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Foreword

The series of papers collected in the present issue of *Paradigmi* is the outgrowth of a common research effort undertaken by a group of scholars coming from different places in Italy – Rome and Venice – and bringing together different philosophical competencies on Wittgenstein and pragmatism, both in its so-called classic formulations and its more recent forms. The project was originally inspired by an insight of Rosa Calcaterra and Luigi Perissinotto. Two leading international scholars joined the group during its research work, further contributing to the project.

It could be said that the whole research has been inspired by a sort of shared philosophical sensibility, whose main features were more or less implicit at the beginning of the project and can now be more explicitly appreciated in the papers published here. One of these features is the peculiar anthropological approach adopted. Many important attempts to develop a comparative reading of Wittgenstein and Peirce in particular, but also of James, had focused on epistemological topics, such as the problem of truth, the question of meaning, logic and related issues. It is redundant to say that all of these are extremely important subjects, which lie at the core of philosophy in general, including the pragmatist tradition and Wittgenstein's thought.

However, our research sets out from the idea that – to sum it up in a rough formula – knowledge is not the only, primary or fundamental way we experience the world. On the contrary, epistemological and logical issues are understood as being anthropologically based, that is as being rooted in particular forms of human life. These forms of life configure the obvious background of our shared life in its wider sense – our life as human living organisms – involving the emergence and development of more specific practices and languages (Boncompagni). Knowing, thinking and calculating are embodied and enacted before becoming the content of a proposition or of a mental state. More generally, our propositional knowledge is grounded in basic beliefs. Hinge certainties are unjustified in the sense that they configure the implicit background out of which our ratiocination emerges; hence they are not subject to rational evaluations, but remain ex-

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cluded from justification issues (Moyal-Sharrock). Scaffolding beliefs, anchored agreement (Hagberg) and inherited common sense (Calcaterra) are not epistemic beliefs: they are already there before any doubt arises and engenders perfectly clear knowledge or misleading brain cramps.

While some scholars (Boncompagni and Moyal-Sharrock) point out that our basic certainties concern us as something animal-like, others (Dreon) stress the fact that James, Dewey and Mead consider humans as living organisms, whose habits of behavior are strictly intertwined with the peculiar kinds of interactions these living forms can have with an ever-changing environment.

The idea of a basic continuity between animal nature and human culture seems to be more or less emphasized in all the various papers. Hence, a naturalistic stance can be identified as a second important feature characterizing the philosophical approach of the research group. However, it is important to distinguish the kind of naturalism we find in Wittgenstein and in the above-mentioned pragmatists from other forms of naturalism. Perissinotto's paper is particularly careful in making distinctions: Wittgenstein (and the pragmatists for sure) cannot be associated with naturalism as the enthusiastic subscription to the translation of philosophical problems into natural, physical facts. Wittgenstein's criticism of what he calls «empiricism» is directed against the assumption that conceptual problems could and must be resolved by recurring to empirical, factual data. Nonetheless, there is an underlying correspondence between grammar and «general facts of nature»: every language game is strictly intertwined with some facts of nature, which cannot but be accepted as they are. Naturalism is not equal to reductionism or rough scientism and Wittgenstein shares with the classic pragmatists what we could currently describe as a naturalism without naturalization. Dreon's essay, by endorsing Dewey's cultural naturalism, pushes the issue a bit further: while we are bound to acknowledge that we are still basically human animals (Moyal-Sharrock), we must take into account the peculiarities characterizing human forms of interactions with the environment in comparison to those qualifying other living species. The question thus emerges of just how important habits are in human behavior and what their consequences might be.

Are we returning to a new kind of old-fashioned foundationalism by evoking a discourse on human nature from a pragmatist perspective and from a point of view close to that of Wittgenstein? The issue is a delicate one and Moyal-Sharrock here seems to find a divergence between Wittgenstein and the pragmatists: the former is supposed to be foundationalist in her interpretation, while the pragmatists (but which ones?) are seen to have rejected all forms of foundationalism. Calcaterra's paper comes to our aid

by avoiding the traditional contrast between traditionally foundationalist and anti-foundationalist stances: conduct and behaviors, practices and habits, rules and values, beliefs and common sense, language games and forms of life configure the basic concepts which could characterize an anthropological conception of human nature by their constituting a virtuous circle, whose elements can work only by supporting each other and by remaining open to a constant dynamic differentiation. Could things be different in the human case, one of the peculiar features of which is precisely the lack of completely fixed organic answers to the actions of the environment on the individual or even the lack of any species-specific environment? We can still speak about human nature by drawing upon an insight that is shared by both Peirce and Wittgenstein: the idea of giving up the old-fashioned metaphysical goal of finding a single inferential chain in favor of the rope constituted by a plurality of threads which do not extend to the whole length of the rope, but nonetheless make its strength (Hagberg).

Against this background, Baggio and Dreon propose an analysis of the concepts of behavior and habits respectively, and of their relations to rules and norms. Behavior is not equal to behaviorism, and even if we take behavior as a central concept for our philosophical inquiry, this does not mean that we can avoid posing the question of the conscious or mental dimension of our doing and experiencing (Baggio) – as well as that of the economic and social management of human behaviors.

Dreon's paper poses some questions about the natural and social factors orienting our actions. Are they primarily rational choices, acts of pure will, explicit norms governing particular cases, calculations of possible advantages and disadvantages – or are they social habits which have become almost physiological, being rooted in our forms of life? Are they implicit rules which are not defined before they are applied to our behaviors and our modes of communication? And how do they relate to norms?

The issue of normativity lies at the center of Calcaterra's essay: her inquiries into Rorty's thought outline an image of man which is neither metaphysical in the conventional sense nor bound to lead to skeptical outcomes. What space can be preserved for normativity and ethical issues if we honestly accept a radically contingent image of the human condition? This is one of the main questions posed by this paper, in response to the broad over-intellectualization of normativity in philosophy.

The present issue of the journal discusses some of these problems and offers some suggestions: while it is not intended to be an exhaustive inquiry, it will hopefully pave the way for future investigations.

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