

Nature and value:
from convergence to conflation
via the 'natural imperative'

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Abstract:

Studies on the longstanding dichotomy between value and nature are broad and multifarious. Present paper focuses on the place of value in natural behaviour, because I assume that it is here at 'ground level' that the place of value in nature can be examined in situ. Hence a real convergence of value and nature, if in the first place tenable, involves a prior convergence between philosophies and psychologies of value. Which then presupposes a more fundamental assumption that the Kantian twofold concept-and-content criteria of knowledge, which entails a conflated formal-*and-material* value, is tenable. The outcome has been affirmative. Drawing from Christian Wolff's (1720) philosophical psychology of 'maxim'—alongside Aristotelian philosophies and psychologies of *eudaimonia*—my research yields a thesis of 'natural imperative': that value, in its formal-and-material conflation, is necessary for action. My proposed method of theoretical convergence however cannot be taken for granted; because it is potentially objectionable by both traditional realists (who tend to assert a divergent dualism) and another longstanding and respectable sceptical-empiricism (which holds firmly to a relativist-divergent position). A detailed discussion on convergence, and a comparative study of the types of convergence in the literature—namely, social and theoretical convergences—are hence in order. I suggest that theoretical convergence is a viable, perhaps the only viable, method for the dissolution of any longstanding, or what some philosophers call 'faultless', disagreement, in which a theoretical stalemate is sustained through a twofold 'ideal conditions' of reason and evidence *at each of its opposing ends*.

Keywords: faultless disagreement, convergence, nature/value gap, neo-eudaimonism, natural imperative

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INTRODUCTION

0.1 BACKGROUND AND MAIN THEME

ARE VALUES REAL?

Depending on *who* is asked—a realist or a sceptic or a naturalist, and if naturalist, what sort of a naturalist—folk philosophers who look to philosophers for answers will get a different response. Folk philosophers are non-academic philosophers who may approach the philosopher in one of two dispositions: a folk moralist in earnest or a folk sceptic in doubt. Either way, folk philosophers might be on an intellectual par with their academic counterparts; they are typically highly investigative and, therefore, well-informed—many are in fact academics and scientists. Folk philosophers are critical enquirers who demand reason and evidence. They want an intellectual response. They want only coherent answers. They will not settle for anything less than *objective*. What folk philosophers will very likely get from their academic counterparts, however, are a barrage of theoretical divergences, paradoxes, and stalemates; some of which it seems are as old as philosophy itself—might it be that philosophy is just the ancient mammoth stuck, and utterly irrelevant, in a modern world of science, facts, and data? If philosophers, who are purportedly the savants of ethics in our world, cannot provide an objective answer to a genuine and fundamental question such as this, then what is at stake for philosophy may be really heavy. Philosophers may look to religion as to what the price may entail when critical questions cannot be answered critically. Many have already abandoned religion. Will the life of values and ethics, so-

called the ‘good life’—which are viewed as no less imaginative than ‘unicorns’ even amongst some philosophers—similarly face the modern-day guillotine of science and facts?

It is perhaps a dystopic picture for the future of moral philosophy, one that is fictive and may not come true after all. Because in spite of divergent answers produced by philosophers, these answers are not incoherent, and many philosophers discuss values alongside *nature*—albeit, again, in divergent ways. Folk philosophers who consult in Philippa Foot’s (2001) *Natural Goodness* will find a constitutive feature in value that, like a blueprint from outside of human subjects, bear on human subjects to act in particular ways that are consistent with their nature. On the other hand, a consultation in J. L. Mackie’s (1977) *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* will find a subjective human naturalism that is free from and devoid of any such normative powers that the like of Foot claims is ‘built-in’ to the very fabric of nature. Foot and Mackie are not alone; they each represent a system of thought that are equally (more or less) agreed upon amongst groups of philosophers, respectively, Moral Perfectionists and Moral Sceptics. Nor are the views of Foot and Mackie modern-day fabrications and fleeting trends; they come from a long lineage that can be traced back, over two millennia, to Aristotle and Sextus Empiricus, respectively. Their more fundamental epistemic commitments—the ways in which Foot and Mackie approach the study of ethics—namely, Rationalism and Empiricism, go even further back to the time of Plato and the ‘Pyrrhic’ sceptics, respectively. In spite of divergences and disagreements, there appears to be something very *stable* in philosophy.

Placing the question within a framework of nature places value *with* nature. If value is a constitutive partner with nature, then value must be real, because nature is real.

The naturalist approach is an important one, but it also raises desiderata upon itself: *How is value natural? Is value natural?* Folk philosophers will find in contemporary philosophy an ‘almost universally acknowledged’ thesis (Zimmerman and Bradley 2019: 7) that puts nature at odds with value. G. E. Moore’s (1903) ‘naturalistic fallacy’ thesis, according to which value is a *nonnatural* entity ‘distinct from any of the natural properties studied by science’ (Hurka 2021: 3; emphasis added), is common knowledge amongst philosophers. The success of Moore’s nature/value schism has in turn produced an enormous amount of literature that seek to make sense of value and its place in nature; particularly in, but not limited to, ethics and moral philosophy.

In ecology and biology, Holmes Rolston III (1994) offers a well-mapped picture that suggests a ‘less anthropically based’ and ‘more biocentric theory’; whereby ‘some values, [both] instrumental and intrinsic, are *objectively* there [in animals and plants!], discovered and not generated by the [human] valuer’ (Rolston: 19; emphasis added). Whilst the ‘*attribution* of value is subjective’ (15), the ‘*attributes* under consideration’, such as how animals hunt and howl, find shelter, find mates, flee from threats, suffer injury and lick their wounds, ‘are objectively there before humans come [along]’ (15). Even amongst highly conscious humans, there is what Rolston calls innate or intrinsic ‘value-ability’ (22) located in the organism that is totally independent of its conscious host, such that *it* selects and therefore prefers, for example, ‘photosynthesis and protein’, or ‘vitamin B1 or the cytochrome-c molecules’ (18) over some other toxins that may be harmful to itself.

In epistemology and metaphysics, John McDowell (1994: ch. IV–V) offers a thesis of ‘second nature’. McDowell draws on the Aristotelian conception of character building, which in turn relies on ethical values that are ‘in one sense *non-natural*’ (McDowell:

87; emphasis added), but in another sense *also* natural insofar as these ‘conceptual capacities’ are ‘inextricably implicated [...] in our senses’ (87). It is difficult, McDowell claims, for one to see the conflation when we ‘forget that nature includes *second nature*’ (loc. 260). ‘Our nature,’ McDowell moots, is ‘largely second nature’ (87), which is a combination of inbred (viz., natural) potentialities and upbringing. Thanks to the notion of ‘second nature’, ‘we can say that the way our lives are shaped by reason [and values] is natural’ (87), even as one chooses to retain the ontological gap between the space of reasons (= nonnatural values) and the realm of the law (= nature).

In the domain of ethics and moral philosophy with which this paper is chiefly concerned, remarkable attempts can be seen to re-conflate the nature/value gap such as in Bernard Williams’ (1985) ‘thick ethical concepts’, and Hilary Putnam’s (2002) *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy*, which also recurses to Williams’ thick theory. According to Williams, thick ethical concepts such as COWARD, LIE, BRUTALITY, GRATITUDE (Williams 1985: 140) are each ‘*inextricably intertwined*’ (A. Moore 2006: 216) with ‘thin’ prescriptive concepts such as GOOD, BAD, RIGHT, or WRONG; so that they are each part *evaluative*, and part *descriptive* of actions and human traits that are situated, if we want to use McDowell’s language, in the realm of the natural world. On Williams’ view, thick ethical concepts demonstrate the fact that the domains of value and the world, if distinct, are intermeshed with only faint boundaries; since their descriptive feature is ‘world-guided’ and their prescriptive feature is ‘action-guiding’ (Williams 1985: 141). Williams’ thesis has in turn spawned a robust and independent field of studies that investigate the relations between the descriptive and evaluative features in thick ethical concepts.

There is no shortage of philosophical literature that provide meaningful responses to Moore's nature/value dichotomy. Whilst these efforts are well-mapped and tenable, the gap that is being retained, as it should be retained, begs a fundamental question: *How* do subjects know if thus and such *is* good and, often, with unwavering conviction? The *touchstone* for value hence must only lie somewhere, somehow, *within* nature, without which subjects cannot know, let alone be motivated and guided by, a distant value. Moore himself offers 'intuition'; but whether intuition, like the widespread 'disposition' and 'attitude' in contemporary philosophy, offers orientation and direction or contact as such is arguable. In any case, Moore's intuition is not the sort of *empirical* contact that can deliver the more tangible and solid grounds—viz., objects—that moral sceptics such as Mackie might demand. But is there any such empirically verifiable ground beyond intuition?

Present paper explores the space of contact between value and nature through a sort of reverse-engineering of Kantian epistemology: if all knowledge, including knowledge of value, 'spring[s] from *two fundamental sources* of the mind; the first is the capacity of *receiving* representations (receptivity for impressions), the second is the power of *knowing* these representations (spontaneity [in the production] of concepts)' (Kant 1781 repr. 1929: 92; emphases added), then the contact between subjects and value must only be found in the realms both of concept *and sense experience*, even as subjects may not at first place a concept to what they experience. On a Kantian epistemic view, this paper draws on empirical references in psychology to explore the space of contact between subjects and value. I will attempt to show that it is here at the point of contact that a conflation between nature and value can be established to fulfil Kant's twofold criteria of knowledge. If successful, a philosophical

picture of contact should also hold out to folk philosophers a picture of *their* contact with value.

But to do so, a few conventional barriers that characterise contemporary philosophising may have to be, for want of a better term, ‘jiggled’.

0.2 METHODS

Two Sorts of Empiricism:

MY FOCUS ON the space of contact *within* subjects is a focus on Kant’s phenomenal space, viz., the mind in which knowledge—specifically knowledge of value—occurs. Kant’s phenomenal space, however, has been pictured, in both psychology and contemporary philosophy, as a ‘box’; each connoting some or other degree of inhibition from studies. As is well known, over 2,000 years of enquiry into the *psyche* took a turn away from the mind when John B. Watson (1913) introduces behaviourism to the world. Following its success, the mind and its contents are deemed ‘inaccessible to proper scientific methods’ (Ryan 2019: 4), and any attempt ‘to reify the unsubstantial and immaterial must be inhibited’ (Carr and Kingsbury 1938: 510). The mind and its contents are thus labelled the ‘black box’ (Ryan 2019: 4–7). In a similar vein in philosophy, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953) questions the credibility of any introspective theorisation with his Beetle in the Box thought experiment, in which everyone has a beetle in her own box and if no one has ever—*can* ever—look into anyone else’s box, writes Wittgenstein, ‘how can I generalize the *one* case so irresponsibly?’ (Wittgenstein: 106^e). Wittgenstein’s linguistic turn and Watson’s

behaviourism have erected barriers as to what should or should not—what can or cannot—be studied; they are ‘black boxes’ that keep contemporary scholarships focused on things that are *empirical*: namely, language and behaviour. Hence, my focus on the space of contact may come off as academically *sub*-standard, or, more fundamentally, methodologically *in*-correct; with an exemption, perhaps, from the viewpoint of phenomenological scholarships that, likewise, cast their focus on the *thing-itself*.

However, unlike much of phenomenology, which is focused on *formal* principles, my attention has largely been given to *material* values throughout my research—I had in fact worked from empirical grounds, viz., the other one of *two* sorts of empiricism. One being the foregoing ‘sense experience’, which involves ‘our five-oriented senses’, and, this other empiricism being ‘reflective experience’, which includes ‘conscious awareness of our mental operations’ (Markie and Folescu 2021: 1). This other sort of *introspective* empiricism is not without respectability and credence in the literature. In fact, in philosophy, introspection is a longstanding tradition whose currency, doubtless, might have been undermined by the linguistic turn, but nonetheless validated by respectable philosophers such as Augustine of Hippo, René Descartes, Edmund Husserl, John Locke, and even David Hume (Schwitzgebel 2019: 46–47). Descartes (1641), in particular, finds *within* the conscious subject an indubitable *touchstone* of truth. In fact, Wittgenstein (1953: 108^e), too, writes of the infallibility of introspected experiences. On a collective philosophical viewpoint, hence, the subject’s self-ascribed judgements on inner experiences each carries a combined weight of infallibility, indubitability, and incorrigibility (Schwitzgebel 2019: 46–47).

I further suggest that introspection is *indispensable*, because knowledge of value can only be conducted through looking into one's own, or one's self-referral of the other's, mind in which values reside. On this assumption, no talks or thoughts about value is possible at all without some or other degree of reference to the 'black box'—to one's *own* 'black box'. Indeed, many twenty-first century psychologists have 'moved on' from '*black box* thinking' (Ryan 2019: 4). In *The Oxford Handbook of Human Motivation*, Richard M. Ryan (2019: 2) observes that present-day psychology reflects 'a quieter turn of events' but one 'just as revolutionary' as behaviourism in the last century. Motivational science, Ryan writes, reflects a 'strong turn' toward 'a detailed understanding of the *internal psychological processes* and biological mechanisms underpinning behavior' (Ryan 2019: 2; emphasis added); motivational sciences are 'moving more and more *from the outside in*' (6; emphasis added), and empirical research is 'resoundingly focused on what is inside the black box' (6).

This paper draws on both sorts of empiricism: interior and, where data are available, exterior. In a sense, my investigations go all the way *in*, deep into the black box and all the way *out* to obtain external validation, where available. I draw data from a convergence of two disciplines, namely, philosophy and psychology of value; because rather than assuming an epistemic dualism, the two sorts of empiricism can be deployed as distinct conduits into the external and internal worlds of information. I adopt in my studies on value a mutually inclusive approach in which external validation is deployed as a cross-validation of introspectively derived experiences and theories. In my mind, Wittgenstein's 'beetle' in one's box is describable and then expressible by oneself, so that others may compare-and-contrast their own 'beetles' with that which

has been brought to light *for validation*. This is provided, of course, that the introspected account is consistent with one's actual experience, and that pre-internalised languages and structures employed to describe the experience are competent and interpersonally compatible. It may be of worth to note that this method goes way back to Plato, whose very founding motivation of the *Akademía* has been to obtain objectivity via 'contemplation' and then through communal crosschecking. The relation between internal and external empirical validations will also be further explored alongside the relation between two sorts of a similar method mooted in this paper: respectively, intrapersonal convergence and interpersonal convergence.

Two Sorts of Convergence:

PHILOSOPHICAL DICHOTOMIES ARE many and many are as old as philosophy itself. These longstanding disagreements seem to reveal strength and validity at *each* opposing end of the argument, when viewed especially with their remarkable longitudinal consistency, and amongst numberless talents who are supposedly well-equipped for critical scrutinization, to boot. Given the 'hardiness' (Sorensen 2022: 1) of these paradoxes, the disputes in question 'may well be discussed for the next twenty-five hundred years'; which then leaves the impression that neither side of the conflict has committed a mistake or a fault, thus resulting in what philosophers sometimes call a 'faultless disagreement' (Kölbel 2004; MacFarlane 2014; Eriksson and Tiozzo 2016)—a *stalemate*. A stalemate in which *both* sides of the disagreement are each backed by a twofold 'ideal conditions' of *reason* and *evidence*.

How might divergent outputs occur from a discipline that prides itself for rationality and objectivity? Might philosophers on the whole have cornered themselves into a self-contradictory position? These are fundamental questions that threaten not only the progress in knowledge in, but also the very relevance of, philosophy as a rational and objective discipline. Philosophers attempt to justify divergent outputs on two main strands: either they retain disagreements as matters of *fact*, as is often the case for a relativist; or a realist may defend its position by discrediting the quality of reasoning or/and sufficiency of evidence in at least one of two interlocutors and, should these 'mistaken' interlocutors someday be 'better equipped' to conduct their investigations, they may in fact be on the course for convergence.

The term 'convergence' seems to have first emerged from Bernard Williams' (1985) *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* as a response to divergent outlooks and theories that are rampant in philosophy; the term refers to convergence amongst subjects, or what David Chalmers some thirty years later termed '*collective convergence*' (Chalmers 2015: 4). Chalmers explores the possibility of philosophical progress *through collective convergence* (3). Drawing on statistics, however, the fact shows that 'there has not been large collective convergence to the truth' on the big philosophical questions. Chalmers suggests both a 'glass-half-full' and a 'glass-half-empty' theses. On one hand, he holds that there is, at present, no progress ('half-empty' thesis); on the other hand, he remains hopeful that 'collective convergence to the truth' may occur someday, should and when the 'ideal circumstances' of reason and evidence are sufficiently present within groups of 'ideal reasoners' ('half-full' thesis) (29–31).

Whilst collective convergence of the sort seen in Williams and Chalmers is an accepted practice for statistical validation in the sciences, it should however be noted

that the *faultless* disagreements in question are, it seems, supported by collective convergence *at both ends*, in the first place. To boot, collective convergence at each opposing end appears to have been sustained in turn through the same ideal conditions of reason and evidence—which only reinforces a theoretical stalemate.

Nine years after Williams, John McDowell (1994) calls for ‘convergence’ of another sort. Unlike Williams and Chalmers, who are both focused on *intersubjective* convergence, McDowell’s is a direct treatment of *subject-matter*, specifically for him, the mind/world and norm/nature ‘deeper dualism’ (McDowell: 93). McDowell’s convergence occurs theoretically and appears to promise a stronger objectivity than the intersubjective sort that Williams has set, precisely, as the very *limit* that philosophers can obtain. On this view, McDowell’s convergence looks like a break through Williams’ ceiling; and Williams’ ‘limits of philosophy’ might well be read as ‘Williams’ limits of philosophy’. But whether McDowell’s approach is tenable or can stand against the ideal conditions that appear to be present in an equally valid relativist position, which has neither presuppositions nor need for a convergeable object, remains to be seen. I will attempt to show in chapter one that McDowell’s method is tenable and, in chapter two, that theoretical convergence of nature and value is tenable on a common empirical reference shared by both realist and relativist outcomes.

These are two sorts of convergence that emerge in the literature to address the rampant and perennial divergences in philosophy: (1) Williams’ convergence of *thoughts*, and (2) McDowell’s convergence *in thought*. I have taken the liberty to term McDowell’s sort of convergence as ‘intrapersonal convergence’—shorthanded in this

paper as intra-convergence—and Williams’ as inter-convergence, from ‘interpersonal convergence’. In so doing, I hope to convey that both convergence models can be viewed as empirically derived. I will explore their relations alongside the two sorts of empiricism, namely that theoretical outputs from intra-convergence can be validated through inter-convergence, as a result of which the latter may constitute ‘evidence’ for the former. I will also cross-examine the intra-convergence thesis against potential objections from, on one hand, the traditional realist, and on the other hand, the sceptical-relativist.

0.3 PARAMETERS

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE of my paper is to extract from cross-disciplinary literature the place of value in natural behaviour, converging studies in philosophy with those in psychology. I seek to advance from *convergence* (which has already been quite remarkably obtained in Rolston, McDowell, and Williams and Putnam) to a real *conflation* of value and nature via a ‘natural imperative’ thesis. The natural imperative is in turn drawn mainly from Christian Wolff’s (1720) philosophical psychology of ‘maxim’, according to which in natural behaviour, selection and evaluation are prerequisites in obtaining any particular course of action—which is *every* action insofar as every action requires particularity. Hence, I am chiefly working out theoretical convergences within the domain of natural behaviour, which includes the longstanding empiricism/idealism dichotomy in natural knowledge. But given that, per Wolff, natural actions require some general motivational maxim, ‘x is good’, the natural

domain may also be viewed as an ethical one—if Wolff is correct, then natural behaviour for humans *is* ethical behaviour, in situ at least.

Present paper does not (as yet) obtain ethical and moral convergence, and discussions are confined at **first-order values**. First-order values (such as Truth, Happiness, or Justice) are those that are pursued *for its own sake* and *everything else is pursued for its sake*; they are properly *intrinsic values*. ‘Intrinsic value’ has traditionally been thought to lie ‘at the heart of ethics’ (Zimmerman and Bradley 2019: 1); it will here be deployed as a motivating ground in natural behaviour and is taken in its ‘traditional’ sense (Zimmerman and Bradley: 6, 7, 19), rather than Christine Korsgaard’s (1983: 169–70) construal that seeks to correct the ‘rather standard fare in philosophy’. Korsgaard’s ‘intrinsic value’, which refers to ‘things which have their value in themselves’ (Korsgaard: 170), viz., intrinsic property, will be left out of present discussion; for it involves a commitment to the controversial thesis of intrinsic goodness in things themselves—a gorgeously enameled frying pan, a rare postage stamp, Abraham Lincoln’s pen (Zimmerman and Bradley: 18)—against Moore’s ‘almost universally acknowledged’ thesis, according to which value is supervenient on any and all nonevaluative properties. Second or other orders of values whether nonethical, ethical, or moral, are not part of present thesis. For example, ‘slavery is good/bad’ is a latter-order injunction, which is not part of the discussion here, although its potential underlying first-order values such as, say, ‘empathy is good’ or ‘justice is good’, or, conversely, ‘profitability is good’ or ‘efficiency is good’, are plausibly within the inventory of natural values.

Philosophical convergence in this paper also does not imply the converge-ability of *any* disagreements. Items that are brought out from the history of philosophy for

convergence are longstanding and eminent conceptions that have each withstood, respectively, longitudinal and latitudinal consistencies; to boot, amongst *numberless* interlocutors who are each supposedly equipped with the ideal conditions of reason and evidence, namely, philosophers. These are typically theories from, or associated by lineage with, systems or/and philosophers with longstanding eminence. I have assumed, from an Archimedean point, that the 'evidence' for truth-value in these theories lie in the very fact that they have each withstood prolonged critical scrutiny: *n*, in many cases here, = above 2,000 years. In this respect, they have each qualified even at face-value as a 'faultless' argumentation, if equally so at each end of a disagreement.

Chapter 1: **Philosophical Convergence**¹

1.1 INTER-CONVERGENCE

PHILOSOPHICAL DISAGREEMENTS ARE numberless and rampant in both folk and academic philosophies. In ‘folk philosophy’ where non-academically philosophical subjects are highly capable of reflection and arriving, with wit, at, say, the Socratic ‘how one should live’, there are as many different ‘theories’ as there are the numberless perspectives on ‘how one should live’ for oneself. In this practical domain, ‘theoretical’ differences are non-issue and, may be readily accepted, perhaps even welcomed, as the very fabric of human co-existence, such as revealed every so often in the common language: ‘to each their own’. Bernard Williams is not surprised by disagreements; he is surprised rather that one should find them surprising. He writes: ‘the earliest thinkers in Western tradition found conflict at least as obvious a feature of the world as concord’ (Williams 1985: 132). On Williams’ view, there is neither need nor necessity to overcome disagreement; in fact, disagreements ‘may remain an important *and constitutive feature* of our relations to others...’ (133; emphasis added). In Williams’ mind, the ‘constitutive feature’ of disagreement is also a feature in academic philosophy, particularly in ethics but, also, for Williams, in other disciplines within the broader academy, including philosophy of science (156). However, unlike folk philosophy, where no one is strictly speaking held accountable for their own brand of ethics and philosophical perspective, academic philosophers, as Williams sees it, must

¹ The development of this chapter is indebted to Dr Wahida Khandker who first pointed out its necessity at the preliminary review. Further developments are encouraged and reviewed by Dr Anna Bergqvist, and additionally indebted to examiners Dr Docent Laura Candiotta and Dr Paul Giladi for their remarks.

still provide some or other forms of explanation to safeguard the *objectivity* that any fields of study is expected to obtain; indeed, for Williams, the very aim of relativism 'is to *explain away* a conflict' (156), rather than to promote rampant disagreements as such. Disagreement may be seen as 'something that is merely to be expected *in the light of the best explanations...of how [it] arises*' (133; emphasis added). In Williams' mind, disagreements are not wild and rampant, so that the field of philosophy is not to be seen as a formless mass of sheer disagreements amongst philosophers—whether folk or academic—who *each* has an utterly unique viewpoint: disagreements do *converge* at some point or other. A philosophical disagreement is almost always the meeting point between two (or more) viewpoints that are each in turn a point of convergence, and, to the extent that each viewpoint is a point of convergence amongst philosophers of like-viewpoints, philosophical objectivity obtains. As compared to the hard sciences whose domain of studies entail 'how things are' (136) and that hence their inferences may converge on 'how things are', the 'best hopes' that philosophers 'could coherently entertain for eliminating disagreement' (135) is the sort of convergence, viz., intersubjective agreement, amongst themselves. For Williams, it seems like it is this sort of intersubjective convergence that sets the 'limits'—as his title, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, suggests—to philosophical objectivity. As to the sort of harder objectivity that the sciences are capable to obtain, Williams maintains that 'there is no such coherent hope' (136).

David Wiggins (1990), who likewise takes convergence to mean intersubjective agreement, appears not to have found agreement with Williams. On the first of two counts, Wiggins, against Williams' limits, advances a convergence thesis toward *theory*; and, on the second count that follows from the first, contrary to Williams'

subjectivist outlook, Wiggins deposits an imperative of truth in propositions that are deemed to be true. Wiggins writes: 'if [sentence] *s* is true, then *s* will under favourable circumstances *command convergence* in belief, and the best explanation of this convergence in belief will require the actual truth of *s*' (Wiggins: 65; emphasis added). By 'actual truth of *s*' Wiggins means a proposition at which one arrives and there is '*nothing else to think*' (66) but that, for instance, in math, $7 + 5$ is 12, and, in morality, say, 'slavery is unjust and insupportable' (66, 70; emphasis added). Hence Wiggins also deposits the qualities of 'irreducibility' and 'indispensability' in true propositions and terms these a 'vindicatory explanation' (67, 68, 84). Whilst Wiggins, in turning his focus on theory, is clearly surpassing—and quite clearly supplying a far harder objectivity than—Williams' 'limits', his 'vindicatory explanation' given to math may not sit well, however, with morality, or, values more generally. Because whilst the mathematical proposition ' $7 + 5 = 12$ ' *is* irreducible and indispensable, and universally so, one might add, the same qualities however do not seem to sit well with the moral proposition, say, 'slavery is unjust and insupportable'. The moral proposition is *not* irreducible, because it first requires an unpacking—viz., a break down—of the term 'unjust'. The moral proposition is also *not* indispensable, because it presupposes an entanglement thesis between 'insupportable' and 'slavery', which, on Williams' sort of observations, would only seem *relatively* tenable. Wiggins may have surpassed Williams' limits in offering philosophical objectivity through convergence *to the truth*; but by positioning his moral truths alongside mathematical ones, Wiggins seems to have entirely bypassed Williams' grounds of distinction between ethics and science on which his limits, precisely, are set in the first place. Nonetheless it may still be of worth for now

just to note a distinction—if perhaps only arguably—between Wiggins’ *math*, which may count as ‘abstract’, and Williams’ (empirical) *science*.

David Chalmers does not open the proverbial ‘can of worms’ by turning to what might potentially lead to comparative argumentations between (philosophies of) math and science, and then each in turn compared with philosophy. Chalmers treats philosophical objectivity as it is and from where it now is—he draws on philosophical *statistics*, viz., statistics that are gleaned from philosophers. Hence, like both Williams and Wiggins, he turns to intersubjective convergence as indicator of philosophical objectivity. In ‘Why Isn’t There More Progress in Philosophy?’ Chalmers (2015) explores the possibility of philosophical progress through convergence; like Williams, Chalmers is focused on the fact of diversity amongst subjects, but like Wiggins, Chalmers’ outlook entails convergence ‘to the truth’ (Chalmers: 4). Perhaps this is why Chalmers would eventually adopt what he calls a ‘glass-half-full’ and a ‘glass-half-empty’ theses to the question, ‘Is there progress in philosophy?’ (3). Whilst laying an equal-validity claim to both theses, Chalmers focuses on the latter and seeks to explore the possibility of *more progress in philosophy through convergence to the truth*. Chalmers’ measure of philosophical progress hence is indicated by ‘*collective convergence to the truth*’ amongst philosophers (Chalmers: 4; emphasis added); and, in so much as ‘there has not been large collective convergence to the truth’ on the big philosophical questions—in fact, ‘[t]here is almost no thesis [...] about which [all] philosophers agree’, he quotes Peter van Inwagen (4, 5)—as compared to the hard sciences, Chalmers holds that there is, at present, no progress (viz., the half-empty thesis). Chalmers’ premise is derived from a 2009 survey conducted by PhilPapers, which gleaned some 940 responses from professional philosophers. The degree of

disagreement on the big questions—including the Platonism/nominalism, empiricism/rationalism, moral realism/antirealism, naturalism/non-naturalism dichotomies—is ‘striking’ (8–9). Of the 30 topics selected for the survey, a majority 23 garnered less than 60% convergence (viz., agreement) (9); the extent and degree of disagreements on longstanding philosophical problems are so widespread that it is almost *systemic*. Disagreements and divergences are, it seems, built into philosophy itself—as a matter of fact.

Alongside Chalmers, many philosophers who study disagreement similarly highlight the possibility—some with hope and others with pessimism—that disagreements may dissolve ‘someday’, should and when the ‘ideal circumstances’ in which philosophical interlocutions occur are properly met (Kölbel 2004; McGrath 2010; Tersman 2021; especially Chalmers 2015: 29–31). These ideal conditions are many (and many are highly psychologically projective especially in the domain of moral philosophy²), but they can be streamlined to a more reliable, more stable, and basic twofold *evidence* and *reason* (McGrath 2010: 59; Chalmers 2015: 19, 29; Frances and Matheson 2019: 10; Jackson 2021: 217). A key feature found in disagreement literature thus revolves around the question of whether ‘convergence’—understood as intersubjective agreement—can occur should disputants in question be equally equipped with evidence and philosophical competence, viz., ‘ideal conditions’. Working along this line of thought, Chalmers keeps his hope for convergence (half-) open. Chalmers offers a ‘Fundamental Scrutability’ thesis, which in turn draws from the twofold *sufficient evidence* and *ideal reasoning* that an ‘ideal reasoner’ (Chalmers 2015: 29) may be in possession of. In principle at least, convergence *should* occur through an ideal

² See, for instance, Tersman’s (2021: 8–9) curation of non-ideal conditions that include ‘self-interest’, ‘bias and prejudice’, and ‘lack of imagination’, amongst others.

'community of ideal reasoners' (30; emphasis added). Chalmers seems to suggest that, at present, there are insufficient ideal reasoners with sufficient evidence, or, that there are sufficient ideal reasoners with insufficient evidence. But either way, '[t]he [big] questions are answerable by us,' Chalmers writes, 'but *as yet* unsolved' (31; emphasis added).

ON MY READING, David Chalmers' glass-half-empty thesis is a thesis of *evidence*; the glass-half-full thesis, on the other hand, is a thesis of *hope*. But Chalmers' hope for convergence *to the truth* is precisely the theoretical sort that Bernard Williams, thirty years before him, dismissed with 'there is no such coherent hope' (Williams 1985: 136). Chalmers' appeal to 'ideal conditions' as grounds for (future) convergence is especially problematic in the face of what some philosophers call a 'faultless disagreement' (Kölbel 2004; MacFarlane 2014; Eriksson and Tiozzo 2016), in which *divergence* occurs, in the first place, *because* the ideal conditions of reason and evidence are present *at each opposing end* of a dispute. A faultless disagreement is sustained through ideal conditions at two (or more) points of convergence, resulting hence in philosophical stalemates. Whilst academic philosophers on the inside may thrive on robust dialectics that come precisely from disagreements, the view from outside, however, may be an entirely different one. If Chalmers' campaign for philosophical objectivity through convergence makes no significant progression, and theoretical stalemates remain unaccounted for, the view of philosophy from the outside may look, to borrow Williams' language, hopelessly incoherent, or else, incoherently hopeless. For academic philosophers to whom folks may look up for explanations, there is no escape; theoretical stalemates, *viz.*, *philosophical* stalemates,

must be accounted for—one way or another. If Chalmers is correct, convergence may only offer a thesis of hope; and for Williams, there can be ‘no such coherent hope’.

David Wiggins appears to offer a more promising entry point to philosophical objectivity, because Wiggins’ TRUTH—a hard object as it were—bears on the intrapersonal space of reason in such a way as to ‘command’ convergence. For Wiggins, convergence is not a matter of hope but a matter of *time*. However, when it comes to hard evidence, time—over 2,000 years to be specific—has not seemed to favour Wiggins’ conviction; because many fundamental ‘truths’—to name a few, the empirical/idealist, the one/many, the objective/subjective, the mind/body, and the value/nature dichotomies—have each remained divergent till today, and perhaps even reinforced and hardened at each opposing end of these divergences. In this respect, Williams seems to be in a much more tenable position to have called out any such hope for convergence as ‘incoherent’. All the same, against evidence or so it seems, Wiggins and Chalmers press on, alongside the *n.* (for numberless) academic philosophers who belong on the same 2,000-year longitude of objective-realists, each supposedly equipped with reason *and evidence*. Traditional realists do not appear to waver, ever, in the face of contrary evidence.

The enduring persistence in traditional realism may perhaps be seen in two ways. Either these highly esteemed philosophers are blind to evidence, which I suggest *not!*; or, I suggest instead, that there are two opposing sets of evidence, with equal validity, that might just have to do with the two sorts of empiricism that have been in play—in this case, at odds one against the other—throughout the realists’ longstanding stalemate against sceptical-relativism. If this were indeed the case, then one sure way to perpetuate the divergence is to hold to an epistemic dualism between the two sorts

of empiricism. But I suggest that this need not be the case. Because the two sorts of empiricism are each a distinct and independent method of validation within the interpersonal and intrapersonal spaces of reasoning. That the former, namely, interpersonal objectivity, is a universally accepted practice both in the sciences and philosophy is common knowledge; whilst the latter, namely, intrapersonal objectivity, however, may require some further considerations. At any rate, philosophy as it now stands seems to resonate neither with Wiggins' thesis of time nor Chalmers' thesis of hope for any real convergence TO THE TRUTH.

SARAH MCGRATH DOES not agree that the sort of inter-convergence pursued commonly by Williams, Wiggins, and Chalmers can offer any significant validation for, nor has any significant correlation with, philosophical objectivity; not even *moral* objectivity wherein any real nonevaluative properties are arguably absent. In 'Moral Realism without Convergence',³ McGrath (2010) cross-examines the common thesis, 'REALISM REQUIRES CONVERGENCE'—from which I have taken the liberty to focus in this section on a more specific 'OBJECTIVITY REQUIRES CONVERGENCE'—that is accepted by both prominent moral realists as well as antirealists (McGrath: 59).

McGrath is focused on moral objectivity, and draws examples from the sciences, although not in a way that throws Williams' caution to the wind. McGrath moots that *even* in the domain of sciences, 'objectivity of paradigmatic scientific judgments does not presuppose or entail any significant convergence thesis' (McGrath: 76). On McGrath's view, objectivity obtains independent of interpersonal convergence. For example, paradigmatic historical judgments such as 'The Battle of Hastings occurred in

³ McGrath's concern in this paper is moral realism, but I suggest that her moral thesis can be situated here within a broader philosophical discussion.

the year 1066', or 'George Washington was the first president of the United States', each, of its own, purports to be objective, without convergence. Each of these statements are '*sufficient* explication of the "objectivity of historical judgment", and it does not entail or presuppose anything interesting about convergence' (76). Here, I recall Wiggins' mathematical example that ' $7 + 5 = 12$ ' for this specific purpose: for a fully rational person who holds that seven and five are indeed twelve, convergence adds nothing to (nor does it alter) his objective claim. For McGrath, the same is said of moral objectivity inferred by a fully rational person: convergence 'adds nothing to that to which he was already committed by his belief in objective moral facts' (78). Further to McGrath's thesis that OBJECTIVITY DOES NOT REQUIRE CONVERGENCE, I suggest that intrapersonal objectivity obtains often *in spite of* disagreements; such as, famously, when Copernicus mathematically deduced that the 'universe' is heliocentric—*against* a universally convergent view that it is geocentric. Or that, whilst sages of ancient times rather unanimously converge on the 'truth' that supernatural forces are the source of the natural world, Democritus logically deduced that nature is made of irreducible particles called *atomos*. Of course, each of these subject matters are precisely the sort of hard objects that differ from ethical studies, as Williams has cautioned. Yet, similarly, intrapersonal objectivity in each of these cases obtains *without* hard evidence—before the inventions of the telescope and microscope respectively—at the time the postulations were made: intrapersonal objectivity obtains with neither convergence nor hard evidence.

Wiggins will agree with the sort of intrapersonal objectivity that McGrath seems to be advancing; but Wiggins, unlike McGrath, retains his CONVERGENCE thesis *in virtue of intrapersonal objectivity*. Because for Wiggins, objectivity *qua* OBJECTIVITY,

'commands', viz., presses on subjects 'to converge'—viz., to *comply*. Wiggins externalises the objectivity that in fact has been derived within *his* intrapersonal space of reasoning. On the face of it, Wiggins' may come off as *un*-reasonable and utterly *non*-evidential; but Wiggins' sort of interpersonal objectivity that commands convergence cannot also be lightly dismissed as *being* unreasonable and nonevidential, without also dismissing a rock-solid, two-millennia-long longitudinal consistency—viz., *convergence*—amongst *n.* philosophical talents, viz., talents who are purportedly equipped with ideal conditions, who are all of a piece.

As much for Wiggins as for the numberless moral realists who believe—without wavering—that objectivity commands convergence, OBJECTIVITY COMMANDS CONVERGENCE *is* rational and (self-) evident. Hence, commitment to OBJECTIVITY REQUIRES CONVERGENCE in turn behoves a commitment to cast doubt on the rationality and information in those who do not converge; because, as McGrath highlights, OBJECTIVITY REQUIRES CONVERGENCE ON THE TRUTH inevitably results in the notion that individuals who *are* rational and well-informed about nonevaluative facts—like moral realists who are rational and well-informed—will '*inevitably*' and are '*guaranteed*' to converge on THE TRUTH (McGrath: 64). Hence, realists who commit to OBJECTIVITY REQUIRES CONVERGENCE are hard-pressed to ascribe psychologically projective causes such as 'sheer prejudice', 'confused thinking', and other cognitive 'lapses' against those who do *not* converge 'on the truth' (62). McGrath argues that even if these highly speculative causes were true, even if irrationality or ignorance of facts were indeed eliminated from defective reasoning, there is nothing to guarantee that subjects will converge on an outcome—'maybe they would,' 'maybe they wouldn't' (62). Hence, OBJECTIVITY REQUIRES CONVERGENCE ON THE TRUTH is only

contingently correct, at best. Which is to say, on my reading, that OBJECTIVITY REQUIRES CONVERGENCE ON THE TRUTH is *in*-correct. McGrath moots that there is no reason why two (or more) rational and informed reasoners cannot arrive at divergent outcomes (62, 66). McGrath seems to be suggesting here the possibility of what some philosophers call a ‘faultless disagreement’ (Kölbel 2004; MacFarlane 2014; Eriksson and Tiozzo 2016). If longstanding philosophical disagreements were indeed faultless at every opposing end, then, as Williams says, there can be ‘no such coherent hope’ for inter-convergence on these matters.

1.2 FAULTLESS DISAGREEMENT

PHILOSOPHERS WHO STUDY disagreement often highlight the belief—some with hope and others with pessimism—that intersubjective oppositions may dissolve ‘someday’, should and when the ‘ideal conditions’ in which philosophical interlocutions occur are properly met (Kölbel 2004; McGrath 2010; Tersman 2021; especially Chalmers 2015: 29–31). A key argument found in disagreement literature thus revolves around the question of whether ‘convergence’—as discussed in preceding section—can occur should disputants in question be equally equipped with evidence and philosophical competence. Meanwhile, however, disagreements remain a fact; interlocutors of any persuasion universally agree on disagreement. And they generally agree that ‘*radical* disagreements’—viz., disagreements that ‘persist in ideal circumstances’—are ‘the most troublesome’ (Tersman 2021: 8; emphasis added). For example, one can disagree with Hume’s or Kant’s or Nietzsche’s ethics; but none of these conflicting philosophers can strictly speaking be charged for being ignorant of facts and irrational. In fact, the

opposite seems to hold true, given the convergences they have each commanded within longstanding groups of Humeans or Kantians or Nietzscheans. These longstanding metaethical disagreements have evidently persisted *through* ideal conditions; and, as individual arguments, each has been sustained with remarkable longitudinal consistency amongst philosophers who disagree with each other, but who are equally well-equipped, 'given their training, familiarity with each other's arguments, and the time they have spent on reflecting on the issues' (Tersman: 7–8). Whilst sound reasoning and sufficient evidence *may* someday converge theorists to any one side of a longstanding dispute, radical disagreements seem to suggest, at least for now, that the twofold 'ideal conditions' might just be the very cause of longstanding disputes at each opposing end in the first place. It seems that these philosophical disagreements are here to stay.

Max Kölbel (2004) explores the notion of '*faultless* disagreement'. Kölbel's thesis consists in all the trappings of a radical disagreement, but which additionally entails a categorial claim that neither disputant has committed a fault or a mistake. Faultless disagreements are those disagreements in which even one's acquiescence of belief or argument to another would make improvements to neither interlocutors nor, by extension, the interlocution per se (Kölbel: 53). By Kölbel's definition (53, 54):⁴

A faultless disagreement is a situation where there is a thinker *A*, a thinker *B*, and a proposition (content of judgement) *p*, such that:

- (a) *A* believes (judges) that *p* and *B* believes (judges) that not-*p*
- (b) Neither *A* nor *B* has made a mistake (is at fault).

⁴ This paper follows Kölbel's (54) disclaimer in deploying the notion of 'faultless disagreement': 'Saying that disagreements in some area *can* be faultless (and perhaps sometimes *are* faultless), is not to say that *all* disagreements in that area are faultless'; with an additional claim that so-called 'faultless' disagreements are longstanding philosophical disagreements that have been sustained through remarkable *n.* longitudinal consistency.

Kölbel believes that most people have a ‘healthy pre-theoretical intuition’ that there can be and are faultless disagreements, especially where it concerns matters of taste. For example, where Bob and Paul disagree that Grace Kelly is prettier than Mai Zetterling, and where both Bob and Paul have both seen their respective films and have given the matter ample considerations, it seems clear that both Bob and Paul might be ‘entirely without fault’ in their judgements (54). Additionally, that ‘there might be nothing either of them could learn that would make it recommendable for them to change their mind’ (54). But where it concerns deeper theoretical commitments, the possibility of faultless disagreement may be dismissed on logical grounds that (55):

Equivalence schema (ES) It is true that p iff p .

(ES1) If p , then not-It is true that not- p .

(ES2) If not- p , then not-It is true that p .

Hence, following the first, a second logical ground for dismissing faultless disagreement is a commitment to the ‘plausible principle’, where (56):

(T) It is a mistake to believe a proposition that is not true.

On Kölbel’s observation, these logical presuppositions provide a common ground to deny foregoing condition (b) of a faultless disagreement in two common ways. A first response is to simply state on *a priori* grounds that that something is true cannot also be un-true; hence, someone *has* to make a mistake, even when none is apparent. ‘The fact that we cannot find anyone to blame does not show that no-one is at fault’ (58). A

second response is to draw a distinction between the ideal conditions of reason and evidence—combined as ‘cognitively faultless’—and ‘belief’ (59). In this way, there can be ‘a *different sense* in which disagreements can be faultless’ (59), in that whilst interlocutors may both be ‘cognitively faultless’, at least one of them, nonetheless, may be liable of ‘*false belief*’ (59; italics added); and could in that sense ‘have improved his situation by giving up that belief’—which is to say that there is still ‘*some mistake*’ that, because either disputants are ‘cognitively faultless’, escape detection (59). Faultless disagreements hence are only apparent and not genuine in both scenarios.

Kölbel displays little interest on the first response; the fact that ‘it does nothing’ at all to account, at least, for *some* matters, say of taste, but instead imposes a general *a priori* law of noncontradiction on all matters, is ‘clearly unattractive’ (58–9). By drawing a contrast against how proper enquiries typically involve ‘further discussion or investigation’, in a ‘systematic way’, and ‘guided by considerations’ (58), Kölbel also seems to suggest that this sort of response is un-reasonable. Contrary to the first, the second response allows for some possibility of faultless disagreement, in that it does not deny the presence of reason and evidence at both ends of the dispute. Whilst it does attempt to explain away the fact of disagreement by depositing, in addition to reason and evidence, the possibility of ‘false belief’, Kölbel nonetheless finds it ‘puzzling’ that ‘the truth-values of these beliefs’ are, in the first place, not only independent of, but can also be ‘in conflict with’, the reasoning and evidence of ‘flawless thinkers’ (60).

Kölbel identifies each of these responses with types of *realism*, respectively, ‘unmitigated’ and ‘mitigated’ (57, 58–9). They are the sorts of response that one might

expect from the like of Wiggins, whose conception on things carries the presupposition that OBJECTIVITY COMMANDS COMPLIANCE to the object itself. The objectivity of something bears itself on perception, so that, as McGrath also has highlighted, convergence is ‘inevitable’ and ‘guaranteed’—there is simply no room for disagreement, let alone faultless disagreement. Stripping away from such presuppositions, Kölbel instead focuses on an immediate touchstone: perspectives. By a person’s ‘perspective’ Kölbel means ‘the point of evaluation appropriate for the person’, where ‘a perspective is a function that assigns truth-values to propositions’ (70). Hence, Kölbel seeks to modify (T) on account that perspectives are relative to subjects, to establish what he calls a ‘unified relativised version of (T)’, as follows:

(TR) It is a mistake to believe a proposition that is not true in one’s own perspective.

From this viewpoint, Kölbel suggests that a ‘same proposition can be evaluated differently in differently perspectives’ (72); and neither may be judged a mistake, because, for Kölbel, ‘the truth-value of the content itself is relative’ (72). Kölbel, however, does not explain *how* the same content can be ‘relative,’ except that ‘the same proposition can be evaluated differently from different points of evaluation’, relative to ‘different people’ (70). McGrath seems to converge with Kölbel; but McGrath offers a metaphor to illustrate how a same content may give rise to different perspectives, each without having to commit a mistake.

McGrath invites each of us to take photographs with her. Supposing, she says, that each of us ‘use our cameras to take photographs of the same scene from the same vantage point’ (McGrath 2010: 68), our cameras would naturally be receiving the same inputs. Supposing, however, if our photographs turn up different representations of

the same scene, then at least one of them *must* be a misrepresentation. We may then attribute the misrepresentation to camera malfunction. That, for McGrath, is a traditional realist's picture; which is to say that any proposition that is not correctly represented constitutes 'a cognitive deficiency' or 'cognitive shortcoming' (69), as symbolised by the camera malfunction. McGrath grants that this may be true in *some* cases (70). But supposing, McGrath now invites us, to take a photograph of a different *content*, say, her daughter; and supposing that her daughter is in a distance, so that she appears in our pictures as no more than a 'blurry, indistinct blob', and additionally that our blobs appear to have some differences—there is then no reason at all to attribute the differences to defective cameras. Her daughter, viz., content, is simply too far away to be accurately represented (70–1). Here, McGrath seems to be suggesting the possibility of a subject-matter, in this case, morality and moral facts, that may turn out to be inherently 'distant'; so that differences in representation are not to be taken strictly speaking as defective reasoning. Then, McGrath positions her daughter immediately before us (71); but even so, McGrath argues that 'there will be ever so many aspects of *her appearance* that the resulting photographs will not accurately represent' (71; emphasis added).

McGrath uses the camera metaphor to illustrate her point that OBJECTIVITY DOES NOT REQUIRE CONVERGENCE even as interlocutors are equally (more or less) ideal; but in doing so, she also *seems* to be implying a thesis of faultless disagreement. A faultless disagreement in this case that occurs when the subject-matter, viz., content, offers limited access for accurate representation, in the first place. Hence, for McGrath, the rational thinker's appropriate response to an inherently 'fuzzy' subject-matter is 'by suspending judgment' (79). By adopting the *agnostic* approach, which

McGrath recommends (66, 79, 80, 86, 87), the rational thinker ‘neither believe in the truth *nor disagree*’ (80; emphasis added); which is also to say, from another perspective, that McGrath’s view on ‘faultless disagreement’ is *void*, because in adopting an agnostic approach, there can be neither fault nor even disagreement. But McGrath’s cameras (reasoners) *are* non-defective (= faultless), and there *are* different representations (= disagreements). Hence, if the agnostic feature—whether as an outcome of, or presupposition in, disagreement—is eliminated from consideration, it does look like data alone do indicate faultless disagreement.

In keeping with McGrath’s metaphor of the camera, I suggest another way of looking at ethics or more generally philosophy. Perhaps the subject-matter in question may more accurately be represented by an age-old giant sequoia. Rather than being in a distance, the subject-matter is near—very near indeed—but simply too tall and too wide to be captured *entirely* by any one camera. To represent a complete picture of the sequoia, I must either take several steps back for a wider viewpoint, or, I can piece the many different representations into one. Be that as it may, *any* perspective of the sequoia is a ‘faultless’ one, provided that it does not also explicitly reject other differing, if equally ‘faultless’, representations. On this view then it seems the only real fault in any faultless disagreement is in the rejection of an opposing viewpoint that is, in and by itself, a faultless viewpoint.

STUDIES ON FAULTLESS disagreement are controversial, because the very claim of a *faultless* disagreement is highly controversial; especially where it concerns theory and the objectivity that theory entails. Even relativists who can thrive on such a notion do not take the term lightly. John Macfarlane (2014, ch. 6) breaks down ‘faultless’ and

‘disagreement’ into various types, and cautions that if ‘one does not want to be misunderstood, it is best to avoid the phrase “faultless disagreement” entirely’ (Macfarlane: 136). Yet, in my mind, I cannot seem to find a more appropriate term to describe some millennia-long disagreements—or, ‘hardened paradoxes’—that seem to reveal strength and validity at *each* opposing end of the disputes; disputes that ‘may well be discussed for the next twenty-five hundred years’, as Roy Sorensen (2022: 1) puts it. It does look like longstanding disagreements such as Plato’s rational-realism and Pyrrhic empirical-scepticism—amongst others—do make a case for Kölbel’s ‘faultless’; particularly when the set of arguments and theories at each end of these disputes *has* withstood critical scrutiny (criterion of talent), *has* gained traction amongst these critical talents (latitudinal consistency), and *has* been sustained through centuries amongst these critical talents (longitudinal consistency). Where it concerns age-old fundamental topics that have each been sustained through critical scrutiny for as long as philosophy has been in existence, it may even perhaps be on pain of evidence to deny ‘faultless disagreement’.

In this paper, I take ‘faultless disagreement’ to mean differences between very fundamental systems of thought that have emerged through the years in the philosophical space of reason. The metaphor of the giant sequoia—which may well represent THE PHILOSOPHICAL SPACE OF REASON—may not adequately be found convincing, especially for those who are inclined to find the disenchanting language more compelling. (Though metaphors can also be found amongst some of the most disenchanting, such as ‘Hume’s Fork’, Watson’s ‘Black Box’, or Wittgenstein’s ‘Beetle in the Box’.) Hence, I have taken the liberty to provide ‘body’ for the giant sequoia through a scientifically acceptable method found in psychology.

Following Gordon Allport and Henry Odbert's (American) (1936), Francis Galton's (English), and Ludwig Klages' (German) lexical psychology, according to which trait terms that have made their way to the dictionaries are indicative of universally convergent representations of behavioural descriptions, I have taken a similar vantage point from which to view the numerous philosophical terms that have emerged from, and been sustained through, the history of philosophy. Each of these terms, called 'items', are 'rock-solid' and are representative of fundamental thoughts or systems of thought: say, EMPIRICISM, RATIONALISM, IDEALISM, SUBJECTIVISM, NATURALISM, PLATONISM, SCEPTICISM, to name few. They also tend to belong to the mainstream, since being 'mainstream' means that these items have each obtained 'traction', which in turn result in latitudinal and longitudinal consistencies. Hence, items that do not meet these criteria, which is to say they do not also belong to the mainstream and do not obtain or have not obtained widespread traction, such as, EPIPHENOMENALISM or EXPRESSIVISM, do not qualify as 'faultless'. (Though these and other countless items *may* in fact be faultless.) My intention in restricting to these longstanding and fundamental items is to assure, as much as possible, the integrity of 'faultlessness'—to 'play safe', as the saying goes. The longitudinal and latitudinal criteria are additionally obtained with an underlain criterion of *talent*, viz., rational thinkers who are equipped with the ideal conditions of reason and evidence, viz., PHILOSOPHERS. The criteria for 'faultless' hence are a tripartite of longitudinal and latitudinal consistencies, and talent. Items in this paper that are brought out from the history of philosophy for study, hence, meet all three criteria, and are assigned the label, 'faultless'. I have assumed, from an Archimedean point, that the very fact that these selected items have each withstood prolonged critical scrutiny through n —in most cases here, =

above 2,000 years—amounts to ‘evidence’ and, given that they are sustained by philosophers who are equipped with ideal reasoning, also amounts to ‘reason’. In this respect, they have each qualified even at face-value as fulfilling the ideal conditions for theorisation, hence, fulfilling the label, ‘faultless’.

The notion of faultless disagreement advanced in this paper, say, between RATIONALISM (R) versus EMPIRICISM (E), additionally meets the requirements of classical logic (ES) and (T), without having to subscribe to Kölbel’s modified (TR) (see page 35); as follows:

(ES) It is true that R iff R .

(ES1) If R , then not-It is true that not- R .

(ES2) If not- R , then not-It is true that R .

Likewise:

(ES) It is true that E iff E .

(ES1) If E , then not-It is true that not- E .

(ES2) If not- E , then not-It is true that E .

Hence, E and R are each logically tenable, and potentially logically cotenable; unless one is introduced to the other as a foreign *addition*, and, additionally, as a comparative diametric, when they are each in situ an independent and self-standing item; as follows:

(ES) It is true that R iff not- E .

(ES1) If R , then not-It is true that E .

(ES2) If not- R , then not-It is true that not- E .

The above does not look tenable in my mind, especially when the phenomenon is in view, where (ES) RATIONALISM IS HELD TO BE TRUE IF AND ONLY IF EMPIRICISM IS NOT TRUE. It now looks logically absurd to hold that the truth-value of rationalism is dependent on the falsity of empiricism. What requires accountability, it seems, is a dualism that has been added to what might otherwise be two independent and equally valid items. Hence barring an unaccountable dualism, faultless disagreement between *R* and *E* fulfils:

(T) It is a mistake to believe a proposition that is not true.

For both *R* and *E* are not-not true.

On this view, a rejection of faultless disagreement is opened to the risk of rejecting a faultless proposition that is of equal validity in virtue of reason and evidence. Whilst Kölbel's, and McGrath's arguably, relativistic stance sustains a thesis of faultless disagreement, the problem that is faultless disagreement remains, for the same reason. The like of Wiggins, on the other hand, will have to account for introductions of a foreign comparative notation and an unaccounted dualism. I will next discuss the problem of *dualism*, the foreign notation that drives a wedge between what might otherwise be two potentially logically cotenable items.

DUALISM IS RAMPANT in common language and everyday phenomena: 'Are you naughty *or* nice?' 'Is your boss a good *or* a bad person?' 'We are right and *they* are wrong'. To name some more basic ones. The dualistic language seems to betray pre-theoretical perceptions that place reality in dichotomised boxes, hence suggesting that children

are not in fact naughty *and* nice, or that a righteous individual cannot also be susceptible to unethical behaviours, or that one's social group and its norms are not in fact relative or fallibilistic. Although the dualistic mindset appears to be intuitive and natural, and seems necessary for the perception of individual realities—that something is *this* and not *that* entity—Alistair J. Sinclair (2011) cautions that it can lead to a 'dogmatic extremism in which [an] opposing view is demonized' (Sinclair: 42). Divergent dualists such as 'terrorists, extremists, and hot-headed fanatics' are typically 'absolute monists who give no credence to opposing views' (54). Sinclair highlights an exemplary 'few members of the Nazi Party', particularly Oscar Schindler whose non-dualistic 'frame of mind' 'abhorred the extremes' of the regime and saved the lives of many Jews (44, 48). Organisations in today's society that cannot accommodate opposing views similarly run the risks of 'fruitless extremes' that 'impede their progress' (49); other practical implications include, amongst others, imbalanced views on and choices in political leadership, or the lack of prudence and a balanced mindset that one requires to succeed in life (51).

Dualism in philosophy can result in stubborn disagreements and theoretical stalemates, or else leads to extreme theories such as radical nihilism and radical perfectionism in ethics, or epiphenomenalism and panpsychism in metaphysics and epistemology. Contemporary philosophical studies on dualism however are not widespread (50)—with the exception perhaps of the Cartesian mind/body problem; when, from Sinclair's viewpoint at least, 'the history of philosophy may be viewed *dualistically* as an oscillation between dogmatism and skepticism' (51; emphasis added).

According to Hilary Putnam (2002: 9), John Dewey is one of the few who deals with ‘a great many philosophical dualisms’, including the fact/value and analytic/synthetic dichotomies. Indeed, Dewey has treated dualisms in several domains; including mediatism/immediatism and representation/experience in epistemology (Dewey 1922a: 353–355), and monistic/pluralistic realism (354–356) and physical/psychical in metaphysics (356). Dewey has also worked substantively on the instrumental/intrinsic values dualism in ethics (Dewey 1922b). Following Dewey, Putnam (2002: 9) cautions that one’s dualistic intuition to pit one idea *against* the other is philosophically ‘pernicious’. Putnam then goes on to moot at great length, on both historical and theoretical grounds, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy*.

Although Putnam does not explain why philosophical dualisms are ‘pernicious’—and direct treatments elsewhere are limited—the phenomenon can be picked out in almost every domain and topic in philosophy. For instance, in speaking of arguments for and against moral anti-realism, Richard Joyce (2021: 13) describes the multi-layered dichotomies as matters that ‘push philosophers to and fro’; elsewhere, in offering a solution to these vicious circles, Stephen Finlay (2007: 822) urges that the success of a theory depends on its ability to stand up to ‘dialectical pressure’ by making ‘accommodations’. Following roughly in these directions, and particularly in the footprints of Dewey (1917, 1922a, 1922b) and Putnam (2002), this section provides a brief survey on the phenomenon of dualism. My approach is committed to a ‘coherent picture’ whereby the phenomenon of ‘dualism’ is viewed as *a dualistic mindset that results in theoretical divergences and intersubjective disagreements*; so that my main target at the root of disagreement is **dualism**.

A clarification of the term ‘dualism’ is in order, because it carries two diametrical meanings in contemporary literature. Whilst ‘dualism’ traditionally refers to the cyclically *vicious* or ‘pernicious’ phenomenon of divergence (e.g. Putnam 2002), a ‘dualist’ may elsewhere refer to the *virtuous* individual who is able to accommodate dual views in her belief or knowledge (e.g. Sinclair 2011). For discussion in this paper, I have taken the liberty to retain the traditional divergent-dualism as ‘dualism’, against a modified ‘convergent-dualist’ or ‘duality’ when referring to its virtuous counterpart. Yet it bears to note that both ‘sorts’ of dualism are essentially identical in their goals to avoid dichotomisation and to seek convergence where possible.

On Dewey’s view, the relation between dualism and monism is complex; Dewey (1917: 491) defines dualism as ‘two monisms stuck loosely together, so that all the difficulties in monism are in it multiplied by two’. In a sense, then, whilst dualism is the result of a monistic view or disposition, a convergent-dualist on the other hand conflates dual views on a singular, viz. monistic, entity. Hence on Dewey’s view, the ‘problem’ in dualism is not in fact numerical, viz., it is not a problem about dualism or monism at all; the dualism-problem is perhaps more properly a conflict arising from one’s disposition/attitude *to dichotomise*, rather than to accommodate or to converge with a view that is different than one’s own. T. M. Scanlon (2003) speaks of a ‘*no-escape thesis*’, according to which even ‘rational’ or ‘moral’ evaluations that ‘look critically at [...] our [own] dispositions from the outside’ are not plausible at all, because ‘we will always, as it were, be looking *through* some of these dispositions rather than *at* them’ (Scanlon: 280–81; emphases added). If Scanlon is correct, then interpersonal disagreements are potentially rooted in the intrapersonal space of reasoning in which an interlocutor is, for any reason, eclipsed from a potentially

equally valid viewpoint that differs from her 'disposition'. But whether a viewpoint from the outside of one's disposition is indeed, as Scanlon suggests, 'not plausible at all', remains to be seen.

THE ABSURDITY IN foregoing RATIONALISM/EMPIRICISM notation example has a singular culprit: dualism. Following this line of thought, the only fault to be had is not the thesis of 'faultless disagreement', but rather, the faultless *disagreement* as such. On this view, disagreement should not even have existed, because:

(T) It is a mistake to believe a proposition that is not true.

(T*) It is a mistake to reject a proposition that is true.

A convergence, hence, is required in order to sustain the truth-value of *two* correct propositions, which are each an independently correct proposition that is potentially convergeable, viz., cotenable, with the other. Inasmuch as concept (= dualism) precedes communication (= disagreement), however, it seems like an *intrapersonal* convergence is requisite to any chance at all for *interpersonal* convergences. Moreover, a convergence *of thoughts*—as in the case of an interpersonal convergence—already obtains when intrapersonal convergence obtains *in thought*; provided of course that the sets of thought in dispute are convergeable, in the first place.

1.3 INTRA-CONVERGENCE

THE IDEAL CONDITIONS of reason and evidence at both opposing ends of any faultless disagreement seem to force disputants into a *stalemate*—when, that is, one for any reason is unable to accommodate the other within their intrapersonal space of reasoning. One potential candidate that blocks any chance of an intrapersonal convergency is the dualistic mindset that introduces a perceived irreconcilability between items that are each independently valid, and are both logically potentially cotenable. The dualistic mindset, on Dewey's view, is in fact a monistic position that blocks an oncoming proposition that is distinct from one's own. It is the sort of interpersonal convergence—*compliance*, to be precise—TO THE TRUTH that one like Wiggins would expect from a differing viewpoint that, however, might turn out to be of equal validity to his. Hence, Wiggins' sort of INTER-CONVERGENCE TO THE TRUTH is highly problematic when confronted with an antithesis that carries the force of reason and evidence. By the same token, Chalmers' hope for INTER-CONVERGENCE TO THE TRUTH seems highly improbable. Perhaps this is why Williams already cautioned that there is 'no such coherent hope' where it concerns matters of theory. McGrath, similarly, acquiesces to an agnostic outcome where it concerns moral truths. The ideal conditions from which philosophers derive their positions look like a double-edged sword: on one hand, they reinforce any given position; on the other hand, they force two (or more) different positions into a stalemate.

In *Mind and World*, John McDowell (1994) calls for convergence; but it is not the sort of interpersonal convergence that may prove 'hopeless' between two faultless disputants who are each backed by reason and evidence. McDowell asks for

theoretical convergence, which is the sort of convergence that occurs within the individual's space of reasoning; he writes:

‘Modern philosophy has taken itself to be called on to bridge dualistic gulfs, between subject and object, thought and world, [and a] deeper dualism [that is] norm and nature’ (McDowell: 93).

Unlike Williams (1985) and Wiggins (1990) before him, who are both focused on *intersubjective* convergence, McDowell's is a direct treatment of *subject-matter*, viz., the mind/world and norm/nature ‘deeper dualisms’. Apart from McDowell's (1994: 91) own ‘naturalized Platonism’ (which will be further discussed in the following chapter), convergent *theories* have since flourished in almost every domain of ethics.

Elinor Mason (2018: 4) introduces subcategories of the ‘foundational’ and the ‘non-foundational’ to each of the pluralist and monist domains; so that a foundational *monist* who agrees to a plurality of values at the level of choices, she moots, is in fact a ‘nonfoundational *pluralist*’ (Mason: 7). Of course, it can conversely be suggested that foundational *pluralists* who concede to any one value at the level of choices are in fact ‘nonfoundational *monists*’. In another domain, Mark van Roojen (2018: 45) describes present-day noncognitivism as being less distinguishable from cognitivism than its earlier version; ‘borderline and hybrid theories’ (van Roojen: 13–17) such as Allan Gibbard's norm-expressivism, Simon Blackburn's quasi-realism, and, more recently, Michael Ridge's ecumenical expressivism had emerged and each advanced noncognitivism—much like in the pluralism/monism quarrel—toward convergence with cognitivist theses.

Intra-convergence can also be seen in the history of ethics and philosophy more generally. In the postmodern era, Alfred N. Whitehead (1929) converges his

philosophy of science, meta-physics, and value theory on a 'process philosophy' whereby he endeavours 'to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted' (Whitehead: 3). Whitehead (1929) advances a 'synoptic vision' in which the world's 'self-realisation' is a 'fact of facts' that consists in *values* as its 'ultimate motive power' (Whitehead: 29, 33, 37). Whitehead goes so far as to conflate the longstanding form-and-matter and substance-and-attribute distinctions, including the one and the many, into a singular 'conrescence' (Whitehead: 21). Whilst all of this may seem all too speculative by today's measure, especially when one considers that Whitehead has quite literally converged the cosmos on just over 100,000 words, Whiteheadian process philosophy is still being studied widely. This is seen such as through a 2008 publication *Handbook of Whiteheadian Process Thought* in which '101 internationally renowned Whitehead scholars give an impressive overview of [...] the status of their research findings in an enormous variety of domains' (Desmet and Irvine: 53), and the bi-annual International Whitehead Conference where scholars 'from a variety of disciplines and countries come together for the continued pursuit of critically engaging a process worldview' (54–55).

Theoretical convergence has a longstanding history that goes back to medieval and ancient philosophies. Thomas Aquinas' and Augustine's rational approach to the study of God, Aristotle's empirical realism, Plato's naturalisation of the 'heavenly realm' are each philosophies of intra-convergence. Theoretical convergence, it appears, enjoys a longitudinal consistency that more or less equals that of longstanding disagreements. Many longstanding eminent theories are in fact nondivergent before they somehow got dualized as they pass through the passage of time. For example, famously, Plato's

idealism whilst in fact entangled with the sensible world has commonly been targeted as a 'rampant' idealism utterly divorced from nature; Kant's 'transcendental idealism' has likewise been commonly rejected on empirical grounds when in fact his thesis is cotenable with, and *grounded on*, sense experience. (Further discussions on each of these nondivergent theories in following chapter.) Hume's radical scepticism has often been invoked/targeted to promote/challenge an epistemic disenchantment when in fact his ethical space of reason has a huge place for *real* sympathy. Nietzsche, too, has often been read as some sort of a maverick against mainstream morality—an *anti-moralist*—when in fact a basic motivation for the actualisation of his *übermensch* has been a socially moral one against the tyranny of the institutions of his day. Intuitively, it may just be that each of these eminent systems of thought is able to command both longitudinal and latitudinal inter-convergences precisely because their embedded—if somehow eclipsed—antithetical component has been in place to withstand dialectic pressures.

If McDowell could have things his way, things might just be coming back full-circle, where nondivergent systems of thought are being pieced back to their original state; and, in an ironic, a positively ironic, way, it is precisely in virtue of the schismatic activities—where each component is taken apart and being examined and cross-examined over and over again—that each aspect of the whole are coming back together, *stronger*. That is to say, with stronger *objectivity*. Perhaps, as extravagant as it may sound for contemporary philosophers, Friedrich Hegel's ultra-grand phenomenology of the Mind might just be on target after all; for it seems, from a view from below, that the external pressure from ideal conditions can also be a double-edged sword that pulls opposing positions *in*, toward one another.

JOHN DEWEY'S LIFELONG career to loosen philosophy from the grip of dualism and to free philosophical stalemates through integrating 'as dynamic wholes, the various dimensions of experience (practical, imaginative, bodily, psychical) that philosophy and psychology had defined as discrete' is due to, and informed by, his 'early encounters with Hegelianism' (Hildebrand 2021: 6). 'Hegel's Dialectics', as it is famously known, seems to sit in comfort in the face of dual pressures enforced by opposing sets of ideal conditions; because for Hegel contradictory (and faultless) propositions are pre-determined by a sort of metaphysical 'spirit' to sooner or later converge on a higher, more comprehensive, and indeed complete TRUTH. This in turn is possible for Hegel because of an inherent 'moment' within the process of 'dialectics' which he terms *aufheben*, a German verb that carries a doubled meaning of 'a *negating* and at the same time a *preserving*' (Hegel 1807: §113). Hegel's 'synthesis' resonates in Whitehead's 'conjunctive unity', as 'at once the togetherness of the "many" which it finds, and also it is one among the "many" which it leaves' (Whitehead 1929: 21). These are languages that many come off as ultra-extravagant by today's measure, but I suggest, and this paper attempts on, a thesis of theoretical convergence that is not pre-committed to the sort of speculative method and ultra-realism that Whitehead and Hegel had respectively assumed.⁵ Nonetheless, this paper is indebted to the sort of convergence as put forward by Hegel and Whitehead; which in my mind appears to be more consistent with the term 'convergence', since the descriptions put forward by

⁵ Nor does present thesis reject, or unable to accommodate, the speculative method or an ultra-realism; both of which are beyond the discussion scope and space of this paper.

Hegel and Whitehead are more properly a *synthesis* of items rather than the *elimination* of one (or more) item(s).⁶

Julie E. Maybee (2020) offers a contemporary overview of ‘Hegel’s Dialectics’. On Maybee’s descriptive approach, Hegel’s dialectics is a ‘form or presentation of logic’ that consists of three ‘moments’ (Maybee: 3). The ‘first moment’ is the moment which many scholars construe as ‘thesis’, a moment of ‘fixity’ in which a concept has a ‘seemingly stable definition or determination’ (3). The ‘second moment’ is (may be construed as) an ‘antithesis’, the ‘dialectical moment’ in which the first moment of understanding ‘sublates *itself*, or both cancels and preserves *itself*, as it pushes on to or passes into its opposite’ (4). Finally, the ‘third moment’, commonly construed as ‘synthesis’, is the moment that ‘grasps the unity of the opposition between the first two determinations, or is the positive result of the dissolution or transition of those determinations’ (4).⁷ Maybee’s thesis, hence, is free from any ultra-transcendental ‘spirit’ that, for Hegel, is responsible, at least in part, for the synthetic process. But without the Hegelian ‘spirit’ to justify a convergent (as opposed to a divergent) directive, ‘Hegel’s Dialectics’ is now exposed, precisely, to theoretical vulnerability.

According to Maybee, one common objection from the ground against any notion of convergence is that it violates the fundamental logic of noncontradiction; according to which ‘something cannot be both true and false at the same time or, put another way, “x” and “not-x” cannot both be true at the same time’ (Maybee 2020: 36). For example, where something is white, it cannot also at the same time be not-white.

Recall the classical logic which Kölbel highlights earlier:

⁶ *Oxford Learner’s* defines **convergence** as ‘the process of moving together from different directions and meeting; the point where this happens’₁ and ‘the process of becoming very similar or the same’₂; which both seem to imply the subsistence of *divergent* or starkly *different* individual entities in spite of the merger.

⁷ Maybee (2020: 18) cautions against confining the ‘second moment’ to a strict diametric of the first.

(ES1) If *white*, then not-It is true that not-*white*.

(ES2) If not-*white*, then not-It is true that *white*.

Hence, white and not-white are *not* cotenable; hence, convergence of thesis/antithesis is logically fallacious. So far so good. (When *x* is taken as an independent entity, and not taken as an entity whose existence or truth-value is parasitic to another foreign entity.)

According to Maybee, contemporary Hegelians offer two kinds of response. In the case of Dieter Wandschneider, a distinction is drawn between the *property* and *meaning* of *x* (Maybee: 37). Where a proposition refers to meaning, in this case, the meaning of white, it is non-convergeable with not-white, which is in agreement with the objection raised. However, where a proposition refers to property, especially in the case of ‘an undefined content’ (37), *x* is no longer bound to not-not *x*; because something, a *property*, can be both white and not-white. I suggest that even in the case of defined content, say, the colour of cream, it is not incorrect to hold to both white and not-white. The foregoing notation in classical logic refers to the *meaning* of *x*, and not *x* as *property*; were it to also mean property, then white as property is (1) only comparatively defined as, say, not-black (recall the absurdity in ‘if RATIONALISM, then not-It is true that not-EMPIRICISM’), which then leads to (2) a regression to an infinitude of definitions for white as ‘not-black,’ or ‘not-blue,’ or ‘not-indigo,’ or ‘not-red,’ or any *other* colours including those outside of the visible spectrum. This would be rather queer even in common language, where, for instance, John buys a white car and his friends each gets a different reply—‘not black’, ‘not blue’, ‘not red’—when they ask John, ‘What is the colour of your new car?’. John would probably be left

friendless, to say the least. Convergence theorists, hence, are not in violation of classical logic at the level of the meaning of an item; nor are they in violation at the level of the property of the item, provided of course that convergence is consistent with the property in question. On the other hand, objections to convergence on grounds of classical logic run the risk of an erroneous divergence when they introduce an unnecessary comparison, and unaccounted dualism, to two different properties that are each independently valid, and potentially logically cotenable.

A second Hegelian response appeals to perspectives. Inoue Kazumi draws on the distinction between *perspectival* and *substantive* distinctions (Maybee: 37–38). Much like McGrath’s faultless cameras, there can be any number of different perspectives on a same substantive *x*; thus a ‘dialectical contradiction’—as distinct from a *logical* contradiction—‘arises when a topic is considered from different vantage points’ *and* that each vantage point ‘does not violate the law of non-contradiction’, per foregoing rationale (37, 38). In this respect, divergent theorists similarly run the risk of introducing an unaccountable dualism, and additionally run the risk of a substantive error in the case where either the property in question is in itself multi-aspectual or that a different vantage point that is of equal validity with their own is being rejected. It bears repeating that:

(T) It is a mistake to believe a proposition that is not true.

(T*) It is a mistake to reject a proposition that is true.

Supposing that John’s white car has a brown interior. A faultless disagreement then occurs when John insists that the new car is white, and his wife, Mary, insists that it is brown. (Good luck to their marriage.)

A third response offered here is a combination of foregoing couple; where, say, the proposition, 'Value is both natural and nonnatural' can refer, without contradiction, to, say, a *multi-aspectual* property, Value; or else, that the same substantive VALUE is perceived from different vantage points. But either way, that from a unilateral perspective, whereby the other aspect for any reason is eclipsed from view, hence perceived as natural *or* nonnatural, each, on its own, may be sustained without contradiction. In an instance whereby x is in fact multi-aspectual, the only logical contradiction is a proposition that holds to a singular-aspect thesis; notwithstanding that it may also be faultless in *one* aspect of the whole.

HEGELIAN-INSPIRED CONVERGENT theorists do not violate classical logic. On the other hand, divergent theorists must account for introducing to classical Equivalence Schema: (1) a foreign comparative item: is it necessary to define x via *not-y*? (2) a foreign relational item, namely, dualism: what is the ground of dualism, when x and y are equally independently true, viz., are similarly derived from the twofold ideal conditions of reason and evidence? Divergence theorists additionally run the risk of rejecting what is of its own a faultless proposition. Hegelian-inspired convergent theorists also do not require a pre-commitment to an ultra-realism, an ultra-transcendental X that bears on subjects to comply to Itself. Hegelian-inspired convergent theorists can appeal to the evidential force of ideal conditions that are present at both ends of a faultless disagreement.⁸

⁸ It bears to note that 'faultless' does not amount to an absolute faultlessness, but that it *indicates* faultlessness within particular historical boundaries in which evidence are situated-references that result in (sound) situated-inferences. Yet, in so far as philosophising *is* situated-philosophising, an argument that satisfies reasoning, evidence, and the trio of criteria *is* 'faultless'; although it is always-open to sublation and transformation in the very next-moment, which, when viewed from current-moment, may or may not occur at all.

1.4 SUMMARY AND REMARKS

‘IDEAL CONDITIONS’ OFTEN appear in the literature as a hypothetical forecast that, *should* they be sufficiently met, convergence amongst philosophers *may* follow; or else they appear as conditions that occur in an equally hypothetical *idealised* reasoner. Hence talks of ideal conditions can be ‘extremely speculative’ (McGrath 2010: 62), and they are a matter of *hope*. This seems to imply that the body of age-old philosophical truths, as they stand today, are *not* already built on the ideal conditions of reason and evidence; when they are each in fact conceptions that have withstood the tripartite tests of time (longitudinal consistency), traction (latitudinal consistency), and talent (rational individuals who *are* purportedly equipped with ideal conditions). I suggest that ideal conditions need not be idealised conditions; that ideal conditions may be viewed, with more coherence, as matters of *fact* rather than *hope*. Because to suggest otherwise is to indict on philosophers—as they now stand, as a body of rational thinkers—a rather untenable judgement that they are *nonrational* and *nonevidential*, or else that philosophers, as they now are, with lesser if not without significant infliction, are *insufficiently* rational or/and evidential.

Chalmers’ (2015) ‘glass-half-full’ thesis of hope when viewed from the outside—the viewpoint especially of intellectually-equipped folk philosophers such as sceptical scientists—may come off as counterfactual, since it is nonfactual. Chalmers’ thesis of hope may be viewed as a thesis of fact when ideal conditions are mooted as facts. Additionally, Chalmers’ ‘glass-half-empty’ statistical thesis may in fact be ‘glass-half-full’ when ideal conditions are mooted, instead, as matters of fact; as follows:

ϕA is objective, because ideal conditions a .

ϕB is objective, because ideal conditions b .

$\therefore \Phi$ is objective, because ideal conditions a and b .

But:

$\phi A \neq \phi B$.

$\therefore \Phi = \phi A \vee \phi B$.

$\therefore \Phi$ is self-contradictory.

One way to dissolve a self-contradictory position is to deploy Wiggins' sort of monistic truth proposition—an absolute TRUTH—that indicts an antithesis for falsity, hence eliminating the contradiction by eliminating the antithesis. But this approach requires accountability to ideal conditions—now understood as a fact of reason and evidence—that are purportedly present in an ideally established antithesis. Moreover, the elimination of an ideally established antithesis runs the risk of a logical fallacy:

(T*) It is a mistake to reject a proposition that is true.

Another way to circumvent a self-contradictory position is to appeal to perspectival (p) differences, as seen in Kölbel's thesis, or/and deploy an inherently multi-aspectual TRUTH, such as found in McGrath's approach:

$\phi A(p) \neq \phi B(p)$.

But $\Phi = \phi A(p) \wedge \phi B(p)$.

$\therefore \Phi = \phi A \wedge \phi B$.

$\therefore \Phi$ is (relatively) objective.

Whilst tenable on the inside, the view from the outside may demand more than a proposition of relative objectivity or at least something nearer to the sort of OBJECTIVITY that the sciences obtain, which is to say, in fact, the sort of OBJECTIVITY that Wiggins—along with his numberless cohorts that descend from a two-millennium-old longitude—has all this time been unwaveringly asserting. A stronger objectivity is possible via the sort of Hegelian-inspired convergence such as in Dewey's and McDowell's approach; whereby:

ϕA is objective, because ideal conditions a .

ϕB is objective, because ideal conditions b .

$\therefore \Phi = \Phi_{A+B}$, because ideal conditions $a+b$.

$\therefore \Phi$ is objective.

Hegelian-inspired convergence is the sort of theoretical convergence that results in the same *intrapersonal objectivity* that Wiggins has self-asserted, and McGrath similarly has mooted, in their respective theses; albeit with contrary outcomes. But Wiggins will first have to unblock an access for an oncoming ideally established antithesis, and in so doing acknowledge an objective set of ideal conditions that may be different than his own. And McGrath's 'rational individual', who previously arrives at a sensible 'suspension of judgement' due to a perceptibly inaccessible REALITY, may want to, with equal rationality and objectivity, temporarily suspend her 'suspension of judgement' to reconsider if two equally valid divergent propositions are not in fact coherently convergeable to provide, precisely, the clearer picture that has previously been perceptibly inaccessible. From a more positive Archimedean point, Hegelian-inspired convergence will only yield the sort of monistic objectivity that Wiggins has

always asserted in the first place, since equally valid propositions now converge on a singular body of TRUTH. And at the same time, by retaining perspectival diversity, a Hegelian-inspired convergent theory is in fact aligned with McGrath at her own relativist foundation. Hegelian-inspired convergent theories do not abolish, but fulfil, both objectivity and relativity at their grounds.

Williams' scepticism about philosophical convergence in matters of theory is reflective of his more fundamental scepticism in obtaining any real objectivity in knowledge, including the sciences. Yet in seeking to 'explain away' rampant ethical relativism, he comes upon the notion that even within cultures and societies, individuals do converge on values 'to some adequate degree' (Williams 1985: 140), and these values in turn do bear on individuals as 'action-guiding' directives (140). Ethical terms such as COWARD, LIE, BRUTALITY, GRATITUDE (140) are each '*inextricably intertwined*' (Moore, A. 2006: 216) with 'thin' evaluative properties such as GOOD, BAD, RIGHT, OR WRONG. Hence, ethical terms are 'thick ethical concepts' that consist of both evaluative and nonevaluative features. Williams, perhaps unwittingly, has since spawned a robust field of *theoretical* studies on thick ethical concepts; and, perhaps also unwittingly, Williams does seem already to have embarked on the course for theoretical convergency, one that synthesises the ancient polarity between sceptical-empiricism and realism ('to some adequate degree', at least). It does look like Williams has been the first to break his own limit of philosophical objectivity, long before McDowell did.

CAN THERE BE philosophical objectivity? Can philosophy progress through convergence? Is there any real hope for convergence? I have followed in Chalmers' line of enquiry,

which leads to two sorts of convergence that can be found in the literature. (1) An inter-convergence of the sort treated by Williams, Wiggins, McGrath, and Chalmers; and (2) an intra-convergence of the sort promoted by Dewey, McDowell, Putnam, and Sinclair.

I suggest that a convergence *in thought* (group 2) precedes a convergence *of thoughts* (group 1); because where an inter-convergence *at* opposing ends is in fact a supporting ground of a faultless disagreement and hence, a hardening of dualism, it is through intra-convergence that theoretical stalemates are resolved, which may then only bring about inter-convergence *between* opposing ends. Moreover, a convergence in thought is already a convergence of thoughts within the intrapersonal space of reasoning. There is no question about any *hope* of a convergence of thoughts for those in the second group, since convergence of thoughts has well been *materialised* within the convergent-theorist's intrapersonal space of reasoning.

Hegelian-inspired convergence at the local level displays the ability to dissolve longstanding philosophical dichotomies, as seen even in the case of a radical sceptic (Williams 1985), and also McDowell's 'naturalised Platonism' in which nonnatural values are viewed as 'conceptual capacities' that are 'inextricably implicated [...] in our senses' (McDowell 1994: 87). Hegelian-inspired convergence at the macro level may offer a significantly more positive view of PHILOSOPHY—as it now stands—from the outside. Chalmers' 'glass-half-empty' statistical thesis, which previously has been interpreted as empty of philosophical objectivity, may now offer a Hegelian picture in which the many different grains of philosophical truths diverge into different directions, but also converge from time to time, to form a singular network—an age-old giant sequoia that is PHILOSOPHY. But a critical eye from the outside may not see

enchantment at all, and the poetic license may not be given. It is probably best to take heed of McDowell's call for convergence:

'Modern philosophy has taken itself to be called on to bridge dualistic gulfs, between subject and object, thought and world, [and a] deeper dualism [that is] norm and nature' (McDowell: 93).

If McDowell is correct about the role of modern philosophy, then it is the very purpose of modern philosophers to embark on a rather alchemistic work to turn every faultless disagreement there is into faultless *agreements*. On this note, I follow now in McDowell's footprints to converge an age-old schism between value and what appears in the sciences to be natural behaviours that are anything but virtuous.

Chapter 2: **Natural Imperative (I)**

STUDIES ON CONVERGENCE in chapter one has led to an unexpected plot twist; a sort of philosophical plot-twist in which two academic exemplars in contemporary philosophy—each from divergent camps of an age-old schism—converge on the nature of value: one compressing value toward nature, and the other lifting nature toward value. It is the unlikely convergence, respectively, of John McDowell (the Platonist) and Bernard Williams (the Sceptic). Whilst Williams (1985) advances from a strong sceptical position toward an objective-realism ('to some adequate degree'), McDowell (1994) opens his rationalistic ethics to an oncoming 'minimal empiricism' (which the following will discuss in detail). Hence a view from an Archimedean point seems to suggest that Williams and McDowell are each set on a course for convergency (*not* collision). In my mind, this seems like a significant moment for academic philosophy; because Williams and McDowell each holds out PHILOSOPHICAL OBJECTIVITY to folk philosophers who may up until now have indicted the discipline for being hopelessly divergent and hence 'hopelessly incoherent'.

On a view from the inside, if Williams and McDowell are indeed set on a course for inter-convergence, then it follows that the traditional realist's OBJECTIVITY REQUIRES CONVERGENCE is preceded by OBJECTIVITY REQUIRES *INTRAPERSONAL CONVERGENCE*. Which is to suggest, in turn, that philosophical objectivity requires the sort of intrapersonal objectivity that both Williams and McDowell have each evidently demonstrated. Following in their footprints, I will now attempt in the following chapters to flesh out present paper's overarching thesis PHILOSOPHICAL

CONVERGENCE REQUIRES INTRAPERSONAL CONVERGENCE. And also in their exemplary footprints, I will attempt on a deeper convergence between value and nature. A good head-start has been given in the forms of ‘thick ethical concepts’, which Williams (1985: 129) describes as ‘a union of fact and value’; and McDowell’s ‘naturalized Platonism’, which draws on Kant’s concept-and-content convergent epistemology. Hence I will begin with the duo’s convergent theories, but seek to eliminate positions of dominance that are still present in each of their theses. In my mind, the *accommodation* of an antithesis—respectively indicated as ‘to some adequate degree’ and ‘minimal empiricism’—is distinct from *convergence* whereby, in Whiteheadian terms, a ‘conjunctive unity’ is ‘at once the togetherness of the “many” which it finds, and also it is one among the “many” which it leaves’ (Whitehead 1929: 21); so that a convergence on this view is more properly a thorough elimination of dualism. Dualism lurks, as it were, somewhere in the theory still when convergence is not thoroughly executed and, where dualism lurks, philosophical objectivity is still exposed to vulnerability.

2.1 NATURE AND VALUE

ARE VALUES NATURAL?

The study of value within a naturalist framework is an important one; because if nature is a constitutive partner of value, then value must be real, because nature is real. But *is* value natural? Folk philosophers who turn to philosophy for an answer will find a resounding ‘yes’ amongst naturalists, albeit with explanations that are at odds with one another, depending on whether one is a natural sceptic or a natural

objectivist. To further complicate matters, moral philosophers since David Hume (1751) are almost all of a piece on a distinct gap between is and ought, and fact and value; and they ‘almost universally’ (Zimmerman and Bradley 2019: 7) assign with G. E. Moore (1903) a nonnatural feature in value that supervenes on any and all natural properties.⁹ Moore’s definitive wedge between x (natural property) and ‘good’ (value)—as abstracted from the general value-proposition ‘x is good’—has swung postmodern philosophising from the traditional object ‘x = good’ (intrinsic-goodness) to an anthropocentric ‘x is good’ evaluative; thus raising a desideratum amongst objectivists, but also some subjectivists, who must sustain the objectivity and necessity of values in a modern world of science, facts, and data. A fundamental disagreement in ethics thus is if or how value can still be viewed as an inherent constitution of human nature, given its nonnatural feature. A faultless paradox hence may be abstracted as follows: if the nature/value gap is not eliminated, then the place of value in human behaviour remains somewhat tentative, hence reducing ethics to, at best, an optional endeavour and, at worst, irrelevance; *but the gap is ineliminable*.

The faultless gap has also raised a secondary fundamental paradox as to the nature of value:

$$[\text{VALUES ARE NONNATURAL}] \vee [\text{VALUES ARE INHERENT TO HUMAN NATURE}]$$

If left unresolved, this second paradox may also infect the first, raising doubts hence as to the coherence, and relevance, of value and ethics more generally.

⁹ The fact/value, is/ought, and nature/value divisions are often seen together in many philosophical texts; even as their nuances can be significant. Roughly, I understand fact/value as a theoretical derivative of a more experiential-linguistic is/ought, and as an epistemological aspect of the broader nature/value. Whereas nature/value seems to refer more to the ontic question of how or if the two are related, and fact/value concerns the descriptive/evaluative relation, Hume’s is/ought has a more specific concern on the moral problem of descriptive/prescriptive: viz., if or how one may derive ‘statements of obligation from statements of fact’, which targets an even more specific moral cognitivism (Fieser 2022: §7). But all three seem to share a common and more general nature/value schism.

Williams' theory of 'thick ethical concepts' (Williams 1985: 140) seeks to re-conflate the gap. According to Williams, thick ethical concepts such as COWARD, LIE, BRUTALITY, GRATITUDE (140) are each '*inextricably intertwined*' (A. Moore 2006: 216) with 'thin' prescriptive concepts such as GOOD, BAD, RIGHT, OR WRONG; so that they are each part *descriptive of*, and part *prescriptive in*, behaviour. On Williams' view, thick ethical terms seem to suggest that value and fact, if distinct, are intermeshed with only faint boundaries; since their descriptive feature is 'world-guided' and their prescriptive feature is 'action-guiding' (Williams: 141). Williams' thesis has in turn spawned a robust and independent field of studies that seek deeper understanding of the nature of a thick ethical concept and its relations to its 'thin' evaluative counterpart.¹⁰

Whilst moral realists may receive thick ethical concepts with open arms, given that nonevaluative materials seem inextricably entwined with 'thin' judgements to suggest embodiment of real moral properties, Williams' theory, however, and rather ironically, are often challenged by philosophers who are of a piece with his scepticism. Sceptics tend to find so-called thick ethical concepts—if they exist at all in a world of facts—only contingently and loosely bound to their thin counterparts and are hence highly indeterministic. The sceptical view threatens to disentangle Williams' 'union of fact and value'.

SIMON BLACKBURN (1992) expresses puzzlement in 'the place people accord to thickness in ethical theory' (Blackburn: 285) and could not resist name-calling these philosophers 'thickie' (297). Thick concepts, Blackburn writes, 'are of no great importance to the

¹⁰ For updated and rich entries on thick concepts, see Väyrynen (2021) and Kyle (2022).

theory of ethics' (285), because 'language maintains few lexical conventions of this thickening kind' (286). 'Are there [even] thick concepts?' Blackburn provokes (296). Even if there were, Blackburn observes that thick terms are but terms that are only 'thick' with an outer *crust* of fleeting intonations (287–91), emotions (272), and—joining Allan Gibbard (1992) here—culture (Blackburn: 285). Thick concepts hence are not at all stable, nor permanent, nor cognitively determinate (294–296), with only few exceptions (295). Mostly, the outer 'crust' falls into smithereens at the ping of a tuning fork (if it is nascent) or the thump of a sledgehammer (if aged); but they all fall. Take SELFISH; by and large a term thick with *wrong* or *bad*, and in longstanding traditions and social groups, doubtless, it can still be pared down to a matter-of-fact biological sequence and un-thinned on a *global* scale, such as when it is presented as 'selfish gene' under a very scientifically influential Richard Dawkins. Hence for Blackburn, there is nothing in thick terms that are particularly ethical in the objective and normative sense, if they do exist as matters of fact, in the first place.

Allan Gibbard (1992) spins a story about a certain 'Kumi' tribe with a particular thick term 'gopa' that is laced with complexity; apparently no one in the tribe has an exact and determinate description of just what the term or phenomenon *is* (Gibbard: 267–73), even as the people may come to apply *gopa* 'in more or less the same way' (273). For Gibbard, a thick ethical concept has something of a gestalt-vagueness, it is not determinate. This is further exacerbated within a social context, since the vagueness is now open to multiple subjective interpretations. Whilst the evaluative and descriptive components may be intermeshed 'tightly' (278) in a thick ethical concept, they are elastic, and their relation with each other is also elastic. This elasticity is due largely to the *emotions, attitudes, and dispositions* (274–5; also Blackburn 2019: 291) involved

when a thick ethical term is deployed (or when it is withheld). On this view, there is simply *insufficient stability* to facilitate any talks of ethical objectivity and truth-value through thick terms and thick ‘ethical’ ‘concepts’. On Blackburn’s view especially, there may be strictly speaking neither ‘ethical’ nor ‘concept’; so that ‘thickies’ are in fact deploying invented entities, or, ‘unicorns’ (Joyce 2021: 17–19), to the field of ethical enquiry when they deploy thick ethical concepts.

‘Thick ethical concept’ may only be recently minted, but contemporary sceptical commentaries nonetheless appear to be rooted in the age-old empirical dictum found with Sextus Empiricus (Tersman 2021: 1):

The same thing is thought bad by one person and good by another.
∴ There is nothing by nature good or bad.

On an Empirical viewpoint, ‘thin’ evaluative concepts such as GOOD, BAD, RIGHT, or WRONG are, broadly speaking, ‘nothing’.

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS’ GROUND of scepticism is in fact *of a piece* with Plato, whose inference, though, runs the other way:

The same thing is thought bad by one person and good by another.
∴ Nature is both good and bad.

As is well known, Plato’s ethics hinges on what is arguably the mother of all dualisms, viz., the dualism between GOOD and EVIL. Hence the distinction between Sextus and Plato is not one of evidence against reason, since both are empirically grounded. The distinction instead seems to be located at the *interpretation* of data. Quite oddly

enough for Plato, however, his position *also* seems to entail another thesis, which from another standpoint seems to have inched closer to Sextus:

The same thing is thought bad by one person and good by another.

∴ There is nothing by nature good or bad.

∴ Good is nonnatural (or supernatural).

As is also well known, Plato locates FORMS and VALUES in the realm of the heavens. This in turn yields his famous thesis of *gulf* between value and nature, which then saw a definitive revival at the dawn of the twentieth century when G. E. Moore (1903) moots his thesis of ‘naturalistic fallacy’, according to which, broadly, values cannot be found in any and all natural properties.

As it turns out, Moore’s *gap* and Plato’s *gulf* are like a pair of twins with similarities and differences. A first significant difference is of course the difference between a gap and a gulf. Whereas Plato decisively situates value in an utterly transcendent space, Moore is one foot apiece between earthy language and an unknown space known only through an equally ineffable, yet natural, ‘intuition’; so that Moore displays commitments to both a predicative ‘x is good’ *and* a ‘simple and unanalysable’ ‘goodness’ (Hurka 2021: 2, 3). Plato and Moore are both realists; but Plato taking it one step further to designate VALUES—as Forms—as the *Really-Real* in which earthly sensibles ‘partake’ (Silverman 2014: 11) or ‘participate’ (Santas 1977: 7–8) as imperfect copies. For Plato, as with other pre-Socratics (with the exception perhaps of the Sophists), there is no question as to the reality—the Really-Real—of these metaphysical entities; so that a Platonistic Value is an unquestionable OBJECT, a substantive X, say, JUSTICE, whose perfectness and perfect goodness, so to say, *as JUSTICE*, is the very essence that constitutes its existence. All of this may appear all too

extravagant for contemporary readers; yet, Plato's nonnaturalism is accessible to and analysable through human thought, whilst Moore's contemporary counterpart consists of 'metaphysically dubious properties' (Sayre-McCord 2014: 15) that are utterly nonnatural. On an epistemic reading then it seems more appropriate to speak of Moore's *gulf* and Plato's *gap*; because Plato's VALUE both maintains a thesis of gap and retains a thesis of inextricable entanglement with 'earthly sensibles'.

Although Plato does not provide a systematic account of the nature of the Forms, several features can be abstracted from his text. The Forms are utterly—and literally—out of this world; yet, they are not divorced from natural phenomena. Foremost, Plato's idea of the Forms accounts for *types* of things, so that 'the world is not a vast sea of [rampant] dissimilarity' (Santas 1977: 24), but that properties of particular types of things are consistently bound to their archetypal references. For Plato, the Form of *the Good* also accounts for any knowledge or utterance of anything that may be deemed 'good'. The Form of the Good renders the intelligibility of 'good' possible (Santas: 4): 'If we do not know F-ness of the F, we do not know anything is F' (Santas: 3). It is the Form of the Good that renders 'x is good' possible. On Plato's view, Form of the Good is also motivational and action-guiding, hence an inherent property *in nature*:

...many people would choose things that are believed to be just or beautiful, even if they are not.... Yet no one is satisfied to acquire things that are *believed* to be good. On the contrary, everyone seeks the things that *are* good.... That, then, is what every soul pursues, and for its sake does everything'. (*Republic*: 505D)

Plato's Form of the Good meets the twin-parameters in Moore's supervenience thesis: the first is that it supervenes on—in the sense that it is external and 'added to'—natural properties;¹¹ the second is the 'modal formulation' whereby:¹²

A-properties supervene on B-properties if and only if a difference in A-properties *requires* a difference in B-properties—or, equivalently, if and only if exact similarity with respect to B-properties *guarantees* exact similarity with respect to A-properties.¹³ (McLaughlin and Bennett 2021:3)

In ethical supervenience, a general claim is that evaluative properties A—understood as '*supervening* properties' (McPherson 2021: 3)—cannot vary without the nonevaluative B-properties—'the *subvening*' or '*base*' properties—also varying. A student, say, who cheats in a test is evaluated as 'bad conduct', and another who studies conscientiously is evaluated as 'good conduct'; *and not vice versa*, in both cases. Of course, there are also 'grey' cases in which two or more different evaluations can supervene on the same nonevaluative property. But suffice to say for the purpose here that, in spite of the possibility of inconsistent evaluations, *the evaluative* (be that as it may) *supervenes on the nonevaluative* (be that as the other may). Plato's 'participation' thesis carries an identical idea:

For it seems to me that if anything else is beautiful besides Beauty Itself, it is beautiful on account of nothing else than because it *partakes* of Beauty Itself.
(*Phaedo* 100c)

¹¹ This vernacular sense of 'supervenience' whilst 'irrelevant to the philosophical use of the term' (McLaughlin and Bennett 2021: 4–5), seems appropriate to Moore's 'naturalistic fallacy' thesis.

¹² Whilst Moore did not use the term 'supervene', his theory is essentially a supervenience thesis: 'one of the most important facts about qualitative difference...[is that] two things cannot differ in quality without differing in intrinsic nature (Moore (1922), quoted in McLaughlin and Bennett (2021: 6)).

¹³ Supervenience 'is not entirely uncontroversial' but can hold 'with varying degrees of modal force' (McLaughlin and Bennett 2021: 7); its claims may also vary in 'different kinds of necessity to the connection between B-properties and A-properties' (3); but generally, the core idea is the same.

Thus, Forms are not *completely* out of this world, as their particularisation *require* pairing *with*, and participation *within*, natural properties.

Plato's 'self-predicative' Form (Santas: 7–9; Silverman: 11–14) is perhaps of foremost significance to contemporary studies on value. The relationship between the Form of the Good and particular Forms, viz., between the Good and different Forms of the Value, is identical with the relation between Forms and particular sensibles. For Plato, each Form 'is the best object of its kind there is or can be' (Santas 1977: 7); so that a Form of the Value consists in, and is a conflation of, 'superlative reality of kind' and 'superlative goodness of kind' (9). Beauty Itself, for instance, is both the kind that it is and the best of its kind; or Courage Itself; or Truth Itself; and so forth. It is then more appropriate to view Plato's Value as a self-predicative and conflated: X-IS-GOOD.

When people *speak* of values, they seem to speak in the predicative 'x is good', say, 'justice is good' or 'truth is good'; but when they *act* on values they do not appear to deliberate, but rather, they tend in ordinary behaviour to act on a singular, self-predicative x-is-good: say, truth-is-good, such as when one is reading and reflecting on a book, or, courage-is-good such as when one is parachuting off the airplane. In this way, 'Value Itself'—x-is-good—should mostly be 'intuitive', in the Kantian and Moorean, as well as in the common, senses.

It appears that there is more *naturality* to Plato's transcendental value than a stereotyped 'Platonism' may let on. Compared with Moore's 'intuition' and ineffable 'goodness', which readers alongside Sayre-McCord (2014: 15) may find 'metaphysically dubious', these conceptions, when seen through Plato's viewpoint, seem to offer more BODY than Moore's. Of course, Plato's Forms and Form of the Good remain 'transcendental'—which is precisely the 'almost universal' thesis maintained amongst

philosophers—but it is also in his transcendental thesis that one can account for how these various Forms, say, Perfection, Beauty, Truth, Justice, to name a few, can be spoken about and perceived *independently* without referencing to any particular natural property. In Plato, the value/nature gap is retained, as it should be retained; but the items are, per foregoing scholarships, a conflated x-is-good.

ARISTOTLE SEEKS TO make progress with both Plato's realism and 'Pyrrhic' empiricism.

Aristotle does not seem however to take well with Plato's gulf between the universals and the sensible order; he writes:

Socrates was the first to seek the universal in ethical matters but that he did not separate it. Plato, marrying Socrates' philosophy with that of Heraclitus, separated the universal ['form'], on the grounds that the sensible order, where Socrates had focused, was in flux'.
(*Metaphysics* 1078b12–34)

Aristotle goes on to situate form, alongside its inseparable counterpart, matter, *in* nature to explain its apparent motions, viz., 'flux'; thus further naturalising Plato's 'transcendentals'. Aristotle offers, in contrast with his predecessor's philosophy 'from above', a more evidently empirical view 'from below'; which seems to sit well with our scientific time and age, where causations can be observed *within* physical properties—the *telos* of an oak tree is encoded in its DNA without necessarily positing its 'form' in a meta-physical realm. Many psychologists similarly find it useful to transpose Aristotle's laws of causality on behaviour, even amongst Behaviourists such as Peter R. Killeen (Álvarez 2009: 48–49) who adhere to strict empiricism. Whilst on the face of things this may seem 'unusual', Aristotle's four causal constructs can be seen as much in common as in academic language (Álvarez: 47):

- (1) *What is that?* (formal causation);
- (2) *What is this made of?* (material causation);
- (3) *How is it made?* (efficient causation);
- (4) *Why is this here?* or *Why is that made?* (final causation).

Aristotle's causations thus are derived from 'common evidence' (Álvarez: 46).

Philosophical causations can serve as psychological models, whereby 'rationalist questions about possibility and so forth are effectively translated into empirical questions about matters of fact' (P. White 1990: 11).¹⁴ There are two philosophical conceptions that are of particular relevance in psychology: *artificial/mechanistic causation*, 'in which the notion of efficient, deterministic causation is predominant, with transeunt causation and causal production'; and *natural/Aristotelian causation*, 'in which notions of final cause, and will, volition, or agency predominate, with immanent causation and with causal propagation' (16).¹⁵ In this section, I adopt a hybrid mechanistic-natural approach, whereby deterministic causations are each viewed as *values* from the perspective of agents:

FINAL CAUSATION	↔	TELIC VALUE
FORMAL CAUSATION	↔	FORMAL VALUE
MATERIAL CAUSATION	↔	SPATIAL-MATERIAL VALUE
EFFICIENT CAUSATION	↔	INSTRUMENTAL VALUE

¹⁴ The transposition from 'is this how causal inference should be done?' (philosophy) to 'is this how people actually do it?' (psychology) has however in some cases already been conducted 'partly' by philosophers such as Mill (1843), Hart and Honoré (1959), and Gorovitz (1974) (P. White 1990: 11).

¹⁵ Whilst the distinction drawn by White is helpful, his *dichotomization* of mechanistic/natural causations may require accountability, especially when viewed with McDowell's assignment of nature to the 'realm of law' (McDowell 1994: ch. IV).

Causal values are then superimposed on action that is ‘purposive’ and executed ‘*under the person’s guidance*’ (Frankfurt 1978: 158); the behaviour of which is deemed elsewhere as ‘full-blooded human agency’ (Wilson and Shpall 2016: 4), or, in short, ‘human action’, which includes the moral and the ethical.¹⁶ By conducting an experimental ‘metaphysics of action’, I seek to distil the basic causal properties that may be underlain in everyday behaviour. Supposing now I break down Cristiano Ronaldo’s strike at the football. Ronaldo’s action would require:

- (1) Purpose: why is Ronaldo here in the first place? It could be Identity and Aspiration, Success, or Dominance. Or all of the above. Each of these are a telic value: an end ‘for the sake of which a thing is done’ (Falcon 2019: 4).
- (2) A particular instrumental value¹⁷ that is relative to its end: if Identity, then a unique ability *to differentiate* (oneself); if Success, the ability *to procure* (results); if Dominance, the ability *to dominate* (the game, or the opponent, or oneself).
- (3) A formal value: ‘the account of what-it-is-to-be’ (Falcon: 3), or/and ‘the contribution to the being of a thing of its form or shape’ (P. White 1990: 3). For example, Aspiration or Success or Dominance *in the form of* Footballer or Football. Additionally, if causal explanation pertains to Ronaldo’s *behaviour*, viz., what *sort* of behaviour, then a formal value may also be described in terms of traits, e.g. ‘original’ or ‘effective’ or ‘dominant’.

¹⁶ Whilst clear boundaries between what is ‘human’ and ‘ethical’, and what is ‘ethical’ and ‘moral’ are not found in my research, not universally and categorially at least, *moral* action is here viewed as a ‘subsystem’ (Williams 1985: 20, 27) within the broader *ethical* within an even broader *human* classes of action. This hierarchy of actions is also consistent with Korsgaard’s (1996: 45) classification of ‘human identity’ and ‘moral identity’ (47).

¹⁷ As opposed to Wiggins’ identification of ‘non-instrumental value’ with ‘intrinsic value’, ‘instrumental value’ here is a correlate of an intrinsic value. The suggested hypothesis is that for every end, there is a corresponding efficiency, an ability that is particular to that end. For example, Knowledge (end) requires *intellect* (efficiency); Perfection requires the ability *to govern*; Merriment requires the ability *to enliven*; and so forth.

(4) A material-spatial value: whereas ‘that out of which’ is a traditional definition for material causation (Falcon 2019: 3), here, ‘spatial’ refers to its correlative ‘that in which’. It seems that spatial value is required for action; because in all acts, a *turning-toward* some preferred space precedes any action. Agents are required, as ‘first-act’, to turn toward either (a) the inner (subjective) space *by introverting*, or (b) the external (objective) space *by extraverting*, or (c) the relational (intersubjective) space *by ‘inter-verting’*; without which an action cannot begin its course at all.¹⁸

It looks like Ronaldo’s action involves a range of inter-causal values; and the likelihood is that there is more than one telic value in play, which then doubles or triples or so forth the entire gamut of values. Supposing that I now also include second- and other order values: say, to place the foot and to lean the body at a perfect angle → to curl the ball into the top-right corner of the post → to score → to win the match → to impress the audience and club managers at the game. This adds up to a riot of numberless values required to perform one action, viz., Ronaldo’s strike at the football. It does not seem plausible for Ronaldo to have deliberated on and consciously organised the many components into a plan before he takes to action. Like Ronaldo’s instantaneous strike at the football, everyday human actions tend to be *spontaneous*, and the chain of active values are *simultaneous*: one action. Thus, it appears that the moment of action is a sort of gestalt-moment at which multiple causal values are bundled together and loaded on an intuitive and conflated: X-IS-GOOD; and, as a unit, in

¹⁸ In personality psychology, there is a wide array of meanings given to ‘introversion’ and ‘extraversion’; ranging from ‘Schopenhauer’s will’ to ‘the causal factor behind the conflict in the neurotic’ (Geyer 2012) to, more recently, ‘traits’. Present descriptions are consistent with Carl Jung’s definitions; according to which introversion is ‘an attitude-type characterised by orientation in life through subjective psychic contents’ and extraversion as ‘an attitude-type characterised by concentration of interest on the external object’ (Jung 1961: 414–5).

turn motivates and *inclines* subjects to some particular, natural course of action. Yet, the action and the motivational x-is-good, whilst distinct, appear to be an inextricable fit: the one is loaded *in* the other and the other, in one. On an Aristotelian causal thesis then, an action *requires* a spontaneous and simultaneously conflated value: X-IS-GOOD.

PLATO AND ARISTOTLE each offers an in situ nondivergent account of value and nature.

Contemporary philosophical interpretations however tend to enforce a divisive wedge that turns what is originally a *distinction* into an irreconcilable *dichotomy*, especially in the case of Plato, who in fact by retaining a clear distinction between nature and value has remained thoroughly consistent with Moore's 'universally acknowledged' supervenience thesis. Notwithstanding each of their accountabilities to the inextricable place of value in nature, Plato and Aristotle, especially Plato, remain largely too speculative for Sceptics. Platonism does not typically pass an empirical-sceptical tribunal of the sort enforced by Blackburn and Gibbard. Perhaps a rehabilitated view of a Platonist account of VALUE may be, at best, that of a unicorn composed of real properties—the horse's body, the rhinoceros' horn, the goat's beard—but it is still a unicorn. Because the realist's space of speculative reasoning still seems all too distant and far-fetched for earthy Sceptics. The Sceptic wants to be grounded. The Sceptic demands that knowledge of any sort must come down to earth *completely*.

WHILST ARISTOTLE DID relocate Plato's Form from the realm of the 'heavens' to the metaphysical realm *in* nature, his metaphysics—after which Foot takes—still holds value bound to an external space from where nature 'receives' their special blueprints,

even if said blueprints are also immanent. It appears that it was Christian Wolff (1720) who *entirely* dislodged Aristotle's *telos* from the metaphysical realm and deposited these conceptions into the real mental space of natural subjects. Wolff speaks of Aristotle's 'end' (Wolff: §139) and 'highest good' (§164) as 'goal' (§140), 'final goal' (§139, 140), and 'main goal' (§140). Wolff is avowed to empiricism. Indeed, Wolff 'was the first to mark off the discipline of empirical psychology and to distinguish it from rational, or theoretical, psychology', even as they are to him 'two corresponding methods of conducting psychological inquiry' (Richards 1980: 227). Wolff's distinctions proved to be 'enormously consequential' and, till today, 'these disciplines remain intrinsically connected' (Hettche and Dyck 2019: 35).¹⁹

Wolff's idea of 'empirical psychology', however, is very different than the sort of data furnished by today's cognitive sciences and neurosciences. Whilst not neglecting observations of external behaviour, 'empirical psychology' in Wolff's 18th century is chiefly 'the mind's direct introspection of its own activities' (Richards 1980: 228). Thus, Wolff's (1732) *Psychologia Empirica* can be read as a discourse on the *introspective* method;²⁰ he writes:

...discoveries made *a priori* about the human soul should be compared with what empirical psychology [viz., introspection] establishes through [inner] experience. And if the former are the same as the latter, that is, if they agree, then *no one will be able to doubt the truth of such discoveries...* (Wolff: §5; emphasis added).

¹⁹ Wolff blends 'divergent elements'—rationalism and empiricism, and Newtonianism and scholasticism—in many of his philosophical discussions (Blackwell 1961: 339); his intra-convergent method precedes Hegel and Whitehead.

²⁰ One of Wolff's 'strong influence[s]', apart from his direct predecessor Gottfried Leibniz, is René Descartes (Van Peursen 1987: 74); for whom even empirical appearances cannot surpass the sort of touchstone for reality that introspection can offer. The only really-real, via his famous universal methodic doubt, is the indubitable self who is at present doubting all other things, thinking, and self-reflecting.

More than 200 years later, Wittgenstein (1953: 108^e; italics his) echoes thus: ‘I can only *believe* that someone else is in pain, but I *know* it if I am’; hence, it is held along with not a few other philosophers, including Augustine, Descartes, Husserl, Locke, and even Hume, that one’s self-ascribed judgements on inner experiences—for example, *I am in pain (= P)*—each carries the weight of *infallibility* (Schwitzgebel 2019: 46–47):

The judgment that *P* is *infallible* just in case, if I make the judgment, it is not possible that *P* is false. It is *indubitable* just in case, if I make the judgment, it is not possible for me to doubt the truth of *P*. It is *incorrigible* just in case, if I make the judgment, it is not possible for anyone else to show that *P* is false.²¹

Wolff, nonetheless, worries about *who* it is that is introspecting, especially where it pertains to ‘dogmata’; he thus adds an essential caveat: ‘*one who would discover the truths of empirical psychology should have the habit of referring what is experienced to accurate definitions and determinate propositions*’ (Wolff 1732: §3; underscore added). Hence, subject to the accuracy with which one uses her pre-internalised structures and words to organise and describe the inner experiences—in a word, talent—and provided that these descriptions are consistent with one’s experiences, introspected theories for Wolff are able to offer ‘determinate propositions’.

Wolff, the talent, goes on to engage in a two-pronged introspection and logic to analyse the cognitive process—which can take a fraction of a second to one hundred years—leading up to action: *any and every action*. Wolff appeals to the necessity of particularity; that particular acts—which is *every* act—requires an evaluative determinant that he calls a ‘maxim’ (Wolff 1720: §190), without which a rational agent

²¹ From another viewpoint, the introspective method seems *indispensable*; given that the only way to know the mind is through one’s own or one’s self-referral of the other’s. Interestingly, for all the advancements in science and technology—perhaps this is the one thing that science can never get inside—medical doctors rely on patient’s introspection for a reliable measurement of pain: *On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your pain?*

‘cannot determine himself to do certain [out of numberless other possible] actions’

(333):

We know that man can neither will nor refrain from willing, and therefore can neither act nor refrain from acting, without a motive. Now, because the motive of the will as well as that of the sensible desires is the representation of the good...and because if we are to judge whether something is good or bad a maxim is required, man must have certain maxims...to which he directs his action, even if he himself does not clearly recognize this (Wolff: §190).

In this way, a ‘general maxim’ (§192) for Wolff is a necessary ‘motivating ground’ (Kitcher 2003: 222) or ‘determining ground’ (223) in behaviour that may be formulated as ‘x is good’ (McCarthy 2015). It bears to note at this point that Wolff is not—not yet at least—conducting a moral enquiry, but rather, per his primary interest in the studies of ‘man as man’, Wolff is working on ‘the standard picture of human action’ (Kitcher: 223). Wolff is primarily interested in prying the natural constitution in human behaviour. Thus, the motivating ground, ‘x is good’, figures in any and every human act.

Wolff’s general maxim is a necessary property; it is a standard of judgement without which there is not a reference point from which subjects can make an evaluation if some particular action out of numberless others is good or not-good, and so cannot act. Hence for Wolff, ‘the knowledge of [what is] good is the motive of the will’ (Wolff 1720: ch. 1, §6): human agents have the natural tendency to *will*, and at the same time to *know*, that their action *is* good. ‘X is good’, however, is not a statement that an agent typically makes when action occurs; an agent may not even ‘clearly recognize’ its presence (§190). Wolff’s account of the general maxim seems like a natural tendency toward some particular end that an agent already ‘knows’ is

good. Hence, consistent with Plato's self-predicative and Aristotle's pluralistic theses, Wolff's general maxim is perhaps best represented as an 'intuitive' (and motivational) X-IS-GOOD. It accounts for how behaviour *tends* toward some kind, and disinclines from others. Wolff's maxim mirrors Aristotle's *telos*—according to which:

Every skill and every inquiry, and similarly every action and rational choice, is thought to aim at some good; and so the good has been aptly described as that at which everything aims.

(NE: 1904a)

—except, Wolff's *telos* is psychological all the way down.

Like Plato and Aristotle before him, Wolff's philosophical psychology, now construed as an intuitive, silent, and conflated x-is-good, is a nonnatural value that however occurs *fundamentally* within natural agents; so much so that it may now come across as 'queer' to speak of values as *nonnatural* when they are referred to in human behaviour. By positioning x-is-good value as a motivating ground in any and every human behaviour, the nature/value gap is seen as an inseparable and deeply entangled conflation, even as the distinction is retained. The 'nonnatural' feature in value may perhaps be more properly termed '*transnatural*', as, quite clearly, values are *not* nonnatural.²²

²² Wolffian philosophy may not sit on par with Plato and Aristotle in stature and, more importantly here, in longitudinal and latitudinal criteria; but in Wolff's ethics one finds a convergence—in fact, conflation—of these two longstanding lineages: Aristotle's (transmigrated) *telos* and Plato's eudaimonistic perfectionism. He writes: '...the perfection of ourselves and our condition is the aim of our action.... Hence, because all free acts are directed at this aim, it is the final aim of all our free acts and the main aim of our whole life' (Wolff 1720: I, ch. 1 §40).

For Wolff's influence on European Enlightenment, see Mark Larrimore (2000: 189–193) and C. A. Van Peursen (1987: 69–71); for his (immense) influence on Kant, see Matte Hettche and Corey Dyck (2019: 1–2) and especially Patricia Kitcher (2003: 221–6); and for his influence on contemporary psychology, see Hettche and Dyck (34–35) and Robert J. Richards (1980: 227–30).

CONTEMPORARY STUDIES ON the nature of value and the place of value in nature can draw on nondivergent theories from Plato, Aristotle, and Wolff. In Plato, a three-pronged construal of particularisation, participation, and self-predication reveals an empirical sensibility that is often eclipsed by his bigger, major transcendental thesis. In Aristotle, a psychological construal reveals a gestalt-like convergence of multifarious values on any given action. In Wolff, a deepened insight on the motivational dynamics of value is offered. In each of these longstanding theories, and particularly in Wolff's 'maxim', Williams' thick ethical concepts can find a deepened conflation that cannot be disentangled without also dismantling the necessary role of value in natural behaviour. On these views, full-blooded human agency simply cannot be accounted for without involving VALUE: now understood as a psychological motivating ground that set natural agency into motion. Wolff's complete migration of value into the psychological space should provide sufficient grounds for consideration to Sceptics who demand knowledge of any sort to come down to earth completely.

2.2 NATURAL IMPERATIVE (1): X-IS-GOOD

FOREGOING THESES CONFLATE (particularly through Wolff's maxim), and at the same time retain (particularly through Plato's Form), the gap between nature and value. This is achieved by exploring the place of value in natural behaviour. In natural behaviour, the conflated x-is-good value-property replaces the schismatic x / 'is good' value-proposition; so that 'x is good' value-proposition, which is deliberative and 'separable', is tightened into an active, substantive, and inseparable x-is-good value-property, and, as a unit, is deposited *in* nature. First-order value x-is-good hence is the 'natural

imperative' that accounts for the spontaneity and simultaneity in, and selection of, natural behaviour. In this way, whilst x may be relative, it is not however contingent, but tethered, to 'good' and, in turn, as a unit, tethered to nature. The natural imperative x-is-good binds value to nature to form an empirically verifiable ethical property, whilst the motility of x retains a relativist thesis.

Natural Imperative (NI) is akin to Wolff's (1720: 333) 'natural obligation', in that 'man remains wholly free in his actions...when he acts in accordance with it'; but whereas natural obligation is more of a *moral* imperative for 'the reasonable man' 'who does good acts because they are good and does not do wicked ones because they are wicked' by virtue of 'the perfection of his nature' (Wolff: ch. 1 §38), a *natural* imperative grounds ordinary behaviour, facilitating *attraction* (x-is-good) and *aversion* (x-is-not-good) in natural actions and selections. Indeed, it would appear that NI figures centrally even in shaping individual perspectives; because it seems that even ordinarily nonevaluative things and terms like a chair, a glass of water, or a passing neighbour are instantly *thickened* with CHAIR, WATER, NEIGHBOUR just in case an x-is-good is in force. Thus, the NI is a potential candidate that determines not only the selection and evaluation of objects, but also, in determining which out of the manifold 'bits' of the world is given attention, it also determines one's disposition and, by extension, attitude. Which includes an empirical-sceptical disposition such as seen in Blackburn and Gibbard.

An x-is-good *inseparability* thesis—be that EMPIRICAL-NONCOGNITIVISM-IS-CORRECT or RATIONAL-COGNITIVISM-IS-CORRECT—does *nothing* to noncognitivism; one in fact supports the other, since x-is-good is natural, viz., *conative*, and,

additionally, the 'x' in x-is-good is *variable*, notwithstanding an in situ inseparability.²³ When expressed—whether through text or tone or a facial expression—natural imperatives X-IS-GOODs are essentially thick variable natures of value, and thick values in variable human natures. Blackburn and Gibbard—and sceptical-noncognitivists more generally—would readily agree with Gilbert Ryle's 'dispositional concept', according to which statements of certitude are dispositional rather than propositional (Tanney 2021: 28–31); but then the sceptical-noncognitivist might ought also to agree with Ryle that dispositions and attitudes are 'more or less *enduring* conditions' (Ryle 1930: 115; emphasis added), especially when read alongside personality psychology, which defines 'personality' as 'the enduring configuration of characteristics and behavior that comprises an individual's [...] major traits, interests, drives, values, self-concept, abilities, and emotional patterns' (APA Dictionary of Psychology 2023). Take the lifespan—a local longitude—say of Foot: from Foot's earlier writings of 1959 ('Moral Beliefs') to 1972 ('Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives') to 2001 (*Natural Goodness*), she oscillates between views that 'self-interest is rationally required' to taking 'an about-face on the issue of rationality of morality' (Hacker-Wright 2021: 7–8) to virtues as 'dispositions of the heart' and 'innermost desires' (19) to assigning a strong evaluative feature to 'what [humans] see as good' (30). Yet Foot's position *and disposition*, namely, OBJECTIVITY-IS-RIGHT, is unwavering. It appears that her moral *attitude* is characterised by a fundamental moral-resolute that does not cave against pressure, even if *adjustments* must be made.

²³ A term and conception emphasized in Anna Bergqvist's (2013) 'Thick Concepts and Context Dependence'; although here *in situ* refers to the basic metaethical phenomenon x-is-good, or, conversely, x-is-bad convergence, as opposed to schismatic 'x / is good', 'x/ is bad'; so that in spite of variability occurring at this level, the thick-thin (be that as thin may) relation remains intact *in situ*.

How stable and determinate then is Foot's sort of RATIONAL-COGNITIVISM-IS-RIGHT? It has been well over 2,000 years now, if one begins from Plato. And how stable and determinate is Blackburn's sort of EMPIRICAL-NONCOGNITIVISM-IS-CORRECT? About the same longitude, more or less, if one begins from Sextus. It does look like a thick natural imperative X-IS-GOOD, whilst variant in form, can also be anything but unstable in 'substance'. Hence an inseparability/stability thesis may now be inversely placed in a *noncognitivist* thesis, and conversely, an attitudinal/dispositional thesis may inversely be deposited in a *cognitivist* thesis; resulting in a further convergence of sub-theses. The cross-inversions are possible because the conventional value-*proposition* 'x is good' has been regenerated here as a natural and conflated value-*property* x-is-good. Additionally, a separability thesis is retained, given the diversity, relativity, and motility of x; but within the real x-is-good value property.

The transmutation from 'x is good' value proposition into x-is-good value property reinforces Williams' 'union of fact and value', which can now be read, per Wolff's psychology of 'maxim', with a thesis of *necessity*; the Whiteheadian 'conjunctive unity' that occurs in natural behaviour cannot now be disentangled without also altogether eliminating the action itself. Given that the natural imperative thesis places value at the very ground of natural behaviour, it may now seem unfitting to think of value as *non-natural*, for the natural person acts *on* value.

Chapter 3: **Natural Imperative (II)**

IS MORALITY REAL?

Sceptical accounts on the nature of value as seen in Simon Blackburn's (1992) and Allan Gibbard's (1992) treatments appear to be derived from observations of *interpersonal* phenomena, tending hence toward *external* sociological evidence. Whereas traditional moral realist accounts as seen in David Wiggins (1990) and Philippa Foot (2001) seem to be derived from *intrapersonal* phenomena, tending on the other hand toward *internal* psychological evidence. Hence it might just be that a faultless disagreement between moral scepticism and moral realism is located at an (unaccounted) epistemic dualism between two sorts of empiricism. It does not however seem like sceptical positions are not also introspectively derived, nor that realists are thoroughly internally empirical about their position. I suggest hence that the point of divergence is located at the deeper epistemic region between foci on internal concept (traditional realists) and internal content (sceptical-empiricists), which are, if a Kantian epistemology is correct, potentially cotenable and convergeable. Hence a second (unaccounted) epistemic dualism appears to be present to account for divergence, namely, rationalism and empiricism.

The first empiricism/empiricism dualism has been explored in the introduction and preceding chapters, but there is more to be said because the empirical evidence for Wiggins' sort of *a priori* moral outlook appears to be sorely absent from both sceptical and Wiggins' own theses for validation. But I will first address the more fundamental longstanding dichotomy between rationalism and empiricism through various readings

of John McDowell's (1994) *Mind and World*, and at the same time explore the possibility of (re-) converging Kant's *idealism* and empiricism.

3.1 MIND AND WORLD

TELIC VALUES LIKE MORALITY or MERRIMENT are thick concepts that are in situ *inseparable*: they are self-predicative (at least minimally by subjects), motivational (viz., action-guiding), and causal (viz., they dispense particular directives to actions). Telic values are also in situ *entangled* with natural properties: they require sensible participations (per Plato), they are simultaneously formal-and-material (per Aristotle), and they are hosted *in* natural subjects (per Wolff). But the operative here is *in situ*; so that telic values are *also* separable and can be disentangled, as observed such as by foregoing duo of sceptical-noncognitivists, Blackburn and Gibbard, but also, almost two millennia before them, Sextus Empiricus. The separability and disentanglement theses may however prove 'bad news' for the sceptics, especially when viewed with another related thesis of *shapelessness* that has grown with traction in thick philosophy, according to which 'the extensions of evaluative terms can[not] be mastered on the basis of non-evaluative similarities' (Väyrynen 2021: 17). It now seems unavoidable to assign telic values to a *separate* and utterly transcendent space of the sort envisioned by Plato; because the shapelessness, separability, and disentanglement theses also indicate that a thick ethical *concept*, as an abstract and without reference to any base properties, viz., all by itself, when used by one subject from New York or Bombay can be received in more or less the same meaning by another subject from New Zealand or Beijing. One knows Form of the Value *F*, because

one knows *F*-ness of the *F—in and by itself*. No sooner, then, does one start to enquire on the whereabouts and the ‘howabouts’ of these Forms of Value than one also begin to slip into some or other form of supernaturalism. As McDowell (1998: 160) points out: ‘It is as if, barring subjectivism, the appeal to the supernatural has to show up somewhere, and only in primitive conception of nature could it pass unnoticed that something supernatural is being smuggled into nature’.²⁴ This raises a fundamental desideratum as to *how* the ‘supernatural’ value is bridged to nature, and how natural subjects are able to *contact*—let alone be motivated by—these distant entities.

G. E. Moore (1903) himself offers no more (but no less either) than an ‘intuition’.²⁵ Whilst Ethical Intuitionism—whether construed as ‘self-evidence’ (Stratton-Lake 2020: 7–11) or ‘intellectual seemings’ (15)—cannot be underestimated, as it has re-emerged as a ‘respectable moral theory’ toward the end of the previous century (1), intuition alone however still cannot account for a *picture of contact*, given its ineffability. The philosophical nusus seems unable to stop at intuition for a sufficient reason; there is, as it were, a nagging sense that there is ‘moore’ to intuition than meets one eye—or else, that there is nothing at all to intuition. Given that intuition straddles ambiguously between evaluative-subjects and nonnatural ‘goodness’, one may either be befuddled by how the nonnatural gets inside natural agents, in the first place, or else commits to a nonnatural sort of human species. Intuitionism raises more questions: Is intuition nonnatural, like its perceived object? Or is it natural, like its host? In this chapter, I will

²⁴ Historically, however, it is the later disenchantment in Neo-Humeanism (which is only arguably Humean) that has smuggled the supernatural *out* of ‘nature’; for philosophical enquiries from the beginning—from Thales to Plato to Thomas Aquinas—endeavours not so much to *neutralise* as they in fact *naturalise* the supernatural.

²⁵ His commitment to a nonnaturalist objectivism is not without inconsistency; he does at some point concede to C. L. Stevenson’s noncognitivist emotivism (Hurka 2021: 2–3).

deploy a sort of reverse-engineering of Kantian epistemology to explore the deeper nature of the Moorean ‘intuition’; Kant writes (1781 repr. 1929: 92):

‘Our knowledge springs from two fundamental sources [...]; the first is the capacity of receiving representations (receptivity for impressions), the second is the power of knowing an object through these representations (spontaneity (in the production) of concepts)’.

If the Kantian twin of concept-content is correct, then the criterion of contact between natural subjects and nonnatural value must be located, and must only be found, in the spaces of both concepts *and sense experiences*. Whilst concept provides the *formal explanation* of what it is (that constitutes contact), it is sense experience that provides the *material touchstone*, the contact as such. In this way, the space of contact is also the mental realm of experiences and properties that psychologists commonly work with and term ‘constructs’ and ‘dimensions’. This chapter converges philosophical concepts and psychological constructs to suggest a potential formal-and-material candidate for a criterion of contact.

IMMANUEL KANT (1781), following Wolff who relocates Aristotle’s *telos* out of a metaphysical realm, likewise entirely migrates Plato’s Form to the mental space within natural subjects; which *should* by now have exorcised the supernatural from nature, except: his Transcendental Idealism—according to which reality is shaped by mental *a priori* forms and therefore all of reality is perceived-reality (‘phenomena’)—has been advanced at the cost of the mind’s direct connection with world-as-it-is (‘noumena’). The Kantian reality as perceived-reality has since survived through contemporary coherentism such as from the likes of Wilfrid Sellars and Donald Davidson; until McDowell (1994) attempts to intervene through his famous *Mind and World*.

McDowell attempts to converge rationalism with, but disentangle Kant's idealism from, empiricism by drawing on Kant's own dictum: *thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind* (Kant 1781: 92; McDowell 1994: 3, 23, 87, 89). He does so by expelling the thesis of idealism from 'thoughts' and 'concepts', instead assigning these 'conceptual schemes' to a thesis of rationalism. By doing so, McDowell assuages the epistemic anxiety that reality cannot be known for what it is; since Kant's idealistic realm of reality-as-it-appears is now replaced by a 'minimal empiricism' that contacts reality-at-it-is (McDowell 1994: loc. 125). McDowell's minimal empiricism provides real 'friction' from *outside* of thought to keep spontaneous rationalisation from 'frictionless spinning in a void' (18, 38–39; 11, 42, 67); since 'the conceptual contents that sit closest to the impact of external reality on one's sensibility are not already, *qua* conceptual, some distance away from that impact' (9). In displacing Kant's realm of the noumena for direct-contact with reality-as-it-is, 'the world is no longer opaque to reason rather experience has become transparent' (Alweiss 2005: 62; cf. McDowell: 144). McDowell (1998: 162) writes elsewhere in more explicit terms:

'...the ineffable "in itself" is, by Kant's own showing, nothing to us. About the world of nature, we are fobbed off with idealism; and it is really no consolation to be told that it is only transcendently speaking that that world is in part a product of subjectivity [...]. The perfectly describable empirical world takes over the role played in Kant's structure by the ineffable "in itself" [...].'

Lilian S. Alweiss (2005), Michael Williams (2005), and particularly Sandra M. Dingli (2005) —amongst other philosophers—express doubts about McDowell's escape from idealism. Because by dissolving Davidson's 'dualism of scheme and content' (McDowell

1994: ch. 1), and by situating the ‘space of causes’ within the Sellarsian ‘space of reason’, so that ‘reasons might *be* causes’ (86), McDowell has inevitably relocated perceptible reality ‘*within* the conceptual realm’ (Dingli 2005: 150; emphasis added). That ‘experience is seamlessly integrated into a conceptual repertoire’ (151) and thus ‘rationally linked into the activity of adjusting a world view’ (McDowell 1994: 33) reeks, for Dingli, of (Fichte’s) idealism. McDowell, however, has emphasised that constraints on thought come from ‘outside *thinking*’, and not ‘from outside *thinkable contents*’ (28); so that the empirical influx *from outside* precisely prevents an idealistic free rein. This however raises Williams’ (2005) worry that McDowell is committing an idealism of the sort found in T. H. Green, whereby the physical world is populated with ‘quasi-linguistic objects’ called ‘thinkable contents’ (M. Williams 2005: 191–92); because McDowell seems now to suggest that ‘the non-mental world exhibits the logical conceptual structure of *thought*, as it must if it is to exert rational control over our thinking’ (192). Williams’ worry seems significantly more worrying than if McDowell were to ‘revert’ to an *already*-conceptual content *at impact*—viz., at the very threshold of thought—assigned to ‘thinkable contents’; but which then however puts empirical influx right back to the space of reasons, hence going right back into idealism. Moreover, McDowell (1998: 161) himself cannot be any more explicit here:

The disenchantment Hume applauds can seem to point to a conception of nature as an ineffable lump, devoid of structure or order.²⁶

Dingli, as with others, appreciate McDowell’s plot to converge scheme and content, and reason and nature; quoting Colin McGinn, Dingli notes: ‘McDowell is pushing for

²⁶ Here is another example of a dualistic reading of Hume, who *also* ‘applauds’ a very enchanted thesis of human sympathy.

the idea that thought and nature share a common feature or structure, but it is notoriously hard to make sense of this without implying idealism' (Dingli 2005: 153). Alweiss' (2005) appreciation of the difficulty goes deeper; although McDowell, and also Husserl, have each broadened the notion of the Given by *highlighting* the moment of passivity and receptivity over and against spontaneity, 'they do not seem to be able to overcome the problems of idealism' (Alweiss: 64). Alweiss uses the Heideggerian expression, 'nothing can be that would not fit the "fore-structures of understanding"' (64). Perhaps then neither McDowell, Husserl, Heidegger, nor anyone for the matter, can escape idealism in the first place; 'for any constraint or restriction is intelligible only within the space of concepts' (64). In the end, McDowell's (1994: 88) goal to 'naturalise spontaneity within the realm of law' is, quite conclusively, as he himself puts it, a 'naturalised Platonism' (91–95). A naturalised Platonism, however, is not an escape from idealism.

Perhaps there is no escape from idealism at all. As Kant (1781: 359) has long since observed: '[the] only way of escape would be frankly to hypostatise representations, and to set them outside [oneself] as real things'.

ON AN EPISTEMIC construal, Kant's 'transcendental idealism' is in no conflict at all with empiricism. 'There can be no doubt', he writes, 'that all our knowledge begins with experience [...]. We have no knowledge antecedent to experience, and with experience all our knowledge begins' (Kant: 41). Kantian epistemology is in fact an equal-part convergence between idealism and empiricism (92; emphasis added):

- (1) Without sensibility/receptivity no object would be given to us, without understanding/spontaneity no object would be thought. The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing.
- (2) Only through their union can knowledge arise.
- (3) *To neither of these powers may a preference be given over the other.*

On Kant's view, therefore, the concepts 'a priori' and 'a posteriori' are not to be taken in a chronological sequence; they are seen as an a-priori-and-a-posteriori *simultaneity*.

Gilbert Ryle provides a similar account on the way natural perceptions occur through his 'thick descriptions'. Ryle's 'thick descriptions' are descriptions that help us to understand the 'intentional and purposive detail' in—viz., the significance of—'mere bodily motions' (Väyrynen 2021: 3). The Rylean 'thin' in this case is the 'base property' (as opposed to the evaluative component in Williams' thick ethical concept), and the 'thick' refers to *meanings* that supervenes on the base (Kirchin 2013: 66). For example, 'the boy contracted his eyelids' would be a 'thinnest description' (66), whereas 'a conspiratorial wink' or 'a flirtatious wink' would make a 'thick description'. Following are a few other examples:

RYLEAN 'THIN' (PHYSICAL REALITY)	RYLEAN 'THICK' (PHENOMENAL REALITY)
Brain	Mind
Homo sapiens	'Humanity'
Two Homo sapiens	'Marriage'
Desire	'Value'
Text and paper	'Philosophy'
Five pieces of wood	'Chair'
Body jiggles and high decibels	'Laughter'

On a Rylean view, natural perceptions seem neither to place a pause nor to consist in any division between the physical and phenomenal fields of reality at all; natural language converges on a singular thick description, thus converging the Given and the conceptual, the content and the scheme. Perhaps with the exception of investigative procedures, the fundamental modes of thought—receptivity and spontaneity, in Kantian terms—are neither separable nor consist of any linear priority; they are simultaneous and cyclical: *thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind*. On this deeper convergent model, McDowell's 'mind' and 'world' distinction may be better pictured as 'mind' and '*earth*' (or 'mind' and 'matter'), with the 'world' repositioned at the point of convergence between the two. The 'world' as we know it, hence, is the *product* of a simultaneously executed empirical sense-perception and *a priori* conceptualisation. On a Rylean view, McDowell need not worry about an idealism that inflicts epistemic anxiety in thinking subjects, nor to concern over removing the (irremovable) 'blinds' just so that subjects can see reality with transparency; because if we go with the sort of explanation provided by Ryle, it does look like Kant's idealistic representations are only very thinly veiled from reality-at-it-is: perceived-reality is almost the reality that it perceives. Far from being opaque, idealistic mediations are more like a pair of clear see-through glasses after all.

The idealistic 'world' is a conflated reality between the Given and the conceptual: respectively, the material and the formal. Where a formal value is—including the sort of moral 'unicorn' that the likes of Wiggins and Foot have persistently pursued—there too must be its material partner. Knowledge of any sort, including knowledge of value, is an *inherent binary* of conceptual scheme (idealism) and experience (empiricism).

3.2 HAPPINESS AND MORALITY

KANT'S INHERENT BINARY for knowledge of any sort necessitates the knowledge of any value—including the sort advanced by traditional moral realists—as consisting in an intrinsic binary of concept *and content*. It follows that the natural imperative *x-is-good* is an intrinsic binary of telic value (concept) and autotelic experience (content). I suggest that an intrinsic binary thesis is necessary on two counts: epistemically and, correspondent to that, substantively qua VALUE. Telic values that 'hang' in the space of the forms (per Kant) or the realm of the heavens (per Plato), any *telic* values from MORALITY to MERRIMENT to SELF-PRESERVATION, can be known at all because of an autotelic touchstone through which each of these values are contacted; respectively, say, the intrinsic experiences of INTEGRITY, JOULARITY, and PERPETUITY. Each of these items appear to be *positively experiential end-states* for which values are known and pursued. Positive end state (PES) is deeply reminiscent of an age-old material value that has almost universally been invoked as a ground for ethics by philosophers since Aristotle, from the medieval Aquinas and Bonaventure to the modern rationalist Descartes; namely, *eudaimonia*. If a PES general thesis is indeed a general thesis of *eudaimonia*, then *eudaimonia* is 'the' autotelic Natural Imperative—EUDAIMONIA-IS-GOOD—without which telic values—whether ethical, moral, or otherwise—cannot be known at all, much less can they be pursued. To put it in Kantian terms: *'the good' without eudaimonia is empty*. The reverse likewise seems also tenable where the specimen of knowledge concerns VALUE: *eudaimonia without 'the good' is blind*; for without the evaluative 'good', *eudaimonia* cannot convey to-be-pursuedness, at all, to subjects. But the homonymous term 'eudaimonia' first requires an audit.

Philosophers (e.g. Hursthouse and Pettigrove 2018; Kraut 2018; LeBar 2020) and psychologists (e.g. Broeck et. Al. 2019; Gonzalez et. Al. 2012; Huta and Waterman 2013; Vittersø 2016) differ on what ‘eudaimonia’ *is*, and, within each domain of study, there are yet more disagreements; even as all studies are derived from a common seminal text, namely, Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE). But it appears that it is precisely in NE that the homonymity of the *term* is found to be a direct result of the complexity of the *phenomenon*, to which Aristotle himself finds difficulty in assigning any one definition. Aristotle confesses right at the outset: ‘we must try *at least roughly* to comprehend what [eudaimonia] is’ (1094a; emphasis added). A general schema in NE seems to reveal two theses: an ‘indicative thesis’ according to which ‘*eudaimonia* is that for whose sake all action **is** taken’, and, a ‘gerundive thesis’ in which ‘*eudaimonia* is that for whose sake all action **ought** to be taken’ (McDowell 1998: 9; bold text mine); respectively, hence, a *descriptive* and a *prescriptive* theses. The latter is seen in Aristotle’s evident promotion of the values, whereby eudaimonia as ‘chief good’ entails a directed life of virtues, self-control, wisdom, and the like; the former, however, is also evident, in that eudaimonia, viz., ‘happiness’, is a terminal *and universal end* pursued by ‘both the masses and sophisticated people’ (NE 1095a15–25), notwithstanding the variables within and between each of these groups of people. As a general ballpark, eudaimonist philosophers generally tend toward a prescriptive thesis, which includes theories of ‘well-being’ and ‘life satisfaction’, and (moral) virtue ethics; whereas eudaimonic psychologists tend to stay within a descriptive subjectivism, which further bifurcates into a ‘hedonia-focused’ and a ‘eudaimonia-focused’ subdomains (Huta and Waterman 2013; Heintzelman 2018). But overlaps (viz., convergent models) can also be found between philosophical and psychological

eudaimonisms. For example, Dan Haybron (2020) advances a philosophy of happiness, and Richard M. Ryan and Frank Martela (2016) seeks to build Aristotle's ethical import into their psychology of flourishing.

Psychologies of 'Eudaimonic Well-Being' are robust, if divided; psychologists are heavily invested in deciphering 'happiness' (eudaimonia) from 'pleasure' (hedonia) (Huta and Waterman 2013; Heintzelman 2018). But I suggest that this alone should not be indicative of a deviation from Aristotle's *ethics*, since the philosopher himself has also taken great pains to 'explain' their relations. For example, after a tedious treatment in Book X, concluding with 'enough said', the next chapter returns immediately to the same conundrum. On some accounts, Aristotle concedes that even physical pleasure is an end in itself and so *does* fulfil a key criterion of eudaimonia—and 'not unreasonably so'; but in the same breath, partakers of pleasure are also dismissed as 'coarsest' (NE 1095b15). On another account Aristotle names those who revel in jokes and laughter 'the buffoon' and 'the boor', but hastens to qualify, 'even though relaxation and amusements are a *necessary* part of life' (1128b; emphasis added). Toward the end of NE, Aristotle also concedes that the quintessential ethics of contemplation and a life of intellect *do* result in pleasure, which he then distinguishes as 'proper' (1177b15). Additionally, Aristotle associates pleasure with the 'happy person' (*eudaemon*), otherwise one cannot say of the ethical person as one with a 'pleasant life' (1154a). Perhaps the most telling—or else, the most confounding—is that in book II chapter 7, JOULARITY is counted as, alongside Aristotle's classical pantheon of JUSTICE, COURAGE, TEMPERANCE and the like, an equal, arguably, but

certainly, a *virtue*.²⁷ Hence a reading on source material only affirms the psychological dilemma between hedonia (as pleasure) and eudaimonia (as happiness).

If an 'empirical tribunal' is invoked to resolve the conundrum, a psychological study has found eudaimonia to correlate with hedonia at $r = .96$, indicating *negligent discriminant validity* (Disabato et. al. 2015).²⁸ Although limitations of the study may include an inadequate coverage of the underlying constructs of the two factors (Disabato et. al.: 9), the eudaimonic scale does include virtuous and ethical items such as, 'I have a responsibility to make the world a better place', 'In choosing what to do, I take into account whether it will benefit other people', and 'Setbacks don't discourage me', amongst others. Hedonic items include 'I tried to take in every sensory property of the event', 'For me, the good life is the pleasurable life', and 'Life is too short to postpone the pleasures it can provide', amongst others.²⁹ Whilst these studies may require a more philosophically-focused taxonomy of values, a .96 coefficient way surpasses any indication of discriminant validity between the two factors that have traditionally been viewed as rivals in philosophy. I suggest that the proximity between eudaimonia and hedonia is indicative of the proximity between the term 'eudaimonia' and its commonly translated 'happiness'. The *proximity* thesis in turn suggests that 'eudaimonia' is both 'happiness' and 'not-happiness', in which case a 'positive end state' (PES) thesis seems to sit well.

²⁷ The Greek *eutrapelia* is translated in source materials as 'wittiness'; a translation agreed upon in modern moral literature, which tend to also qualify its ethical function with some other rational modifications, so that it is *not* treated qua *eutrapelia*. I consulted Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Strong's and Strong's Exhaustive concordances, Google translation, webtran.eu, and duolingo.com; they either offer or tend toward a more extreme 'jocosity'. A philological journal (DeMoss 1918) offers 'jocular'; which also agrees with translations of *eutrapelos* ('jocular') at the online sites.

²⁸ Studies were conducted from March 2009 to March 2013, with a sample size of 7,617 from 109 countries in 16 different languages; questionnaire combines items from a hedonic well-being scale (Diener 1984) and eudaimonic well-being (Ryff 1989) models.

²⁹ Aaron Jarden, et. al. (2010) for 'International Well-Being Study' full questionnaire.

The happiness thesis is espoused by many philosophers, including translators of Aristotle's text. Variations of 'happiness' include W. D. Ross' 'well-being', John Cooper's 'flourishing', and even Henry Sidgwick's hedonistic 'pleasure' (Kraut: 168–9). Nicholas P. White (2006) subscribes to a more direct 'happiness' thesis. White (2006: loc. 58) further observes a twofold import in the term 'happiness' as used in common language: (1) 'Are you happy *about...*?' which refers to a local happiness; and (2) 'Are you happy?' which refers to a wider, general context, such as the course of one's life. Amongst the many construals and nuances of the term, translation of eudaimonia as 'happiness' per source materials seems most fitting particularly on the descriptive thesis; whereby 'eudaimonia' is described in Aristotle's text as something that is pursued *universally* ('the sophisticated' as well as 'the masses') and that it is *terminal*—that for which all other 'goods' are pursued—an end-state: viz., a positive end-state, when taken together.

A descriptive happiness thesis, however, poses a problem to many eudaimonist ethicists, and ethicists more generally, who espouse the sort of moral values such as seen in David Wiggins' categorically objective TRUTH or Philippa Foot's moral perfectionism. Moral philosophers are inherently prescriptive, and their prescriptive approach is inevitably at odds with the descriptive thesis. Contemporary eudaimonist ethicists hence tend to favour a more moral eudaimonism over a subjective-state psychology. So much so that virtue ethics, which is a eudaimonistic counterpart in Aristotle's, as well as Plato's, and most of ancient philosophy's scheme of things, but which now concerns with 'the moral good', is not any much different, as William J. Prior (2001: 334) picks out, as its legalistic rivals, utilitarianism and deontology. So much so that any talks of eudaimonia per Aristotle's descriptive thesis have been

indicted by some ethicists for being ‘mistakenly’ ‘unmoralised’ (e.g. Hursthouse and Pettigrove 2018). To boot, it sure seems in live experiences that the ethical and moral commitment actually leaves one *un*-happy, and these commitments are anything but natural. Moral and natural imperatives will only result in, as Christine Korsgaard (1996) puts it, ‘conflicting obligations [that] can both be unconditional’, and ‘that’s just one of the ways in which human life is *hard*’ (Korsgaard: 50; emphasis added). Hence many contemporary eudaimonist ethicists or ethicists more generally have severed the subjective/descriptive thesis in—which is also the very roots of—ancient ethics from their studies.

Many contemporary ethicists however can be seen to re-converge their prescriptive eudaimonism with its descriptive counterpart. Richard Kraut (1979), for instance, in his eponymous ‘Two Conceptions of Happiness’ refer, rather interestingly, to one that belongs to Aristotle and the other to Aristotelians. The one, Kraut claims, is a stringent objectivism (Kraut: 167); and the other, a sort of subjectivism that characterises ‘eudaimonia’ as various forms of one’s ‘deepest desires’ that are each relative, to some extent, to different individuals (174). Whilst complete fulfilment of desire ‘is necessary for eudaimonia’, Kraut argues that it is insufficient. Kraut argues that these ‘...desires must be directed at *worthwhile* goals, and they must be proportionate in strength to the value of those goals; otherwise, one is not *eudaimon*, however satisfied one feels’ (176; emphasis added). On Kraut’s view, ‘a person is happy only if he meets the standards he has set for himself’ (195). Hence Kraut positions his thesis to be somewhere between ‘subjectivist’ and ‘flexible objectivist’.

William J. Prior (2001), by comparison, tends toward a more moral eudaimonism; Prior writes (Prior: 325):

Eudaimonism is the view that the fundamental intrinsic value in ethics is the human good.

Prior's text and tone are a regular *moral* eudaimonism that tends to speak of some 'human good'—viz., goodness *simpliciter*—in a manner that seems to sidestep the 'almost universally acknowledged' nature/value duality. Prior's outlook may also come off as deviating from Aristotle's, according to whom 'the good'—indeed 'the chief good'—is an evaluation *of*, therefore is substantively distinct from, eudaimonia. But from another viewpoint, Prior's 'human good' as consisting *in* 'eudaimonia', so that one can speak of 'eudaimonia' *as* 'goodness', reveals a radical conflation—EUDAIMONIA-IS-GOOD—that in turn radically conflates the intrinsic *binary* on a simple and singular unit. This is provided, of course, that Prior's 'human good' is taken as an *evaluative*, as opposed to a *prescriptive*, thesis. Whereas the former is viewed as a singular and simple value *property*, the latter prescriptive thesis entails a de-hyphenated and de-conflated 'Eudaimonia is good' value *proposition*.

ARISTOTLE'S NICHOMACHEAN ETHICS—together with Socrates and Plato and almost all of ancient philosophy—clearly entails a prescriptive thesis in which ethics and morality are promoted on the premise that moral people are happy or at least happier; or, conversely, that immoral people are unhappy or at least not *truly* happy. It is a difficult schema that has persisted through the ages by a great many philosophers (e.g. Aquinas 1485; Wolff 1720; Nagel 1972; Kraut 1979; Lovibond 1995; Annas 1998; Prior 2001; N. White 2006; LeBar 2020). Paul Bloomfield (2017)—along with some others—calls this 'the Holy Grail of moral philosophy' (Bloomfield: 2614). Bloomfield himself

contributes what appears to be an ambitious attempt to demonstrate MORALITY IS NECESSARY FOR HAPPINESS in just fifteen pages and a six-line syllogism; as follows (2615):

Morality is necessary for treating like cases alike
 Treating like cases alike is necessary for fair self-evaluation
 Fair self-evaluation is necessary for self-knowledge
 Self-knowledge is necessary for self-respect
 Self-respect is necessary for happiness

∴ Morality is necessary for happiness

Bloomfield goes on to defend what is essentially a 'self-respect' thesis:

- (1) By associating 'self-respect' with self-righteous arrogance, citing, amongst others, that *even* 'Machiavelli, Hobbes' Foole, Hume's Sensible Knave, Nietzsche's Übermensch, Rand's Roark, etc.', who all see themselves as a 'cut above', converge at the premise that 'self-respect is necessary for happiness' (Bloomfield: 2619);
- (2) By highlighting the possibility that self-hating people who nevertheless lead happy lives are 'confused' and 'self-contradictory' (2620);
- (3) By arguing that the diametric 'self-disrespect' runs counter to happiness (2620);
- (4) By hypothesising the possibility that immoral people who *feel* that they respect themselves are not in fact respecting who they *actually* are, and therefore not in fact respecting the self (2621).

With the exception of (3), which is theoretical rather than psychological, Bloomfield's argument looks like a daunting one that is premised upon knowledge of *other* subjects' internal world: how *they* 'see themselves' (1), how *they* are 'confused' and 'self-contradictory' (2), and how *they* are not 'in fact' respecting their true selves (4). Each of these views hangs on an assumption of what goes on in *another* person's (including fictional ones, to boot) inner world. Perhaps Bloomfield's syllogism is more aptly presented (in his 'collapsed form' [2619]) with a qualification; as follows:

Morality [for me] is necessary for self-respect
 Self-respect [for me] is necessary for happiness

∴ Morality [for me] is necessary for happiness

Which may also perhaps be extended to others to mitigate the threat of a radical subjectivism or rampant relativism, as follows:

Morality [for some/many] is necessary for self-respect
 Self-respect [for some/many] is necessary for happiness

∴ Morality [for some/many] is necessary for happiness

Given, however, that 'self-respect' is not particularly *tethered* to morality, it may also imply that for some others:

Having a respectable house and finance is necessary for self-respect
 Self-respect is necessary for happiness

∴ Having a respectable house and finance is necessary for happiness

Self-respect can also be obtained by other means, such as found in Bloomfield's characters: dominance and success (Machiavelli 1532), self-individuation and self-empowerment (Nietzsche 1883), or (objectively self-appraised) ambition and self-excellence (Rand 1943).

Bloomfield's case for philosophical *necessity* paves the way for a compelling argument. What may be required however in his syllogistic motion is perhaps a eudaimonic item that is consistently and *particularly* tethered to morality, instead of 'self-respect'; which is, doubtless, a positive end-state and consistent with a moral outcome, but nonetheless not uniquely and necessarily attained *through morality*.

A POSITIVE END-STATE, per Aristotle, is a positive experience at which all goals, pursuits, and actions terminate their course. Whereas a *telic* value is the *ultimate* end beyond which there are no further ends, its correlational eudaimonic end-state is the most *basic* end beyond which there are no deeper ends and is therefore properly an *autotelic* value. On this view, a distinct experience say of PERCEPTIVITY (autotelic value) is how and why telic values such as KNOWLEDGE and WISDOM are valued and pursued; VIVACITY (autotelic) is how and why MERRIMENT, PLEASURE, ENTERTAINMENT (telic) are pursued; and, particularly in question here, INTEGRITY (autotelic) is a potential candidate for how and why PERFECTION, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND MORALITY (telic) are valued and pursued. In any given course of action, these autotelic-telic binaries conflate the nature/non-nature dichotomy, because they operate as *one* intrinsic value: $x = x \Leftrightarrow x_1$.

INTEGRITY, as a subjective experience, seems to sit well within a more general PES framework. INTEGRITY as subjective experience is seen in eudaimonic psychology: ‘a sense of autonomy and integrity’ constitutes a dimension of the eudaimonia construct (Ryan and Martela 2016: 10). In moral philosophy, Korsgaard (1996: 45) describes ‘integrity’ as the self-experience of ‘oneness’ and ‘unity’ of existence, and an identity derived from living up to one’s ‘own standards’. Taken together, INTEGRITY may be described as a positive self-experience that entails ‘intactness’, ‘ordered-ness’, and ‘faultlessness’, amongst other thematic experiences. INTEGRITY, so construed, is not an external value that is akin to those that can be found in business mission statements or some corporate war cry; rather, it is a real inner experience that is verifiable through introspection. The ‘sense of self’—or ‘moral identity’ as Korsgaard (1996) terms—that comes with INTEGRITY may be characterised in shades of ‘uprightness’, ‘blamelessness (to oneself)’, ‘incorruptibility’, ‘compactness and intactness’, ‘autonomy’, and the like; INTEGRITY arises particularly when the moral subject does the Right Thing, and never when a (morally) Wrong is committed. INTEGRITY seems to entail Bloomfield’s ‘self-respect’, but of its own, ‘self-respect’ does not seem particularly bound up with MORALITY.

An intrinsic-binary thesis, particularly the INTEGRITY-MORALITY binary, lends a thesis of necessity that seems to be missing in Bloomfield’s ‘self-respect’; whose position may be better reinforced as follows:

Morality is necessary for integrity

Integrity is a [form of] happy state

∴ Morality is necessary for a [form of] happy state

On a view from the intrinsic binary thesis, MORALITY is hence *necessary* for INTEGRITY, a positive and subjective end-state. As to whether such a happy state, precisely as a subjective state, can or should be universalised is a discussion that must go beyond the scope of present paper. Preliminary evidences from psychological sciences however seem to indicate a need for universalization. From the point of view of socio-personality psychology, for instance, moral and ethical values are ‘goals from the ideal self’ that can be thought of as being ‘typical starting points for self-regulation’ (Carver and Scheier 2019: 31, 37). In another neuropsychological-focused model, a high level of self-regulated motivation has shown to correspond with well-being, mental health, and ethical behaviour (Quirin et. al. 2019: 394).

3.3 NATURAL IMPERATIVE (2): $x = x \Leftrightarrow x_1$

THE NATURAL IMPERATIVE EUDAIMONIA-IS-GOOD is a general construct within which a potential *moral* natural imperative (MNI) INTEGRITY-IS-GOOD is located. Given Kant’s inherent epistemic binary through which knowledge of moral value is known at all via INTEGRITY, the MNI is then an intrinsic binary, $x = x-x_1$, that is loaded onto a singular value-property, INTEGRITY–MORALITY-IS-GOOD. In virtue of its telic–autotelic conflation, the MNI—as with all NIs—is hence a conflation of *ought* and *want*; as in, a conflated *must*, as in, ‘I *ought* and *want* to—I *must*—do the right thing’. The MORALITY NI hence is no less (and no more) an ought-and-want than, say, KNOWLEDGE: ‘I *ought* and *want* to—I *must*—read Richard Dawkins’ *The Selfish Gene*’, or RELATIONSHIP: ‘I *ought* and *want* to—I *must*—catch up with my old friend’, or SELF-PRESERVATION: ‘I *ought* and *want*

to—I *must*—get well soon’, or ENTERTAINMENT: I *ought* and *want* to—I *must*—catch a funny movie this weekend’, and so forth.³⁰

Moral *natural* imperative is of another ‘ball game’, so to say, from moral *categorical* imperative (CI) of the sort enforced by Wiggins and, from origin, by Kant; because the CI consists in a solitary *ought*, whereas MNI, as with all NIs, is a binary of *ought* and *want*. MNI and CI hence are of different *species*, and I suggest that the special distinction necessitates different domains of discussion. In his introduction to Kant’s *Metaphysics of Morals*, Roger J. Sullivan (1996) highlights a useful distinction between Kant’s ‘Doctrine of the Right’, which is concerned *only* with ‘duties of outer freedom’; and the ‘Doctrine of Virtue’ or ‘ethics’, which concerns how one is under obligation to fulfil external duties ‘*from the motive of duty*’ (Sullivan: loc. 145; emphasis added).³¹ Whereas the former may come under the jurisdiction of the State ‘to restrain the selfishness of human nature’ (loc. 220), the latter concerns features of ‘ethical character’ (loc. 145) such as ‘moral courage’, ‘cultivating moral feelings’ (loc. 282), ‘dignity of the person’ (loc. 294), ‘commitment to right principles’ (loc. 307), ‘self-respect’, and so forth.³² Perhaps in a nutshell, a basic distinction between Kant’s categorical and his ‘ethical’ imperatives is, respectively, compliance *with* duty and compliance *from* duty. Kant’s CI hence is situated in the former interpersonal context,

³⁰ Interestingly, the Chinese term for ‘necessity’ is a composite of *bì* (= ought) and *yào* (= want); as in, when someone says that it is necessary to act in thus and such a way, there is a *bì yào* to act in thus and such a way.

³¹ J. David Velleman (2012) differentiates a moral act as one that is acted ‘**from duty**’, contrasting with one that is ‘**in accordance with duty** but from inclination’ (343; bold text his), which at first impression seems to be a reversal; but a closer look at the context on which he is exegeting reveals a difference in semantics rather than in substance. The former describes a shopkeeper who does not shortchange his customer because it is forbidden to do so: ‘from duty’ in this sense is essentially compliance with duty *from the motive of duty* (= Kant’s ‘ethical character’ or virtue ethics); whereas the latter describes another shopkeeper who does not shortchange a customer *because he wants to attract more customers* (arguably, = Kant’s HI). In this case, ‘in accordance with duty’, without inclination, viz., CI proper, is not part of his discussion in the first place.

³² Sullivan puts it like this: ‘...when those who read *The Metaphysics of Morals* with an open mind return to the *Groundwork*, they tend to find themselves reading a different book, one with doctrines clearly set out that earlier had inexplicably eluded them, and with this new reading many of their former objections also tend to disappear’ (loc. 81).

whereas MNI belongs to the latter intrapersonal domain. Yet, the likes of Kant and Wiggins cannot have plucked out a CI from the sky, so to speak, without a prior sensible contact. Hence the CI, whilst a ‘different ball game’, is nonetheless derived from the MNI in which contact and material evidence are situated. Kant himself derived his CI from what he terms the ‘good will’ (Kant 1785: §1–§2), a natural property located in the moral subject and hence, a moral natural imperative which might plausibly be identifiable with the eudaimonic INTEGRITY.

NI, including MNI, is also of a different species from Kant’s *hypothetical* imperative (HI). Kant’s HI runs thus: ‘You ought to do X, if you want Y’; contrasting with his CI, ‘You ought to do X’, which is without an *additional* notation Y. By conflating the autotelic–telic binaries, NI converges HI and CI in this manner: ‘You ought to do X, because you want X₁’; thus, both adding a new item (HI) and *not* adding any new item (CI) to the notation. But given its *autotelic* orientation, NI is perhaps more properly represented in the first-person, ‘I ought to do X, because I want X₁’, or, ‘I ought and want to do X–X₁’; in that they each consists, simultaneously, in *ought* and *want*, from first-person perspective. It follows then that a moral act such as being punctual or showing justice does not of its own constitute a moral natural imperative; because these moral *appearances* may have been enacted from a different autotelic motivation, such as, say, PROFITABILITY. In such cases, perhaps HI is a more appropriate description, since a telic value is being ‘abducted’ to fulfil an autotelic desire that does not in situ belong in the binary. Perhaps ‘AI’, ‘abducted imperative’, is a more fitting description.

A NATURAL IMPERATIVE thesis can be viewed as *evidential*, in that it picks out—what was previously left out from Kant’s taxonomy of imperatives—a particular sort of value

that is commonly seen in everyday language, as characterised by a conflated ought-and-want *must*. A natural imperative thesis should also be *reasonable*, because its intrinsic-binary thesis of telic-and-autotelic value is necessitated by a more fundamental epistemic binary of concept-and-content.

A thoroughly conflated telic and autotelic features on value, and in the perceptibility of value, however, does not abolish, but is emphatic of, the ‘almost universally acknowledged’ gap between nature and value—as signified by the retention of, respectively, a convergent empiricism *and idealism*. By disentangling McDowell’s rationalism from, and reinstating Kant’s idealism in, knowledge, conceptual schemes can now be accounted for in their apparent multiplicity. Idealism enables thought to occur in a variety of *directions*, and to think rationally is but one of many different ways of perceiving, of knowing, indeed of *thinking* about the sensible world. A flower, for instance, can be thought of as ‘beautiful’ in virtue of an *emotive* conceptual scheme; a piece of land can be thought of as ‘territory’ in virtue of an *appetitive* conceptual scheme; a triangle of equal sides can be thought of as ‘a perfect triangle’ in virtue of a *geometric* conceptual scheme; and so forth. It follows then that it is in an *a priori* conceptual scheme ‘to think in a rational way’ that thinking can actually begin its course in a rational way. By the same token, the way in which the Sceptic ‘selects’ and kickstarts an empirical way of thinking is *not* plausibly itself informed by evidence, since to think of the sensible world *as evidence* requires, more plausibly, a specific directive prior to the occurrence of thought, which is, namely, an *a priori* empirical conceptual scheme! Hence, far from obscuring thinking subjects from empirical knowledge, the reinstatement of Kantian idealism in fact renders empirical thinking possible.

Like every other conceptual scheme, an empirical conceptual scheme bears on thinking subjects—here, the Sceptic—in a way that conforms thinking to the scheme itself. There is then quite clearly an *ought* that determines the way the Sceptic conducts her thought. The sort of moral conceptual scheme espoused by realists hence can no more be dismissed as nonevidential than the Sceptic's own empirical conceptual scheme. The Moral Sceptical and Moral Realist conceptual schemes can be viewed as different schemes that bear on subjects to each think in a morally distinct way—whereas the former is focused on content, the latter is focused on concept. There is no reason hence to think that content and concept are mutually-exclusive, and cannot arrive at a common outcome; moreover, focus on content should not amount to a genuine absence of concept for the Sceptic, and, conversely, focus on concept does not amount to the absence of content for the Realist. For if the Kantian inherent epistemic binary of concept-and-content is correct, then concept and content must be present in both EMPIRICISM-IS-CORRECT and MORAL-OBJECTIVISM-IS-RIGHT. But *focus*, it seems, may have precisely eclipsed—to varying degrees—concept from the Sceptic and content from the Realist.

The question of convergence perhaps runs both ways. Is the Sceptic able to accept the moral conceptual scheme that bears on the Moral Realist to think and act in a particularly moral way? If they can't, then there may be every reason, too, to question the empirical conceptual scheme that bears on the Sceptic to think and act in a particularly empirical way. Conversely, is the Moral Realist able to contact the moral content—potentially the eudaimonic INTEGRITY (per Kant) or/and EMPATHY (per Hume)—that convey feedbacks to subjects that some and not other acts *are* moral? If they can't, then an empirical touchstone for morality will have to be accounted for

'elsewhere' to in turn account for a contact between nature and moral values. But even where for any reason an empirical contact as such is obscured, the moral conceptual scheme remains peculiarly *visible* for the moral subject, and the way the moral conceptual scheme bears on action and thought with an infallibly experienced 'ought' conveys *tangibility* to the moral subject. For the Moral Realist who is convinced beyond any doubt, the moral conceptual scheme *is* content!

On its own, the moral conceptual scheme may be seen as *indispensable*, because it is bound inherently with a particular content and commands thinking and action in a particular way. It is also quite evidently *irreducible*, because bound with content as an *intrinsic* binary. These are the twofold 'vindicatory explanation' in Wiggins' validation of propositional truth (Wiggins 1990: 67, 68, 84), but which now refers to a concept-and-content moral property. But, so too, should Wiggins' vindicatory explanation apply on an *empirical* concept-and-content binary. On this view, the dispute between moral realism and moral scepticism does look like a *faultless* moral disagreement; hence, one that is potentially cotenable and convergeable. I suggest that the Moral Sceptic can converge toward an objective realist position if they can see, as Moral Realists have evidently *seen*, the moral conceptual scheme *as content*, that there is such a *thing* as a moral conceptual scheme. And that the moral conceptual scheme no less bears on the way morality is thought and enacted than the Sceptic's own empirical conceptual scheme bears on the way they think and act in a particularly empirical way, as if from the outside. 'To think in an empirical way' from the Sceptic's vantage point is hence both constitutive *and* constituted; likewise, 'to think in a moral way' from the Moral Realist's vantage point is both constituted *and* constitutive: $x = x \Leftrightarrow x_1$. If the Moral

Sceptic wants to be correct, they *ought* to be empirical. If the Moral Realist *wants* to experience INTEGRITY, blamelessness, incorruptibility, etc., they ought to be moral.

Convergence looks hopeful between these two faultless positions, given that one is, epistemically speaking, bound up with the other in an inherent binary. But whether or how any real convergence can occur remains to be seen, and it is beyond the scope and size of present paper to flesh out a thorough investigation.

IS MORALITY REAL?

Moral imperatives such as those experienced in Wiggins' and Foot's intrapersonal spaces of reasoning are moral *natural* imperatives that are bound, like all natural imperatives, in an intrinsic binary of concept and content. A potential touchstone for the moral conceptual scheme is suggested here as the positive end-state of INTEGRITY. But even where for any reason the subjective experience is obscured, the conceptual scheme itself may also be *experienced* as evidential content for the moral subject in question: the *ought* is an infallible experience. There is hence no question as to the truth and nature of morality, just in case for the moral subject; especially where an antithesis of arbitrariness can be eliminated through cross-validations between identical subjects—spanning over two millennia of *n.* moral academic as well as folk philosophers—with identical experiences. Moral subjects, it appears, no more require evidential content to think and act in a particularly moral way than sceptical subjects require contact with a conceptual scheme to think and act in a particularly empirical way. Morality for the morally disposed individual is no less natural than, say, Merriment is for the merrily disposed individual; for moral subjects no less *ought* and *want* to do what is right than jocular subjects *ought* and *want* to make merry. On such

a view, the *naturally* moral person should no more need to seek vindication for Morality than Merriment for the naturally jocular person.

I hasten however to add that, in my mind, a moral conceptual scheme, alone and all by itself, can no more serve as evidence than, say, the conceptual scheme of a unicorn or a Santa Claus. I recourse hence to Plato's vision of *Akademía* on which he founded a two-pronged validation of 'contemplation' (intrapersonal objectivity) and communal crosschecking (interpersonal objectivity); but Plato also has a third criterion that underlay the first two: philosophical talent, viz., rational thinkers who are (purportedly) capable of reasoning from evidence. In this light, the moral conceptual scheme has shown to *commonly* and *consistently* bear on *n.* philosophical talents—from Plato to Aristotle to Aquinas to Kant to Foot and Wiggins—and many more between and beyond—to think and act in a particularly moral way. I suggest hence that the moral conceptual scheme fulfils a twofold intrapersonal and interpersonal empirical validation.

CLOSING REMARKS:*A Future for Philosophical Convergence*

ARE HUMANS VIRTUOUS?

A study of value at natural behaviour inevitably opens pathways into further cross-topical and cross-disciplinary studies. A value theory of nature, if successful, may be exported to other ethical domains such as the metaethics of naturalism, natural ethics, or even applied ethics and moral philosophy; other broader philosophical subjects include anthropology, metaphysics, and perhaps also a naturalist philosophy of God. A theory of natural value, viz., the natural imperative thesis, may also open opportunities for convergence with the natural sciences such as motivation, personality, and positive psychologies, sociology, and even historical anthropology and psychiatry.

The natural imperative thesis that every human action is fundamentally motivated by *x-is-good* may however suggest a very naive picture of Human Nature, or else that there is no need for ethics in the first place, since every human being is already virtuous, insofar as her every action *is good*. But the natural imperative thesis in fact serves as an entry point into ethics; because (1) *x-is-good* is located at a first-person perspective (see page 107) and hence, (2) it is not in situ validated as an ethical or moral imperative. (3) As a preliminary, and restricted within the parameter of ordinary behaviour, the natural imperative—*x-is-good*—a *virtue*—insofar as it is good—does appear also to be a same ground of ‘*vice*’ on a particular construal. An initial proposition that virtue and vice can be grounded on an identical property can be supported by philosophical (e.g. Russell 2020), psychological (e.g. Pinker 2011), and psychiatric (e.g. Angyal 1965) scholarships.

Andras Angyal writes (228; emphasis added):

[Our] essentially healthy features exist not beside but *within* the neurosis; each neurotic manifestation is a distorted expression of an individually shaped healthy trend. The distortion must be clearly seen and acknowledged, but the healthy core must be found within the distortion itself.

Hence on the sort of psychiatric view produced by Angyal, ‘vice’ may be studied as a **distortion** of its more fundamental virtuous counterpart. An excessive psychological ‘press’ on the self-schematic virtuous NI, say, ‘I am happy’ or ‘I am safe’ or even ‘I am good’ may result in unhealthy self-exaggerations, respectively, ‘I AM HAPPY!!!’ (overindulgence and addiction), ‘I AM SAFE!!!’ (‘paranoia’ and hypervigilance), and ‘I AM GOOD!!!’ (perfectionism and an over-inflated self-righteousness). Conversely, however, but more from a philosophical standpoint at present, a **deficiency** in NI, say, the positive end-states of Happiness or Integrity, may potentially be hypothesised as unhealthy states of self-insipidity and self-corruptibility, respectively. Hence, NI opens up a route to a possible convergence between prescriptive ethics and psychiatric intervention which, historically, is but a retrieval of an age-old Aristotelian ethics, whereby the eudaimonic-virtuous state (viz., healthy state) lies at the ‘golden mean’ between deficiency and excess.

Steven Pinker (2011: ch. 8) studies psychology within an anthropological framework that spans from 8000 BCE to the 1970s. Pinker picks out a taxonomy of five ‘inner demons’ in human nature: PREDATION, DOMINANCE, REVENGE, SADISM, and, the last of which a very subtle IDEOLOGY. Pinker also extracts four ‘better angels of our nature’ that are principally responsible for a statistically-derived decline of violence in the world (e.g. Pinker: 60–64, 211, 338); namely, EMPATHY, SELF-CONTROL, MORALITY,

and REASON (ch. 9). But the distinction between ‘angels’ and ‘demons’ for Pinker is not categorically clear. There is, Pinker observes, a ‘dark side’ (590) to each of the virtues. The ‘meteoric rise’ of Empathy, for instance, has been ‘overhyped’ (573) and due to its folk association with ‘sympathy’ and ‘compassion’, has been ‘valorised’ today as ‘an altruistic concern for others’ (574); when, Pinker suggests, its evolutionary precursor can be found in the oxytocin required for maternal care (579). On the practical side, ‘empathy can *subvert* human well-being when it runs afoul of a more fundamental principle, fairness’ (590). But morality, too, has a dark side; ‘the human moral sense’, Pinker says, ‘can excuse any atrocity in the minds of those who commit it’ (622). Luke Russell (2020) puts forward a similar philosophical observation, albeit, perhaps, referring more to everyday phenomena, in which ‘many of us can be whipped into a vindictive and self-righteous rage,’ and ‘lash out impulsively’, when we ‘mistakenly’ ‘fall into the grip of an ideology which *demonizes* its innocent opponents’ (Russell: 123; emphasis added). On a combined socio-psychological and socio-philosophical view, hence, even the virtue of Morality can be a device for destruction and ‘demonisation’.³³

Conversely, Pinker’s taxonomy of ‘inner demons’ might well be better pictured as ‘fallen angels’ on Angyal’s sort of psychiatry. IDEOLOGY, for instance, may be associated with, or even derived from, a more fundamental PERFECTION and IDEALISATION, which are intrinsic values and always entail some or other notion of *betterment*; REVENGE may have arisen from an innate sense of FAIRNESS and JUSTICE; PREDATION may be associated with VITALITY or/and the ACHIEVEMENT of goals and benefits; and DOMINANCE, which Pinker correlates with our testosterone (Pinker:

³³ See also a psychological perspective of the phenomenon in Alon and Omer (2006).

518), is necessary in overcoming challenges, adversities, illnesses, and oncoming assaults. It appears that each of these psychological constructs may possibly be underlain with a self-preserving and virtuous feature; perhaps with the exception of SADISM, when understood as taking sheer pleasure at watching someone in pain. Pinker's 800-page picture of human nature may best be summed up as something of a chiaroscuro of light and darkness, a complexity and inter-influencing of psychological faculties that has a place, however, for neither absolute moral perfection nor 'the myth of pure evil' (Pinker: 488–97).

On a view that a vice is grounded on the virtuous NI x-is-good, a pathway may also be opened to deeper studies on what is perhaps the mother of all dualisms, namely, the primordial GOOD/EVIL dualism.

OTHER PATHWAYS INCLUDE metaethics, wherein the NI binary thesis may be deployed to converge two age-old rivals, namely, Moral Perfectionism and Moral Scepticism, on a common ground of naturalism. On their own, both metaethical positions are vulnerable targets for radical sceptics—whether folk or philosophical—who altogether deny morality. Whereas the normative conceptual scheme in Moral Perfectionism needs to converge with a critically derived subjectivism, an open thoroughfare sort of moral subjectivism, on the other hand, needs also to be strengthened with a moral objectivity that impedes Moral Scepticism from slipping into radical scepticism. The NI binary thesis seems to hold out possibilities to both ends without eliminating each of their fundamental positions.

J. L. Mackie (1977) is a moral sceptic who famously opens his iconic work with, 'There are no objective values' (Mackie: 15); any claims of moral objectivity, Mackie

holds, 'are all false' (35). This is because Mackie sets a very high standard for what may qualify as 'objective'. For him, neither the sort of intersubjectivity suggested by Bernard Williams (1985) nor the semantic sort mooted by R. M. Hare (1952) would suffice; Mackie's objectivity is a concrete sort of property—'fabric' as he terms it (Mackie: 15, 21, 22, 23)—*built into* its very own infrastructure; and this, on Mackie's observation, is sorely missing in the realist's thesis. Philippa Foot (2001) on the other end, attempts to supply the sort of 'built-in' feature that Mackie demands. The *norms* about how some particular feature of a member of a species is 'as it should be' or 'defective' (33), Foot claims, is *independent of human desires or interests* (35); they are 'facts' about the natural world. Assessments on whether a human character or action is 'as it should be' or 'defective' are 'not to be understood in psychological terms' (36); they are derived from 'patterns' (38) and 'structures' (39, 46) that are built into the normativity of natural species: *Pliability is good in reed though a defect in oak* (35). Foot's 'natural normativity' seems to offer all the 'built-in' features that Mackie demands for anything to be counted as 'objective'; features that are *built into* all living things, viz., nature. *Except*, that the 'goodness' and 'deficiency' that are part of the 'fabric' of nature are not, in fact, so much within those properties as they are within the judgements and evaluations that *deem* these properties to be 'good' or 'deficient'. Hence, Foot's thesis only confirms Mackie's subjectivist position, in part at least.

The NI intrinsic binary might just be able to supply the 'built-in' feature that Mackie demands and Foot needs; because the intrinsic binary is on one hand an autonomous *system* that determines how evaluations occur from the outside, and on the other hand, the system is dependent on subjective evaluations. Foot will find a natural built-in *ought* (conceptual scheme) that she seeks, without having to deny a subjective

naturalism; and Mackie will be able to retain the ‘hypothetical’ *want* (content) in his thesis, but with a built-in conceptual scheme to prevent from slipping into a radical scepticism. The natural inherent binary thesis dispenses a common ground for convergence between Foot’s sort of prescriptive (conceptual scheme) and Mackie’s sort of descriptive (content) naturalisms; hence opening a pathway to flesh out a more complete metaethical and ethical naturalisms through further studies.

PRESENT PAPER’S METAETHICAL convergence, or more generally philosophical convergence, aims primarily to conflate nature and value at their ground, which I have taken to be the starting points of natural behaviour and natural knowledge. I have hoped to contribute something of a prolegomenon for future developments and applications in cross-topical and cross-disciplinary studies. From the outside, I have hoped to present a coherent picture of contact with value to folk philosophers, be they moral folks in earnest or sceptical folks in doubt. Mostly, I have taken heed in David Chalmers’ campaign for philosophical progress through convergence; which I hope to have succeeded, and contributed, even if it were for a tiny inch forward. My overarching methodological thesis INTER-CONVERGENCE REQUIRES INTRA-CONVERGENCE (through the elimination of the foreign notation dualism) is also taken on an inverted INTRA-CONVERGENCE REQUIRES INTER-CONVERGENCE, especially where it concerns matters of value and theory. In my mind, interpersonal convergence is an indispensable external validation that, where it concerns philosophy—as my paper concerns philosophy—, must occur amongst philosophers who are (better) equipped with the ideal conditions of reason and evidence (than I am). To this end, I seek, from

readers who are no doubt better equipped, and thus no doubt in a better position, to validate if my thesis of, and hope for, philosophical convergence is indeed coherent.

A final potential objection to philosophical convergence may come from what appears to be another longstanding position, namely, the antirealist. The antirealist may argue that convergence requires a precommitment to realism. But this is not true because, as seen in Bernard Williams' thick ethical concept, convergence toward realism can be advanced from a radically sceptical position. Moreover, rather than being a presupposition, a realist thesis may instead be just the *corollary* of a thesis of CONVERGEABILITY, whose possibility I have attempted in chapters two and three to demonstrate. Because the converge-ability of opposing items suggests a thesis of externality, at least from a pre-convergence viewpoint at which an antithesis is an external proposition that is not (yet) part of a whole.

Secondly, antirealist positions such as nominalism that target conceptual schemes as non-real cannot now do so without also targeting ordinary thinking and action that are bound up—in an inherent binary—with conceptual schemes that provide specific directives for thinking and action. Without a conceptual scheme, thinking and action cannot receive their required particularity.

Finally, the antirealist position is only arguably a longstanding one. Because its sceptical lineage to Sextus Empiricus may be severed by Sextus' own injunctive, hence, objective 'ATARAXIA IS GOOD' (Morison 2019: §3.3). It is arguable if Sextus and the Pyrrhic sceptics did not hold any belief; for it seems by the withholding of beliefs Sextus has meant 'Pyrrhonists do not assent to *anything unclear*' (PH I: 13, quoted in Morison: 14–15; italics added). It is also doubtful if Sextus had any antirealist sentiment, in the first place. Hence the antirealist position, severed from a possible

longstanding lineage of scepticism, may not be reliably established as a faultless one, which is to say that it is not within the parameter of items that are picked up for philosophical convergence, in the first place.

Nonetheless in this paper, Sextus' empirical focus on content, whether interior or external, has been deemed a faultless position all the way down; only that it is positioned side by side with a Plato-inspired idealism with equal validity. And, together, they yield a conflation of nature and value.

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