
LAURA CAPONETTO
Vita-Salute San Raffaele University
lauracaponetto@gmail.com

BIANCA CEPOLLARO
IFILNOVA, Lisbon
bianca.cepollaro@gmail.com

A SNAPSHOT OF A NEW GENERATION OF PHILOSOPHERS

1. New Trends in Philosophy

This Special Issue of *Phenomenology and Mind* (“New Trends in Philosophy”) gathers the works of young philosophers from all over the world, from master students to PhD candidates, post-doctoral fellows, and young researchers. It aims to draw a picture of the directions in which philosophy is heading and provide a critical overview of some of the most interesting topics and methodologies in the current philosophical debate. The volume consists of four invited papers and nineteen contributed papers that were selected through a double-blind peer review process.

The Issue is a portrait of state-of-the-art research in many different areas of philosophy, with a particular focus on philosophy of language, philosophy of mind and psychology, (neuro) phenomenology, and moral philosophy. Further areas it deals with include philosophy of science, philosophy of mathematics, metaethics, political philosophy, and history of philosophy. Many contributions to the volume adopt an interdisciplinary stance, where philosophy engages in a fruitful dialogue with other disciplines: physics, neurosciences, cognitive sciences, psychology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, biology, and much more. Such a rich variety of perspectives offers an intriguing snapshot of a new generation of philosophers.

2. Contents

As invited authors for this Special Issue, we chose young and prominent philosophers from different fields who are representative of what good philosophy looks like nowadays. The section dedicated to invited papers opens the volume.

2.1. Invited Contributions

Valeria Giardino (CNRS/Laboratoire d’Histoire des Sciences et de Philosophie - Archives Henri-Poincaré) kick-starts the section with her paper “The Practical Turn in Philosophy of Mathematics: A Portrait of a Young Discipline”, where she discusses the so-called *philosophy of mathematical practice*, in relation to the practical turn in philosophy of science and in philosophy of mathematics. Giardino goes through various approaches to the practice of mathematics and discusses the possible replies to the question as to what counts as mathematical practice.

In her invited paper “New Wine in Old Bottles: The Kind of Political Philosophy We Need”, Beatrice Magni (University of Milan) investigates the meaning and the role of contemporary political philosophy by exploring the relation between philosophy and politics. In particular, she is interested in what kind of political practice is able to reconcile the normative commitments of political philosophy (Rawls, 2007) with its actual and feasible goals (Hall, 2015; Galston, 2007). The third invited paper, “What Metalinguistic Negotiations Can’t Do” by Teresa Marques (LOGOS Group, University of Barcelona), tackles a hot question in philosophy of language

and metaethics, namely the role of metalinguistic negotiation in normative and evaluative disagreement. *Contra* Sundell (2016), Marques argues that metalinguistic negotiations are neither necessary nor sufficient for genuine evaluative and normative disputes, as for Marques value talk requires stronger metanormative commitments.

The section dedicated to invited contributions ends with a paper in philosophy of time. In “The Myth of Presentism’s Intuitive Appeal”, Giuliano Torrengo (Centre for Philosophy of Time, Department of Philosophy, University of Milan) questions the intuitive appeal of presentism, the view according to which only what is present exists. While the intuitive character of such a view seems to constitute a main reason for taking it into consideration, Torrengo goes through the misconceptions on which such appearance of intuitiveness is based.

The section dedicated to contributed papers features contributions from various fields in philosophy too: we observe a special focus on philosophy of language, philosophy of mind and psychology, (neuro)phenomenology, philosophy of science, moral philosophy, and history of philosophy.

In “Contextualist Answers to the Challenge from Disagreement”, Dan Zeman (Institute of Philosophy, University of Vienna) offers a survey of the most recent contextualist answers to the *challenge from disagreement* raised by contemporary relativists. The challenge constitutes one of the main objections against contextualism in philosophy of language. While providing an overview of the latest dialectical moves of the debate, Zeman critically discusses the main strategies available to the contextualist and formulates some objections against them.

“How to Dispel the Asymmetry Concerning Retraction”, by Diogo Santos (LanCog, University of Lisbon), discusses MacFarlane (2014)’s *assessment-sensitivity* and addresses the asymmetry concerning retraction identified by Ferrari & Zeman (2014). Although assessment-sensitivity predicts that speakers ought to retract previous assertions whose content is deemed false, MacFarlane argues that retracting is not necessarily “admitting fault” (2014, p. 110) – where the sense of not being at fault invoked is distinctively epistemic. Ferrari & Zeman (2014) identify an asymmetry between retractions involving predicates of personal taste and moral terms that MacFarlane’s epistemic notion of “being at fault” cannot explain. In his contribution, Santos provides a way to dispel such an asymmetry and concludes that assessment-sensitivity needs no supplementation in order to account for it.

Simone Carrus (Vita-Salute San Raffaele University), in “Slurs: At-issueness and Semantic Normativity”, discusses the interaction between slurs and denial as well as the ways in which denial is taken to be effective in targeting the descriptive and evaluative content of certain expressions. After dealing with some theoretical issues, Carrus applies the test of denial to an utterance extracted from a recent juridical case with the aim of investigating the content of slurs in non-standard uses.

In “Thomason (Un)conditionals”, Andrés Soria Ruiz (ENS-PSL, Paris - Institut Jean Nicod) considers utterances of the form *if p, ~Kp* – such as “If my coworkers hate me, I have absolutely no idea” – known as *Thomason conditionals*. The author discusses the ways in which these sentences pose problems for epistemic theories of indicative conditionals. Soria Ruiz aims to show that Thomason examples are *not* in fact indicative conditionals, but alternative unconditionals, in the sense put forward by Rawlins (2013).

Paolo Labinaz (University of Trieste), in “Assertion and the Varieties of Norms”, challenges Cappelen (2011)’s claim that assertion does not correspond to a speech-act category, as for Cappelen there is no satisfactory criterion to distinguish between utterances that are assertions and utterances that are not. While adopting an “Austin-inspired” framework, Labinaz claims that there are in fact some norms that can be seen as applying to assertions in a specific way.

2.2. Submitted Contributions

Enrico Cipriani (University of Turin), in “Chomsky on Analytic and Necessary Propositions”, discusses Chomsky’s view on the analytic-synthetic distinction and on necessary propositions. Cipriani underlines how Chomsky’s defense of such a distinction can hold only under the assumption of conceptual innateness. Furthermore, Cipriani notes that, in Chomsky’s view, the distinction between necessary and contingent truths is determined by the structure of the conceptual system and its relations with other systems of common-sense understanding. But such a hypothesis, Cipriani argues, seems to be incompatible with Chomsky’s own objection to Kripke’s essentialism.

In “The Two-Way Relationship Between Language Acquisition and Simulation Theory”, Hashem Ramadan (Boğaziçi University) draws a two-way connection between Simulation Theory and language acquisition. The idea is that, on the one hand, if an individual has better simulation capabilities, then she will be better when it comes to L2 acquisition; on the other hand, being exposed to different languages seems to lead to better simulation capacities and higher degrees of empathy. Drawing on an evolutionary explanation, Ramadan argues in favor of Simulation Theory over Theory Theory and discusses some studies involving children with ASD which provide support for it.

Marco Fenici (University of Florence), in “Rebuilding the Landscape of Psychological Understanding After the Mindreading War”, addresses the intricate net of connected debates in philosophy and cognitive sciences about the onset, the development, and the nature of mindreading mechanisms. Fenici discusses the contribution of each debate and the ways in which philosophy and cognitive sciences have or have not fruitfully interacted thus far.

Alessandra Buccella (University of Pittsburgh), in “Naturalizing Qualia”, puts forward an alternative to Hill (2014)’s naturalization of qualia. For Hill, perceptual qualia (*i.e.*, the ways in which things look from a viewpoint) are physical properties of objects and are relational in nature – that is, they are functions of objects’ intrinsic properties, viewpoints, and observers. After analyzing the weaknesses of Hill’s account, Buccella builds upon Chirimuuta (2015)’s *color adverbialism* and argues for a broadly adverbialist view of perceptual qualia.

“Carving Mind at Brain’s Joints. The Debate on Cognitive Ontology”, by Marco Viola (IUSS Pavia and Vita-Salute San Raffaele University), assesses the vexed mind-brain problem; in particular, he discusses the traditional hypothesis of a one-to-one mapping between mental states and neural activities and the shortcomings of this sort of “new phrenology”. Viola explores two ways to avoid such weaknesses: the first endorses a many-to-many mapping model, whereas the second radically rethinks its *relata*.

Joana Rigato (Champalimaud Center for the Unknown, Lisbon), in her paper “Looking for Emergence in Physics”, discusses a topic on which philosophers and physicists often talk past each other: *emergence*. Emergentism, in its different forms, is the view that certain features of reality (be they objects, properties or laws) are irreducible to the lower-level bases they emerge on. After going through some examples of emergence in (classical and quantum) physics, Rigato concludes that paradigmatic examples of discontinuity between models in physics can back the emergentist philosopher’s case up against reductionist theories.

“Direct Social Perception of Emotions in Close Relations”, by Andrea Blomqvist (University of Sheffield), explores the theory of Direct Social Perception with respect to perceiving the emotional states of our closest ones (spouses, friends, and family). Blomqvist argues that emotions are embodied and can be directly perceived. Moreover, she argues against a non-conceptual view of emotion recognition and claims instead that by attending to certain expressive patterns of emotions, we can learn “emotional concepts”. This view predicts that we can directly perceive both basic and non-basic emotions of people we are close to.

In “Me, You and the Measurement. Founding a Science of Consciousness on the Second Person Perspective”, Niccolò Negro (University of Milan) critically assesses the methodologies

involved in the study of consciousness while discussing whether they adopt a first-, second- or third-person perspective. In particular, he argues that Integrated Information Theory is the approach that is most likely to account for a measure and a mathematical analysis of conscious experience.

Timothy A. Burns (Loyola Marymount University), in “Empathy, Simulation, and Neuroscience: A Phenomenological Case against Simulation-Theory”, questions the claim that the discovery of mirror neurons provides empirical support for the simulation view of mindreading. In addition to formulating multiple objections against Simulation Theory, Burns draws on the works of Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein and proposes a phenomenological account to mindreading.

In “On Experiencing Meaning: Irreducible Cognitive Phenomenology and Sinewave Speech”, John Joseph Dorsch (University of Tübingen) deals with the phenomenon of sinewave speech (*i.e.*, a synthetic acoustic signal that replaces the original human voice’s formants with pure tone whistles). When subjects first hear sinewaves, all that they can discern are beeps and whistles; however, after listening to the speech from which the sinewave is derived, beeps and whistles actually sound like speech. Granted that the two episodes (whistles vs. speech) differ in their phenomenal character, Dorsch investigates whether and to what extent such an alteration in phenomenal character may provide evidence for irreducible cognitive phenomenology.

Joe Higgins (University of St. Andrews and University of Stirling - SASP) discusses the tension within cognitive scientific accounts of human selfhood between bodily processes and social processes in his paper “Embodied Mind – Ensocialled Body: Navigating Bodily and Social Processes within Accounts of Human Cognitive Agency”. Drawing on a range of phenomenological and empirical insights, Higgins argues for the concept of an “ensocialled body”, in which all organic bodily processes are at the same time also social processes.

In “Biology, Justice and Hume’s Guillotine”, Hugo de Brito Machado Segundo (Federal University of Ceará, UFC - Brazil) and Raquel Cavalcanti Ramos Machado (Federal University of Ceará, UFC - Brazil) discuss the role of philosophy in the investigation of moral sentiments and address the question as to how the discovery that moral sentiments have evolutionary origins interacts with the problem of *Hume’s Guillotine*. The authors explore the ways in which certain features of human beings that can be accounted for in terms of natural selection are culturally promoted or discouraged.

“On Solidarity: Gramsci’s Objectivity as a Corrective to Buber’s I-It”, by Ryan Adams (Franciscan University of Steubenville), addresses a dichotomy in human interactions: on the one hand, there is the merely objective *I-It* interaction; on the other, there is the intense intersubjective relationship of the *I-Thou*. Adams posits the *principle of solidarity* as a *non-I-Thou* relation that retains the dignity and the personhood of the Other in a way that still confines her/him to the “It” of Buber’s *I-It* pair. In the second part of the paper, Adams shows how – in such a framework – solidarity functions as Gramsci’s *Objectivity*.

The section dedicated to contributed papers is closed by “The Italian ‘Difference’: Philosophy Between Old and New Tendencies in Contemporary Italy”, by Corrado Claverini (Vita-Salute San Raffaele University). The author discusses the legitimacy, the risks, and the benefits of the tendency of Italian philosophy to reflect on itself. Moreover, Claverini identifies the distinctive hallmarks of the Italian philosophical tradition from the Renaissance to today in “precursory genius”, in ethical and civil vocation, and in the so-called *living thought*.

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