

WE NEED TO RESCUE THE PROTAGONIST ROLE OF WISDOM – Interview with Darlei Dall’Agnol

PRECISAMOS RESGATAR O PAPEL PROTAGONISTA DA SABEDORIA – Entrevista com Darlei Dall’Agnol

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Abstract

This interview was conducted in February 2025, following the symposium celebrating the 60th anniversary of Brazilian philosopher Darlei Dall’Agnol. It reviews his educational background, his philosophical outlook going from Metaethics (Practical Cognitivism) to Bioethics (Respectful Care) and his views on how philosophy can, today, contribute to addressing humanity’s greatest existential threats.

Keywords: Wisdom. Ethics. Moral Problems.

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Resumo

Esta entrevista foi realizada em fevereiro de 2025, após o simpósio que celebrou o 60º aniversário do filósofo brasileiro Darlei Dall’Agnol. Ela analisa sua formação educacional, sua perspectiva filosófica, que vai da Metaética (Cognitivismo Prático) à Bioética (Cuidado Respeitoso), e suas opiniões sobre como a filosofia pode, hoje, contribuir para enfrentar as maiores ameaças existenciais da humanidade.

Palavras-chave: Conhecimento. Ética. Problemas Morais.

Introduction

Darlei Dall’Agnol is a Full Professor of Philosophy at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), with a distinguished academic career centered on Ethics and Bioethics. He earned his PhD from the University of Bristol (UK, 2001) and pursued postdoctoral research at the Universities of Michigan and Oxford.

His work ranges from Metaethics, where he developed the theory of Practical Cognitivism, to Bioethics, with a particular focus on the concept of Respectful Care. He has published widely, contributed to national and international research initiatives, and remains deeply engaged in philosophical debates on contemporary Moral Philosophy.

Milene Consenso Tonetto: Congratulations, Professor Darlei Dall’Agnol, for last week Symposium “From Practical Cognitivism to Respectful Care” (held in Florianópolis from 20 to 22 January 2025) celebrating your 60th birthday and for your brilliant career in philosophy. Your work made significant contributions and inspired many students and colleagues. You helped to expand the frontiers of philosophical thinking, especially in ethics, in Brazil and worldwide as well. Besides, you engaged in public debates over many bioethical issues. Well-done!

I would like to start this interview by asking what motivated you, in the first place, to dedicate your life to philosophy?

Dall’Agnol: Thanks for your kind words and thanks also to the journal *Aurora*, especially to its editor, Professor Léo Peruzzo, for this opportunity to express some of my philosophical ideas developed over the years. Well, I believe that the my “philosophical” thinking began when I was a child and reached, as human beings normally do, self-consciousness and start to wonder about our existence in the world. We begin to feel alive but also we experience fear of death, we became aware of infinity or eternity and we ask ourselves on the existence of supranatural deities, we start to have distinguish appearance from reality etc. For instance, I remember, back in the 1970s, discussing with my friends, especially Moacir Baú on how would be the world if nothing existed. I would then try to convince him that this was possible by holding my two hands separated and showing him that there was nothing between them. The world would be like that: empty. Not a convincing argument! (rsrs) Of course, this was a childish experiment, but the metaphysical issue came from some philosophical questioning. Keep in mind, please, that we were at that time living in the Cold War and many people believed that the world could end. There were also scatological predictions about the second coming of Christ, so we felt fear that this could happen in the turning of the XX Century. Looking back today, then, I believe that I could use, as we sometimes do in philosophy, the word ‘wonder’ to characterize this special feeling, either of enchantment or fear or curiosity over our own, and mainly the world existence. I believe this wonder is the main source of philosophical reflection, but also of art, science and religion as well. In other words, it is the central metaphysical question: Why is there something rather than nothing? Now, coming from a Catholic family, I ended up in the Seminar Aparecida (Caxias do Sul, RS) and all the metaphysical answers came provisionally from religion. It was in the High School then that I had a formal contact with philosophy. I used to read a lot not only literature, but also philosophical books in

the library. I engaged in many philosophical debates during that time with my colleagues. I remember disagreeing with Gilmar Favretto on whether we could say, without contradiction, the sentence “I know nothing,” a question today I see in a different light. Then, in 1981, I read *Why I am not a Christian*, from Bertrand Russell, and I was persuaded that there were no proofs of the existence of God and that religion was mainly based on fear. I felt into a deep intellectual crisis doubting the answers to the metaphysical questions I had and eventually I decided to give up my intention to become a priest. I left the seminar. At that time, I was also the president of GEA (Grêmio Estudantil Aparecida) and had already many connections with students organized around UCES (União Caxiense de Estudantes Secundaristas) where I got contact with some political organizations. Following Russell’s ideal of a “free thinker” as my ideal, including his atheist tendency, I decided to study philosophy at the University of Caxias do Sul.

Tonetto: What about your undergraduate studies? What did you study?

Dall’Agnol: At that time, phenomenology was the mainstream at UCS, so I read Husserl tutored by Antonio Carlos Kroeff Soares; Heidegger e Merleau-Ponty supervised by Jayme Paviani and other philosophers such as Sartre etc. Logic and Philosophy of Science were also very important disciplines. I enjoyed epistemological questions around the nature of human knowledge and studied authors such as Popper, Kuhn and Lakatos motivated by José Carlos Köche. I learned to establish a problem, to construct hypotheses and to tried to refute them and, if not successful, to accept them as corroborated scientific laws/theories. These studies were useful later, since I started, with only 22 years to teach Scientific Methodology at UCS. However, I had a serious difficulty in applying the phenomenological method in a productive way. My MPhil project, submitted at the University Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), was on how to best describe phenomenologically the *eidos* of human beings. This was a too broad project doomed to failure since ...

Tonetto: Sorry, but it seems that during you master degree you changed the subject. Could you, please, tell us how that happened and the philosophical reasons behind it since reading your CV only we do not know why? How did you end up writing a work on ethics?

Dall’Agnol: To understand this change, I have first to explain my delusion with phenomenology. At that time, I had, so to speak, a Husserlian understanding of how to practice it. Briefly, first one should proceed by making the phenomenological reduction (leaving the external objects and attend only to how they appear to our consciousness); then, one should make a variation of the aspects of the phenomenon trying to reached an intellectual intuition of the essence (eidetic reduction) in order to, eventually, *describe* it. Phenomenology is basically description of essences. I could not reach any such intellectual intuition, so I was unable to describe anything phenomenologically. I remember even visiting Husserl’s archives in Belgium with my friend Delamar Dutra and trying to work at Husserl’s desk holding *Sein und Zeit*, full of his notes disagreeing on Heidegger’s description of *Dasein*, and still not getting any intellectual intuition of the human *eidos*. Today, after meeting Wittgenstein’s notion of family resemblances, I understand that it was not perhaps due to my intellectual limitations, but, most likely, because of the unrealistic requirements of Husserl’s method. Moreover, now I understand also

that phenomenology has many methodological limitations, for example, it cannot say anything *normative* since it is purely descriptive. This may explain why Heidegger did not write anything relevant in ethics and even could support a brutal political regime. But the turning point had other reasons too. During my master degree I came across the *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* (TLP). I chose a seminar, taught by Balthazar Barbosa Fº, out of my interests for logic and philosophy of science. Soon I became fascinated both by Balthazar’s style of teaching and by Wittgenstein’s ideas, which I struggled very hard to comprehend. Balthazar was revising his “positivistic” interpretation offering a somewhat Kantian reading of the *Tractatus*. I learned a lot from his classes both on Aristotle, Kant and, especially, I wanted to practice conceptual analysis as he did, namely sorting out the necessary and sufficient condition to apply a concept. Regarding Wittgenstein’s first book, I was fascinated by its last pages: the most important is not logic, science or what can be meaningfully said, but what cannot be *said*, only somehow *shown*. I wanted to understand “the ethical sense” of the book, so I decided to change the project. At that time, I had the privilege of discussing the TLP’s ethical sense with my colleague Robson dos Reis and Anscombe’s introductory book to it with Paulo Faria. I also reencounter Bertrand Russell, my first strong philosophical influence, and read many of his works deciding to write a dialog between him and Wittgenstein. I managed to do this both considering their logical-philosophical ideas as well as their differences on the nature of the mystical (religion, ethics etc.). Against Russell’s logicism and scienticism, Wittgenstein twisted my philosophical interests: logic sentences seemed always true, but trivial; science has an important, but limited role in our lives; I was not sure of atheism anymore and thus ethics became vital! I made several distinctions between *kinds of showing* and types of silence etc. to understand the ethical sense of the TLP and Professor Spica developed this point in the Symposium last week, which, I hope, will appear in the book *Practical Cognitivism and Respectful Care*.

To understand how these changes were really paramount in my life and determined my academic career later, it is worth also mentioning that during my studies in Porto Alegre, I came across Tugendhat’s works. He was already a very famous philosopher in Germany and was working in Chile, but used to come to Brazil for conferences invited by Ernildo Stein (UFRGS). Tugendhat was very critical of Heidegger’s philosophy and had turned, back in 1965, from phenomenology to analytic philosophy influencing many important Brazilian philosophers such as Guido de Almeida, Maria Clara Dias etc. At that time (end of 1980s beginning 1990s), Tugendhat started to focus his main interests in ethics. Again, this helped me to decide to definitely change the subject of my master work. The main result is now published in *Ética e Linguagem*, which seems to have influenced many persons in Brazil and elsewhere to understand Wittgenstein in a different light (see also *La ética en Wittgenstein y el problema del relativismo*). This means, basically, that the ethical has priority over the theoretical or, as Kant argued (not forgetting Plato’s place for the idea of Good), the practical use of pure reason has primacy or, as Wittgenstein used to quote: “In the beginning was deed.” (Goethe). Thus, when, back in 1993, I had to choose between Logic or Ethics to get a teaching place at the University Federal de Santa Catarina, I had no doubt. The rest is history ...

Tonetto: So, it looks like this new perspective led you straightway to write a doctoral dissertation on Moore’s *Principia Ethica* since it is a classic in analytic ethics, right?

Dall’Agnol: Yes, exactly! I wanted to complete my studies on the “holy” trinity of analytical philosophy (rsrs). Here, I have also to say that Tugendhat had a strong influence on my decision to go to England. During my master studies, I became very close to Ernesto and I invited him to Florianópolis in 1995 for the III Congress on Analytical Philosophy (now known as *Principia Symposium*). I had a decisive conversation with him at that time at Praia Mole Hotel. Afterwards, I met him several times in London during my PhD. I even considered to write a dissertation on his ethical views, but we had a philosophical disagreement: I somehow still believe in his Kantian reconstruction of the Categorical Imperative, giving centrality to the so-called formula of the End in Itself, made in *Vorlesungen über Ethik* (1993), while he was going back to a contractualist ethics. In the symposium, Professor Lodéa reconstructs well Tugendhat’s movements. Now, my doctorate supervisor was also reticent to support such weak contractualist basis for morality. Thus, I decided to write on Moore’s ethics developing a *conceptual analysis* of ‘intrinsic value,’ a basic idea for any ethical theory, which is now also published as a book (*Valor Intrínseco*). It was supervised by Keith Graham, an analytic philosopher, who became Marxist late in life and enjoyed playing jazz in pubs. Anyway, he approved the project since it helps to make sense to, for instance, the idea that democracy is *worth in itself* (recognises the value of each person), but also bring *the best consequences* (economic development etc.). The meta-ethical analysis pointed to a mixed normative theory in ethics that I am still trying to construct.

Tonetto: Looking back now, which are the main initial achievements of your career?

Dall’Agnol: Well, after completing my PhD, I think that the most important academic marks are two: (i) creating the *Seria Ethica*, which published around 20 book in practical philosophy, and the *ethic@*, the first Brazilian journal to be digital (it was born green) and (ii) working as Head of Philosophy Department as well as Director of our Graduate Program in Philosophy at UFSC. Now, leaving aside these boring involvements in administrative roles at the universities were I taught or still work, I believe that, as I said previously, the “conversion” to analytic philosophy was crucial. Thus, I have, in the past 25 years, tried to do conceptual analyses on many concepts: knowledge; action; intrinsic value; know-how; lying; care; respect; wisdom, and, more recently, of ‘health’ in a forthcoming book *Bioética Clínica & Filosofia da Medicina*. I followed this methodological orientation, but I have also tried to develop a meta-ethical theory of moral knowledge (Practical Cognitivism), a mixed normative theory (a renewed Triple Theory), and applied them to everyday moral questions. In that sense, I do not practice analyses only, but, let us say, synthesis too. To illustrate: I have tried to construct the concept of ‘respectful care’ to overcome some theoretical problems in bioethics related to autonomism (Engelhardt) and paternalism (Pellegrino). In that sense, I am *not* an analytical philosopher only. I am not also an analytical philosopher in the sense that I specialize on a particular author, for instance, Moore or Wittgenstein. I keep reading Aristotle, Kant, Mill as well as many contemporary thinkers. I believe that in Brazil people associate us too much with the authors we study. I do not see myself as a “Wittgenstein’s Scholar” and even I hold some un-Wittgensteinian ideas. For example, I have tried to correct the intuitionist meta-ethical basis of the predominant bioethical theory, namely the so-called

“principlism” (or the four-principles approach) by proposing a first ethical principle (a metanorm). A version of it is already presented in my book *Bioética* (2004), which is now in the second edition published by PUCPress with a slightly different formulation. Thus, to answer your question, if I made any relevant contribution, it came from the attempt to practicing some philosophical methods to achieve theoretical, especially ethical results.

Tonetto: Could you, please, say a little more on how meta-ethical investigations ground your concept of respectful care? That is to say, how Practical Cognitivism leads to respectful care in bioethics?

Dall’Agnol: Yes, of course! Many thanks for this question. It gives me the opportunity for clarifying the link between the different domains of ethical inquiry as I see them today. I started to develop a new moral epistemology after my PhD reading Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigation*. I had a research project on rule-following. Afterwards, when I was doing post-doc at the University of Michigan under Steve Darwall’s supervision back in 2007, I had some interesting philosophical insights. We had the so-called “ethics lunch” at Madras Restaurant every Wednesday: Gibbard (a notorious expressivist), Railton (one of the most important realists) and Darwall (the proponent of the second person approach to morality) were there “just philosophising” on their own meta-ethical theories. I had met them before, in my doctorate in England during the congress “Re-evaluating Ethical Intuitionism,” and knew that Ann Arbor was a meta-ethical think tank, but still I was surprised with the high level of the discussions. I then tried to engage into the debate and I learned a lot in that period. First, I started to doubt Darwall’s metaethical characterization of ‘care’ as giving agent-neutral reasons for action, but ‘respect’ only agent-relative ones. Soon, I realised that this could be just a semantical disagreement, but I still had doubts whether Darwall had a good way of balancing these two concepts, especially because he supported an Aristotelian thesis that could have paternalistic implications. Thus, I wonder whether care and respect were not in tension, somehow limiting each other, but, at the same time, complementing themselves. At that time, I started to read also care ethicists such as Gilligan and Noddings as well as feminists such as Elizabeth Anderson and Hilde Lindemann. So, having already turned from a Tractarian non-cognitivist approach to a cognitivist one during my doctorate and soon after reading Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule following (*Philosophical Investigations*, §184-243), I started to get some new insights into different kinds of knowledge and became convinced both that moral knowledge could be seen as involving a special kind of cognition and that care and respect were two forms of intrinsically valuing a vulnerable being and/or a person. Some of these ideas appeared in the book *Seguir Regras*. Thus, I dedicated my time to conceptually analysing ‘knowing-how’ and to distinguish moral know-how (caring) from non-moral kinds of knowing (bicycling). I had this problem: what about an agent who knows—that she must care for someone else (or herself), but does not *know-how* best to perform it or even acts wrongly (e.g., does it paternalistically)? I conclude then that an agent needs also to know-how to take care in certain ways, namely, in order to act morally, she needs to know-how to be respectful: do what is good for someone else for *her own sake* and according to *her* conception of the good. Therefore, intrinsic valuing plays a central role in that distinction and it seems clear that moral values override non-moral ones. Due to my interests in bioethics, I started to investigate cases where care was (dis)respectful. I discussed them in my book *Care and Respect in Bioethics*. Basically,

the metaethical link to the normative and the practical is clear when we say “A knows-how to *φing*,” for example, “A knows-how to take care of premature babies,” that is, in the moral sense of ‘caring,’ A must intrinsically valuing the baby, that is, do good for *her own sake*. This is of the main components of ‘respectful care,’ which can be read as one side of the coin since it is necessary also to know-how to respect a person, namely in a caring way. Therefore, Practical Cognitivism points to the need of considering this special kind of cognisance moral knowledge is all about. Is it clearer?

Tonetto: Ok, I see it now, but let me ask you in which other ways your international experiences helped to consolidate your philosophical ideas.

Dall’Agnol: Well, I always was and still am after the best environments to do philosophy. During my undergraduate studies I chose courses offered by the best teachers at that time and during my master degree I wanted to learn as much as possible from Ernst Tugendhat. There were excellent professors at UFRGS, for instance Valério Rohden from whom I learned a lot on Kant and Marco Zingano, who taught me on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* back in 1993, but I decided to study abroad to get the best possible philosophical training. The two post-docs I chose to do, including the second at Oxford University, were just part of my attempt to learn from the best philosophers around. Parfit’s work was much discussed at that time and I had already read the first volume of *On What Matters* before going to Oxford, in 2015. Thus, I believe that a philosopher needs to be aware of what is going on in the best parts of the world in philosophical terms. In this sense, Brazil did a good job through agencies such as CAPES and CNPq sending many students abroad and I regret that recently there is a decline in the internationalization process. Worse yet is “closing our doors” trying to construct a “Brazilian philosophy” based on our national identity. Philosophy deals with perennial issues and no one will make a significant contribution without coming into contact with the best of what is being made around the world. Thus, apart from classical philosophers such as Aristotle, Kant, Mill, Moore, Russell and Wittgenstein, I have learned a lot from direct interactions with my best teachers and colleagues (including Brazilians who reached a high level of excellence) and international thinkers such as Tugendhat, Darwall, Lindemann, Railton, Rauscher, Engelhardt, Sanfélix Vidarte, Parfit, Onora O’Neill, and many others including, more recently, Roger Crisp. I was happy listening to their contributions last week in the Symposium and trying to respond to their criticisms. Of course, I do not have any illusions regarding the impact my work have, but some discussions are still going on and may result into something valuable.

Tonetto: How then you assess your career so far? Do you feel happy with your achievements?

Dall’Agnol: Yes, as people say “So far, so good!” Recently, I engaged into two very important projects (O3 -Our Brain, Ourselves and Our Word- and BioJusPan -Bioethics, Distributive Justice and Pandemics-; the first led by Oxford and the second by us), which were very fulfilling both personally and professionally. And, yes, I consider myself a happy person in the Aristotelian sense (leaving aside the metaphysical assumptions of the *ergon*): my way of life is composed of the necessary material conditions; I engage into pleasant activities (football); I believe I have a few true friends and I have for

sure a nice family; I cultivate some righteous states of character (I try to be a fair person) and I dedicate myself to philosophy without considering it superior to other activities such as science, arts etc.

Tonetto: But you do not have any regrets or disappointments? What were the main challenges you had and how you overcome them? Is there something that you would do differently?

Dall’Agnol: No, I do not regret any personal or professional choice I made. Of course, there were several difficulties, for instance, finishing PhD in England taking care alone of my son Gustavo, but I kept working very hard till I got it. Disappointments? Maybe one or two. For instance, after working at the Michigan State University with the support of the Fulbright Foundation back in 2018, I submitted a manuscript there to be published as a book. It got one very favourable review recommending publication and the other was supportive but suggested rewriting the whole draft from a care ethics perspective. Since I refused to do so (in fact, I wanted to show some limitations of care ethics), I had to publish the book *Towards Neurobioethics* elsewhere, but I wanted to publish it in the US. I think that this was a kind of “ideological” censorship that we should avoid in academy. By the way, I am one of the responsible to introduce care ethics discussions into philosophy here in Brazil afterwards. As you know, we read *An Introduction to Feminist Philosophy*, back in 2009, at the SAPE (Seminário de Aperfeiçoamento em Pesquisas Éticas), an important forum of philosophical debate that we are celebrating 25 years now. It motivated many people to study alternative approaches to ethics. This was part of my plan to expand ethical studies alongside with the journal *ethic@* and the *Série Ethica* that helped a lot to open the doors to different ethical views not only on Kantian ethics, which remains the mainstream in our country, anyway. Oh, sadly, yes I do have a frustration in my life: no talent for music despite my efforts to learn playing an instrument!

Tonetto: What about your plans ...

Dall’Agnol: Many, many plans. So, I will need to live some more decades (rsrs). The most important in the short time is perhaps to complete the manuscript I entitled “From Philosophical Ethics to a Common Morality.” I believe that in the past 10 years I reached a systematic view of philosophy, which I would like to sum up here very quickly. By the way, it was discussed in the Symposium by Professor Pinzani, whose comments will appear in the book *From Practical Cognitivism to Respectful Care*.

This is my diagnosis of our times: the existential threats we face nowadays (nuclear wars, global warming, overpopulation and poverty, potential menaces from generative IA aligned to robotics, fundamentalism, negationism etc.), I believe we need to rescue the *protagonist* role of wisdom in our lives to save humanity from extinction. A true philosopher is a wisdom’s lover. She must have an absolute commitment to truth. This is no trivial matter, so we need to ask again and again: what is wisdom after all? Well, I think that a Socratic approach is very helpful to start with. First, in searching for self-knowledge, we, members of *Homo sapiens sapiens*, have to recognise that we do not know everything (to be established by a kind of *agnontology*), but also that we are well aware of some things we know (to be epistemically justified by *gnoseology*). Thus, it is necessary to discriminate what we really do know from the things we do not and perhaps will never do, for instance, whether the world had a beginning in space and time or it is eternal; whether our *uni*-verse is the world as a whole etc.

That is why we can have different worldviews giving rise to *antagonistic* beliefs and values. For this reason, in metaphysical issues I remain *agnostic*, but I am not sceptic regarding daily knowledge and the sciences, which are, by far, the best materialization of human cognitive abilities and can be employed to construct useful technological artefacts. But technoscience must be guided by ethical knowledge since it can be used to destroy, to kill and so on. So, we need morality, art and religion to imagine a better world giving meaning to it. That is why, Practical *Cognitivism*, as a new moral epistemology, may help us showing the kinds of cognition are necessary for wisdom, namely not only theoretical knowledge, but mainly practical knowing (ethical, political etc.). To be wise, then, is knowing-how to apply scientific knowledge to act rightly in order to live better. In the moral case, especially, we need to know-how to take care of vulnerable beings, including non-human animals, how to respect persons etc. Here, the ontological distinction between persons and objects is paramount: the former have inherent worth; the late, instrumental value only. These ways of intrinsically valuing beings may be the cornerstone of a common and sharable morality (I call it “*a CS-Morality*”) for present day avoiding pluralism falling into a crude form of relativism (conflicts, wars etc.). Now, Practical Cognitivism can ground a normative metaprinciple unifying the main current ethical theories (deontology, consequentialism and aretaic ethics) in this way: follow norms that prescribe actions apparently valuable in themselves, but that are also optimific and universally willable, including by virtuous persons, considering them from an impartial point of view. Intermediate principles can be postulated to each different domains of human life. A CS-morality is then the necessary condition for peaceful co-existence, for making many forms of cooperation possible (not only economical, but also ludic activities such as sports, cultural endeavours etc.), for reaching excellent standards in education, health and well-being, safety etc. The first ethical principle provides the justification for instituting national States *agonistically* governed by the rule of law, supranational federations and even perhaps nowadays a global multi-leveled republic to avoid the existential threats mentioned above. This can, for instance, lead to implement a basic and unconditional income for everyone to supply the elementary needs alleviating the *agony* of millions and millions of human beings worldwide suffering from malnutrition, forced immigration etc. I do not know about the best system of economic production after the collapse of real socialism, but perhaps even capitalism can achieve that. So, my main project is to finish the book “From Philosophical Ethics to a Common Morality” in the next few years ... I have also a manuscript, written in a dialog format, on Moore’s doubts and Wittgenstein’s certainties, but I am not sure I will be able to publish it giving the present discussions around *On Certainty* made by hinge epistemologists etc. Professor Peruzzo mentioned some of these philosophical problems last week in the symposium relating foundationism/fallibilism etc. Perhaps, I would rather prepare the 5^a edition of my book *Ética – História & Filosofia da Moral* if I have the time before retiring or soon after that ...

Tonetto: What is your view on philosophy’s future in academic terms for researching and teaching?

Dall’Agnol: Oh, it is difficult to predict, but I am realistically optimistic (I hope not too naïve). If it is true that we seem to have lost the best way to conduct human affairs because of scientism, fundamentalism etc., and that is why we need to rescue wisdom’s protagonist role to give technoscience and some fanatic religions better ethical ends, then philosophy still has a crucial role in the future. To

give one more example: we live today in a world full of information, but also pseudoinformation and misinformation. Ignorance is our natural condition and that is why we need science and philosophy to create a better civilized society. Consequently, it looks like we need more and more wisdom to separate useful information from *fake news* and trivial *big data* from the relevant knowledge in order to live better. That is to say, new scientific and technological innovations always bring new ethical challenges as the discussions around “Ethics and AI” nowadays shows. Consider also the ethical challenges brought by genetic engineering, namely the possibility of human enhancement and the moral issues around transhumanism if not post-humanism. How will the new generation of philosopher deal with that? I do not know. To give another example: the COVID-19 pandemics raised many ethical issues as can be found in my book *Bioética, Biopolítica e Biodireito*, where I discussed questions around allocating scarce resources such as ICUs etc. I made several criticisms to vaccine nationalism, negationist view and so on. Now, I would like to ask: are we prepared for new pandemics that will certainly arrive due to deforestation, extreme climate events etc.? In the past ten years or so, we had year after year the breaking of new records of high temperatures. We seem to be already above the threshold established by the Paris Agreement. What should we do? How to be *wiser* in our interactions with nature? Consequently, it looks like there will always be a place for new ethical questioning as can be provided by philosophy.

Tonetto: Yes, it seems so. Finally, what would be your tips for young people willing to study philosophy?

Dall’Agnol: Again, a very difficult question. Out of my own experience, I would like to pass on a valuable lesson I learned: try, at the same time, to ensure a very solid classical education reading the best philosophers ever, including learning a language such as Greek if it is possible, with a real concern with our current existential problems. I am a bit worry on the present criticism in Brazil regarding the so-called canon in philosophy as we can realized in the site of ANPOF. Even in philosophy, we cannot start from zero believing we will, so to speak, invent the wheel. For instance, no one can seriously do good philosophy without reading Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (ideally in the original), but one needs also to question the nature of space-time, the existence of freedom and so on, considering what we know and do not know today on such matters in the face of new developments in quantum mechanics, synthetic biology etc. I recommend, then, exercising imagination perhaps through poetry, music etc. in order to be more creative, to innovate, to find solutions to philosophical questions. This combination may produce a new generation of philosophers, who can reach wise solutions to our current problems making our world a better place to live.

Tonetto: Ok, thanks for the interesting interview. I believe we can now understand better your views. We look forward also to read the written contribution presented in the Symposium *From Practical Cognitivism to Respectfull care* and your replies.

Dall’Agnol: No, thank you and the journal *Aurora*.

Data availability statement

The main focus of this interview is contributions of a theoretical or methodological nature, without the use of empirical data sets. Therefore, in accordance with the journal's editorial guidelines, the interview is exempt from being deposited in SciELO Data.

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