strange, the alien, and the ambiguous. Still, paradoxically, order could not exist without ambivalence since it manifests as a reaction to it.

In conclusion, given its multifaceted nature and variegated perspectives, the volume represents a thorough and clear compendium of Zygmunt Bauman's sociological thought. The book's main merit lies in the analysis of the more overlooked concepts of Bauman's sociology, while also including its mainstream themes. Generally, the book is clear, refined, and well-written, arousing interest and curiosity in the reader. In terms of its scope and readership, the study can be considered a precious—albeit auxiliary—tool for researchers and scholars whose fields of research embrace sociology, political science, political theory, and philosophy, as well as for a broader audience willing to engage in key elements of Bauman's sociology.

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Kitcher, Philip, *Moral Progress.*
New York: Oxford University Press, 2021, pp. xix + 200

What criteria can we appeal to for qualifying a change in what we believe and do as an instance of moral progress? Do these criteria necessarily presuppose a reference to a universal and objective moral truth? And how can we promote progressive moral changes? These are the fundamental questions that Philip Kitcher's latest book, *Moral Progress*, tackles.

The book presents, in written form, the text of the first *Munich Lectures in Ethics* that Kitcher delivered at LMU in 2019. As often happens with this type of publication, the organization of the content is less than optimal, the argumentation is sometimes a bit rough, and the comparison with the literature on the subject limited. But the text, on the other hand, maintains some of the pleasant intellectual agility usually associated with lectures of this sort and level. Moreover, it is accompanied and complemented by three sets of excellent replies from three outstanding philosophers, namely Amia Srinivasan, Susan Neiman, and Rahel Jaeggi.

The first chapter of Kitcher's text provides an overview of his pragmatist and anti-realist theory of moral progress. The two following chapters deal with specific issues related to this theory although, in doing so, they add much more than just a few finishing touches. The second part, dedicated to the problem that the phenomenon of false consciousness represents for Kitcher's theory, actually does much more than proposing a solution it, as we will see. The third and final part is dedicated to clarifying the limited and quite specific ways in which this pragmatist theory allows us to frame the notion of progress in terms of "truth" and

"moral knowledge". The readers with little interest or sympathy for the pragmatist tradition—within which the conceptualization of truth is notoriously a longstanding issue—will be pleased to discover that they can skip this part without missing out on much.

For reasons that will be clear in a minute, a good place to start outlining the contours of Kitcher's theory of moral progress is his evolutionary account of morality itself, which he offers in part II. According to Kitcher, morality represents a bio-cultural innovation specific to the species Homo sapiens and it emerged in the late Paleolithic (49). According to Kitcher, "the best available picture of premoral hominin—and human—life portrays our predecessors as possessing a capacity for identifying the desires and intentions of their fellow band members and for adjusting their behavior so as to engage in joint projects with others" (50). For social creatures whose survival depends on the group to which they belong, this ability, which Kitcher refers to as "responsiveness" (50) is somewhat necessary to ensure some degree of cooperation within the group, and thus the survival of the group itself.

This limited responsiveness, for Kitcher, was likely shared by the first sapiens, who spent the vast majority of their stay on planet Earth (which began around 300,000 years ago) organized in small bands of hunter-gatherers. This limited responsiveness constituted a limit to intra-group cooperation and, thus, to the maximum size a group could hope to reach (51-52). Morality, against this background, functionally presents itself as a social technology that allowed us to overcome this impasse and increase the responsiveness of our species' members, enabling the formation of larger and more cohesive groups. What mechanisms allowed its emergence? Kitcher provides only a few details on this matter, and the reader who wants to know more will have to return to the first four chapters of *The Ethical Project* to which Kitcher's current account remains substantially faithful.[1]

How does the theme of moral progress fit into these views of our evolutionary past? Just as in *The Ethical Project* (2011, chap. 6), Kitcher establishes the continuity between the two themes through a functionalist perspective. On such a perspective, the evolutionary understanding of the original function of morality allows us to define what moral progress consists of. More specifically, if the original function of the moral device is to compensate for the limits of human responsiveness, i.e., to correct and amplify their limited ability to adopt others' perspectives, needs, interests, and desires, then moral progress is primarily "a matter, if you like, of improving this device, the responsiveness amplifier" (148). Historical cases such as the abolition of slavery, the emancipation of women, and the acceptance of homosexual relationships are interpreted by Kitcher in these terms.

As anticipated, Kitcher characterizes this conception of moral progress as essentially pragmatic and anti-teleological, contrasting it from the outset with the realist conception that sees moral progress as an approximation to moral truth, a progressive activity of discovering previously ignored bits of moral knowledge (15). Instead of seeing moral progress as an alignment of our beliefs with reality based on epistemic standards, we should see it as the solution to practical problems afflicting the moral architecture of society: not progress *towards* truth or correct moral beliefs, but progress *from*, based on overcoming limitations and problematic situations (25).

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[1] Kitcher, P., 2011, *The Ethical Project*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Conceiving moral progress in these terms, Kitcher argues, has several advantages. A very important advantage is that, starting from this pragmatic conception, we can have a better understanding of what happens when a society progresses morally, and use this understanding to outline a method that helps us in identifying morally problematic situations and ways to resolve them for the best.

The development of this method is the fundamental contribution of the volume. It is articulated in a long series of steps that occupy much of the first and second chapter. Simplifying, we can summarize it as follows. First, if an individual or a group complains about a situation despite the current moral code allowing it, this situation is to be considered prima facie problematic and is to be further examined to evaluate the actual justification of the initial complaint (34-36). How should this examination be conducted? Kitcher appeals here to the regulatory model of an "ideal conversation"—an ideal that leads him to label his view as "democratic contractualism" (57-58). According to this model, problematic situations are those that a society would see as such if representatives of all involved viewpoints, having to deliberate together based on justified factual beliefs and in conditions of deep mutual respect and sympathy, would agree on their problematic character (37). The same model then comes into play in defining the standard that makes a change a progress. A proposal is a justified resolution of a problematic situation only if the transition from the problematic situation to the proposed one would be accepted in an ideal conversation where the perspectives of all stakeholders are represented (38).

What should be done in cases where a situation is objectively problematic but no one complains about it, perhaps because they have internalized the prejudices of a given culture despite being victims of it? In the second chapter of the book (aptly titled "Problems of False Consciousness"), the proposed method is integrated to address these cases. Even in the absence of actual challenges, Kitcher clarifies, "societies should periodically check whether the restrictions they impose on the range of appropriate self-models for a certain subgroup can be justified" (67). The kind of social experimentation proposed by John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor in their time to question the validity of Victorian prejudices about gender remains for Kitcher the principal tool for this purpose (68).

This proposal will not sound extremely original to those who have been following the debate for some years. Peter Railton and, more recently, Elizabeth Anderson have advanced similar and influential ideas, and it is a pity that Kitcher does not spend more resources clarifying how his position differs from theirs, especially from Anderson's, who share with Kitcher a broadly pragmatist view.[2]

Additionally, there are several problems that Kitcher's text leaves open or does not address entirely satisfactorily. For example, one might wonder if the theoretical framework offered by Kitcher truly does away with notions such as "moral truth". In fact, the appeal to an ideal deliberation procedure characterized by sympathy and mutual respect seems to presuppose and embody, in some way, the idea that at least the judgment "everyone has an equal right to participate in

[2] See Railton, P., 1986, "Moral realism", *Philosophical Review*, 95 (2), 163-207; Anderson, E., *Social movements, experiments in living, and moral progress: Case studies from Britain's abolition of slavery.* The Lindley Lecture, University of Kansas, https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/14787; Anderson, E., 2015, "Moral bias and corrective practices: A pragmatist perspective", *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association,* 89, 21-47.

this conversation" is true in a strong and non-pragmatic sense. And what is this if not a moral judgment? Furthermore, one cannot but wonder whether his methodological proposal for fostering progress presupposes an overly rationalist view of the phenomenon, underestimating the importance of volitional obstacles, rather than cognitive ones, that it must overcome. After all, many people in many circumstances know what would be morally right to do, but this is often insufficient to motivate them to do it. How can the ideal conversation (or some institutional embodiment of it) address this problem? Kitcher, as I have said, leaves these and other questions unanswered.

Nevertheless, for the clarity and the degree of detail with which it is articulated, his contribution remains a highly recommended read for anyone interested in the theme of moral progress.

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McKenzie, Kerry, *Fundamentality and Grounding*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, pp. 74.

Fundamentality and Grounding is an academic publication that stands out in the landscape of contemporary metaphysics. Its general intent is to assess some of the central issues that arise around the widely debated notion of "grounding", according to a naturalistic methodological viewpoint proper to the metaphysics of science. Such methodology aims at understanding what is possible to "import" from science to "update" or "inform" metaphysics and how to implement this task. Specifically, three issues are considered:

- What are the relationships between the notions of fundamentality and grounding?
- Is the notion of grounding used in the various philosophical discussions ambiguous? In other words, are there substantially different types of grounding?
- Should we exclude the possibility of infinite regress in the order of grounding?

McKenzie is clear from the outset in stating that the concepts of fundamentality and grounding are intimately linked. As it shall be clear, she regards "grounding" as a "level connecting explanation" (8) among facts or entities belonging to different metaphysical categories. Grounding bears interesting relationships to the notion of ontological priority, which is undoubtedly the most common way of thinking about fundamentality: x is fundamental if there is no y ontologically prioritized over x. The interest in grounding is motivated by its close connection with the concept of fundamentality, so conceived. The reason for this interest, McKenzie explains, arises from the fact that fundamentality plays a key role in the way metaphysics is often understood, namely, as the study of the fundamental.

In what follows, I critically review Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of *Fundamentality and Grounding*, the stated purpose of which is to naturalize the metaphysics of grounding, grounding being a relation often relegated to a priori metaphysical analysis