

are judged as utterly immoral. In this respect, some critics have pointed out that morality as we know it could have hardly emerged, in its entirety, from the notion of fairness (plus sympathy). Imperatives such as the moral condemnation of incest might be more exhaustively explained through different evolutionary roots.⁶ However, a possible reply is that moral judgments that are apparently irreducible to the morality of fairness (plus sympathy) could be possibly explained through the interplay of these elements with non-intrinsically moral cultural or biological factors. The related prohibitions, including the prohibition of incest, may acquire normative (moral) force when their violation is perceived as a violation to standardised ways of doing things, threatening the stability of the cooperation.

The last section of Ch. 4 is devoted to the new cooperative processes that began with the rise of agriculture (12.000-10.000 years ago). A sedentary condition dominated by individuals with a surplus of food brought about a more institutionalized lifestyle, more apt to solve disagreements and promote negotiation by means of formal regulations—ultimately legitimised by their linkage with the moral point of view. The notion of *cultural group selection*⁷ here plays a major role in explaining how large-scale societies might have progressively emerged. Throughout history and with the enlargement of the moral community, those norms (e.g., slavery) that patently violated the basic principles of equality and fairness were progressively overcome. In some fascinating pages, Tomasello hypothesises how the abstractness and authority of norms may have led to organized religions. These, in turn, play a role in strengthening the cooperation as directed towards a grander, supernatural, end. As in the previous stages, a pivotal role is played by forms of collective intentionality, here expressed by the tribe's being structured as a group agent. Therefore, to take on board Tomasello's views, one must be already quite comfortable with the notion of *shared agency*. As some have pointed out, the risk might be that of reifying social tribes as stable and monolithic units, a strong conclusion of which many social anthropologists and evolutionary theorists have been more and more sceptic.⁸

That said, and to conclude, Tomasello's work is an ambitious and fascinating journey in the history of morality, highly recommended to anyone interested in these fundamental cogs of human cognition.

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Tripodi, Paolo, *Analytic Philosophy and the Later Wittgensteinian Tradition*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, pp. v-267.

“How Did We Get Here from There?”, the title of a fine paper by Timothy Williamson,¹ is a question that testifies to how the understanding of analytic philosophy is changing thanks to the study of its history. Indeed, recent contributions

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See, e.g., Henrich, J. and Boyd, R., 2016, “How Evolved Psychological Mechanisms Empower Cultural Group Selection”, *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 39, e40.

⁸ See Birch, J., 2017, “Michael Tomasello: A Natural History of Human Morality”, *BJPS Review of Books*.

¹ Williamson, T. 2014, “How Did We Get Here from There: Transformation of Analytic Philosophy”, *Belgrade Philosophical Annual*, XXVII, 7-37.

to metaphilosophy and the history of analytic philosophy have become crucial for understanding the current development of philosophical work. Intriguing issues emerging from these reconstructions concern how current analytic philosophy shows striking incompatibilities with the work of its founding fathers such as Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Moore, and Carnap. Analytic metaphysics, naturalism, and a tight connection with cognitive science, to name a few of the dominant trends, mark a sharp contrast with the work of the first generations of analytic philosophers. Hence, it was inevitable that the history of analytic philosophy as an autonomous discipline would have signalled and highlighted such discrepancies. Revolving as they are around the identity of analytic philosophy, these issues are becoming controversial.

Tripodi's book focuses on an issue that would make today's analytic philosophy almost unrecognizable to a hypothetical British analytic philosopher who lived in the 1950s and the 1960s and who happened to have hibernated until now: Wittgenstein's disappearance from mainstream analytic philosophy.² It is not uncommon, inside or outside the boundaries of analytic philosophy, to hear peremptory judgments like, 'Wittgenstein just wasn't an analytic philosopher, period'. Despite our ability to provide grounds for such a claim, a statement like that before the 1960s would have been dismissed as sheer incompetence. Hence, one can legitimately ask how this shift in judgment happened. Tripodi attempts a detailed reconstruction of precisely that shift, making this book noteworthy. Let us first examine the book's structure so that its qualities may emerge in context.

Chapter 1 goes back to the Oxford and Cambridge of the 1950s and 1960s, when Wittgenstein was a gravitational force for analytic philosophy. Wittgenstein's philosophy was the "dominant way of thinking in Cambridge in the 1950s and 1960s", and "everybody in the new generation of Cambridge philosophers was deeply impressed by Wittgenstein's later way of philosophising, and set up their own work based on that model" (5). In those years, the combination of Gilbert Ryle's editorship of *Mind* and the early availability of Wittgenstein's late work contributed to establishing the intellectual trend culminated in the "Oxford linguistic philosophy" (8), that, even though it was not a homogeneous movement, brought about a recognisable style. This idea of philosophy was mainly devoted to two aims: "[to] dissolve philosophical problems by reaching conceptual clarity" and "describing the conceptual connections (and exclusions) in the web of one or more words" (9). Hence, philosophy was meant to be a conceptual endeavour, and this marks a relevant difference with current ideas: "the linguistic turn—to which the later Wittgensteinian tradition certainly belongs—has already gone by" (11). Conceptual analysis is no longer the obvious philosopher's tool, philosophical issues are now taken at face value, and metaphysical questions are understood as genuine. However, to talk about a 'general' Wittgensteinian decline would not be accurate, as Wittgenstein is still a widely read and discussed classic; the decline is visible only inside the restricted area of analytic philosophy (14). In fact, it can be measured only in the most important analytic journals, such as *The*

² The fiction about cryogeny can be found in chapter 1 (1-2). An analogue exercise has been invented by Huw Price to emphasise the contrast between Carnap's anti-metaphysical stance and the current abundance of metaphysics. See Price, H. 2009, "Metaphysics after Carnap: The Ghost Who Walks?", in Chalmers, D., Wasserman, R., and Manley, D. (eds.), *Metametaphysics: New Essays on the Foundations of Ontology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 320-46.

Philosophical Review, *The Journal of Philosophy*, and so on: here, Wittgenstein is ranked in the 63rd position with only 199 citations over 30 years (15). This explains why and how his later views have been “ignored and neglected” (15). This decline is a fact, certified by “historical-philosophical evaluation, academic history, editorial and publishing data, personal memories, citation analysis” (19).

Chapter 2 tells how British academia lost its centrality to US universities, and how this helped the decline of the Wittgensteinian tradition. Then there is the so-called ‘Gellner affair’; in the middle of the intellectual war between the rising London School of Economics and Oxbridge in the 1950s, it happened that LSE’s champion, Karl Popper, inaugurated a season of hostility versus Wittgensteinian philosophy, especially its tendency to treat problems as linguistic (25). In this context, Ernest Gellner published *Words and Things*,³ a violent attack on the ways Wittgensteinians practiced and conceived of philosophy; the book, many controversial aspects notwithstanding, was influential over the following decades, contributing to discrediting Wittgensteinians as irrationalist, relativist, initiatory, and unscientific (32). Finally, the book charged Wittgenstein’s followers with being inherently conservative in their defence of the practical irrelevance of philosophy (34-36). Hence, “[a]round twenty years after [...] *Words and Things*, most Anglo-American analytic philosophers considered Oxford linguistic philosophy a dead intellectual option” (36): hostile to science, obscurantist, negationist about progress in philosophy, irrationally devoted to ordinary language, relativist about forms of life, quietist in its metaphilosophy (36-37). However, as Tripodi emphasises, this decline cannot be wholly credited to Gellner’s influence, which remained controversial as rude and abusive. Crucial also was the rise of US academic hegemony, and Gellner’s attack was not effective since it came from ‘the periphery’: “Britain used to be the “core” of the leading global empire, but it had irremediably become more peripheral, with respect to the United States” (41-42). This fact had a substantial impact on analytic philosophy, and Tripodi provides a detailed account of the transformations it produced. Nonetheless, and quite independently of his influence, Gellner’s conclusions against Wittgensteinian philosophy were later reached by US analytic philosophers (39).

Chapter 3 is the story of how in the United States from the 1930s to the 1950s it happened that Wittgenstein’s views were conflated with Rudolf Carnap’s. This depended firstly on the fact that Wittgenstein’s work remained almost unknown in US circles until the 1930s (51-52). When Wittgenstein’s reception increased, it was in the context of the season of Logical Positivism and Wittgenstein was often enlisted along with it (52); the positivist emigration to the United States contributed to this partial misunderstanding. In the 1940s Wittgenstein’s philosophy “gave way to lack of interest” (54), since “during the 1930s and 1940s, even in Europe it was not easy to understand what Wittgenstein was trying to do in his later work” (54). This resulted in a conflation that was fostered by attitudes including scepticism toward the identification of meaning and reference, a rule-based approach to meaning, negativity toward Platonism in the philosophies of logic and mathematics, similar views on the a priori character of ‘grammatical’/‘syntactic’ statements, and a dismissal of metaphysics as nonsensical (55-57). However, there were also differences between the two philosophers, for example about science, since Wittgenstein had reservations about ‘the scientific image of

³ Gellner, E. 1959, *Words and Things: A Critical Account of Linguistic Philosophy and a Study in Ideology*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

man in the world' (58-60). Also, religious belief was a matter of disagreement (60-61). Wittgenstein was, furthermore, critical of empiricism, while Carnap never appreciated Wittgenstein's 'showing'/'saying' distinction (62). Furthermore, while Wittgenstein defended the primacy of ordinary language, Carnap considered it full of amendable imperfections (63). However, deeper disagreements lay in their views on philosophical theorising: Wittgenstein rejected the idea of philosophical theories (64-70). In this context, it was inevitable that Quine's criticism of the analytic/synthetic distinction, which targeted Carnap's metaphilosophy by criticising the discontinuity between science and philosophy ruled out interest in Wittgenstein's metaphilosophy: "Quine's "continuist" theses were at odds with the metaphilosophical views shared not only by Carnap but also by Wittgenstein" (84).

Chapter 4 addresses the ways in which Wittgensteinians failed to react to Quine's hegemony. Tripodi explains this phase by a cultural transformation undergone by the academic system in the United States, which promoted the model of natural sciences in the humanities during the 1950s and 1960s (103) and favoured Quinean views about the continuity between philosophy and science (105-06, 110-12). With these premises in place, Tripodi affirms that "the history of analytic philosophy took its course under the influence of Quine, and the Wittgensteinians did not provide a commensurate response" (92). All this was a consequence of Quine becoming the leading figure in the analytic world, moving it toward naturalism, and of Wittgensteinians' being unaware of its implications (namely that the Quine-Carnap dispute would condemn them to irrelevance), incapable of providing an alternative to the dominant paradigm (as their views on philosophical theories and on the science/philosophy divide left them almost unarmed), and belonging to a declining world (as mostly enlisted in British academia when US philosophy became hegemonic).

Chapter 5 tells how Wittgenstein gained popularity, achieving a better reception of his later views in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s thanks to philosophers like Wilfrid Sellars and Stanley Cavell. This trend changed during the 1960s and 1970s, when 'scientific realism' became popular within US analytic philosophy, marking a distance from Wittgenstein even in the cases of otherwise sympathetic authors such as Hilary Putnam and Sellars (143-44). Even more importantly, Wittgenstein's legacy was contested in connection with one of its main axes: the distinction between 'reasons' and 'causes' in the philosophy of mind and action. Here, it was Donald Davidson's famous 1963 paper,⁴ taken for some decades as a serious challenge to that distinction, which contributed to discrediting Wittgenstein's views in US circles—that Davidson's view entailed serious consequences for the tenability of the distinction, as Tripodi nicely highlights, is now disputed as the issue proved terminological (152-54). Another stage of Wittgenstein's decline was the return of mentalism; the new phase, fostered by cognitive science and new reductionist approaches, discredited Wittgenstein's philosophy of mind as 'behaviouristic' (156-57). Finally, Wittgensteinian views on grammar were contrasted with Noam Chomsky's 'generative grammar'; once again, Wittgensteinians were perceived as defending non-scientific views (167).

Chapter 6 explores other aspects that contributed to a "weakening of the later Wittgensteinian tradition" (171). New work on modality made available by Saul Kripke and Davis Lewis started a revival of metaphysics that is still a dominant trend. This does not mean that metaphysics was hostile to Wittgenstein's

⁴ Davidson, D. 1963, "Actions, Reasons, and Causes", *The Journal of Philosophy*, 7, 685-700.

philosophy; rather, it contributed to moving philosophical debates elsewhere. However, Wittgenstein's ideas did not fit this new phase: he understood necessity in a Kantian way as a 'logical' category (172-73); moreover, he also defended in the *Tractatus* a notion of 'fact' as inherently contingent (174). These concepts in the meantime became obsolete as implicitly defeated by Quine's criticism of analyticity. Kripke's 'a posteriori necessities'—the fact that identities like 'Hesperus=Phosphorus' can be necessary even though we need empirical inquiries to know about them—had a crucial role in obscuring not only Wittgenstein, but also Quine and Logical Positivism (176). Lewis's modal realism, finally, inaugurated the season of the now dominant metaphysics (179-81). Yet, the main event here was a change in the conception of philosophy as constructive, systematic, and science-oriented. The only camps where Wittgenstein's influence played some role in those years are found in Britain, with Peter Strawson and Michael Dummett. Although neither of them can be understood as defending Wittgenstein's metaphilosophy, Wittgenstein is undeniably relevant in their works (186-87). However, Tripodi emphasises, it is here that Wittgensteinians found their dead end, as Strawson and Dummett ultimately subscribed to an idea of philosophy that was constructive and systematic in a way mostly incompatible with ordinary language philosophy. Therefore, this decline took its last step namely in matters of style and metaphilosophy:

The decline of the later Wittgensteinian tradition [...] is perhaps condensed here, in the science-oriented, rather than humanities-oriented philosophical style of the two most authoritative Wittgenstein-inspired philosophers in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s (189).

If Strawson and Dummett moved that tradition to a dead end, philosophers like Williamson working on mostly Lewisian foundations can be seen as having put a tombstone on it, even in Britain.⁵

Chapter 7 ends the book and concerns recent times, when Wittgenstein's decline became apparent. It was already evident in the 1980s and quickly gained speed. After a brief recap of the book, Tripodi presents bibliometric evidence, concerning co-citations of the *Investigations* in recent decades, of the relevance and scope of the decline of the Wittgensteinian Tradition (205). Sociology of academia certifies the trend, signalling a comparatively low success rate of Ph.D. candidates who chose Wittgensteinian topics for their dissertations in the years 1981 to 2010 (212). This fact receives correct emphasis with Tripodi's comparison of it with the years 1950 to 1960, when Wittgensteinian candidates were as successful as others. However, as the *zeitgeist* was not per se hostile to Wittgenstein, this decline seems to be a consequence "of a process driven from the top, [...] guided by [...] those academics who hold the power of influencing the recruitment policies in philosophy departments" (212).

The contribution of Tripodi's book to a right relocation of the relationship between Wittgenstein's legacy and current and past trends in analytic philosophy, carefully crafted as it is, does justice also to many unanswered questions in general analytic philosophy. The transformation in the metaphilosophical guidelines explains the main changes undergone and the decline of Wittgensteinian views.

⁵ Williamson, T. 2007, *The Philosophy of Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Williamson omits to consider Wittgenstein's metaphilosophy.

Tripodi provides a huge amount of data supporting this reading that is a good map of the socio-economic and cultural causes of what happened, and of the main philosophical arguments which contributed to this decline. Even though some might disagree about the details concerning a controversy, this book is immensely valuable for anyone interested in analytic philosophy, and not only its history. It is one of those books in which readers can find and appreciate contents depending on their interests and sensitivities, and recommended for all who are interested in these issues, not to mention those interested in Wittgenstein.

Closing this story with Williamson's metaphilosophy (190-95) may leave the reader with the feeling that analytic philosophy reached an equilibrium with the triumph of metaphysics and naturalism. Even though this is to be expected for books about history of philosophy, the situation can be remedied by examining more recent developments. The rapid resurgence of 'conceptual engineering'—a metaphilosophical stance that understands philosophy as a mainly conceptual endeavour—is a growing trend to which belong, for instance, world-class analytic philosophers like Sally Haslanger, Amie Thomasson, and David Chalmers. This is not enough to reclaim the legitimacy of a Wittgensteinian conception, but surely quite Carnapian views are once again live options. Furthermore, analytic metaphysics has been forcefully challenged by the scientific arguments of James Ladyman and Don Ross as 'neo-scholastic', that is mostly incompatible with a sound naturalism.⁶ Thus, how these metaphilosophical views will develop in the years to come remains to be seen.

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⁶ Ladyman, J. and Ross, D. 2007, *Every Thing Must Go. Naturalized Metaphysics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Analogue criticisms show up also in the anti-reductionist camp. See for example Price, H. 2011, *Naturalism Without Mirrors*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, and Putnam, H. 2004, *Ethics without Ontology*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.