compass of these 'isms' in the hope that the semantic magnetic pole is not moving too fast and chaotically. It is our constant task to evaluate whether a given "ism" is functional or is just a label on a bottle, into which a different content is poured at any moment. We should heed the wise warning: "Never think that you have got a philosopher sorted out just because you can say what 'ism' he represents". See Craig, E., *Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford, Oxford University Press 2002, p. 61.

4 Among the various forms and shades of naturalism, I will mention at least those that have repeatedly appeared in recent literature (some readers would probably be able to add others): metaphysical naturalism, methodological naturalism, metaphilosophical naturalism, humanistic naturalism, non-reductive naturalism, normative naturalism, liberal naturalism, pragmatic naturalism, cultural naturalism, poetic naturalism, and ethical naturalism.

for working on specific problems. The goal of a philosopher who understands herself as a naturalist should not be to spend her time in metaphilosophical debates about what naturalism really is or is not, but to contribute to a unified account of the world by showing how different aspects or parts of the world can be understood as part of a basic naturalistic image.

Throughout the article I will limit myself to theoretical philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of mind), although naturalism is, of course, an important player in the field of practical philosophy (ethics, social philosophy) as well. This narrowing is motivated by my personal primary focus, but even more so by my belief that there are some entirely new issues in the field of practical philosophy that deserve separate and more intense attention than I could afford to give them here.

In the second part of the article, I will attempt to further define my position by responding – partly in agreement and partly critically (hopefully, in a constructive way) – to a relatively recent article on a similar topic by Filip Tvrdý, "Anti-Scientism, Conceptual Analysis, Naturalism".[5]

So let me first say what I mean by "naturalism", or, more precisely, what is the concept of naturalism I am willing to go along with. My definition will consist of three main points, which I will first express in brief and then give a more detailed explanation for the sake of clarity.

First, I do not understand naturalism as some kind of philosophical theory (analogous to scientific theories, such as evolutionary theory, quantum theory, etc.) but as a philosophical attitude (stance, orientation).

Second, I consider the abandonment of the program (or ideal) of "first philosophy" to be the core of naturalism.

And third, I consider the insistence on the priority of the research method, which is characteristic of contemporary natural sciences, to be a necessary part of naturalism.

Naturalism as a Philosophical Attitude

In the first point, I contrasted the understanding of naturalism on the one hand as a (philosophical) theory and on the other hand as a (philosophical) attitude. This may, without further explanation, give rise to a number of doubts or ambiguities of which I consider the two types of reservations to be the most important, so I will try to answer them as a matter of priority.

The first reservation is based on a widespread understanding of naturalism that says that naturalism promotes the fusion of philosophy with science

5 Tvrdý, F., Antiscientismus, konceptuální analýza a naturalismus. *Pro Fil*, 19, 2018, No. 1, pp. 49–61 (hereafter Antiscientismus).

(especially with the natural sciences), or even a kind of "dissolution" of philosophy (philosophical problems, claims, methods) in science. However, if for the naturalistic philosopher philosophy is only one part of science, then it seems to be inconsistent to characterize it as an attitude because sciences such as physics, chemistry, and biology – which the naturalist considers exemplary – do not have as their primary goal to be "attitudes", but rather to generate testable theories about relevant segments or aspects of reality.

The second reservation is actually a follow-up to the first and represents a kind of psychological extension of it. Presenting naturalism as an attitude (and perhaps presenting philosophy as a whole in this way) may seem more like an evasive maneuver aimed at relieving the naturalist of the burden of proof in the sense that she does not have to defend the truth (or at least the plausibility) of her own clearly formulated philosophical theses.

In response to these two objections, I will try to explain why I consider it more appropriate to speak of attitude rather than theory when it comes to naturalism. As we will see in the discussion of the second part of my definition of naturalism (which we could briefly refer to as the principle of immanence), the use of the term "attitude" should in no way imply that the aim is to exclude philosophy from general scientific research. Rather, this term is intended to express the normative nature of naturalism. But normativity is not something that lies outside of science, or that approaches it only from the outside, so to speak. That would mean having a picture of science, according to which it is nothing more than finding out and systematically organizing facts. Of course, the most convincing product of science is empirically successful theories, which expand our knowledge in the form of new facts, explanations, and unifications. An integral part of the whole process, however, are, for example, the methodological standards of the scientific discipline and the negotiation of these standards within the scientific community. The fact that these norms are not for most of the time the focus of the work of scientists does not mean that they are not implicitly present (in the form of internalized values, mental settings, and ideals). The fact that they do not need to be frequently mentioned or even revised during standard scientific work indicates their functionality, not their absence. They are implicitly present in all those situations where a scientist knows what a good explanation should look like, what good evidence or a good definition should look like, and so on.

Let us now ask as follows: Are these (implicitly accepted and lived) methodological norms theories or parts of scientific theories? Are they something whose correctness or truthfulness a scientist can defend in the same way that she tests the experimental implications of her theories? The answer is yes and no. Not in the sense that these normative elements are rather –

metaphorically speaking – the atmosphere in which the average scientist works and not individual hypotheses prepared or being prepared for empirical testing. Yes, in the sense that even these norms have not fallen from some epistemic sky but are part of scientific practice and, together with it, either promote and quietly serve further progress or become a barrier to epistemic progress.

Thus, when I speak of naturalism as a philosophical attitude, I mean the overall normative attitude within the framework of scientific research, which is the philosophy of this research roughly in the sense in which we used to talk about "corporate philosophy". It is not a theory among other scientific theories, and in this respect it is something more vague (because it is mostly implicit), but it does not follow that, if necessary, its individual components cannot be (more or less adequately) made explicit. Nor does it follow that it cannot be argued in favor of naturalism as a philosophical attitude, that naturalism, understood as an attitude, can only be a subjective expression of personal preference on which any further debate is, so to speak, inappropriate. All I am saying is that the argument in favor of naturalism, if it is to remain intellectually honest, cannot be conducted in the naive triumphalist way that is typical of public pronouncements of certain well-known philosophical naturalists.[6] I will come back to this point in the final part of the article.

Naturalism and the Principle of Immanence

As can be easily recognized by any reader who has devoted at least some attention to the subject of naturalism over the last 50 years or so, the formulation of my second defining characteristic is taken directly from Quinean sources. Among other virtues, Quine undoubtedly had the ability to express philosophical views in a pregnant and stylistically inventive way, to the extent that in some cases his reader could take the impression of unambiguity, even though there was in fact no particularly detailed elaboration and development of the subject in Quine. However, the absence of Quine's systematic elaboration on the notion of naturalism is nowadays sufficiently compensated by the work of his successors, who explicitly addressed this issue, whether their primary motive was to work on their own naturalistic version of philosophy (based on Quinean conception, but revising it at some points), or a systematic and historically accurate account of Quine's philosophical legacy.[7]

6 Alex Rosenberg's article, "Why I Am a Naturalist", which appeared in *The New York Times* (September 17, 2011), may serve as a case in point.

7 One of the prominent representatives of the first (systematic) approach is the American philosopher Penelope Maddy (see, for example, her book *Second Philosophy: A Naturalistic Method*.

In his recent book,[8] Sander Verhaegh focused on the aspect of Quine's naturalism that he considers his central motive. And that is precisely the rejection of "the first philosophy". In his work, Quine expressed the same idea in several memorable ways, sometimes directly, sometimes metaphorically. Let us remind ourselves of the most important formulations:

1. The ideal of the "first philosophy" must be abandoned – philosophy can be neither a priori propaedeutics nor a project of providing the foundations for science.[9]

2. Philosophy and science are not fundamentally different cognitive enterprises – in fact, there is continuity between them.[10]

3. There is no external standpoint ("cosmic exile") from which scientific disputes can be philosophically judged (e.g. in relation to methodological criteria), we must always start (and stay) in the middle, within scientific research.[11]

4. The philosopher is situated on the same ship and on the same open sea as the scientist, she has no superior view or conceptual apparatus coming from a "transcendent" seaport.[12]

In his work, Verhaegh seeks to prove by a detailed reconstruction of the Quinean corpus not only that this idea is the core of Quine's naturalism, but also that the reasons for its acceptance are deeper on Quine's side than suggested by the traditional interpretation. According to the traditional view, Quine became a naturalist due to the disappointment of logical positivism. Since I am not at this moment concerned with interpretive matters concerning Quine's philosophical development, I will not elaborate this further other than to state that Verhaegh's reconstruction seems entirely plausible to me. However it may turn out, in any case, from a purely hermeneutical perspective, I consider the very idea of "philosophizing from within" – which I used as the second defining feature of naturalism (in my understanding) – to be extremely important from a systematic perspective.

Oxford, Oxford University Press 2007 [hereafter *Second Philosophy*]), while in the field of historical-philosophical work on Quine's philosophy I would like to highlight the contribution of the contemporary Dutch philosopher Sander Verhaegh.

8 Verhaegh, S., *Working from Within: The Nature and Development of Quine's Naturalism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press 2018.

9 Quine, W. v. O., *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays.* New York, Columbia University Press 1969, p. 126.

10 Quine, W. v. O., "Naturalism; or, Living Within One's Means". *Dialectica*, 49, 1995, No. 2–4, pp. 251–261, esp. p. 256.

11 Quine, W. v. O., *Word and Object*. Cambridge, MIT Press, [1960] 2013, p. 254 (hereafter *Word and Object*).

12 Quine, W. v. O., *Theories and Things*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press 1981, p. 72; Quine, W. v. O., *Word and Object*, p. 3.

It is necessary, however, to think a little more deeply about what a philosophy understood in this way means and what its *modus operandi* is (can be). It is relatively easy to contrast such philosophy with some exemplary philosophical programs from the history of philosophy. The very term "first philosophy" leads us (apart from the older Aristotelian roots) almost automatically to a Cartesian vision of a unified system of knowledge based on metaphysical foundations acquired through methodological doubt and the natural light of reason. Later in Kant's critical philosophy, the autonomy of philosophy and its qualitative difference from the "special sciences" is based on the belief in the ability of reason (once and for all) to examine its unchanging structural features and thus become the supreme judge on matters of the highest (theoretical and practical) importance. Similar ambitions are characteristic of Husserl's phenomenology, which is basically one long meditation on the autonomous territory of philosophy ("phenomena of pure consciousness") and the corresponding purely philosophical methods of examining it ("phenomenological reductions").

But the fact that we, as Quinean naturalists, can distance ourselves from the above historical projects (and the like) does not necessarily mean that we know sufficiently precisely what to do philosophically in the current situation, i.e. what it practically means to begin (and remain) "in the middle" and what specific types of work to do on Neurath's ship.[13]

Let us therefore begin with a negative definition: What types of intellectual activities should a naturalist "working from within" not participate in or, resp. of which of these activities should she be instinctively suspicious? Here are some examples:

1. We should resist the temptation to remain trapped in a circle of purely intra-philosophical discussions, which have essentially no relevant connection to any area of scientific research, but nevertheless (if not thanks to that) can fascinate a certain part of the professional philosophical community for a relatively long time (typical examples are the infamous Gettier discussions in epistemology or some modern anthologies of metaphysics dealing with the themes of being, identity, causality, etc. practically without any connection to current physical theories).

2. We should be very suspicious of dealing with *prima facie* philosophical questions such as "What is X?" (consciousness, knowledge, determinism, hu-

13 It may be of interest to some readers that the first occurrence of this by the now well-known metapher of sailors who have no alternative but to rebuild their ship on the open sea dates back to Neurath's 1913 article on economics, "Problems in War Economics". A very thorough historical retracing of Neurath's use of this simile can be found in the book *Otto Neurath: Philosophy Between Science and Politics.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1996, pp. 89–94.

man being) without having them properly anchored in some ongoing scientific discourse and without knowledge of current issues and the functioning of relevant conceptual tools in respective scientific disciplines.[14]

At first glance, it might seem that the naturalistic imperative of working in the middle and from the inside is relatively straightforward and easy to observe if a given philosopher chooses this path. However, this simplicity can be an illusion caused by looking at things statically, not dynamically, as we should. Even if we start working "from the middle", as Quine recommends, it does not mean that we will stay in that center permanently, because the situation in scientific research is evolving and the focus of productive and constructive problems of a philosophical nature is shifting. For instance, many prominent philosophers (and philosophically-oriented physicists) of the twentieth century have worked hard to tackle the problems of quantum physics in a way that is fully consistent with the naturalistic orientation I hold here. It is an indisputable fact that many of these interpretive problems arose directly in scientific practice and that many of those who set out to shed light on them had an intra-scientific motivation, which was to improve current physics in terms of its conceptual maturity as well as epistemic productivity.

However, looking back at almost 100 years of interpretive and reform efforts, we see, in addition to a few unquestionable benefits for physics, a whole mountain of texts that may raise the legitimate question of whether redirecting this effort to other areas might not be more appropriate. Of course, in this sphere there is no clear algorithm that we could apply to evaluate the situation. Even among contemporary theoretical physicists, one can still find the view that a true (deeper) understanding of the foundations of quantum theory could perhaps help to solve the most acute problems in contemporary theoretical physics.[15] With this example, I just wanted to indicate that the topics that the philosophically busy sailor is working on aboard Neurath's ship are subject to revision (like almost everything) and that the category of

14 In order to direct the reader to a more extensive critique, I will add that James Ladyman and Don Ross (et al.) in *Every Thing Must Go: Metaphysics Naturalized* (Oxford, Oxford University Press 2007) did very deserving work on a specific critique of contemporary analytical metaphysics. Their textbook, deconstructive work in relation to the aspirations of analytical a priori metaphysics is highly recommended to anyone with a naturalistic mindset (regardless of whether one agrees with the constructive parts of their book).

15 To name just two examples, Lee Smolin and Sean Carroll are contemporary, philosophically-minded theoretical physicists who share this belief, as can be seen from their recent popular books. Smolin, L. – Bradonjic, K., *Einstein's Unfinished Revolution*: *The Search for What Lies Beyond the Quantum*. London, Penguin Press 2019; Carroll, S., *Something Deeply Hidden*: *Quantum Worlds and the Emergence of Spacetime*. New York, Dutton Books 2019.

eternal questions / problems is as dubious as the category of the transcendent standpoint.

At this point, I would like to mention another example of how to circumvent the principle of immanence, which also seems important from the point of view of contemporary theoretical philosophy. It was aptly described by Penelope Maddy from the example of van Fraassen's philosophy of science.[16] As is well known, van Fraassen, in his influential work of 1980,[17] advocated in the philosophy of science a version of agnosticism called "constructive empiricism", the point of which is to shift the focus from the ideal of literal truth of scientific theories (with appropriate ontological commitments) to the demand of their purely "empirical adequacy". For example, answers to the questions about what types of entities exist in the world are not something we should ask of science, according to van Fraassen. It suffices that the theoretical model, which, say, physics offers us, and which we can sometimes retell in such a way that there will be such terms as "electrons", "quarks", "quantum fields", etc. is in accordance with the behavior of observable entities (among which the "objects" just mentioned do not count). Van Fraassen obviously wants to give the philosophical observer of science a certain degree of autonomy and philosophical freedom. From an intra-scientific point of view, he acknowledges that e.g. statements about electrons are meant to be literally true and are far from literary statements about mythical (imaginary) beings. On the other hand, from the standpoint of philosophical reflection on science, he is satisfied with the criterion of empirical adequacy.

Such a position has its charm in that its author is at first sight attached to real scientific practice more than his critics, as he can criticize the overestimation of ontological obligations of scientific theories (in relation to unobservable entities) as an unnecessary introduction of metaphysics into empirical scientific research. Further, philosophy done in this spirit retains with its ontological agnosticism a certain degree of the freedom and privilege of being on the higher pedestal, thanks to which it does not have to be dragged down by the contingent vicissitudes of falsifications of fundamental scientific theories.

Either way, I want to point out the difference between this approach to the role of philosophy and the naturalistic attitude in my understanding. Apart from the notorious conceptual problems associated with the possibility of the sustainable (and productive) distinction between observable and unobservable entities, the naturalist philosopher must reject van Fraas-

16 Maddy, P., *Second Philosophy*, pp. 305–311.

17 Fraassen, B. v., *Scientific Image*. Oxford, Oxford University Press 1980.

sen's dichotomy between philosophical interpretation and intra-scientific research. Of course, she does not do so because she wants to voluntarily give up her free reflection and let her ideas about the composition and functioning of the world be dictated by current theories. She does so because she sees herself as part of this whole cognitive enterprise and tries to work with the best theory that is available. Naturally, she realizes that "the best" may later prove to be severely inadequate, or even completely wrong in some respects. However, this is part of the fallible nature of this whole process, which she accepts as a harsh part of (scientific) life.

When philosophizing, there is always a tendency to step out and separate from the turmoil of current events and look for (take) a position from which the philosopher will evaluate with appropriate distance the strengths and weaknesses of a given, reflected upon activity, its broader consequences, assumptions, etc. This tendency is deeply inscribed in the consciousness of the professional philosopher and forms an important part of his self-image. Thanks to this, philosophical reflection can be very beneficial for the overall process of cognition. At the same time, however, there is a certain temptation toward a "transcendent position" that will probably never disappear, but which must be held under control. There is a difference – if I may put it a little paradoxically – between the "internal" distance, which serves to better understand the domain we are still in, and the "external" distance, which secures itself against the vicissitudes of the domain by encapsulating itself in dogmatism presented externally as a deeper and more critical position. I see a danger of this kind, for example, in approaches that discourage all discussions on ontological problems of contemporary fundamental scientific theories by pointing to their principled instrumentalist position.

Primacy of Natural Sciences

If we consider only the first two defining features, we could call the described philosophical position an immanentism or an attitude of immanentism. The rejection of the "first philosophy" would not yet have to say anything about a specific kind of research, in the middle of which philosophy wants to see itself or understand itself as one of the cooperating components. We could imagine as one alternative a philosophical position called "culturalism", which would assign a central role in the knowledge of the world and ourselves to the sciences of culture (or the humanities), while the various scientific disciplines could be understood from this position instrumentally as a set of convenient tools with limited descriptive value. However, since the position I am trying to outline and partly defend is called "naturalism", it is obvious

that the situation will be exactly the opposite in this regard. The third indispensable feature of naturalism, therefore, is that with regard to cognition of the world, naturalism prioritizes scientific disciplines such as physics, chemistry, and biology.

As is clear from the enumeration of the various types of naturalism that I mentioned in the introduction (see footnote 4), it is far from the case that all those who call themselves naturalists today accept the thesis of the epistemic superiority of the natural sciences. The fact that they nevertheless claim for themselves the term "naturalism" can have two explanations. First, there may be some different understanding of nature in the game than that which is characteristic of contemporary natural sciences. And second, the reason for the use of the term "naturalism" by such thinkers may be that they consider "supernaturalism" as the main contrasting term to naturalism. To join naturalism in this sense is to reject the belief in supernatural entities or phenomena (mythical beings, gods, angels, cosmic consciousness, paranormal phenomena, etc.). In principle, there can be no objection to this way of defining naturalism. The reason why I do not define my understanding of naturalism in contrast to the supranatural lies in two points. First, the supranatural category may be clear enough at the individual level, but in broader discussions it is semantically too variable and vague. And second, what I expect from the definition of naturalism as a certain philosophical position is not only a rough outline of a certain worldview, but also a certain outline of how a naturalist works in his intellectual activity, his basic goals, tools to achieve them and preferred sources.

Filip Tvrdý and Naturalism

In this last part, I would like to supplement my understanding of naturalism with a brief comparison with the account of naturalism presented by Filip Tvrdý in his article from 2018. It must be said in advance that the presentation of naturalistic philosophy is not the only topic of this article and that the author's intention was not to give a detailed analysis of naturalism (including all of its strengths and weaknesses) and a subsequent thorough defense of its claims. Rather, the article focuses on characterizing the three dominant stances to the issue of the relationship between philosophy and science that can be encountered in contemporary and recent philosophy. Quine-inspired naturalism is just one of these three philosophical positions, and it is also the position with which F. Tvrdý identifies himself. The remaining two philosophical strategies, which he considers to be fundamentally erroneous or at least too limited and therefore insufficient, are described with the terms "anti-scientism" and "conceptual analysis".

By "anti-scientistic philosophers", he means a wide range of thinkers whose attitude towards the scientific grasp of the world could be generally described as distrust or even suspicions, so they see an important function of their philosophy in unmasking the alleged blind spots of science, its ideological prejudices, objectifying consequences, etc. The variety of types of critique of science in this camp is enormous – from the Rousseauian "noble savage" rhetoric through the various currents of "philosophy of life" at the turn of the twentieth century, to the phenomenological and Heideggerian critique of science and, more recently, radical forms of feminist critique of science. As for "conceptual analysis", Tvrdý has in mind the understanding of the nature of philosophy that many philosophers adopted during the twentieth century in the aftermath of Wittgenstein's "linguistic turn" and that later became known under the phrase "linguistic philosophy". According to this conception, philosophy has its own autonomous domain and method (outside of "special sciences") that consists in logical-semantic and linguistic analysis of scientific (and non-scientific) discourse, in identifying, clarifying, and removing conceptual confusions, or (in a more positive sense) in the systematic geography of basic conceptual schemes that are also an (implicit) part of sophisticated scientific theories.

Since, regarding the latter two philosophical strategies, my position and my assessment come very close to that of F. Tvrdý in his article, I will confine myself to two very brief remarks. First, as far as "anti-scientistic" philosophy is concerned, although I share with many other philosophical naturalists the belief that much of the critique of science coming from the anti-scientistic camp is based on hasty conclusions, speculative tenets, or simply lack of (more than superficial) information about relevant scientific disciplines, we should not pour out with the bath water the screaming baby whose scream – though perhaps not quite well articulated and not always capable of meeting the demands of a meaningful discussion (or controversy) – can give us a kind of distance from the scientific worldview. The distance that I suggest here is not meant to call for a significant modification, or even abandonment of the scientific worldview (naturalism), but only to prevent a state in which we would take the naturalistic attitude for granted or as some kind of intellectual automatism.

Secondly, with regard to philosophy understood as a conceptual analysis, I would like to point out one key statement that appears in Tvrdý's article but which, in my view, is not properly explained by the sentence following the claim. The claim is that conceptual analysis should not be conceived as something that goes on outside of science in the autonomous sphere called philosophy, which is capable of a priori insights into the conceptual scheme, but on the contrary, conceptual analysis should be understood and practiced by

philosophers as an integral part of scientific research itself. As Tvrdý writes in his article (drawing on David Papineau[18]): "Conceptual analysis is therefore not an alternative to the scientific method, but a part of it."[19] However, for an example of conceptual analysis understood in this way, I would not refer, as does Tvrdý, to questionnaire methods of "experimental philosophy", but I would rather try to draw the reader's attention to concrete historical instances of conceptual analysis linking scientific and philosophical discourse which brought either significant changes or were at least strong impulses for further scientific research, for example in the field of sciences such as mathematics (concepts of number, set, proof, etc.) or physics (concepts of time, force, energy, and field).

But let us now look at how F. Tvrdý outlines the naturalistic version of understanding the problem of the relationship between philosophy and science. In this respect, too, I see a significant intersection between his position and mine. In particular, I would like to commend the very straightforward way in which he appeals to contemporary philosophers not to remain in their philosophical bubbles and to seek ways to reintegrate their philosophical activities within the broad confines of scientific research. If we do not do this, philosophy will lead us to share the same fate as theology. Not to extinction, that is to say, but to something much worse: the self-deception of importance (as viewed from the inside of philosophical community) and factual irrelevance (as viewed from the outside). (Unlike theoretical philosophers, however, theologians may have as their last resort practical sermons for believers).

Now I would like to draw attention to two points where I perceive certain differences in the naturalisms to which we feel respectively committed. The first relates to the often used distinction between methodological and ontological naturalism.[20] If we take this distinction as it is standardly used,[21] it

18 Papineau, D., The Poverty of Analysis. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 83, 2009, No. 1, pp. 1–30.

19 Tvrdý, F., Antiscientismus, p. 54.

20 Ontological naturalism is sometimes synonymously referred to as "metaphysical naturalism", but most authors seem to prefer the first term – perhaps because the adjective "metaphysical" carries with it a connotation of speculation that the naturalistically-oriented philosopher is trying to avoid.

21 Methodological naturalism promotes the exclusivity of scientific methods for any cognition that seeks to make legitimate claims to credibility and reliability, but leaves aside – or refrains from – the question of ontological commitments arising from (the most successful) theories that are the product of the application of scientific methods. Ontological naturalism has the ambition to be not only a methodological recommendation, but also to say straight away – in Quinean terms – what is there. This distinction was foreshadowed in the distinction between methodological and metaphysical materialism, which was born in the environment of the early neo-Kantian movement in the second half of the 19th century. F. A. Lange's work *History of Materialism and Critique of its Present Significance* (1866) played a key role here.

cannot be denied that it is a useful conceptual tool for preliminary orientation in the heterogeneous environment of numerous naturalisms. However, problems arise as soon as the discussion takes a turn to a more precise, and especially non-circular, parsing of the central substantive thesis of ontological naturalism. F. Tvrdý objects to the attitude of methodological naturalism on the grounds that, from his point of view, methodological naturalism is not sufficiently consistent in drawing conclusions from the hegemonic position of science in the field of knowledge. In specifying the content of ontological naturalism, he employs – without explicitly distinguishing them – two typical strategies: on the one hand the denial of the sphere of the supernatural (transcendent, immaterial) and on the other hand the narrowing of the world to what can be the object of scientific research using standard scientific methods.

As for his intention, I fully agree with him that naturalism as a philosophical attitude cannot be limited to the methodological aspect, because science ultimately is about knowing how the world is constituted and how it works. Ontological questions are a natural part of scientific research and there is no reason to deny them *via* instrumentalism or let them unwittingly transfer to some more dubious instances (speculative philosophy, theology, mysticism, intuition, common sense, etc.). However, as naturalists, we must honestly admit that the use of such dichotomies as natural vs. supernatural, immaterial vs. material – though conceptual dualisms of this sort may be unavoidable in this context – cannot be a completely satisfactory way to define the content of the ontological aspect of our naturalism. For example, finding a plausible definition between material and immaterial is a problematic enterprise also in terms of our current fundamental physical theories. Of course, we can always resort to the tactics of defining the natural, resp. material, as to what is the object of current scientific procedures or which could be subjected to such procedures in the near future. The price, however, is that we get stuck in the definitional circle that immunizes the thesis of ontological naturalism against any criticism from outside.

If we recall that one of the defining features of naturalism that I have decided to present and to some extent defend in this article is the above-mentioned immanentism, we could conclude that some form of circular (or let us say "immanent") reasoning is actually necessary here and does not need to be justified in a foundationalist way but simply accepted as *factum brutum*. In such a case, however, we should be clearly aware of our epistemic situation and not let ourselves be, for example, lured into speculative forms of ontological naturalism, which – in the heat of the fight against the supernatural, transcendent, etc. – easily degrade into ideological skirmishes that have little to do with scientific research.

The second point in F. Tvrdý's article concerning the characterization of a naturalistic attitude, on which I would beg to differ, is his – in my opinion too optimistic (or should I call it naturalistically self-confident?) – statement to the effect that traditional philosophical questions (in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, or even ethics) could be "quite unproblematically"[22] transferred into relevant scientific disciplines (physics, biology, neuroscience, etc.). I think I agree with the author in the belief that the best (most promising) way to solve or at least clarify the traditional philosophical puzzles is to make them accessible to standard scientific methods, as opposed to immunizing them against the application of such methods and maintaining at all costs their halos of depth and mystery. Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the complexity of conceptual problems, which are often the most persistent obstacle in the empirical study of certain areas of phenomena (e.g. in contemporary cognitive science) and which are sometimes conveniently made explicit and embodied in certain "traditional" philosophical questions. Even more than in theoretical philosophy, this situation is pronounced in the field of practical philosophy. The normative problems of ethics do not seem to be easily reducible to any of the available scientific disciplines. The very reformulation of these questions in the vocabulary of evolutionary theory or game theory poses a grave problem if we do not want to flatten them into a form that would be essentially equivalent to a simple change in the topic of discussion.

Conclusion – How to Move Naturalism Forward

In 2012, a several-day interdisciplinary workshop was held in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, entitled "Moving Naturalism Forward". The main organizing figure behind the event was the physicist Sean Carroll (working at Caltech at the time, occupying the former chair of Richard Feynman). The participants of this event were all people who in some sense adhered to a naturalistic worldview, even if they came from different professional backgrounds (philosophy, physics, biology, economics).[23] Although the discussions in this workshop displayed a high degree of enthusiasm and optimism for a global naturalistic approach to the world, these discussions also showed problems with mutual understanding and the ability to follow and constructively de-

22 Tvrdý, F., Antiscientismus, p. 57.

23 Among the most prominent and well-known figures that the organizers managed to bring to the table in this way were luminaries such as Steven Weinberg, Richard Dawkins, and Daniel Dennett. The complete recording of the individual sessions can still be viewed on YouTube or in the form of edited short videos on Sean Carroll's website [accessed on: 19. 2. 2021]. Available at: https://www.preposterousuniverse.com/naturalism2012/.

velop ideas from fellow naturalist thinkers with different backgrounds and areas of expertise.

I do not mention this event here because, in terms of its results, I would consider it the most important event in the naturalistic movement in recent years, although it must be acknowledged that the participants covered, in a very interesting and accessible way, almost all the major topics currently being discussed in connection with naturalism (emergence, morality, consciousness, and many others). What I want to point out is rather the central appeal, which is reflected in the name of the event and which I borrowed for this final part. And, secondly, it is the way in which the main organizer (in particular) tried to fulfill this intention (it is not so important now whether the group succeeded in it completely). I believe that all those who have an eminent interest in the development and prosperity of naturalism can learn a lesson from this meeting.

So, how to move naturalism forward, and what role does philosophy play in this endeavor? Let me make a few remarks and suggestions that are of a more prospective character.

First, naturalism as a philosophical position, like any other philosophical movement, over time tends to become entangled in its own conceptual problems, which are largely of terminological origin. More and more time is devoted to reflecting on and clarifying concepts than to getting to know the world itself. Not that metaphilosophical problems are just an insignificant part of a philosophical position. However, it is a question of adequate proportions. Whenever metaphilosophical considerations and discussions prevail over substantive inquiry, we must say that something is wrong with naturalism as such. Because it is precisely naturalism that is programmatically aimed at bringing philosophy back into play as part of the scientific knowledge of the world (the natural world, the social world, the world of culture). In this respect, naturalism seeks to distinguish itself from more traditional second-order philosophical approaches, which place at the center of philosophical reasoning some form of reflection on conceptual or linguistic means, sometimes making such inquiries not only central but even the only thing philosophy supposedly can and should contribute.[24] The naturalist, on the other hand, vehemently opposes such a division of tasks, because she sees in it, or at least – on the basis of historical experience – suspects the danger of detaching philosophy from current scientific research and fall-

24 One paradigmatic example of such an understanding of the role of philosophy within a contemporary philosophical environment is Hacker's Witttgensteinian conception based on the distinction between understanding and knowledge. (See, e.g., his essay *Philosophy: A Contribution, not to Human Knowledge, but to Human Understanding*, published in P. M. S. Hacker [2013], *Wittgenstein: Comparisons and Context*, Oxford University Press [2013]).

ing into the line of aprioristic "splendid isolation". Analysis and critique of conceptual tools should be an internal part of the overall cognitive scientific process, just as the occasional grinding of a scythe is a natural part of a mowing activity.

Within academic philosophy, there are many temptations that ultimately lead to the fact that this principle is formally recognized and even explicitly emphasized, but in fact not being observed and followed. As for theoretical philosophy, a philosopher who obtains his philosophical education at most contemporary institutes of philosophy is encouraged to more or less aprioristic thinking. What usually counts the most and what is most appreciated by peers are conceptual observations and arguments based on the analysis of older philosophical concepts and the discovery of their inconsistencies or incoherences (with the abundant use of the method of often far-fetched thought experiments) and subsequent suggestions of novel arguments, conceptual distinctions, etc. (which means another spin of the wheel of purely internal philosophical debates). The realization that following actual research in specialized scientific disciplines is an extremely time-consuming and intellectually challenging proposition strengthens the tendency of philosophers to confine themselves to their philosophical "safe spaces".

This has certainly been said many times in the past and no doubt more eloquently and extensively (not to mention from more competent mouths). So why repeat it at this point? It seems to me that even the great dominance of naturalism in the contemporary philosophical world (or at least in a significant part of it) has still not brought about the main point of it all. And this is a reform in the basic education of philosophers who in the future intend to devote themselves specifically to theoretical philosophy. In principle, the education of philosophers still consists in reading (philosophical) texts, in their interpretation and analysis, in identifying arguments and their critique, and in proposing novel arguments. Nowhere in this process of education is there a significant insistence on systematic and detailed acquaintance with particular theories and methodological procedures of key scientific disciplines such as mathematics, physics, and biology. At the very best, it is assumed that a young philosopher who wants to devote herself, e.g. to the topic of the metaphysical aspects of the natural sciences, will, in addition to her normal philosophical education, seek to supplement her knowledge and skills elsewhere on her own.

But the point of the naturalistic approach, as we understand it in this text, is that theoretical philosophical disciplines as such (as a whole) should not only be superficially informed by science, but deeply embedded in the research environment and research atmosphere of those scientific disciplines from which we, as naturalists, expect first and foremost new cognitive gains

in terms of the understanding of fundamental physical interactions and entities, subjectivity and consciousness, biological life, and the workings of societies. Thus, in order for the naturalistic approach in philosophy to function not only as another among the isolated academic philosophical currents, it is necessary to proceed to more radical changes in the content of study programs within universities and faculties. Although in recent decades there has been plenty of talk about a naturalistic turn in philosophy, which was intended and presented as a significant *Revolution der Denkungsart* (to borrow from Kant against Kant), real change, which would not be just another ephemeral metaphilosophical fashion, can only come on the basis of systemic changes in the way the new generation of philosophers becomes acquainted with philosophizing from the beginning. I am fully aware that this is a very sensitive spot for all members of the philosophical community (whether of naturalistic or non-naturalistic bent of mind) and that putting such considerations into practice is not in sight for the time being. However, the merging of horizons is bound to begin unless philosophical discourse regarding time, causality, substance, etc. in the academic subdisciplines of theoretical philosophy is not to have the same relevance to the future knowledge of the world as theological debates on transubstantiation have to the current knowledge.

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Adaptivity and Truth. A Critique of Plantinga's Reasoning against Evolutionary Reliabilism[1]

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Abstract:
The paper analyses the arguments put forward by Plantinga to justify his refutation of evolutionary reliabilism, i.e. the claim that the probability that the cognitive faculties, developed in the process of unguided evolution, are reliable is low. I argue that all the thought experiments offered by Plantinga to justify this thesis suffer from a common defect – they disregard the condition of evolution or fail to take it into account properly. In addition, I argue that pointing out the difficulties that naturalistic approaches have in explaining mental causation does not lead to Plantinga's conclusion that in a naturalistic world there would be no mental causation whatsoever.

Keywords: Alvin Plantinga, Darwin's doubt, evolutionary reliabilism, the evolutionary argument against naturalism

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Looking at human cognitive faculties and their function from the evolutionary perspective, it seems natural to assume that adaptivity and truth are positively related. True beliefs are what helped our ancestors to survive. In the hunter-gatherer period, having a large number of true beliefs concerning edible and poisonous plants and local animal behaviour was crucial to people's lives and this knowledge was shared in the group and passed on to the next generation. The same holds true for us. It is certainly better for me to believe that the mushroom with an olive-green or yellowish cap and white gills under the cap, white annulus, and white volva at the base, known as *Amanita phalloides* or the death cap, is deadly poisonous, than for me to think it an exquisite delicacy.

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The contention of a positive link between truth and adaptivity lies at the heart of the philosophical position called "evolutionary reliabilism". Plantinga's attack on this principle was a key step in his journey to rejecting naturalism in its entirety. The Darwinian concept of evolution has become a strong explanatory tool in science; Dennett defines Darwin's contribution to philosophy thus: "In a single stroke Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection united the realm of physics and mechanism on the one hand with the realm of meaning and purpose on the other."[2] Plantinga, however, is prepared to argue that although evolution is *the main pillar of contemporary science,* it is by no means the pillar of the naturalistic worldview.[3] In his famous evolutionary argument against naturalism (EAAN)[4] Plantinga attempts to demonstrate that to combine evolutionary theory with naturalism is self-referentially incoherent, and so these doctrines cannot rationally be accepted together. The main line of argumentation goes roughly like this: supposing our cognitive faculties evolved through the process of undirected evolution, then the probability of these faculties being reliable is low. Hence, if we accept evolutionary theory and naturalism, we have reason to doubt the reliability of our cognitive faculties. And if the reliability of our cognitive faculties is suspect, the same applies to what they deliver. But naturalism and evolutionary theory are themselves produced by our cognitive faculties. Therefore, "my belief that naturalism and evolution are true gives me a defeater for that very belief."[5]

The EAAN has been the subject of extensive discussion, but Plantinga, having responded to dozens of objections raised by well-known scholars, considers that the "EAAN seems to me to emerge unscathed – or if a bit scathed, then at least bloody but unbowed."[6] At the same time, the EAAN does not

2 Dennett, D., Darwin's "Strange Inversion of Reasoning". In: Avise, J. C. – Ayala, F. J. (eds.), *In the Light of Evolution: Volume III: Two Centuries of Darwin.* Washington, The National Academies Press 2009 [accessed on: 17. 2. 2021]. Available at: http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12692.html, pp. 343–344.

3 Plantinga, A., *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism.* Oxford, Oxford University Press 2011, p. 310 (hereafter *Where the Conflict Really Lies*).

4 The first formulation of this argument can be found in Plantinga's book *Warrant and Proper Function* (New York, Oxford University Press 1993; hereafter *Warrant and Proper Function*). Since then, the EAAN has been restated by Plantinga many times and has been the subject of extensive argumentational exchanges between Plantinga and other scholars, and so naturally it has undergone some refinement, but not a substantial overhaul, as I see it. Plantinga himself refers in his later works to the earlier wordings without qualification (see Plantinga, A., Content and Natural Selection. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 83, 2011, No. 2, p. 435 [hereafter Content and Natural Selection]).

5 Plantinga, A., *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, p. 314.

6 Plantinga, A., Reply to Beilby's Cohorts (hereafter Reply to Beilby's Cohorts). In: Beilby, J. K. (ed.), *Naturalism Defeated? Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism.* Ithaca, Cornell University Press 2002, p. 205 (hereafter *Naturalism Defeated?*).

seem to have converted any naturalists (and Plantinga probably did not expect it to). In this paper I do not intend to examine the whole argument, and I focus only on the first premise and the reasons put forward to substantiate it. I shall argue that, despite all Plantinga's thought experiments offering justification, his general claims suffer from a common deficiency – they disregard *evolution* or fail to take it into account properly. Moreover, I argue that merely pointing out the difficulties that naturalistic approaches have in explaining mental causation does not lead to the conclusion that *in a naturalistic world, there can be no mental causation whatsoever.*

Darwin's Doubt

The first premise of the EAAN says that the conditional probability (P) that our cognitive faculties are reliable (R), given evolution (E) and naturalism (N), is low: P(R/N&E) is low.[7] For Plantinga *naturalism* is "the belief that there aren't any supernatural beings – no such person as God, for example, but also no other supernatural entities, and nothing at all like God."[8] *Evolution* is an abbreviation for the claim that "we and our cognitive faculties have come to be in the way proposed by the contemporary scientific theory of evolution."[9] *A reliable* cognitive faculty "must deliver at least 3 times as many true beliefs as false: the proportion of true beliefs in its output is at least three quarters."[10] Finally, asserting *the conditional probability* of a proposition means considering its probability to be true under some specified circumstances: "the conditional probability of one proposition p on another proposition q is the probability that p is true *given that,* on the condition that, q is true."[11]

Plantinga also refers to this questioning of whether cognitive faculties developed over the course of "blind" evolution are in fact reliable as "Darwin's doubt", taking his inspiration from the following sentence in Darwin's letter to William Graham:[12] "With me, the horrid doubt always arises whether the

7 Plantinga, A., *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, p. 317.

8 Plantinga, A., Introduction: The Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism: An Initial Statement of The Argument. In: Beilby, J. K. (ed.), *Naturalism Defeated? Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism.* Ithaca, Cornell University Press 2002, p. 3 (hereafter Introduction: The Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism).

9 Plantinga, A., *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, p. 317.

10 Ibid., p. 332.

11 Ibid., p. 317, emphasis in original.

12 I believe that Darwin's doubt was in fact about something else – it is apparent from the context of the letter that he was concerned with "intuitive" metaphysical beliefs rather than cognitive faculties. In the absence of God, who could have infused our mind with metaphysical truths, our metaphysical intuitions about the world are in themselves – without any further critical ex-

convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would any one trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?"[13]

Plantinga approaches the problem as follows. From the perspective of the Christian religion, our cognitive faculties are reliable because they have been created by God as such. In other words, we were created in the image of God, as creatures able to acquire knowledge.[14] But, "if our cognitive faculties have originated as Dawkins thinks, then their ultimate purpose or function (if they *have* a purpose or function) will be something like *survival*."[15] Natural selection operates directly upon behaviour only, not *beliefs*. If beliefs are of any interest to natural selection, then it is solely because of the relationship between beliefs and behaviour. Certain cognitive mechanisms could be selected during the evolutionary process only insofar as they have some effect on behaviour. And so, when Plantinga states that the probability that cognitive faculties are reliable if naturalism and evolutionary theory is true is low, he means that "our having reliable faculties *isn't* guaranteed by or even particularly probable with respect to adaptive behaviour."[16] Of course, this claim needs further argument since it goes against what is usually believed, as noted above.

According to Plantinga, the overall probability (R/N&E) should be calculated as "the weighted average of the probabilities of R on N&E&C and N&E&-C (weighted by the probabilities of C and -C on N&E)",[17] where C is the proposition that the content of beliefs is causally efficacious and -C represents the denial of the causal efficacy of the content of beliefs. Following this distinction, two main lines of reasoning can be identified. The first line is aimed at demonstrating that there is a causal gap between *the adaptivity* of beliefs and their *truthfulness.* In the second line of argumentation, Plantinga asserts that the *content* of beliefs (and therefore also their truth value) is completely out of reach of natural selection. I will now treat these lines of reasoning separately in the following sections.

amination – dubious. Cf. Darwin, C. R., To William Graham, July 3rd 1881. In: *Darwin Correspondence Project, "Letter no. 13230"* [accessed on: 19. 2. 2021]. Available at: *https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-13230.xml.*

13 Darwin, C. R., To William Graham, July 3rd 1881. Plantinga cites this passage almost every time he brings up the EAAN.

14 Plantinga, A., Introduction: The Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism, p. 2.

15 Plantinga, A., *Warrant and Proper Function*, p. 218, emphasis in original.

16 Plantinga, A., Introduction: The Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism, p. 5, emphasis in original.

17 Ibid., p. 10.

Adaptive False Beliefs

Plantinga's first observation with regard to natural selection is that it leads organisms to *adaptive behaviour,* i.e. to improve their *fitness,* which is "a measure of the chances that one's genes are widely represented in the next and subsequent generations."[18] From this, it is clear that natural selection does not aim at *truth*, at least *not directly.* Still, we may think the truthfulness of beliefs is the usual reason why actions are adaptive. To this Plantinga remarks: "Our having evolved and survived makes it likely that our cognitive faculties are reliable and our beliefs are for the most part true, only if it would be impossible or unlikely that creatures more or less like us should behave in fitness enhancing ways but nonetheless hold mostly false beliefs."[19] This assertion is followed by several thought experiments aimed at demonstrating that in fact it is possible for there to be creatures similar to us whose behaviour is adaptive and most of whose beliefs are false.

Before introducing and analysing the thought experiments proposed by Plantinga, it is important to note that they could not be about *us*. Similarly, in developing a critique of Plantinga's position and formulating counterexamples we cannot draw on *our own experience.* The reason is simple: as suggested above, Plantinga thinks *our* cognitive faculties are quite reliable but at the same time, he does not think that we have developed through a process of unguided evolution. Therefore, none of the situations that we have experienced, or the scientific observations or theories relating to humans that could serve as confirmation of the close relationship between the adaptivity of our behaviour and the truth of our beliefs, can be used as counterexamples. Although some scholars do not in fact accept the restriction,[20] *as a reply to Plantinga's argument* I consider this methodologically incorrect. The EAAN as a whole is designed to "undercut" naturalism and therefore to reject the idea that we have developed through "blind" evolution. But if we take our own experience or data obtained through human research as evidence of the fact that human cognitive faculties are reliable under naturalism, then the assumption is that naturalism holds for us.

Let us take a look at Plantinga's thought experiments that are supposed to demonstrate the possibility of unreliable, yet adaptive cognitive faculties (or false but fitness-enhancing beliefs) on N&E&C.

18 Plantinga, A., *Naturalism Defeated?*, p. 4.

19 Plantinga, A., Introduction: The Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism, p. 5.

20 See e.g. Dennett, D., Darwin's "Strange Inversion of Reasoning", pp. 347–353; and Fales, E., Darwin's Doubt, Calvin's Calvary. In: Beilby, J. K. (ed.), *Naturalism Defeated? Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism.* Ithaca, Cornell University Press 2002, pp. 48–49.

A. The source of the first set of examples is a fact Plantinga puts forward – that behaviour is caused not only by beliefs, but also by other factors, such as *desire*, *suspicion, doubt, approval and disapproval, fear*.[21] To demonstrate how this supports his case, Plantinga chooses examples where combinations of desires and false beliefs lead to adaptive behaviour. He introduces Paul – a prehistoric hominid, and the possible ways that he could avoid being eaten by a tiger (i.e. act adaptively) on the basis of false beliefs (in combination with desires). I shall mention just the first two of them since all the examples are based on the same principle.

1. Paul *"likes* the idea of being eaten, but when he sees a tiger, always runs off looking for a better prospect, because he thinks it unlikely that the tiger he sees will eat him."[22]
2. Paul thinks "the tiger is a large, friendly, cuddly pussycat and wants to pet it; but he also believes that the best way to pet it is to run away from it."[23]

This course of reasoning falls well short of establishing the desired thesis and contains several flaws. First, all the examples come from the realm of the conceivable. But if we are to consider the conditional probability of the reliability of cognitive faculties and the conditions are *evolution* and *naturalism*, then the examples have to stem not from what is *conceivable*, but from what *could have originated in the process of evolution.* It is highly improbable that Paul does not have sufficient information regarding tigers' behaviour if tigers are part of the natural environment of Paul and his community. Although Plantinga makes the probability of R conditional on naturalism and evolution, he does not include their principles in his thought experiments. I consider this to be a general error in all of his examples. Furthermore, since those beliefs are not necessarily connected to the accompanying desires, they are adaptive only by chance in particular situations. As soon as Paul loses his interest in petting the "pussycat", or postpones the fulfilment of his desire to be eaten, or simply changes his mind, his beliefs will prove non-adaptive. But a belief can be labeled adaptive only if it can be repeatedly proved. What is more, behind the adaptive but false beliefs one has to identify a general belief-forming mechanism. When Dennett and McKay in their study "The Evolution of Misbelief"[24] look for beliefs that are adaptive but in-

21 Plantinga, A., Introduction: The Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism, p. 8.
22 Plantinga, A., *Warrant and Proper Function*, p. 225, emphasis in original.
23 Ibid.
24 McKay, R. T. – Dennett, D. C., The Evolution of Misbelief. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 32, 2009, No. 6, pp. 493–561 (hereafter The Evolution of Misbelief).

correct, they are attempting to find incorrect *systematically adaptive* beliefs *that are part of the design of the cognitive system*. Also as Ramsey points out, *no one denies the possible existence of false beliefs which,* "coupled with certain desires, would produce adaptive behaviour in certain conditions."[25] He sets out three conditions that such a cognitive mechanism would have to meet: 1. it could come about through evolution, 2. it generates mostly false beliefs and 3. it proves adaptive.[26] Plantinga's first argument does not fulfil any of these; in the first place because he does not describe a general cognitive mechanism.

In the second group of examples, Plantinga reflects on the need for a more systematic account. He suggests that we should imagine a general mechanism for the formation of false beliefs – members of a hypothetical population refer to things only by using *definite descriptions,* which are false, i.e. not satisfied by anything.[27] Paul thinks everything is conscious and refers to everything using the description "*That so-and-so conscious being,*"[28] or Paul believes that "all the plants and animals in his vicinity are witches, and his ways of referring to them all involve definite descriptions entailing witchhood."[29] Finally, the third example is that of "a tribe of cognitively gifted creatures believing that everything (except God Himself) has been created by God,"[30] and we are encouraged to imagine that these beliefs are false, i.e. naturalism holds for them. As Plantinga specifies further, "all their beliefs are properly expressed by singular sentences whose subjects are definite descriptions expressing properties that entail the property of creaturehood,"[31] where "creaturehood" means "having been created by God". Importantly, Plantinga proposes that "their definite descriptions work the way Bertrand Russell thought definite descriptions work."[32]

What is wrong with these examples? Although at first sight they seem to be a shade more convincing than the first set, I shall try to show that they suffer from similar maladies. Plantinga disregards the condition of evolu-

25 Ramsey, W., Naturalism Defended. In: Beilby, J. K. (ed.), *Naturalism Defeated? Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism.* Ithaca, Cornell University Press 2002, p. 20 (hereafter Naturalism Defended).

26 Ibid.

27 Plantinga, A., Introduction: The Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism, p. 9.

28 Ibid., emphasis in original.

29 Ibid.

30 Plantinga, A., Reply to Beilby's Cohorts, p. 260.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid. The third example was introduced in Plantinga's reply to the objections posed by Ramsey. The last condition mentioned in particular is a direct response to Ramsey's suggestion that the definite description should be analysed by means of Kripkean causal theory of reference. Ramsey, W., Naturalism Defended, pp. 26–27.

tion again, i.e. presents to us a situation that is *conceivable*, but it is dubious whether it is probable from the evolutionary viewpoint. He does not consider the question of whether such a community could have evolved in the evolutionary process, nor does he ask whether their way of thinking about the world would be adaptive. In an argument supporting the probability of such scenario it would be appropriate to submit some partial real examples, e.g. an instance of language in which reference can be made using only definite descriptions, an instance of language that does not contain any general statements, or an instance of language in which all the definite descriptions contain one and the same predicate. Since all the beliefs have to be expressed in *singular sentences containing definite descriptions*, members of the hypothetical tribe would have only very limited knowledge, which is problematic from the viewpoint of adaptivity. Furthermore, it is truly odd that the language would contain demonstrative pronouns, as is evident from the form of the definite descriptions Plantinga sets out (see above), but that those pronouns could not be used independently; that is, they could say "that witch is blooming" but not "that is blooming". Moreover, members of the hypothetical tribe would not be able to reflect on the accuracy of the predicate contained in the definite descriptions. Not only would it be impossible to deny these properties and say that something is *not a witch*, or that it is *not a creature*, or that it is *not conscious* – because that would lead to a contradiction – but if a given description is the only medium of reference to a particular thing, it is not even possible to consider whether the description applies to the thing or not.

Although I find Plantinga's example of a cognitive system that is adaptive yet unreliable to be mistaken, it does not automatically mean that the whole thesis, Darwin's doubt, is under serious threat. As Plantinga remarks,[33] even the concession that P(R/N&E&C) is high does not by itself disprove his claim that P(R/N&E) is low. Let us recall that Plantinga determines the probability of R/N&E as "the weighted average of the probabilities of R on N&E&C and N&E&-C (weighted by the probabilities of C and -C on N&E)"[34] Therefore, to dismiss the thesis that *P(R/ N&E) is low*, it is not enough to undermine the assertion that *P(R/N&E&C) is low*. Besides, it should be demonstrated that P(C/N&E) is high, or that P(-C/N&E) is low. However, Plantinga is convinced that P(-C/ N&E) is high, because, as he puts it, "it is extremely hard, given materialism, to envisage a way in which the content of a belief could get causally involved in behaviour."[35]

33 Plantinga, A., Introduction: The Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism, pp. 9–10.
34 See footnote 17 and the corresponding place in the text.
35 Plantinga, A., Introduction: The Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism, p. 10.

Causal Gap between Material and Mental

Plantinga considers the problem of the (in)ability of materialism to account for the causal impact of belief contents on behaviour (and for the causal laws between the neurophysiological and the mental) in more detail especially in his later works.[36] He either *thinks of naturalism as including materialism*[37] or alternatively ponders on materialism in reaction to *the conditionalisation problem*[38] – but for our present purposes the difference is not significant. Plantinga considers materialism in two forms, as *reductive* and *non-reductive* materialism. Let us begin with the latter.

Plantinga defines non-reductive materialism (NRM) as the theory that content properties supervene on neurophysiological (NP) properties: "for any content property C that a neural structure can have, there is an NP property P such that if a neural structure has the content property C, it has P, and conversely, any neural structure that has P also has that content property C."[39] NRM is not considered here as a complex theory; rather, Plantinga investigates whether the sole fact of the supervenience of the content on NP properties could ensure its causal impact on behaviour and again supports his line of reasoning with a thought experiment. We are invited to imagine a hypothetical species cognitively similar to us – they have beliefs and change them, make inferences etc. They live in a world where no God exists, i.e. naturalism holds for them. Their beliefs are neurological structures, complex enough to generate content, which at the same time serve as reliable indicators – a concrete "structure is a reliable indicator of that kind of predator: it arises when and only when there is a such a predator in the middle distance."[40] Yet we have no reason to expect that the proposition determined by the NP structure is true, states Plantinga.[41] Certain NP properties determine the content

36 E.g. in the last part of his book *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, pp. 318–339, in the paper Content and Natural Selection, pp. 437–445, or in the response to Paul Draper *Against "Sensible" Naturalism* (Plantinga, A., *Against "Sensible" Naturalism.* 2007 [accessed on: 21. 2. 2021]. Available at: https://infidels.org/library/modern/alvin_plantinga/against-naturalism.html).

37 Plantinga, A., *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, p. 326.

38 Plantinga, A., Content and Natural Selection, p. 439. The conditionalisation problem was originally formulated by Richard Otte in his critical study *Conditional Probabilities in Plantinga's Argument.* Otte states here that even if P(R/N&E) were low, we could have some further evidence (O) such that if we add it to the conditions, then P(R/N&E&O) would be high. Otte, R., Conditional Probabilities in Plantinga's Argument. In: Beilby, J. K. (ed.), *Naturalism Defeated? Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism.* Ithaca, Cornell University Press 2002, p. 137.

39 Plantinga, A., *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, p. 324.

40 Ibid., p. 330.

41 Ibid., pp. 330–331.

of beliefs and they also cause adaptive behaviour. But according to Plantinga, supervenience does not ensure that the associated content of adaptive NP properties is true or that it has any impact on the behaviour: "whether or not that content is *true* makes no difference to fitness."[42] He argues that on NRM it is possible that a person from the naturalistic world could avoid stepping into a bathtub with an alligator (i.e. act adaptively) while believing that "the alligator is a mermaid, or even that he's sitting under a tree eating mangoes."[43] All the person needs is "indicators and other neural structures that send the right messages to his muscles."[44] According to the proposed scenario NRM obviously collapses into semantic epiphenomenalism. Natural selection shapes the NP properties to be adaptive, i.e. to cause adaptive behaviour, but the associated content may be false, or may be true; it does not really matter.

As before, I consider this argumentation to be flawed, since the conditions of *evolution*, i.e. *natural selection* and *naturalism,* have not been considered *properly*. Yes, they have been taken into account. As Plantinga clarifies, his argument does not necessarily disqualify *materialism* – since there are also theists who are materialists and could believe that, since God has created us as knowers, he has established "psychophysical laws of such a sort that successful action is correlated with true belief."[45] The argument should therefore be effective particularly against those who endorse the naturalistic view of evolution. But from the perspective of evolutionary naturalism, how can one explain the *supervenience* of the content *"I am sitting under a tree eating mangoes"*[46] on NP properties that caused the person to avoid stepping into a bathtub? And if we are endowed with adaptive indicators and adaptive NP properties of beliefs, how can we account for the emergence of mental content at all, with no obviously adaptive function?

Plantinga's own solution to the problem of causality between mental and material is reminiscent of Descartes: the "causal laws linking NP properties with content properties in such a way that the beliefs in question would be… mostly true" have been *instituted by God.*[47] Indeed, the example described above with the alligator and mangoes recalls the Cartesian evil demon who randomly (or intentionally wrongly) attaches ideas to neurophysiological states. But in naturalism there is no place for this evil demon. Thus it is exceedingly difficult to see how one could reasonably explain, from the point of

42 Ibid., p. 327, emphasis in original.
43 Plantinga, A., *Against "Sensible" Naturalism*.
44 Ibid.
45 Plantinga, A., *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, p. 339, footnote 29.
46 See footnote 43.
47 Plantinga, A., *Against "Sensible" Naturalism*.

view of evolutionary naturalism, how a situation in which there is a bathtub and an alligator (but no tree or mango nearby, and nor is the subject eating anything) could give rise to the mental content "I am sitting under a tree eating mangoes". Even if Plantinga is right that NRM allows for such a situation (because of the lack of an adequate theory of mental causation), there are still two more conditions – naturalism and evolution – which disqualify such cases. And this is what Plantinga has overlooked.

Before the final conclusion, let us take a brief look at how Plantinga treats RM in terms of its ability to establish the causal impact of mental contents on behaviour. In reductive materialism, as the name suggests, content properties are reducible to NP properties.[48] Plantinga follows a similar path as he does with NRM and once again ends up with semantic epiphenomenalism.[49] He points out that among the NP properties of a belief is "the property of having such and such a proposition as its content,"[50] but the fact that the NP properties of a belief are adaptive gives us no reason to assume that the associated content is true: "the content doesn't have to be true, of course, for the neuronal structure to cause the appropriate kind of behaviour."[51]

As with NRM, Plantinga indicates the failure of RM to account for the causal relationship between NP properties and mental content, and his examples cannot be disregarded just because they contradict our experience (for Plantinga *our* cognitive faculties, as designed by God, are reliable). However, since the first premise of the EAAN – "Darwin's doubt" – concerns the low probability of the cognitive faculties being reliable under the conditions of *naturalism* and *evolution,* (and materialism is conceived either as the only admissible theory of mind for naturalism, or as another condition), Plantinga's argumentation should have contained the principles of evolutionary theory as well. All the examples should reflect not only what would be acceptable on materialistic principles,[52] but also on evolutionary principles – which they do not. Moreover, it seems that the conditionalisation problem

48 Plantinga, A., *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, p. 323.

49 Boudry and Vlerick call the view Plantinga ascribes here to naturalists "*arbitrary content labelling*", arguing it is even stronger and stranger than semantic epiphenomenalism. Boudry, M. – Vlerick, M., Natural Selection Does Care about Truth. *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, 28, 2014, No. 1, p. 70.

50 Plantinga, A., *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, p. 334.

51 Ibid.

52 There have also been objections to Plantinga's way of reasoning based on the fact that he reduces materialism to a single thesis, instead of *taking reductive materialism seriously and assuming* "the full strength of reductive materialism". Ye, F., Naturalized truth and Plantinga's evolutionary argument against naturalism. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 70, 2011, No. 1, p. 33 (hereafter Naturalized truth and Plantinga's evolutionary argument against naturalism).

(mentioned earlier)[53] might well apply here. The fact that a general theory on the relationship between NP and mental features of beliefs allows for semantic epiphenomenalism does not mean that materialistic theories of mental content do not contain other important features capable of preventing it.

Now let us take a slightly different perspective and accept that Plantinga has highlighted an important difficulty that materialism has in accounting for mental causation.[54] Would that be enough to substantiate the claim that in a naturalistic world there would be no mental causation? First, it is important to determine which thesis Plantinga has proved: that *no materialistic theory could possibly explain mental causation* or that *neither the postulate of supervenience of mental properties on NP properties of beliefs (alternatively the postulate of the identity of mental and NP properties) and the most popular current naturalistic theories of content*[55] *are able to explain mental causation properly*. Although I presume that Plantinga believes that materialism is incapable of explaining mental causation – since he himself relies here on supernatural explanation[56] – his arguments support only the latter thesis.

Second: is the fact that *the naturalistic theories are currently not capable of ascertaining causality between the mental and NP properties of beliefs* sufficient reason to claim that *in a world that can be truthfully described by naturalism and contemporary evolutionary theory* (some version of it) *the probability that mental content has a causal effect on behaviour is low*? I believe not, obviously. It has not been demonstrated that RM or NRM lead *inevitably* to semantic epiphenomenalism. As mentioned earlier, Plantinga did not consider the full-blown theories which may contain other constraints on the relationship between mental and NP properties of beliefs, and therefore he has at best proved that RM and NRM *allow for* semantic epiphenomenalism.[57] If, then, semantic epiphenomenalism is not a necessary companion of materialism, or of naturalism, the current lack of a proper naturalistic account of mental causation gives us no reason to suppose that there would be no

53 See footnote 38.

54 However, as Ye points out, the problem of explaining mental causation could be posited as a separate argument against materialism. But "the concern here is merely whether his *evolutionary* argument contains any *new* challenge against materialism". Ye, F., Naturalized truth and Plantinga's evolutionary argument against naturalism, p. 33, emphasis in original.

55 In his reactions to the conditionalisation problem, Plantinga considers *the indicator semantics, functionalism, and teleosemantics* as well as RM and NRM. Plantinga, A., Content and Natural Selection, pp. 445–458.

56 See above, footnote 47 and the corresponding place in the text.

57 Cf. Novotný, D., How to Save Naturalism from Plantinga? *Organon F*, 14, 2007, No. 1, p. 38: "… a naturalistic account of mental causation has not been shown to be impossible but (at best) currently nonexistent."

mental causation in a naturalistic world. Here I shall try to make a tentative distinction between an *epistemological* and *metaphysical* reading of the argument, presenting it using the example of the EAAN. On a metaphysical reading it says: if contemporary evolutionary theory and naturalism are true, the probability that our cognitive faculties are reliable is low. On an epistemological reading: if we are convinced of the truth of contemporary evolutionary theory and naturalism, we have little reason to believe that our cognitive faculties are reliable. In this case, the epistemological reading is correct. With the first premise of the argument, "Darwin's doubt", the opposite is the case. The intention is not to make an epistemological claim: if you believe that naturalism and contemporary evolutionary theory are true, then you should admit that the probability of R is low. Rather, the concern is "metaphysical": if naturalism and evolutionary theory are true, the probability[58] of R is low. But his arguments do not substantiate this thesis. Even if contemporary naturalistic theories do not establish mental causation, it does not follow that in a naturalistic world there would be no mental causation. More generally, if we are currently unable to explain a phenomenon, that does not mean it is inexplicable in principle or does not exist.

On the basis of what has been said, I conclude that Plantinga has not provided us with good reasons for accepting the thesis that P(R/N&E) is low. All the same, nothing has been said that justifies the claim that the probability is high. Naturalists agree on the fact that natural selection truly "cares" about adaptivity in the first place – sometimes at the expense of truth.[59] Although the question is beyond the scope of this paper, I am convinced that in developing an answer, cultural evolution should also be taken into account. As McKay and Dennett put it, "cultural evolution can have played the same shaping and pruning role as genetic evolution."[60]

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58 The probability here denotes essential randomness; when the belief content is causally inert, it is truly random whether adaptive NP properties would carry true or false content.

59 E.g. a group of adaptive misbeliefs identified by Dennett and McKay comprising some kinds of positive illusion. See McKay, R. T. – Dennett, D. C., The Evolution of Misbelief, pp. 505–509.

60 Ibid., p. 508.

Prolegomenon to Any Future Critical Responses to Naturalism

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Abstract:
In this paper, I propose a programme for future critical responses to naturalism. The paper is divided into two principal parts. In Part I, after providing a topography of contemporary critical approaches to the Placement Problem, which is the operational logic of naturalism, I provide an overview of a burgeoning critical response to naturalism, which, to date, may be predominantly individuated by hostility towards the Placement Problem in two interconnected manners: an epistemic concern and a political concern. Part II of the paper focuses on four areas of future research on critical responses to naturalism arising from themes identified in Part I: the first is a challenge set by Antonio Nunziante concerning the historical and political aspects of American humanism and naturalism; the second involves centring and combining decolonial and queer theoretic discursive formations to enhance critical theoretic responses to naturalism; the third emphasises the need to put Hegel and Otto Neurath in direct conversation about anti-foundationalism, pragmatism, and the (dis)unity of science, in part to dismantle the long-standing hostility between Hegelians and logical empiricists; the fourth is on the subject of developing a critique of sexology's scientific naturalist framework for making sense of sexual arousal.

Keywords: scientific naturalism, critical social theory, alienation, power, Placement Problem

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Introduction: A Topography of Recent Critiques of the Placement Problem

The underlying conceptual framework of the Placement Problem[1] may be construed as the operational logic of naturalism. Naturalism is the thesis that "*the image of the world provided by the natural sciences as all there is to*

1 As Huw Price (2004) suggests, the Placement Problem can be expressed in the following way: 1. All reality is ultimately natural reality. 2. Whatever one wishes to admit into natural reality

the world. Naturalism, therefore, has metaphysical and methodological dimensions: (i) at the most fundamental ontological level, reality is just what the natural sciences deem it to be; (ii) our ways of intelligibly articulating reality, the ways in which we make sense of things, are ultimately justifiable only by the methods and practices of the *Naturwissenschaften*. The conjunction of (i) and (ii) is often referred to as 'scientific naturalism'".[2] I take 'scientific naturalism' to be interchangeable with 'scientism', which is a variety of naturalism committed to the in-principle reducibility and/or eliminability of intentionality, normativity, first-person vocabulary to natural scientific kinds and vocabularies.

Recent hostility towards the Placement Problem and *ex hypothesi* more conservative varieties of naturalism, such as scientism, has principally stemmed from philosophers of either (i) a Hegelian inclination,[3] who try to dissolve the Placement Problem by articulating how it rests on the non-dialectical framework of *Verstand* (as opposed to the dialectical framework of *Vernunft*); or (ii) a (neo-)Kantian inclination,[4] who try to dissolve the Placement Problem by showing how it is based on presuppositions that fail to underpin different forms of experience and (therefore) different ways of knowing; or (iii) a Husserlian inclination,[5] who try to dissolve the Placement Prob-

must be placed in natural reality. 3. Modality, meaning, norms, intentionality, and so on do not seem admissible into natural reality. 4. Therefore, if they are to be placed in nature, they must be forced into a category that does not seem appropriate for their specific characters; and if they cannot be placed in nature, then they must be either dismissed as non-genuine phenomena or at best regarded as parasitic second-rate phenomena. Price, H., Naturalism without Representationalism. In: Caro, M. De – Macarthur, D. (eds.), *Naturalism in Question*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press 2004 (hereafter Naturalism without Representationalism).

2 Giladi, P., Introduction. In: Giladi, P. (ed.), *Responses to Naturalism: Critical Perspectives from Idealism and Pragmatism*. New York, Routledge 2019, p. 1 (hereafter Introduction).

3 See Giladi, P., Liberal Naturalism: The Curious Case of Hegel. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 22, 2014, No. 2, pp. 248–270; Giladi, P., Ostrich Nominalism and Peacock Realism: A Hegelian Critique of Quine. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 22, 2014, No. 5, pp. 734–751; Giladi, P., The Placement Problem and the Threat of Voyeurism. In: Giladi, P. (ed.), *Responses to Naturalism: Critical Perspectives from Idealism and Pragmatism*. New York, Routledge 2019.

4 See D'Oro, G., The Touch of King Midas: Collingwood on why actions are not events. *Philosophical Explorations*, 21, 2018, No. 1, pp. 1–10; D'Oro, G., Between Ontological Hubris and Epistemic Humility: Collingwood, Kant and Transcendental Arguments. *British Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 27, 2019, No. 2, pp. 336–357; Papazoglou, A., The Idealist Challenge to Naturalism. In: Giladi, P. (ed.), *Responses to Naturalism: Critical Perspectives from Idealism and Pragmatism*. New York, Routledge 2019.

5 See Moran, D., Husserl's Transcendental Philosophy and the Critique of Naturalism. *Continental Philosophy Review*, 41, 2008, No. 4, pp. 401–425; Moran, D., *Husserl's Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2012; Moran, D., Let's Look at It Objectively: Why Phenomenology Cannot be Naturalised. *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 72, 2013, pp. 89–115; and Hanna, R., Husserl's Crisis and Our Crisis. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 22, 2014, No. 5, pp. 752–770.

lem using the perspective of transcendental phenomenology; or (iv) a Wittgensteinian inclination,[6] who try to dissolve the Placement Problem by showing how it distorts the relationship between grammar and experience, conflating saying and showing; or (v) a left-wing Sellarsian inclination,[7] who try to dissolve the Placement Problem by maintaining that normative categories (such as persons) are logically irreducible (but causally reducible) to ideal scientific image kinds, because normative categories are not in the business of describing and explaining in the first place; or (vi) a broadly pluralist realist inclination,[8] who try to dissolve the Placement Problem by relaxing and 'catholicising' the notion of nature in such a way that removes the spectre of reduction or elimination; or (vii) a Rortian neopragmatist inclination,[9] who try to dissolve the Placement Problem by revealing how it is produced by representationalist, rather than expressivist orientations, namely the idea that semantics and our conceptual vocabulary involve a mirroring word-object relationship.

In what immediately follows, I would like to provide a brief thematic summary of a burgeoning critical response to naturalism, one which tries to weave together Hegelian, 'post-analytical', Frankfurt School critical theoretic, pragmatist, and quasi-decolonial conceptual frameworks. Once this has been provided, I then turn to the matter of detailing a programme for future critical responses to naturalism.

6 See Beale, J. – Kidd, I. J. (eds.), *Wittgenstein and Scientism*. New York, Routledge 2017.

7 See O'Shea, J. R., *Wilfrid Sellars: Naturalism with a Normative Turn*. Cambridge, Polity 2007; O'Shea, J. R., On the Structure of Sellars's Naturalism with a Normative Turn. In: Vries, W. A. de (ed.), *Empiricism, Perceptual Knowledge, Normativity, and Realism: Essays on Wilfrid Sellars*. Oxford, Oxford University Press 2009.

8 See McDowell, J., *Mind and World*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press 1994; Putnam, H., *Realism with a Human Face*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press 1990; Putnam, H., *Words and Life.* Cambridge, Harvard University Press 1994; Putnam, H., *Pragmatism: An Open Question.* Oxford, Blackwell 1995; Putnam, H., *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press 2002; Putnam, H., The Content and Appeal of "Naturalism". In: Caro, M. De – Macarthur, D. (eds.), *Naturalism in Question*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press 2004; Putnam, H., *Philosophy in an Age of Science: Physics, Mathematics, and Scepticism*. Eds. M. De Caro – D. Macarthur. Cambridge, Harvard University Press 2012; Putnam, H., Naturalism, Realism, and Normativity. *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, 1, 2015, No. 2, pp. 312–328; De Caro, M., Realism, Common Sense, and Science. *The Monist*, 98, 2015, No. 2, pp. 197–214; De Caro, M., Common-sense and Naturalism. In: Giladi, P. (ed.), *Responses to Naturalism: Critical Perspectives from Idealism and Pragmatism*. New York, Routledge 2019.

9 See Rorty, R., Naturalism and Quietism. In: Caro, M. De – Macarthur, D. (eds.), *Naturalism and Normativity*. New York, Columbia University Press 2010; Price, H., Naturalism without Representationalism; Macarthur, D. – Price, H., Pragmatism, Quasi-realism and the Global Challenge. In: Misak, C. (ed.), *The New Pragmatists*. Oxford, Oxford University Press 2007; and Macarthur, D., Pragmatism, Metaphysical Quietism, and the Problem of Normativity. *Philosophical Topics*, 36, 2008, No. 1, pp. 193–209.

1. A Burgeoning Critical Response to Naturalism

A burgeoning type of hostility towards the Placement Problem has involved fusing (i) an epistemic concern about how scientific naturalism rests on a theoretically alienating conceptual framework which prevents inquirers from doing justice to the complexity of nature and normativity et al. with (ii) a political concern about the type of epistemic power relations governing scientific naturalism.

With regard to (i), a two-level Hegelian diagnosis of Ram Neta's worry about the logical viability of liberal naturalism has been proposed.[10] The first-level explanation is that because reductionism is conceptually articulated in such a way, so as to make it the focal point of dialectic and inquiry, anything that is opposed to reductionism is *ipso facto* understood as incoherent at best or having a penchant for the supernatural or the irrational at worst. The second-level explanation locates the source of the philosophical disquietude expressed by the Placement Problem in a linear and dualistic conceptual structure, one which grips the philosophic imagination with such force because sense-making is exclusively articulated in terms of the kind of inferential patterns definitive of analytical thinking, namely the kind of thinking symptomatic of *Verstand*. However, central to Hegelianism is a committed opposition to treating the nomothetic qualities of the model of rationality which *Verstand* instantiates most explicitly as exhaustive of critical thinking. This is because Hegel places significant emphasis on the dialectical function of *Vernunft*, which does not conceive of rational activity as a detached, voyeuristic critical reason. Why *Vernunft* is favoured here over analytical reflection is that *Verstand* fails to be completely illustrative of our *geistige Einstellung* phenomenology, our *Erlebnis*, and our sense of ourselves as self-interpreting rational agents engaging in multifaceted forms of inquiry. For Hegel, one must go beyond a particular kind of naturalism, namely a narrow naturalism which alienates us from ourselves.

Indeed, a helpful way of making sense of Hegel's position here may be provided by reflecting on Hegel's metaphilosophy in relation to the development of post-analytic philosophy. I take the expression 'post-analytic philosophy' to refer to the Anglo-American tradition's internal critique through its gradual *rapprochement* with its continental European cousin's traditions as well as through the revival of pragmatism. Post-analytic philosophy's self-image is no longer a conception of philosophy whose principal intellectual kinship lies with the *Naturwissenschaften*. Rather, the self-image is a Hegelian con-

10 See Neta, R., Review of Naturalism in Question. *Philosophical Review*, 116, 2007, No. 4, pp. 657–662.

ception of philosophy as a *humanistic discipline*. The move to post-analytic philosophy is meant to expand the vocabulary currently available to inquirers, and thereby reconcile the manifest image (MI) with the scientific image (SI).

Interestingly, the post-analytic position can be reasonably challenged by arguing that, rather than *resolve* the clash between the MI and the SI through joining the 'lifeworldy' conceptual framework of persons to the SI for the purpose of enriching and completing the SI, what Wilfrid Sellars ought to have done is adopt an Adornian, negative dialectical 'resolution' of the clash between the images. This strategy invites one to dismantle the Placement Problem through the logic of 'disintegration'. For all of Sellars's emphasis on the rule-governed features of human language and action, the informal, flexible, and humanistic norm-constituting practices of persons, crucially, involve opposition and struggle, so much so that, the space of reasons is an arena invariably comprising opposition and struggle, contestation and challenge, disruption and disturbance. Significantly, for the Adornian, opposition and struggle, contestation and challenge, disruption and disturbance are the effects of the ineliminable presence of *non-identity* in the conceptual framework of persons: most importantly, this category *eo ipso* puts the brakes on the Sellarsian idea of "an ever-expanding range of homeostatic equilibrium".[11] To achieve success in philosophy would be to 'know one's way around' with respect to internal tension, rather than with respect to welding into one unified, coherent image. Putting Sellars and Adorno into conversation with one another enables one to grasp that our discursive forms of life require multiple images, multiple pictures, which are in conflict with one another, because conflict, rather than a transcending *Aufhebung*, is emblematic of cognitive life itself.

On the pragmatist side of things regarding the epistemic concern about the type of vocabulary available to inquirers, it is worth situating this part of our discussion around two different kinds of pragmatist: Huw Price and Jürgen Habermas. Price's subject naturalism assumes that 'the subject' can be divorced from its broader context of surrounding objects (the experienced world) and studied separately – which assumes the subject to be a discrete individual, rather than, for instance, a node in a web of internal relations. The ensuing dualism and nominalism of Price subject's naturalism invoke the natural world as a desert landscape devoid of non-anthropocentric intelligibility, and conceive of inquiry as involving a sparse conception of discourse

11 Christias, D., The Non-Conceptual Dimension of Social Mediation: Towards a Materialist *Aufhebung* of Hegel. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 27, 2019, No. 2, pp. 448–473, esp. p. 465.

which seeks to limit the kinds of conversation one can have. Price's position is, therefore, a puzzling exercise in epistemic self-harm.

Habermas's pragmatism, by contrast, is not a puzzling exercise in epistemic self-harm. For Habermas, knowledge-constitutive interests (the steering drives of culture) are not the kind of phenomena that are candidates for re-description and translation into the vocabulary and grammar of the natural sciences. Crucially, recognising the irreducibility and ineliminability of knowledge-constitutive interests does not mean there is any ineffable mysteriousness to these 'quasi-transcendental' phenomena. Much in the same way that John McDowell's variety of liberal naturalism has argued there is no inherently anathematic connection between 'first nature' (natural scientific discourse) and 'second nature' (development of moral, socio-cultural, aesthetic sensibilities), Habermas should not be read as claiming that there is no room for thinking the heterogeneity of knowledge-constitutive interests is in square conflict with the claims of natural science. Insisting that knowledge-constitutive interests are conceptually irreducible to purely causal and descriptive kinds in no way disqualifies oneself from being scientific or from regarding the natural sciences as authoritative ways of making sense of things. Indeed, scientism, construed as part of the ideological tendency to establish formal technical interests as hegemonic over communicative interests, necessarily presupposes the grammar of the MI in an effort to excise it in favour of the SI.

The theme of ideological tendency is central to (ii), namely a political concern about the type of epistemic power relations governing scientific naturalism and its theoretically alienating conceptual framework. To this end, developing a Foucauldian critique of scientific naturalism, which argues that the levelling nature of nomothetic rationality and its conservative naturalistic vocabulary involves regulatory discourse, has been very recently put forward: anything that resists placeability/locatability is labelled 'odd'. By being thus visibly marked, 'odd' phenomena become 'queer' phenomena, which then become 'problematic' phenomena. They are, thereby, construed in need of discipline (and even punishment). Understood in this Foucauldian way, the most pressing problem with the disciplinary framework of scientific naturalism is that the erasure of the *sui generis* features of the normative space of reasons amounts to a debilitating variety of alienation in which humanity is estranged from its pluralist matrix of sense-making practices. Thus, scientific naturalist disciplinarity produces subjected and practised minds, 'docile' minds. While post-structuralists, by and large, have general worries about scientific naturalism, and one source of such worries would be a Foucauldian suspicion about the imbrication of power and knowledge so that the natural sciences cannot ever possibly be value-neutral in the first

place, it is well worth extending that suspicion to scientific naturalism as a philosophical project.

The epistemic concern about how scientific naturalism rests on a theoretically alienating conceptual framework, and the political concern about the type of epistemic power relations combine on the following matter: what is lost in the wake of scientific naturalism's imperialistic and colonising way of rendering life, nature, and cognition intelligible. As we have seen, the vocabulary of the ideal scientific image displays hegemonising tendencies, to the extent that there is a type of, what one may call, 'disciplinary double-consciousness' resulting from this type of cultural imperialism. Under the ideology of scientism, not only is the web of meanings of the humanities defined from a STEM perspective, but humanists invariably start to regard their own discursive formations and sense-making practices from the STEM gaze. The risk of this "depleted vocabulary"[12] is forgetting and losing the ability to think in imaginative humanist ways. If one is to eventually overcome scientific naturalism, it seems very reasonable to propose one must develop speculative sense-making practices, in which hermeneutic power can be rooted in the communicative power of discourse about sense-making. Debunking the one-sided and one-dimensional nomothetic framework in favour of a dialectical framework involves a quasi-decolonial practice of combatting and reversing the circulation of epistemic power. Such second-order modes of reflection necessarily presuppose the kind of self-conscious attitudes and intentional vocabulary of *Geist*.

Having articulated an overview of the burgeoning critical response to naturalism, I now wish to turn the discussion to four issues arising from this critical response that are currently underdeveloped. The first issue is a challenge set by Antonio Nunziante addressing the historical aspects of American humanism and naturalism, which directly bear on the political dimensions of the naturalism debate. This is important. The second issue concerns centring and combining decolonial and queer theoretic discursive formations to enhance critical theoretic responses to naturalism. Bringing in, with a view to centring, decolonial and queer theoretic logics will significantly deepen critical theoretic research on the interconnection between theoretically alienating vocabularies and epistemic power relations. This is important. The third issue concerns the need to put Hegel and Otto Neurath in direct conversation about anti-foundationalism, pragmatism, and the unity of science, in part to dismantle the long-standing hostility between Hegelians and logical empiricists with a view to think more deeply about the politics of naturalism and critical responses to naturalism. This is important. The

12 Diamond, C., Losing Your Concepts. *Ethics*, 98, 1988, No. 2, pp. 255–277, esp. p. 263.

fourth issue concerns developing a critique of sexology's scientific naturalist framework for making sense of sexual arousal. Such a critique significantly deepens the interconnection between theoretically alienating vocabularies and epistemic power relations. This is important.

2.1 Nunziante's Challenge

Nunziante, in his review of *Responses to Naturalism: Critical Perspectives from Idealism and Pragmatism*, devotes some time to the contention that "[the ideal scientific image becomes] epistemically authoritarian and imperialistic by forcing other forms of inquiry to adopt the discursive recourses and grammars of formal disciplines that are different in various ways to the manifest image's web of meaning".[13] He notes such a position "seems to be characterised by political as well as philosophical nuances".[14] Indeed, Nunziante is sympathetic to the political-cum-philosophical approach to scientific naturalism and the Placement Problem, writing that "[n]aturalism is more than a theoretical episode, rather it is a properly ideological discourse bound up with the institutional form of contemporary Western society".[15] Nunziante then proposes that the analysis can and should be deepened by paying more attention to the history of naturalism, at least with respect to American humanism. For that matter, he draws attention to Arthur E. Murphy's 1945 review of *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, which "denounced the authoritarian character of American naturalism".[16] Quoting Murphy, "naturalists seem at times to be maintaining that no one can differ from them […] without thereby showing himself to be at least a crypto-fascist and enemy of free Inquiry".[17]

I think there is much to conceptually mine here. I agree with Nunziante's contention that "an analysis of the historical processes that in the 1940s caused the American naturalist debate to go beyond the form of a philosophical discourse to become embodied in academies, institutions and worldwide organisations"[18] is much-needed. On this very point, while there is forthcoming philosophical work that establishes a conceptual link between (a) the

13 Giladi, P. (ed.), *Responses to Naturalism: Critical Perspectives from Idealism and Pragmatism*. New York, Routledge 2019, p. 85.

14 Nunziante, A., Review of *Responses to Naturalism: Critical Perspectives from Idealism and Pragmatism*. *Hegel Bulletin*, 42, 2021, pp. 152–156, esp. p. 153 (hereafter Review of *Responses to Naturalism*).

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Murphy, A. E., Review of Naturalism and the Human Spirit. *Journal of Philosophy*, 42, 1945, pp. 400–417, esp. p. 404.

18 Nunziante, A., Review of *Responses to Naturalism*, pp. 153–154.

colonisation of the lifeworld by the capitalist mode of production and (b) the colonisation of the space of reasons by nomothetic vocabulary,[19] where such a conceptual link might go some way to addressing the general aspects of what Nunziante has written, it would not be reasonable to claim that such work has done justice to the specifics of his challenge here.

Though obviously not ostensibly concerned with idealist, second-generation Frankfurt School, and post-structuralist vocabularies, Stephen Weldon's *The Scientific Spirit of American Humanism* (2020) does much to shed light on what Nunziante has called 'the civil agenda of naturalism'.[20] This monograph is an excellent example of what Nunziante has in mind regarding the specificities of his challenge. In this respect, then, I think one highly promising and needed future research project on critical responses to naturalism *qua* their political nuances would involve detailing the history of how scientific naturalism and American humanism became so intimately connected and politically framed: there is something fascinating about the specifically *American* attitude to naturalism. For, on the one hand, scientific naturalism had been modelled as the exact sort of epistemically, morally, and politically virtuous democratic experimentalist sensibility, one which is symptomatic of John Dewey's pragmatism and its approach to fixing both inquiry and the situation. Whereas on the other hand – and crucially, before Stanley Cavell and Richard Rorty respectively entered the conceptual field here – there were American theorists contending that Deweyan democracy and experimental educational *praxis* are stymied by the ascendency of scientific naturalism. To this extent, then, any future critical response to naturalism would do very well to meet the details of Nunziante's challenge, build on Weldon's work, and elaborate the processes historically operative in the U.S.

2.2 Decoloniality and Queer Theory

As previously mentioned, the second theme of the burgeoning critical responses to naturalism is oriented to discussing the power relations governing the Placement Problem that are logically connected with the exercise of nomothetic reason. On this subject, there is forthcoming work on decolonising the space of reasons. However, such work has only briefly touched on a *formal* (and certainly not material) parallel with Frantz Fanon's account of the colonial mentality, which elaborates the damaged subjectivity of those

19 See Giladi, P., Scientism as Ideology; Speculative Naturalism as Qualified-Decoloniality. In: Corti, L. – Schülein, J.-L. (eds.), *Life and Cognition: Understanding Nature between Classical German Philosophy and Contemporary Debates*. London, Springer 2021; forthcoming.

20 In personal correspondence with me.

subjected to colonisation. Additionally, such work has merely pointed to Walter Mignolo's contemporary approach to decoloniality, which differs from decolonisation in terms of political epistemic scope and ambition.[21]

Because decoloniality fuses epistemic and political concerns together, I think there is much to be gained from fully developing a critical response to naturalism that focuses on the *formal* aspects of the conceptual parallel between (a) the colonial mentality and 'docile' minds and (b) the kind of intellectual 'double-consciousness' humanists experience in higher education institutions, which now increasingly internalise neoliberal jargon and model their financial viability exclusively on STEM models. If one is serious about *this* direction of critical theoretic travel, one which exceeds the Habermasian framework of the clash between system-integrated patterns of reproducing ideologically-pathologised culture, personality, and society that is decidedly at odds with the background communicative discourses and grammars of forms of life, then I think one is increasingly obliged to centre Aníbal Quijano's notion of the coloniality of power in future research.

For, if one accepts that the function of radical social critique of scientific naturalism is to identify and break unequal power relations, then the epistemology of this radical critical theory of society is likely to involve the kind of creatively subversive practices and *Weltanschauungen* associated with Mignolo's concept of epistemic disobedience (*desobediencia epistémica*) and Quijano's notion of de-linking (*desprendimiento*). Epistemic disobedience and de-linking are the logical motors of decoloniality. They are *creatively* subversive for at least two reasons. First, epistemic disobedience and de-linking design the relation between the architecture of epistemic power and the organisation of the logical space of reasons as no longer involving any kind of colonial feedback loop that not only privileges one grammar and vocabulary over others, but also seeks to subject and dominate other grammars and vocabularies. Second, the effort to radically re-design the architecture of power and the organisation of the space of reasons to ensure a virtuous feedback loop is a cathartic and convulsive act that goes beyond those progressive discourses that strive to 'make room for' or 'eke out novelty' in existing conceptual spaces. As Quijano and Mignolo respectively write,

> [i]t is necessary to extricate oneself from all the linkages between rationality/modernity and coloniality, first of all, and definitely from all power which is not constituted by free decisions made by free people. It is the instrumentalisation of the reasons for power, of colonial power in the first

21 See Moosavi (2020) for further on this. Moosavi, L., The Decolonial Bandwagon and the Dangers of Intellectual Decolonisation. *International Review of Sociology*, 30, 2020, No. 2, pp. 332–354.

> place, which produced distorted paradigms of knowledge and spoiled the liberating promises of modernity. The alternative, then, is clear: the destruction of the coloniality of world power.[22]

Epistemic disobedience takes us to a different place… to spatial sites of struggles and building rather than to a new temporality within the same space (from Greece, to Rome, to Paris, to London, to Washington DC).[23]

The decolonial point about not focusing on finding space in existing modalities that allow or tolerate alternative vocabularies and sense-making frameworks is a deeply powerful revisionary metaphysical one. Indeed, I think there is scope to further enhance it by bringing in an ever-growing critical theoretic tradition, one which is typified by its dismantling of the still-dominant conservative/liberal paradigm frame: queer theory.

There seems to be no barrier, in principle, to thinking that, for example, conceptual features of Michael Warner's and Judith Butler's respective critiques of 'normalising' discourses and same-sex marriage[24] may be employed to turbo-boost left-wing Sellarsianism. More generally speaking, since the Placement Problem's (ideological) legitimacy rests on how it has weaponised the J. L. Mackie-inspired panic about queerness *simpliciter*, it seems to make conceptual, as well as, political sense to develop a queer theoretic dismantling of the Placement Problem and scientific naturalism itself. *Prima facie*, however, one would not be remiss for not immediately assenting to how, for instance, Butler's queering of kinship structures bears on left-wing Sellarsian concerns.

To clarify things, then, it is important to grasp the central logic of queer theory, namely the orientation towards a desire to (i) identify and disclose heteronormativity and 'normal' as ideological and (ii) debunk the still-dominant liberal paradigm. For Butler, the worry about the turn towards same-sex marriage is that homosexual couples, who historically have been outside the sexual norm, suddenly start to become assimilated into that norm through internalising the norms of heterosexual marriage. To put this differently, her concern is that this sexual minority desire the same kinship arrangements as heterosexuals, and that by conforming, 'normality' and heteronormativity still exert power over the way in which sexuality is officially

22 Quijano, A., Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality [1999]. *Cultural Studies*, 21, 2007, No. 2–3, pp. 168–178, esp. p. 177.

23 Mignolo, W., Epistemic Disobedience and the Decolonial Option: A Manifesto. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1, 2011, No. 2, pp. 44–66, esp. p. 45.

24 See Warner, M., *The Trouble with Normal*. New York, The Free Press 1999; Butler, J., Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual? *Differences*, 13, 2002, No. 1, pp. 14–44.

constituted. For queer theorists, then, the critique of same-sex marriage is based on the idea that homosexuals have started becoming obsessed with seeking recognition from the *status quo*, that they have become pathologically dependent on receiving recognition and legitimation from the state. Because marriage in and of itself is a conservative institution, marriage *eo ipso* is a barrier to progressive configurations of the multiplicity of kinship structures, many of which actively resist normalisation by marriage and which are operationalised and made distinct by how they are irreducible to normalisation. The claim to liberal progressiveness in the wake of the legalisation of same-sex marriage, then, seems to not just be premature, but also a disturbing form of coded ideology. For, not being married and not being legitimated by the state produces a debilitating doubt about the metaphysical legitimacy of one's non-marital relationship. This variety of doubt is hermeneutically crippling and deeply distressing. It prevents a healthy practical relation-to-one's-beloved. But, as fascinating as this is, how does it bear any conceptual relation to combating the subsumption of the manifest image in the ideal scientific image?

Queering the manifest image would involve a marked suspicion that the liberal discourses that seek to 'make room' and 'find a place' for conceptually recalcitrant phenomena, such as normativity, concede far too much ground to *any* naturalist, to the extent that one even seeks the naturalist's approval for one's making sense of conceptually recalcitrant phenomena in a way that does not disturb the discursive *status quo*. Just like many liberals often contend that a gay couple is a perfectly normal and acceptable kinship structure – i.e. the gay couple is just like the straight couple, but the only minor difference between the couples is the sexual orientation – liberal naturalists will insist that normativity et al. are nothing 'spooky'. Queering the manifest image puts significant pressure on this kind of discourse with a view to a wholescale revisionary metaphysics that is tantamount to an especially radical response to Sellars's own preference for smoothly integrating the manifest image with the scientific image *via* logical irreducibility-cum-causal reducibility.

Thinking from the queer theoretic perspective reveals the double-blind that needs to be overcome, where such transformative work can be realised through combining this critical perspective with the decolonial logics of Quijano and Mignolo: if one seeks legitimation from either conservative or liberal naturalists, one end ups narrowing the discursive field through internalising the norms of conservative or liberal naturalism that maintain hegemonic epistemic power *qua* setting the parameters of what is possibly articulable in logical space, as well as the specific and appropriate rules in playing the game of giving and asking for reasons here. On the flipside,

those who actively resist, challenge the discursive *status quo*, and aim to overcome the desire for this ideological recognition have their revisionary vocabulary at heightened risk of 'derealisation', to use Butler's expression. In sum, the first horn of this dilemma is the cost of staying true to one's alternative discursive formation, namely being vulnerable to the symbolic harms of hostility to the queering orientation, "the defamation of alternative modes of thought which contradict the established universe of discourse".[25] The second horn of the dilemma is that in desiring the recognition of those in positions of established epistemic power, one forsakes the development of radical, creative, new, inclusive, polydimensional discourse, which in turn prevents the articulation of a conception of the manifest image and the space of reasons which is genuinely reflective of these queer phenomena and how they operate.

2.3 Psychoanalytic Presuppositions?

Returning to Foucault now, one of his most enduring contributions to the genealogy and archaeology of knowledge is his view that modern natural science emerges from the Inquisition's model of investigation:

> [i]n their historical formation, measure, inquiry, and examination were all means of exercising power and, at the same time, rules for establishing knowledge. Measure: a means of establishing or restoring order, the right order, in the combat of men or the elements; but also a matrix of mathematical and physical knowledge. The inquiry: a means of establishing or restoring facts, events, actions, properties, rights; but also a matrix of empirical knowledge and natural sciences. The examination: a means of setting or reinstating the standard, the rule, the distribution, the qualification, the exclusion.[26]

Invariably, it would not be a continental philosophical-leaning intellectual party without bringing in psychoanalysis into the conversation here, not least because Foucault's archaeological model is psychoanalytically saturated. I confess, though, that my knowledge of psychoanalytic theory is restricted to elementary Freudian and Jungian frameworks. I have next to no familiarity with Lacanian psychoanalysis. However, despite my lack of detailed psychoanalytic knowledge, I would tentatively insist that Foucault's

25 Marcuse, H., *One-Dimensional Man*. London–New York, Routledge 2002, p. 178.
26 Foucault, M., *Essential Works, Volume 1: Ethics, Subjectivity, and Truth*. Ed. P. Rabinow. New York, New Press 1997, pp. 17–18.

position gives good reason to think that what might be legitimately termed the *nomothetic drive* is bound up with disciplinary drives. Talk of drives in this context has been previously touched on but not fully elaborated.[27]

It strikes me that developing this line of philosophical inquiry, which is part of a currently conceptually unchartered territory, is very much worth pursuing. For, assuming one is interested in questions of power and disclosing the underlying motivations of clashing *Weltanschauungen*, then clearly and rigorously incorporating psychoanalytic approaches and sense-making frameworks would be an engaging, complementary direction of travel for future research on naturalism *simpliciter*, as well as future research on *critical responses to various kinds of naturalism*. In principle at least, the activity of clearly and rigorously disclosing the psychoanalytic presuppositions of scientific naturalism, differing types of liberal naturalism, and near-naturalism, would signify an original contribution to the philosophical literature that fills a gap, not least because, as far as I am aware, neither mainstream Anglo-American nor heterodox/post-analytic approaches to naturalism have thus far engaged (positively or negatively) with psychoanalysis.

Focusing for the moment solely on Alex Rosenberg's contemporary variety of scientism, it intuitively strikes me that a psychoanalytic approach here may profess that some kind of Apollonian fetish and fear of being at home with complexity in nature are jointly operating in the background of Rosenberg's position and *Weltanschauung*:

> What is the world really like? It's fermions and bosons, and everything that can be made up of them, and nothing that can't be made up of them. All the facts about fermions and bosons determine or 'fix' all the other facts about reality and what exists in this universe or any other if, as physics may end up showing, there are other ones. Another way of expressing this fact-fixing by physics is to say that all the other facts—the chemical, biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural facts supervene on the physical facts and are ultimately explained by them. And if physics can't in principle fix a putative fact, it is no fact after all.[28]

27 See Giladi, P., Introduction. Indeed, the Foucault-inspired contention that the nomothetic drive is bound up with disciplinary drives also resonates with (a) Weber's sociological analysis of the sub-processes of rationalisation *qua* disenchantment, (b) Adorno & Horkheimer's view of the Enlightenment as constitutively obsessed with violence and domination in the manner of de Sade's Juliette, and (c) Habermas's account of the knowledge-constitutive interest of nomothetic inquiry.

28 Rosenberg, A., Disenchanted Naturalism. In: Bashour, B. – Muller, H. D. (eds.), *Contemporary Philosophical Naturalism and Its Implications*. New York–London, Routledge 2014, p. 9.

2.4 Putting Hegel and Neurath in Conversation

Rosenberg is perhaps the leading contemporary devout follower of an unqualified, imperialistic, hierarchical Unity of Science Thesis (UIHUST).[29] Such a position contends that every phenomenon explicable by special sciences, such as biology and psychology, is in principle reductively explicable by fundamental physics. Suffice to say that UIHUST is naïve, 'greedy' (in Daniel Dennett's sense), and, above all, an *easily* refutable Comtean positivist position, so much so that UIHUST is not taken especially seriously in contemporary philosophy of science.[30] Having said that, even though pragmatic realism in philosophy of science does not entail – and in fact, strictly speaking, undermines – UIHUST, the following pertinent question arises: 'why, from a diagnostic perspective, does scientism still persist?' Scientism is, therefore, peculiar, because it persists despite resting on implausible grounds, since "the omnipresent neo-Pythagoreanism of contemporary science is surely not adequately justified by its empirical successes".[31]

Crucially, on the point about positivism, Nancy Cartwright et al. (1996) have convincingly argued that UIHUST is *not* attributable to Otto Neurath and his variety of logical positivism, especially considering his anti-foundationalism, anti-pyramidism, and articulation of an 'encyclopaedia-model'. This is because Neurath's very nuanced conception of the Unity of Science involves mapping out the relationship between philosophy, the exact sciences, and the special sciences as involving multiple vocabularies interacting with each other as a discursive constellation of 'mosaics' involving 'systematisation from below'. It should, therefore, come as no surprise why Neurath was the leading figure on the Vienna Circle's left-wing.

However, what should come as a surprise, given the above characterisation of Neurath's position, is the paucity of research on establishing a productive conversation between Neurath and Hegel on *these* philosophical issues.[32] For,

29 Nagel, E., *The Structure of Science*. New York, Harcourt, Brace and World 1961; and Oppenheim, P. – Putnam, H., The Unity of Science as a Working Hypothesis. In: Feigl, H. – et al. (eds.), *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 2. Minneapolis, Minnesota University Press 1958.

30 Pragmatic realism in philosophy of science does not entail – and in fact, strictly speaking, undermines – UIHUST. Given this, the following pertinent question arises: 'why, from a diagnostic perspective, does scientism still persist?' Scientism is, therefore, peculiar, because it persists despite resting on implausible grounds, since "the omnipresent neo-Pythagoreanism of contemporary science is surely not adequately justified by its empirical successes". Dupré, J., *The Disorder of Things: Metaphysical Foundations of the Disunity of Science*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press 1995, p. 224.

31 Ibid.

32 Rockmore (1989) is the only paper that I am aware of that puts between Hegel and logical empiricists (principally Rudolf Carnap) directly in touch with one another on the subject of the

Neurath's fondness for heterogeneity and pluralism means that an engaging discussion is to be had between his encyclopaedia-model and Hegel's metaphilosophy, his philosophy of nature, and his construal of *Geist* as discursive amphibians.[33] The principal intellectual advantage of starting a serious and much-welcomed conversation between Hegel and Neurath, something which has never been attempted, is that it opens conceptual space for rich constructive disagreement about, for example, the logical structure of the sciences and their interrelations, the place of metaphysics, and the nature of inquiry itself. Because rich constructive disagreement between idealists and positivists is properly communicative and devoid of the regrettable tendency endemic in both camps to grossly mischaracterise one another, rich constructive disagreement would bring about a much needed and welcomed *rapprochement* between idealists and positivists. This would be evidenced by the structure of the dialectic, which would involve (i) a *suasive* interplay between Hegelian speculative naturalists and Neurathian pragmatist positivists on the subject of metaphysics, and (ii) a debate between Hegelian speculative naturalists and Neurathian pragmatist positivists concerning *explanatory* arguments for a nuanced naturalism and a nuanced unity of science, anti-foundationalism, anti-pyramidism, and anti-reductionism.

The final area for future research on critical responses to naturalism I have in mind is one which involves an idiosyncratic critical theoretic take on the theme of alienation, discursive impoverishment, and negative sociocultural affect. However, what individuates this direction of research travel *qua* the concern about conceptual loss is not only how the proposed subject-matter is bound up with various psychoanalytic presuppositions which need unpacking, but also how the worry about conceptual loss in the context of the proposed subject-matter provides a way of enabling the literature on critical responses to naturalism and the ever-increasing literature on critical social epistemology bear on another.

2.5 Flattened Affectivity: Naturalisation as Injury to Erotic Dignity

The proposed subject-matter concerns sexual arousal.[34] In one sense, this would not be a domain of inquiry one would intuitively deem as evocative of responses to naturalism, considering how more technical issues concerning normativity, intentionality, personhood, 'second nature', meaning, (dis)unity

unity of science. Rockmore, T., Hegel and the Unity of Science Programme. *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 6, 1989, No. 1, pp. 331–346.

33 See *LA* I:53–55.

34 This is not to be conflated with sexual desire.

of science, and so on are omnipresent in historical and contemporary Anglo-American discourses on naturalism. However, in another sense, the subject of sexual arousal is perhaps one of the most philosophically appropriate to address when responding to naturalism, particularly if one is interested in power relations and socio-cultural affect.

Despite important research on women's sexual response cycle by, for example, Helen Singer Kaplan (1974) and Rosemary Basson (2000, 2002), and despite the DSM-5's (2013) attempted re-conceptualisation of women's sexual arousal, which displays welcome sensitivity to the phenomenological complexities of women's experiences of arousal in the wake of the known low concordance between subjective reports of arousal and genital response in women, much contemporary sexology is still wedded to the underlying physiological-centric framework of Masters & Johnson (1966). Indeed, some sexologists wish to double-down on the Masters & Johnson discourse and sense-making paradigm here, writing that "[w]ith the development of ambulatory psychophysiological equipment, more naturalistic assessments of women's sexual concordance will be possible".[35] To this end, then, some sexologists insist that sex will be good again tomorrow only if the erotic is naturalised. It should, therefore, come to not surprise that the Masters & Johnson framework ideologically maintains its epistemic power on the back of the legitimacy of scientific naturalism. To this end, if one wishes to dismantle the Masters & Johnson paradigm, this requires dismantling scientific naturalism itself. To my mind at least, there are two principal issues with the scientific naturalist framework which are serious enough to merit abandoning the scientific naturalist framework.

First, the naturalisation of the erotic lifeworld constitutes a specific type of symbolic injury to erotic agents, where the injury in question concerns suffering from, following Alasdair MacIntyre, conceptual amnesia, as opposed to thinking, talking, speaking, and writing *as if* one inhabited a world from which phenomenologico-hermeneutic terms for communicating about the erotic had withered away. The idea of reducing sexual arousal to ostensible physiological markers, such as vasocongestion, tumescence, and vaginal and clitoral lubrication, 'tames' the erotic through a naturalising simplification, thereby making the erotic placeable/locatable and consequently easier to discursively (and politically) manage, epistemically (and politically) organise, and render intelligible. This taming of the erotic strikes me as a type of coercive de-sexualisation, to the extent that what started out (and

35 Chivers, M. L. – Seto, M. C. – Lalumiere, M. L. – Laan, E. – Grimbos, T., Agreement of self-reported and genital measures of sexual arousal in men and women: A meta-analysis. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 39, 2010, No. 1, pp. 5–56, esp. p. 50.

is) deeply personal and life-affirming mutates into 'flattened affectivity', to use Audré Lorde's expression. Indeed, the constant search for physiological markers of women's sexual arousal, especially in the light of the *low* concordance between subjective reports and genital response, ironically reveals that such inquiry is deeply ignorant of embodiment and hostile to women's testimonial competencies.

This leads me to the second point here. The dominant scientific naturalist discourses about sexual arousal, rather than contribute to the pro-sex idea of women's liberation *via* sexual liberation, contribute to disciplining women. The vocabulary of these discourses forms, what may be termed, an 'ideological feedback loop' with the erotically oppressive controlling image of female sexual arousal constitutive of the pornography industry. The alienating regulatory force of this controlling image, at the epistemic level, involves, what Kristie Dotson has termed, 'testimonial smothering'. This is because women, under such increasing pressure, have to modify their own self-reflections of sexual arousal into a language that renders their sexual arousal more intelligible to men (at the cost of being fully expressive of women's sexual agency and their non-androcentrically-steered erotic subjectivities). So, instead of ensuring sex will be good again tomorrow, the naturalisation of the erotic makes sex worse.

3. Conclusion

Having first provided a topography of contemporary critical approaches to the Placement Problem, and then provided a brief thematic summary of a burgeoning critical response to naturalism, one which tries to weave together Hegelian, 'post-analytical', Frankfurt School critical theoretic, pragmatist, and quasi-decolonial conceptual frameworks, what I hope to have achieved in this paper is to map out a promising programme for future research on critical responses to naturalism. The task is to "keep conversation going",[36] by meeting Nunziante's challenge, by centring and combining decolonial and queer theoretic discursive formations to enhance critical theoretic responses to naturalism, by putting Hegel and Neurath in direct conversation, and by developing a critique of sexology's scientific naturalist framework for making sense of sexual arousal.

36 Rorty, R., *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature.* Princeton, Princeton University Press 1979, p. 377.

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Reviews

Eric S. Nelson: Daoism and Environmental Philosophy: Nourishing Life

New York, Routledge 2021. 156 pp.

1. Overview: Book and Author

A man from Lu gifted King Yüan a knot. The king ordered all talented people to come and unravel it. But nobody succeeded. A pupil of Ní Yùe asked for permission to try. He could unravel one half of the knot, but not the other. He said: "It is not that it could be unravelled and I did not succeed, instead it cannot be unravelled." The man from Lu was consulted. He said: "Yes, the knot indeed cannot be unravelled. I made it and know that it cannot be. But someone who did not make it and still knows that it cannot be unravelled is surely more talented than me." Thus the pupil of Ní Yùe solved the knot by not solving it. (cited in Heubel 2016: 201, transl. DB)

Compared to the myth of the Gordian Knot, in which the knot is ultimately cut by a sword, this classical Chinese story illustrates a different way of tackling an overly complex problem: solving it by not solving it. Can we apply such examples of paradoxical thinking in early Daoist writing to the complex 'knot' of closely intertwined social and environmental problems in the Anthropocene? Could we use strategies like non-solution, non-interference, or non-domination in relation to the global crisis? These are the key questions posed by Eric S. Nelson's new book *Daoism and Environmental Philosophy*. It is thus placed it neatly in the middle of the debate about how Daoist ideas can be applied to the environmental crisis on one hand (Parkes 2021, Sťahel 2020, Schönfeld/Chen 2019, D'Ambrosio 2013) and the need to decolonise Western thought on the other (Bendix et al. 2021, Allen 2019).

Nelson is a humanities professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. His work is on Critical Social Theory, hermeneutics and phenomenology as well as Daoist and Buddhist philosophy, especially in relation to intercultural environmental philosophy.

Daoism and Environmental Philosophy explores the potential of early Daoist texts – such as the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi* – as a source of guidance for contemporary environmental practice in the Anthropocene. In revealing the critical and transformative dimensions of these, he develops an intercultural political

ecology. In this review, I present this line of argument in more detail before discussing Nelson's work.

2. Detailed Description of the Book

2.1 Introduction: Early Daoist Ethics and the Philosophy of Nature

Before embarking on his investigation, Nelson lays the groundwork. **First** of all, he openly embraces early Daoist writing as a hybrid of religion and philosophy. Daoist writing has to be understood as a practical philosophy of life where the aim is to "reflectively encounter, engage, and question the circumstances and conditions of one's life and engage in an art or technique of living" (Nelson 2021: 6).[1] He stresses that as such, **secondly**, Daoist writing seeks to have "a transformative effect" (ibid.: 8) on individuals and governments, recommending multiple models of how one can best live and act. This can be achieved through communicative strategies like sceptical reasoning, paradoxes, or open ended questions that are not common in Western philosophical and scientific debates. **Thirdly**, Nelson shows that the idea of "nature", in the narrow sense of a unified external world that supports and limits human activity, does not exist in early Daoist writing. **Fourthly**, Nelson advocates a "critical therapeutic ecology" that rejects coercively fixated actions and instead prioritises minimalism, non-domination, non-dualism, and the self-ordering abilities of uninterrupted natural processes. **Finally**, Nelson flatly rejects interpretations that cast Daoism as favouring fatalistic or indifferent passivity. Instead he argues that in the present era it would recommend "restoring and reviving the broken, interrupted, and pathological patterns of an ecologically devastated earth and damaged life" (ibid.).

2.2 Nourishing Life, Cultivating Nature, and Environmental Philosophy

Chapter 2 is concerned with several terms and concepts that are key to Nelson's analysis. The guiding theme here is a critical discussion of what "nourishing life", the subtitle of the book, means in different classical Daoist works (cf. ibid: 24f.). The main opposition runs between its interpretation as (a) echoing natural tendencies (cf. ibid.: 26f.) and (b) as artificial enhancement of life (cf. ibid.: 27f.). Using a paradoxical synthesis (ibid. 34ff.) Nelson argues in favour of a middle way – the "responsive attunement" of actions to the unhindered flow of natural processes (cf. ibid.: 42). Nelson concludes that in the Anthropocene, where the extreme domination of nature by human beings has disrupted the self-patterning of natural systems, such unforced participation in the sum of happenings (*dao*) is a sustainable form of action that is non-coercive but not neutral or indifferent.

1 In line with Nelson's book, I refer to early Daoist philosophy and texts.

2.3 Wuwei, Responsive Attunement, and Generative Nature

Chapter 3 provides the core of the book's argument. In this chapter Nelson reveals his paradox-based interpretation of how we should and should not act when facing the Anthropocene.

The key term here is *wu-wei*, a combination of the Chinese words *wu* (without, nothing, no, not) and *wei* (to do, act as, serve as, become). Nelson distinguishes between three different classical readings of this term. While **Confucianists** see *wu-wei* as moralistic and cosmological – "nature and humanity cooperate to engender a harmoniously balanced and hierarchically organised state of affairs" (Nelson 2021: 51) – **Legalists** stress the non-engagement side, for example the king should not (publicly) interfere with the duties of his ministers but remain hidden behind the laws that he makes. Nelson's investigation focuses on the last of these, the **Daoist** approach. The only norm here is that the course of things, the *dao,* should be followed (ibid.: 53), which means "working with the natural tendencies in things toward restoring sustainable, functional, self-reproducing relational systems" (ibid.: 56).

In this context, *wu-wei* does not simply mean not acting – no ethical guidelines can follow from that – but "a special kind of flexible, receptive, or minimal action, a way of comporting oneself or being attuned" (ibid.: 49). In other words, *wu-wei* is timely, unforced action with minimal effort. Any effort must be in tune with the self-organised flow of ongoing transformations and not impose changes that disrupt the flow. Nelson therefore translates *wu-wei* as responsive attunement.

He concludes that *wu-wei* "contests and disrupts the maximalism of relentless aggressive intervention, commodification, and overproduction and consumption characteristics of existing capitalist societies and political economies" (Nelson 2021: 69). So although *wu-wei* was "not developed in the context of the modern ecological crisis [...] [it] can be ecologically redeployed and reimagined for the sake of present life and addressing its most pressing environmental crisis-tendencies" (Nelson 2021: 68).

2.4 Emptying Ecology: Nothingness, Language, and Encountering Things

Chapter 4 deepens the analysis of chapter 3 by exploring the philosophical ideas behind the *wu* in *wu-wei*. It is crucial to understand that in Chinese philosophy nothingness is an engendering, life-giving precondition for everything else. The meaning of the ethical concepts described in Chapter 3 thus depends on the interpretation of *wu*.

Nelson explores the dimensions of *wu* by analysing the philosophy of (non-) language in the concepts of emptiness (74ff.), uselessness (80ff.), and nothingness (87ff.). The related Daoist strategies of mental 'emptying', 'fasting', and 'self-forgetting' are aimed at removing the illusionary divisions between things. They therefore contest the discursive barriers that have been erected between the self

and others, humans and things; these are the barriers that facilitated the extreme domination of nature with drastic social and environmental consequences in the Anthropocene. As Nelson puts it:

"The recognition and appreciation of things (that which is as it is) pulls us […] outside of our own presumptions and projects toward the nothingness that cannot be determinatively said and conceived even through the most flexible and indirect uses of language. […] [T]hat can inform and allow the reimagining of environmental philosophy" (ibid.: 96).

2.5 Early Daoist Biopolitics and a New Daoist Political Ecology

While Chapter 4 concluded that the ecological strategy of emptiness releases things so they can flourish in their own way, Chapter 5 outlines the broader concept of "Daoist political ecology" on a similar basis. Chapter 5 is therefore the most political and most frequently criticised part of the book.

Here, the term 'political ecology' is already a political statement that suggests that an environmental ethics will not suffice given the "systematically reproduced social-economic processes in advanced capitalist societies" (Nelson 2021: 100). Nelson states that social and political philosophy must "offer an environmentally oriented critique of existing social structures and institutions that directly and indirectly harm creatures and degrade ecosystems" (Nelson 2021: 100). In this chapter he therefore explores what early Daoist sources can contribute to contemporary critical ecology and social theory.

In doing so, Nelson contests the anachronistic dichotomy that posits Daoism interpretations as either totalitarian (101ff.) or anarchic (106ff.). Rejecting these two extremes on the grounds that they are a reductive and de-contextualised modern misreading of the *Daodejing*, he tries to show how the eco-democratic practices (112ff.) of care, nurture, and the primacy of others could be derived from a more complex and comprehensive study of it. He therefore concludes that the "Daoist inspired critical models [of political philosophy] are potentially far more radically democratic in teaching more expansive forms of non-domination that anarchically release persons and things from forms of violence, hierarchical stratification, and coercion" (ibid.: 116).

2.6 Epilogue: Emptying Ecology and Chan Buddhism

Chapter 6 is a historical excursion into the way classical Daoist ideas of emptying were taken up in Chan Buddhism. Nelson's main aim here is to highlight the complexity of good self-cultivation in Daoist ethics, by contesting interpretations that stress antinomianism (123ff.) on one hand and perfectionism in aretaic virtues (129ff.) on the other. His main reason for including this chapter is to show the reader how "to speak in paradoxes and [thereby] challenge conventional and moralistic ways of thinking and living" (Nelson 2021: 119). In this context he concludes that

Daoist and Chan discourses and practices "indicate a therapeutics and embodied practices of emptying that dismantle the illusions of self-power and the mastery and domination of nature that reflects our current ecological crisis-tendencies" (ibid.: 134).

3. Discussion

Eric S. Nelson's *Daoism and Environmental philosophy* provides us with a comprehensive and nuanced interpretation of the relevance of classical Daoist texts for critical environmental philosophy in the Anthropocene. His work could not be more topical as he embraces the need to reject both the de-politicisation of the politico-economic driving forces behind the current socio-ecological crisis tendencies and a coercive environmentalism that ultimately has authoritarian dimensions. Remarkably, his middle way is neither neutral nor apolitical, as are many interpretations of Daoism as spiritual escapism, radical individualism, and fatalistic indifference. Against such an unworldly withdrawal from the political, Nelson formulates a political ecology that goes beyond an environmental ethics.

Nelson deserves great credit for avoiding the two most common pitfalls in the use of Daoist concepts to address the Anthropocene: romanticisation of classical Chinese philosophy and flirtation with the idea of eco-authoritarianism (e.g. Schönfeld/Chen 2019). This is the key aspect of his book that makes his work an outstanding contribution to the pressing challenge of finding a fresh and undogmatic perspective on how (not) to act in the Anthropocene.

I have, however, three main criticisms of Nelson's book. The **first** relates to his writing style. Many passages, especially those containing crucial conclusions and syntheses, seem to drown in opaque word-clouds that repeat various combinations of phrases and words such as "myriad things", "flourishing", "shared elemental body of life", "nurturing", "the embodied self", and "the environing world". These provide little in the way of clarity on the complex paradox-based thinking that Nelson outlines, but instead sow conceptual confusion and mystification. **Second**, despite the convincing discussion of the different political ecologies in classical Daoist texts, the resulting synergy of "Daoist political ecology" remains undeveloped in argument and has manifold shortcomings. One is the simplistic embedding of Daoist concepts in modern Western European political philosophy (113f.). It is not persuasive to vaguely hint at parallels between Daoist concepts and the works of Plato, Mill, Arendt, and Habermas – an analysis of concrete relations is lacking. **Third**, Nelson's work seems to be trapped between the conflicting ideas of critical social theory on one hand and social psychology on the other. He tries to unite both dimensions in his "therapeutic ecology", but the synthesis is ultimately unconvincing. Nelson's view on individual self-cultivation is only weakly linked to capitalist social developments, and his critique of socie-

tal structures and institutions falls short of explaining how exactly it is linked to practices of self-cultivation. What effect does personal transformation through the process of emptying have on societal transformation towards non-dominant relations with nature, given the social context of advanced capitalist societies?

Despite these criticisms, I fully recommend *Daoism and Environmental Philosophy* to anyone interested in exploring the relevance of classical Chinese philosophy in the Anthropocene. The careful synopsis of early Daoist texts embraces the challenge of paradox-based thinking without abandoning the idea of a practical philosophy. Indeed it could inform urgently needed new approaches in contemporary environmental policy and practice by offering a fundamental rethinking of the relations between society and nature in the Anthropocene that posits them as an unresolvable but not hopeless paradox.

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Libor Benda: Akademická svoboda jako filosofický problém[1]

Pravda, spravedlnost a profesionální odpovědnost

Academic Freedom as a Philosophical Problem

Truth, Justice and Professional Responsibility

Praha, Sociologické nakladatelství 2020. 172 pp.

What is academic freedom? We all think we know the answer – particularly when we are not actually being asked the question. Academic freedom seems so familiar to us now that we take it for granted. We assume it will be here forever as a 'legal constant'. But like Libor Benda, I think there is a deficit here. For not only is the term academic freedom far from unproblematic but the traditional arguments wheeled out in its defence do not always suffice (especially in the complex situation academia finds itself in today). Benda's work is a timely challenge for us to discuss and rethink the 'notion of the university'.

Contemplating, analysing and interpreting our academic existence leads us to many thought-provoking and highly relevant problems that philosophy is best placed to tackle in an interdisciplinary fashion, in collaboration with law, history, sociology, economics, anthropology departments and so forth. These problems include the nature of intellectual work and the academic profession, academic culture and identity, academic norms and values, the issues of autonomy and self-governance and the relationships between knowledge and education and teaching and research that lie at the heart of academic life. Behind the problems of academia lurk the main problems of modernity and the current era, especially the Enlightenment and its legacy. And here the key problem for the information or knowledge society is the means of 'knowledge and education production'. One way or another, these have long been the concern of philosophy of education, social and political philosophy, ethics and other areas of philosophy.

One philosopher who contemplated the academic world, including the problem of academic freedom, was John Dewey, a founder of the American Association of University Professors (1915). The association issued several statements and declarations (1915, 1940, 1994) setting out its basic principles. These had global reach in the academic world for they drew on Humboldt's early nineteenth century German initiative, modifying it for the twentieth century. Dewey was interested in the 'professorial' freedom of the academic profession. As president of the association he strongly advocated for the professional rights of professors and for

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their involvement in university governance and the practical decision-making concerning the processes and results of their work.

Libor Benda does not mention Dewey in his book (his name does not even appear in the index), but his approach to analysing the complexities of academic freedom is both similar and compatible. The two scholars view academic freedom in relation to other issues – primarily key issues regarding the character, substance and point of academia generally. As we all know, Dewey defended academic freedom in terms of the need for democracy in education, which he understood to be a matter of way of life, in this case 'life in school'. Academic freedom –described as a 'very fragile concept' by Benda (pp. 24, 37) – is a fundamental part of academic democracy and so both these things need to be continually shaped (and maintained) to ensure that they reflect (but also can critically respond to) the changing conditions. Benda, like Dewey, is not content with a merely political concept of academic freedom (the current variations of which are adeptly analysed and rejected in chapter 2 of the book), but develops a professionalised concept of academic freedom that is an integral part of the academic profession (outlined in chapter 3). This concept is both the core of Benda's work and his main contribution. It also allows him to perform an artful analysis (albeit on a small area) of the historical evolution of the traditional concept of academic freedom (in chapter 1). His history of the university covers both the defence and development of the university as well as the threats and repressions thrown in its path. Benda quite rightly points out the twists and turns in the history of the university, and these show that in practice 'genuine' academic freedom has never fully existed, not even when guaranteed in law. His analysis of other problems shows that simply seeing academic freedom as freedom of speech and intellectual freedom has never sufficed.

Benda therefore suggests that the focal point should be elsewhere: academic freedom is not just about thinking or expressing views but also about academic practice(s), the conduct (of one's profession), the professional post and all the academic work associated with it (pp. 46–55). Thinking of it in these terms allows us to go beyond the mistaken view that academics have 'exceptional privileges', because academic freedom is a wholly naturally part of academic work (like any other professional work) and is subject to its own (academic) norms and rules and standards and criteria. Academic freedom (just like any other) does not exist outside those norms and standards. Benda defines academic freedom as a 'set of professional privileges that lay down the conditions under which academic workers are capable of carrying out their academic profession without constraint, with integrity and in accordance with the standards and norms' (pp. 49–50). Academic freedom is related to the goal of academic work that it enables and that is 'to contribute impartially to the creation of knowledge' (p. 52); it is linked to 'the essence and fulfilment of the academic profession'; its function is to 'provide the conditions under which academic workers can responsibly and freely carry out the pro-

fessional duties placed upon them by their academic profession – in full keeping with academic standards and norms' (p. 54). This simply means that all professionals (not just academics) have the 'right to decide how they carry out their work and how they handle their professional responsibilities' (p. 51). This approach raises the question of whether 'academic freedom is necessary for carrying out the academic profession and therefore an entitlement'– a key question addressed by Benda separately (pp. 55–65) – which does not seem quite so ultimate and has an entirely rational answer. It is of course essential for the academic and the institution to fulfil their mission, be that epistemic (the production and transmission of knowledge and learning) or broader and societal (creating and cultivating the good of society). Here truth and justice are not positioned against one another; academia has a social responsibility towards both, but the way in which it functions has to be grounded in professional freedom and its norms.

Academic freedom is perhaps most commonly conflated with general freedom, with academic freedom being seen as the specific application of general freedom to the academic sphere. Benda correctly observes, however, that the democratic notion of freedom cannot be used to define or justify academic freedom in research and teaching. Unless we specify the type and nature of academic work, it is not clear why academics should have this privilege both as citizens speaking in public and within their profession, while other professions do not (pp. 42–46). Academic freedom does of course entail freedom of speech, but it cannot be reduced to it. Similarly, 'intellectual' ('mental') freedom as freedom of thinking (creativity and critique) is unquestionably part of academic freedom. Academic freedom includes the freedom to decide the goals and methods by which academic work is performed, which is in fact the freedom to act and self-manage (pp. 50–52). Complete academic freedom also has to include the practical aspect of academic work.

Positing freedom as an integral attribute of academic practice and academia requires us to articulate a philosophical concept of academia which demonstrates that the one cannot exist without the other. Therefore we are not interested in the 'elite status of academia' (p. 55), but in understanding and defending this authentic concept of academia. The author embarks upon this task (albeit hesitantly in places) and considers the two main functions of academia: the epistemic function and the social function (p. 57). Freedom can only exist where it is a means of satisfactorily fulfilling these two functions, that is, the authentic mission of academia. It is a mission that can quite easily be articulated more broadly – as a cultural and civilisational mission. Put simply: universities exist to cultivate and civilise humanity in all its aspects (not merely the epistemic side, but also the ethical, political, etc.), and that can only happen when academics have the guaranteed internal and external prerequisites for carrying out their duties and functions. Academic practice is an essential societal practice. Each and every attack on its authenticity – for example the distortion of academic freedom – interferes with its mission. Hence

we should agree with L. Benda, who throughout his book calls for the authenticity of academia to be defended (preserved) and, in that sense, for a balanced approach to conservatism and transformationism of any kind.

The focal point of the current philosophical debates on academic freedom is undoubtedly the dispute over its political and apolitical conceptions. Benda has chosen to analyse the relevant 'ideal types' – Judith Butler's work on the one hand and Joanne Williamson's on the other – and despite criticising and rejecting them quite rightly acknowledges their merits.

On the one hand there is a group of authors for whom academia is quite definitely a political institution that fulfils its political mission and for which its freedom is merely a variation of political freedom, or part of the societal conditions generally. Academic freedom is subordinated to political freedom and it is pointless or hypocritical to pretend otherwise. Academia cannot exist outside politics, especially when politics is threatening or trying to shackle it. Academia's role in the struggle for democracy is unique, not just on the intellectual level but in social and political practice as well. Academic institutions are not isolated islands that can develop their own internal democracy independent of the character of society, the state and politics. Academic freedom includes political engagement and the duty and responsibility towards society to advocate the modern ideals of freedom, justice, progress and humanism.

On the other hand there is a group of authors that rejects political engagement in the name of these modern ideals, considering it incompatible with academic freedom. Instead these authors believe that academic freedom should be based on the pillars ('intellectual virtues') of autonomous reason, secular truth, value neutrality, criticality, objectivity, impartiality and detachment and so on. Its internal mechanism should be free and open discussion, similar to the market mechanism, a kind of 'market of ideas', academic competition in which truth, quality and rationality are effectively enforced. It also relies on the original idea that academia stands outside politics. It is not just that academics are not politicians and cannot present themselves in the same way, but that political viewpoints and currents that would dominate over academic identity should not be allowed to enter academia. Academic culture is not the same thing as the political culture in the state.

Benda is well aware of the complexity of the problem, and does not argue in favour of either 'paradigm' of academic freedom. He thinks the first blurs the line between academia and politics, which is risky and possibly even really dangerous, while the second absolutises and isolates academic practices, which makes it naïve and unrealistic (p. 99). His thinking is that academic practices cannot be entirely 'cleansed' of politics (academic or other) and that both discursive extremes are unsustainable. The key to resolving the dispute is to focus on the 'professional status of the academic profession' (p. 105) and propose a 'viable alternative' that

respects both academia's social and political mission and authentic academic practices (p. 108).

In my view Libor Benda is heading in the right direction when he links his concept of academic freedom with the concept of academia generally and with the issue of the 'demarcation' between the academic world and the non-academic world or the world 'beyond academia': 'The definition of "academia" is therefore of critical importance as far as the problem of academic freedom is concerned…' (p. 113). The problem of justifying academic freedom is therefore also the problem of the design of academia as an institution. Of course, academia itself is not a static term, but Benda immediately embarks on his second step in the right direction by focusing on the concept of academic practice(s) – thereby taking inspiration from Kuhn, Merton, the Edinburgh School of the sociology of science and ultimately even late Wittgenstein – and ends up viewing academic existence not just as a 'social game' but as a 'life form' (pp. 113–119). The problem regarding the design of the institution of academia is also the problem of the philosophical concept of creative academic practices. Academia, the institution which is supposed to reflect this term in its structure, system of governance and functions, has to enable and support the development of these practices in the first place.

The logical and legitimate outcome of this approach is the 'professional concept of academic freedom'. For the sake of accuracy, I should note that this term was not 'invented' by Benda. It first appeared as a principle for defending the professional work of academics in the Declaration of the American Association of University Professors (1915). Since then it has taken root mainly in the American academic world. Benda's description of professional academic freedom draws inspiration from the concept of scientists' 'formative aspirations' taken from the work of the sociologists H. Collins and R. Evans and also, somewhat inventively, the work of Merton and Popper (pp. 118–123), as well as S. Fish (pp. 126–132). I think it is a fruitful approach for more detailed conceptualisation and analysis of the real-life academic practices (of researchers, teachers, managers etc) as the core of academic life. As far as the essence of the 'academic' is concerned, however, we need to focus on the creative aspect of these practices.

In recent decades the academic world has undergone such a massive transformation globally that we can no longer be absolutely sure of the principle of academic freedom. Benda identifies these aspects as the 'sneaky' dangers of 'academic capitalism' – 'managerialism', external financing and productivity pressures, time pressures, 'the McDonaldisation of the university', the roll-out of performance and excellence criteria and so on (pp. 19–21, 38–39). Resolving these problems with our academic existence would require philosophers to engage more forcefully with the issue, critically analyse it and argue in favour of both defending and literally rescuing authentic academic values and principles, such as

academic freedom. Libor Benda's work gives us robust material for this endeavour. I strongly recommend this book to everyone who cares about our shared academic world.

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"Homo homini hominus" or an Inquiry into "Human" Humans[1]

Emil Višňovský: Spytovanie sa na človeka [An Inquiry into Humanity]
Bratislava, Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave 2020. 92 pp.

Experts today are highlighting the fact that human society finds itself on the threshold of a new "human epoch", the *Anthropocene*. The Anthropocene can be variously characterised, most obviously in terms of the exponential growth of technological development, from "machine learning" in artificial intelligence to "genetic engineering" in biotechnology. The exponential growth of development has meant that technologies are becoming an integral part of human life. Hence the need to ask anew the old philosophical question: *Who is man?* In the context of these technological advances this question is not just acquiring new meaning but becoming increasingly urgent. And it is addressed in Emil Višňovský's *Spytovanie sa na človeka* [An Inquiry into Humanity].

In the book, this question is posed on the *normative plane*. It consists of three key sub-questions: *What value do humans hold for other humans? What value do people have for one another? What value does human life hold in today's info-techno-culture?*[2] Višňovský's book is therefore primarily about the relationship humans have with themselves, other humans, and the natural and cultural worlds. In today's technological era there is a need to clarify the *value* of these relationships.

The monograph is divided into six chapters, or studies, that examine "philosophical and anthropological thinking about humans in today's world, where one of the

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2 Višňovský, E., *Spytovanie sa na človeka* [*An Inquiry into Humanity*]. Bratislava, Univerzita Komenského 2020, p. 11 (hereafter *Spytovanie sa na človeka*).

main leitmotifs […] is technological development".[3] Each chapter is clearly set-out and easy to read and thereby accessible to general readers as well. Višňovský offers an in-depth look at these issues, as is immediately evident from his detailed analysis of contemporary thinkers and futurologists like Leonhard, Harari, Šmajs, Zuboff, and so on. Notably, he also draws on the work of classical philosophers such as Nietzsche, Lorenz, Adorno, and Horkheimer, as well as pragmatists like James and Dewey. However, the biggest influence on his work is Richard Rorty.

The first chapter, "An Inquiry into Humanity: Unresolved Issues", takes a critical look at the nature of modern society as influenced by "posthumanism, and even transhumanism".[4] Readers may observe that Višňovský adopts a normative position when writing about contemporary humans and the ethical and moral issues arising from this relationship. This is evident from the introduction to the book in which he observes that the greatest crisis today is not the Covid-19 pandemic but the "intellectual and moral crisis of humankind that is concentrated in the value crisis".[5] The crisis is largely the result of the ever-present Enlightenment ideas about achieving social progress through the use of *instrumental* reason which is "non-human" and only recognises its own authority. Science, but also digital technologies and biotechnology, are the embodiment of this reason. Višňovský then contrasts the "value awareness" represented by *humanism* with the "techno-awareness" represented by *transhumanism*. He points out that value awareness has been reduced to a techno-awareness that is leading to the "modern rationalisation of society" visible in the prevailing "dataism" whereby "everything is an algorithm" so data decide the value of everything […]".[6] The value of humans is thereby becoming the value of virtual data.

In the first chapter, the most substantial contribution to philosophy is the section in which Višňovský analyses the relationship between the "natural" and the "cultural" sides of humans. On this basis he defines humans as a "peculiar biological being": "Humans are a peculiar biological being that has created culture in order to live and survive in nature. Hence, we are both cultural and biological beings, and it is this that makes us imbalanced and gives us our inner tension […]."[7] One could claim that this inner tension is even more visible these days. One of the primary reasons for this being that, in transhumanism, culture is seen as being the opposite of nature, or a means of transcending the biological boundaries of humans. In other words, transhumanists see humans as beings that have evolved both biologically and culturally, and it is on that basis that we have taken control

3 Ibid., pp. 8–9.
4 Ibid., p. 18.
5 Ibid., p. 9.
6 Ibid., p. 15.
7 Ibid., p. 21.

over our biological bodies. By transcending ourselves using the latest technologies we not only overcome our biological limits but also all the things that make us human beings. This is the point Višňovský makes, arguing that the kind of culture we should be creating is a "culture as humanity" that elevates the value of human life. Višňovský ultimately concludes that the "key issue is what culture takes and develops from nature and what it rejects. The "culture against nature" or vice versa alternative solves nothing." [8] I agree with this; however, it is worth noting that although Višňovský stresses both sides of human being, he does not analyse this relationship further in the book.

The second chapter, "On the Value of Human Life Today", is a philosophical look at human life. Here, Višňovský draws on the work of critics of modern and postmodern culture, such as Nietzsche, Liessmann, or Bauman. He critically analyses the main features of modern life, primarily its "liquidity", "individualisation", and "instrumentalization", which best characterise modern life: "Our life is no longer a goal, but a means; we no longer know how to live for life's sake, merely for something else."[9] This question about the value of human life thereby takes backstage. For Višňovský this and the question of "what one living person is to another"[10] are key. That means living life under its circumstances, in which "our desires encounter our possibilities; our aims encounter the aims of others; our will for life encounters the will for life of others."[11]

In this chapter, readers may be interested in Višňovský's view on the role of philosophy. He states that it is philosophers who ask questions about the value of human life: "Is living worth it?"[12] Despite the somewhat negative character of this question (which brings suicide to mind), philosophy can show us how to accept life and love it for what it is: "Knowing how to live means knowing how to conjoin the will to live with respect for life."[13] Hence, Višňovský defends the view that philosophy can teach us "the art of life". I think the second chapter shows the reader that seeing philosophy in these terms can help us recognise that it is the "belief in life as an intellectual force that gives life its value".[14]

Both the third chapter "Life on the Net" and the fourth chapter "Caught in the Snare of 'Big Brother'" focus on the relationship between humans and contemporary digital technologies. In these chapters, Višňovský examines the "digitalisation of society" and how it is manifested in both private and public life, asking questions such as: What do we mean by digital technologies? How do we interpret

8 Ibid., p. 22.
9 Ibid., p. 37.
10 Ibid., pp. 28–29.
11 Ibid., p. 43.
12 Ibid., p. 38.
13 Ibid., p. 46.
14 Ibid., p. 40.

ourselves through these technologies? Do we know how these technologies work and who they serve? These are ethical questions about modern intelligent technologies (e.g. the internet, intelligent households), the loss of privacy that occurs when people are being monitored, being addicted to technologies, and so forth. As Višňovský states, "we are increasingly living in the digital world, in the emerging and interlinking data networks and we have almost no means of escape".[15]

But the digital world does not belong to people; it belongs to "technology oligarchs" such as Google or Facebook whose "economic logic" is based on "surveillance capitalism". This issue is covered in detail in chapter four, which draws on Shoshana Zuboff's *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*.[16] "Surveillance capitalism" is the "application of capitalist relations to digital civilisation that has entered the 'big data' era."[17] Višňovský stresses that the problem with the digital civilisation is not the technologies themselves but rather the "social means and economic relations" within which these technologies function.[18] On careful reading, it is clear he attempts a moderate position on digital technologies in that he doesn't engage in either "digital Luddism" (rejection of technologies) or "digital techno-optimism".

Content-wise, I think the third and fourth chapters are the most problematic. Višňovský does focus on the issue of digital technologies, but only in general terms, and he does not analyse the consequences of using these technologies (e.g. "digital nudity" and the issue of internet privacy). Given however the normative nature of the book, readers will be expecting these to be analysed and to be presented with a solution to the problem. But one isn't presented. For instance, Višňovský argues that technologies should be more human, meaning that they should serve the people and not line the wallets of technological oligarchs.[19] However, he does not explain what being more human would mean in practice. Similarly, he says that digital technologies should not be controlled by technological oligarchs but by "educated, cultured, and democratic actors" who could help ensure the technologies were more human.[20] But the question remains, "Who would these educated actors be?" All of us? Who are "us"? Information technologists, philosophers, or scientists? There is no clear answer to this, and the reader gradually begins to feel they might have to answer the questions themselves.

The fifth chapter, "Homo Harariensis", is primarily a critical look at interpretations of contemporary humanity in Harari's *Homo Deus*.[21] This chapter is more of

15 Ibid., p. 61.
16 Zuboff, S., *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. New York, Public Affairs 2019.
17 Višňovský, E., *Spytovanie sa na človeka*, p. 65.
18 Ibid., p. 63.
19 Ibid., chapter 4.
20 Ibid., p. 71.
21 Harari, Y. N., *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. New York, Harper 2014; *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. London, Harvill Secker 2015.

a review and offers no new insights. Nonetheless, I still think it gives the reader a good opportunity to compare the author's thinking with that of others tackling this issue.

In my view, the last chapter, "Philosophy Must Survive!", contributes more to philosophy than the previous one as, in it, Višňovský explains his views on science and its relationship to philosophy. He critically analyses the nature of Western philosophy today, which is based on "scientism" and that in turn leads to "scientocracy" – the notion that science is the most reliable human knowledge we have that is independent of society and culture. But this is not a notion that Višňovský subscribes to. Instead, he stresses that science cannot be separated from society because science is a human activity: "Science per se is a societal occupation, a social practice. It does not exist 'outside' practice or society and so cannot be neutral and value-free."[22] Via his analysis of science as a human activity – and drawing on pragmatism – Višňovský argues that science is a "sociocultural practice".[23] This leads him to the question of whether there can be such a thing as "science with a human face" or a "humane science". And it is here that philosophy comes to the fore, with its aim of "questioning the point of everything, including science".[24] In the end, he concludes that science cannot exist without philosophy, that is, without a value philosophy. Understood thusly, philosophy acts as the "intellectual conscience of humankind"[25] because it asks ethical questions about the value of science per se.

One can agree with Višňovský that philosophy should ask critical questions about the value of science and yet still think his understanding of science somewhat radical. Although science is a human activity and so does not stand above society, that does not mean it cannot be the dominant means of inquiring about the world. In other words, defending the claim that science is the dominant means of inquiry does not automatically mean that one supports scientocracy. Instead, I think that the authority of science is being undermined by the ascendant post-factual era and the associated questioning of facts. That can have negative consequences such as the spread of disinformation via the internet. In my opinion, we should adopt a more moderate view on science and ask critical questions about the value and point of science but without casting doubt on its standing in the world.

In this book several key questions are raised but left unanswered, such as: Where is the human race headed? Do we know how to be human beings or are we pursuing a utopia that we will never in fact achieve? Višňovský deliberately chooses not to answer these questions – just as he doesn't attempt to answer the ques-

22 Višňovský, E., *Spytovanie sa na človeka*, p. 83.
23 For more on this issue, see: Višňovský, E., *Veda ako sociokultúrna praktika* [*Science as a sociocultural practice*]. Bratislava, Univerzita Komenského 2019.
24 Višňovský, E., *Spytovanie sa na človeka*, p. 85.
25 Ibid., p. 54.

tion "Who is man?". Instead, he leads readers to find the answers themselves and articulate them in normative terms. The main question here is "What makes us human beings?"

One could therefore say that the author is not investigating humanity in the general sense, but the humanity of people. For it is the human side of us that is being lost in "info-techno-culture" in which the other person can seem like an inhuman machine or tool. Hence, the book as a whole has something of a utopic sense of society in which people are seeking their humanity. Nonetheless the question remains – is such a society even feasible? Despite the utopic element I believe that humans, who have become lost in today's world, should continue to seek answers to these questions. The reason being that doing so could significantly influence the future direction of human society. Emil Višňovský's book is therefore a stimulating addition to anthropological studies into the humanity of today and tomorrow.

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Martin Nuhlíček: The Value Problem of Knowledge

Bratislava, Comenius University in Bratislava 2019. 107 pp.

Science, Society, Values: A Philosophical Analysis of Their Mutual Relations and Interactions, is the name of a research project that has produced many important publications, including an academic monograph on the value problem of knowledge. Although this complex issue has been widely discussed abroad, Martin Nuhlíček contends that this is not true of Slovak philosophical research. This book seems then to be an attempt to engage the Slovak philosophical community in tackling one of the five most pressing issues in contemporary epistemology.

The value problem of knowledge. More attention should be devoted to defining this research area. It is usually automatically divided up into separate (well-known) areas – specific axiological questions and scientific knowledge of values usually spring to mind. But here we are concerned with the *epistemic value of knowledge*. The question is located on the *margins* of epistemology and axiology, which is an interdisciplinary space that might offer a qualitatively new perspective.

Right at the beginning Nuhlíček outlines the basis of his belief in the *meaningfulness* of the question of the value of knowledge: "Everything suggests that know-

ledge represents a cognitive state that is associated with a non-negligible positive value." (p. 7) Here he asks many interesting questions but seems to gloss over the philosophical ones. What does "positive" mean? In what way is the value of knowledge "positive"? (in evolutionary terms? social terms? political terms? or generally?). The author does not spell this out, although he later suggests that he is interested in value per se. There is also the (absent) criterion of knowledge – for what? Should knowledge have an *epistemic* value in itself? The question can be rephrased as: Are we looking for value in relation to cognition – of knowledge? These questions may not reflect the author's original intention, but perhaps offer some substance. Nuhlíček says that "we value knowledge as valuable, that is a fact. But explaining in detail why knowledge is valuable is surprisingly challenging." (Ibid.) Why not ask the question: Why do *we consider* knowledge to be valuable? We cannot simply dismiss it as "a fact". Indeed, Nuhlíček ultimately reveals that this "fact" is actually an *intuition*.

The roots of thinking about the value of knowledge can be found in Plato, especially in his *Meno* dialogue, from which the key Meno problem emerged. The work of Michael Williams (*Problems of Knowledge: A Critical Introduction to Epistemology,* 2001) is considered the beginning of modern thinking on the value problem of knowledge and opened up current issues in epistemology.

The aim of *The Value Problem of Knowledge* is to fill a gap (?) in the Slovak philosophical literature and to give a brief (modern) history of the problem of the value of knowledge and the current state of scholarship on the theme, in pursuit of a possible route to finding an acceptable solution. The book is clearly set out and well-arranged. Nuhlíček states that the value of knowledge will be tackled only as an *epistemological* problem, but if he noted at the beginning that it is on the margins of epistemology and axiology (and that is what makes it unique), is that not a problematic limitation?

The starting point – analytical epistemology – is set out at the beginning so that readers know what to expect: "The subject of interest thus becomes the *concept* of knowledge…" (p. 10) However, as long as we are still living people and not just well-trained scholars, we should always consider the ultimate question about the usefulness and harmfulness of knowledge *for life*. If the author emphasizes that the problem of the value of knowledge should now be regarded as the most basic question in connection with knowledge, he could at least admit that the importance of this very current issue in philosophical epistemology lies mainly and perhaps only in its living connection to Life. It is therefore, not (only) language games with concepts, but above all a critical philosophical-axiological analysis of the problem that is needed if we are to understand the value of knowledge for our time. Of course, with these reflections we do not wish to question the seriousness of the scientific text and author's erudition, but it is worth pointing out that to separate the value problem of knowledge from other phenomena of existence is to engage with an *abstrac-*

tion. But in that case how should we understand Nuhlíček's claim that he wants to consider the value of knowledge "*for people,* human goals and interests"? (p. 17)

In exposing the problem, it is essential to assert that knowledge is valuable, and Nuhlíček notes that t*his view is generally shared*. J. Kvanvig's *The Value of Knowledge and the Pursuit of Understanding* (2003) stirred the epistemological waters, stimulating discussions on the value of knowledge as a new perspective for thinking about traditional epistemological problems. Value is now also being considered in relation to other phenomena (truth, reasonable certainty, etc.). In short, in 2000 there was a *value turn* regarding the problem of epistemic values, with special emphasis on knowledge. However, Kvanvig made the following *tricky request:* "An explanation of what knowledge is should also clarify the value of knowledge and vice versa". If Kvanvig – and Nuhlíček – despair at the lack of discussion about the value of knowledge in the history of epistemology, well, what can we say? The history of epistemology is part of the history of philosophy and spiritual cultural history in general – and can certainly offer some ideas that radically question the marginalisation of the problem of the value of knowledge (Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, the existentialists, etc.). Furthermore, does a demand for the development of a theory explaining the nature of knowledge and clearly linking it to the value of knowledge (which Nuhlíček considers an "unexpectedly challenging task") not in principle mean a revived Platonism?

But what is the *epistemic value* we wish to attribute to knowledge? According to the definition given in the book, it is "the value that we attribute to epistemic states". These values may be final (independent) and instrumental (in the sense of a means). In the Meno problem, which addresses the issue of whether knowledge or true belief is more valuable, Nuhlíček indicates that his *intuitive beliefs* come down on the side of the final (fundamental) value of knowledge. He considers it sufficient to rely on "the perceived difference in value between knowledge and true belief". (p. 24)

The value of knowledge can also be formulated in terms of the so-called tripartite theory (D. Pritchard), which outlines three problems pertaining to the value of knowledge: 1. *Why is knowledge more valuable than true belief (opinion)?* 2. *Why is knowledge more valuable than any of its proper parts?* Here knowledge is defined as true belief composed of a set of constituents of knowledge dependent on an accepted theory of knowledge, and the status of the knowledge as justified. Non-knowledge is therefore an incomplete set of the elements constituting a certain theory of knowledge, which violates the claim that knowledge is superior to true belief (e.g. the Gettier problem). 3. *Why is knowledge distinctively valuable?* Knowledge is not just the sum of its components, but has a higher value in itself. This is the qualitative difference between knowledge and other states and is key. Nuhlíček observes that the *force of the justification* plays an important role in making true belief knowledge (strong and weak conceptions of knowledge).

If justification is considered to be the source of the value of knowledge, then we are faced with this definition: knowledge is formed as a true, justified belief, *and* a set of components that lends it a higher value than true belief. The problem is that the question of justification is one of the most problematic epistemological problems. Nuhlíček goes on to present theories dealing with justification in search of the value of knowledge (internalist theories – subjectivism and the Gettier problem; externalist theories – reliability and the swamping problem), while arguing that none is entirely successful in justifying the higher epistemic value of knowledge. Nonetheless, internalist theories at least allow for an axiological distinction between true belief and justified true belief, although it cannot be called knowledge.

So what next? Should we deny the value of knowledge? "But then it would be appropriate to explain the origin and cause of the widespread intuition of the higher value of knowledge, which may not be easy." (p. 54) Here we could again remind the author of the importance of conducting a critical historical and philosophical analysis – maybe we would find that "intuition" is just a deep-rooted metaphysical belief in the ontological significance of humans. What is more, there would be no harm in seeking help from natural science; the "intuition" may be a simple variant of the voice of the selfish gene that gave us an evolutionary advantage… In any case, as far as the value problem of knowledge – presented as a terra incognita in Slovak philosophical circles – and its complexity is concerned, one should avoid shutting oneself up – both logically and argumentatively – in the compartment of just one philosophical discipline, and should remain radically open to the historically evolved character of the problem. Furthermore, perhaps as part of critical reflection on its nature, we could take a similar step in axiology, and explain the value problem of knowledge in relation to the present, "for people". I do not think it is necessary or desirable to seek to build the value problem of knowledge from scratch. All Slovak epistemologists and axiologists (e.g. Gálik, Démuth, Černík, Váross, Sisáková, Brožík, et al.) could certainly provide at least some inspiration for thought on the value of knowledge from their research.

However, Nuhlíček is not to be deterred (he insists on "our" concept of knowledge), and inclines to a rethinking of the central concepts of epistemology along the lines of J. Kvanvig and D. Pritchard. Here we turn to the concept of *understanding,* which promises to give us what we expected from knowledge. The essence of Kvanvig's theory is that the advantage of the concept of understanding lies in the fact that, in contrast to the concept of knowledge, it directs attention to a whole complex of propositions and their hierarchical relationships and connections. The ability *to explain* thus becomes the criterion of truthfulness. One can argue with Nuhlíček's definition of what it means to "understand" (especially the example of poetry). Is it really – ultimately – the ability to "fully explain or apply"? (p. 58)

The Aristotelian approach is quite different in offering *virtue epistemology,* in which knowledge is a performative act (Sosa and his AAA model). Agent reliabi-

lism brings into play the question of the reliability of the overall cognitive character of the individual, supported by cognitive virtues. All three problems of the value of knowledge are solved, but at what cost? We have to identify knowledge with cognitive success and vice versa. It is here that the thesis about the final (fundamental) value of knowledge falls down. Nuhlíček finds this unacceptable and so formulates a "new problem of the value of knowledge" aimed at locating the value of knowledge in a hierarchical relationship with the final value of understanding such that Kvanvig's desire for a comprehensive theory of the value of knowledge is fulfilled. Nuhlíček therefore outlines the possibilities provided by another *pluralistic conception (of the sources) of the value of knowledge*. It compares knowledge to a "Swiss Army knife" (M. Weiner). This concept emphasizes the intertextuality, situationality and variability of the use of the concept of knowledge. This leads to a description of the elements that convey knowledge in natural language. The advantage here is that it goes beyond tripartite theory, since knowledge is not simply reduced to justified true belief. Nuhlíček explains the difference between the pluralistic concept and the three assumptions regarding the final value of knowledge (distinctiveness, universality, necessity), but as he theoretically leans towards pluralism and wants to consider the epistemic significance of variable qualities, he will probably have to go back to the nature of knowledge, to its historical and philosophical and scientific reflections. Thus the initial criteria that Nuhlíček set for himself in the introduction (pp. 9 – 10) are essentially reductionist, given the complexity of the value problem of knowledge. In the end, I believe that he arrives at this realisation unintentionally when he mentions, for instance, the hypothesis of the evolutionary development of knowledge (p. 96).

Finally, Nuhlíček explains what the theory of pluralism still 'lacks' from the point of view of its potential to become a comprehensive theory of the value of knowledge (probably the author's unshakeable desire for fundamental value) and highlights the "risks", but these might instead be seen as inherent in an authentic approach to the *nature* of knowledge.

Nuhlíček does a good job of presenting the current state of the research on the value of knowledge. He wants to stick with the broadest, directly intuitive understanding of the concepts of knowledge and value, and this is paradoxical given that he wishes to follow the problem at the level of analytical epistemology, which requires a logically accurate analysis of the line of argument. Nonetheless, his book is a standard academic monograph that will contribute to and enrich the academic debate, at least on the nature of epistemology itself.

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Paul Giladi (ed.): Responses to Naturalism: Critical Perspectives from Idealism and Pragmatism[1]

New York–London, Routledge 2020. 319 pp.

The first question the reader might ask when looking at the subtitle of this volume is whether the combination of idealist and pragmatist critical perspectives on naturalism is a relatively loose grouping of texts by different authors or whether there is some deeper intention in the background. A quick glance at the contents of the volume might seem to support the first possibility. A relatively lengthy introduction by editor Paul Giladi is followed by twelve essays by various contemporary authors (including Giladi himself), which are arranged in two main sections respectively entitled "Idealist Responses to Naturalism" and "Pragmatist Responses to Naturalism". Given that that idealist philosophy (whether in the form of classical German idealism or Husserl's phenomenological idealism) has traditionally been a clear opponent of the naturalistic way of philosophising, while pragmatism is regarded as a philosophical movement sympathetic to and to a large extent overlapping with philosophical naturalism (especially the pragmatism of Deweyan or Quinean type), the reader might well expect simply a sharp critique of the basic premises of naturalism from the idealist contributors, and from the pragmatists an attempt to critically reform some of aspects of naturalism.

In fact, this first impression needs a certain correction right at the outset. As is clear from Giladi's introductory text, one of the aims of the publication was precisely to encourage dialogue between contemporary idealist and pragmatist philosophers and to exploit the synergetic effect of their critical reactions to prevailing naturalism (p. 11). This is far from just a formal proclamation of the editor, since the proximity – both with respect to main topics and modes of argumentation – of idealism- and pragmatism-oriented contributors to this volume really shows up in most of the essays. To put it briefly, all authors agree that science-oriented naturalism ignores or underestimates those aspects of human existence that feature intentionality, self-conscious action and the search for meaning in the midst of a network of intersubjective relationships framed by rational normativity. Of course, specific strategies, terminological choices, and thematic emphases vary significantly from essay to essay. There is a telling difference, for instance, in choice of terminology reflecting whether authors position themselves against naturalism as such, or retain the designation "naturalism" for their proposed conception while modifying it with added adjectives (such as "normative," "liberal" or even "transcendental").

1 This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the Contract No. APVV-18-0178.

A sharper opposition to naturalism can be found in contributions by Paul Giladi and Alexis Papazoglou in the first (idealist) part of the book. In his critique of naturalism, Giladi uses Hegelian vocabulary, especially in distinguishing between the (limited) analytical way of thinking (Hegel's *Verstand*) and the dialectical way of thinking (Hegel's *Vernunft*), which is able to overcome and integrate fixed ('static') differences. Giladi has major reservations about the type of naturalism in which one such difference, the difference between the manifest and the scientific image of the world, is to be erased in favour of the scientific picture that the naturalist presents as the deepest level of description. According to Giladi, this unjustifiably reduces the first-person perspective characteristic of the manifest image to the perspective of the third person, which leads to a "radical form of dehumanization" consisting in the creation of a misguided self-image of human being that does not take into account intentionality and self-reflection as essential features of our existence (p. 81). Giladi's Hegelian strategy suggests a deeper look at reality, in which there is a place for human being as a being moving both in the space of reasons (norms) and in the space of nature; he makes frequent use of terms such as *Geist, geistige Einstellung* or overcoming of "self-alienation".

In Papazoglou's "idealist challenge" to naturalism, it is not only Hegel's but also Kant and Husserl's work that serves as the inspiration for a critique of naturalism. Although the Hegelian way of thinking seems to appeal more to the author than the Kantian or Husserlian, what he considers to be decisive when it comes to naturalism are the things that they all have in common. Essentially, this is the belief that "the explanatory framework of the human subject is that which takes priority over other explanatory frameworks, including, crucially, that of nature and natural science" (p. 115). Thus, if we (partially) define naturalism as a philosophical position promoting continuity between the natural sciences and philosophy, Papazoglou's position is uncompromisingly antinaturalistic because it seeks to defend not only the possibility but also the inevitability of philosophy as an autonomous sphere of reasoning in the form of transcendental reflection.

In his contribution, Paul Redding revisits the beginnings of analytical philosophy which – especially as represented by Russell and Moore – was formed in the struggle with neo-Hegelian idealism. Redding tries to show that, from a historical point of view, Hegel's idealist monism is a better alternative to Spinozist naturalism. With respect to contemporary philosophy, he argues that it is high time to reconsider idealism in a more positive spirit, because of the unsatisfactory metaphysical underpinnings of analytical philosophy (p. 139).

I will mention the other three chapters of the first part of the book only briefly: Giuseppina D'Oro (like Giladi) defends the priority of the manifest image of the world, but this time it is the Heideggerian distinction between "Vorhandenheit" and "Zuhandenheit" that does most of the analytical and interpretative work. In his essay on "Naturalism and the Primacy of the Practical", Johannes Haag inter-

prets Kant's philosophy (based on his reading of the third Critique) as a "transcendental-idealist version of philosophical naturalism" (which may strike some readers as an undue extension of terminology). Kant's practical philosophy is part of the focus of the essay "Moral Natural Norms" by Katerina Deligiorgi, but in this case the starting point and stimulus for analysis and criticism is neo-Aristotelian moral naturalism in the spirit of Elisabeth Anscombe and Philippa Foot.

Let us now look at the pragmatist responses to naturalism in the second part of the book. While the idealist section is clearly dominated by references to the works of Kant and Hegel, in the second part there seems to be more plurality with respect to key influences. All the same, it is to be noted that among the classical pragmatists Peirce (to whom two chapters are explicitly devoted) is the thinker to whom reference is most often made. Regarding the more recent authors inclined to pragmatism, the influence of Sellars and Putnam is particularly noticeable (in the case of Sellars, his influence is also evident in much of the first half of the volume).

The first essay on Peirce, authored by Shannon Dea and Nathan Haydon, is more of a historical-philosophical exegesis, but a shift to current discussions can be seen in the way that the authors present Peirce's philosophical system as going beyond the usual conceptual divisions. From their point of view, Peirce is a naturalist, but also an absolute idealist. This leads them to introduce such surprising phrases as "theological naturalist" or "naturalistic idealist" to characterise his thinking. Experimentalist mind-set and desire (and optimistic hope) to philosophically grasp the absolute are inseparable from Peirce's philosophising. By contrast, the second text on Peirce's philosophy has a more modest goal and focuses on only one aspect of his naturalism. Gabriele Gava aims to show that Peirce's philosophy can be characterised at least as "methodological naturalism," although he also acknowledges that especially in Peirce's later philosophy there are elements that put him in opposition to naturalism. These relate to his understanding of the method of philosophy. Making a distinction between moderate and radical methodological naturalism, however, Gava manages to argue in favour of the thesis that Peirce's later position still falls under methodological naturalism.

In his contribution, Mario De Caro traces the philosophical development of Hilary Putnam and presents his account of liberal naturalism. He sees it as a metaphilosophical conception that seeks to avoid reductionism in the sense that "not all the real features of the world can be reduced to the scientifically describable features, and the natural sciences are not the only genuine source of knowledge," although on the ontological side the liberal naturalist does not accept any entities that conflict with the current scientific image of the world (p. 200). De Caro considers Putnam's version of naturalism to be "very promising," even though he fails to find a satisfactory solution to the key problem facing this position in Putnam's work. It is clear that this conclusion on the perspective of liberal naturalism is in-

tended in a comparative sense, with an eye to the analogous problems (so called "placement problems"), to which the illiberal form of naturalism is exposed.

David Macarthur's text "Pragmatic Naturalism" most directly fulfils the task outlined in Giladi's introductory study, namely to find connections and develop a conversation between idealist and pragmatist philosophy in order to confront the scientistic variants of naturalism. Some common ground is found in their normativism, i. e. in the belief that "rational normativity is not reducible to objective causal categories recognised by scientific naturalism" (p. 271). Macarthur subsequently argues, however, that the pragmatist version of naturalism is better than the idealism of Kantian provenance because it can most convincingly cope with an old epistemological problem called Agrippa's trilemma. The connection between such pragmatism and idealism is maintained in the fact that, according to Macarthur, a pragmatist theory of inquiry can be seen as a "naturalized and democratized form of Kant's epistemology" (p. 285).

The two remaining essays in the second part of the book deal with Sellars' philosophy, which is very appropriate and useful given how often Sellarsian themes emerge throughout the book, primarily the distinction between the manifest and scientific image of the world and the problems associated with it. Willem A. deVries offers an interpretation of Sellars's specific kind of naturalism, emphasising its connection to German idealism, while the main aim of Steven Levin's study is to defend the critical thesis that Sellars' strategy of incorporating normativity into the naturalistic picture of the world cannot ultimately be successful because it leads to "unacceptable theoretical consequences" (p. 250).

It should be noted that all the chapters are significantly richer in terms of content than indicated by my brief summary, and in this regard, the book undoubtedly provides the reader with plenty of very specific food for thought. This is the case despite the fact that not only do several topics crop up repeatedly across the individual chapters, but also some answers to the questions sound very similar: the irreducibility of normativity, an emphasis on the common sense / manifest image of the world, etc. The book contains some very well-mastered interpretive returns to classical philosophical texts, and so it may also be of some interest to readers whose dominant interest is a better understanding of the philosophical tradition. Nonetheless, the answers that it offers are mainly responses to the situation in contemporary philosophy, and the success of the work must be judged mainly with regard to how thoroughly and convincingly it has fulfilled its role of critical reflection on current naturalistic orthodoxy. In this light, the essays which operate with a sufficiently clear notion of naturalism and which present unambiguous argumentative alternatives to the naturalistic way of thinking appear to us to be the most interesting and inspiring. Suffice it to say that these are the ones to which we have devoted the most space above. The efforts (in some essays) to redefine or terminologically modify naturalism raise some doubts as to whether clear di-

viding lines may not be getting lost in the process. It is true that in contemporary philosophy, "naturalism" is indeed a Protean and perhaps infinitely flexible term, but *sunt certi denique fines*, and problems and controversies will not be illuminated by inducing such a conceptually confusing situation that the original questions lose their clear contours.

Needless to say, the response to the present book is likely to vary widely depending on whether the reader tends to adopt a strictly naturalistic or a distinctly non-naturalistic approach. The first group of readers will no doubt point out that the positive theses (purporting to expand our philosophical knowledge) contained in individual essays look too much like traditional vague philosophical statements, while the second group will enthusiastically highlight the authors' clear achievements in identifying the undeniable weaknesses of contemporary "scientific naturalism." Either way, one great accomplishment of this volume is that it brings philosophical idealism back into the discussion in a relatively vigorous way, and in a form that makes it capable of an intriguing confrontation with various versions of contemporary philosophical naturalism.

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Varieties of Naturalism in Contemporary Philosophy

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Naturalism has been at the centre of meta-philosophical debates for quite some time. It dominates in most branches of theoretical philosophy and its influence is increasingly felt in the domain of practical philosophy. Not only adherents of this movement, but also its critics, are already aware that this is not just a fleeting fashion, but a serious attempt to reorientate and redefine the entire philosophical enterprise. The contributions collected in this special issue seek to do justice to this situation and to the multi-faceted character of contemporary philosophical naturalism. The diversity of topics covered in the essays, from naturalistically orientated ethics through epistemology and metaphysics to critical reactions to contemporary naturalism, reflects this complexity. The common feature of all contributions is the effort to better understand the current state of philosophy, regardless of whether their authors align with the naturalistic movement or are critical of it.

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