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Resenha

REVIEW: SPICA, MARCIANO A. & PERUZZO, LÉO (ORGS.). DO COGNITIVISMO PRÁTICO AO CUIDADO RESPEITOSO: FESTSCHRIFT EM HOMENAGEM AOS 60 ANOS DE DARLEI DALL'AGNOL. GUARAPUAVA: EDITORA UNICENTRO, 2026

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The work entitled Do cognitivismo prático ao cuidado respeitoso: Festschrift em homenagem aos 60 anos de Darlei Dall'Agnol [From Practical Cognitivism to Respectful Care: Festschrift in Honour of Darlei Dall'Agnol's 60th Birthday], edited by Marciano Adilio Spica and Léo Peruzzo Junior, establishes itself as a landmark celebration and investigation of four decades of Dall'Agnol's philosophical production. The collection, in tribute to Dall'Agnol's philosophical work, brings together contributions from Brazilian and foreign scholars dedicated to examining the legacy of the honouree. Far from being a mere gathering of circumstantial praise, the volume stands out for its critical scrutiny and the depth with which it revisits Dall'Agnol's conceptual contributions to ethics, metaethics, normative ethics, and bioethics. More than a celebratory record aimed at a community of specialists, the book presents itself as essential reading for anyone seeking to understand how academic philosophy can engage fruitfully with the moral dilemmas of everyday life and the

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formulation of public policies in times of accelerated social and technological transformation.

The volume's major methodological and editorial feature lies in its distinctly dialogical structure. The work opens with an extensive bio-bibliographical and conceptual interview in which Dall'Agnol himself reconstructs the genesis of his philosophical inquiries and the milestones of his academic trajectory. Following this introduction, the book is organised into four major thematic parts, in which critical essays written by various scholars are set in confrontation with the honouree's perspective. At the end of each of these sections, Dall'Agnol inserts reply chapters entitled Comentários do homenageado [Comments by the Honouree], produced in bilingual editions that accompany the original languages of the submitted articles — Portuguese, Spanish, and English. This dialectical architecture preserves the fluidity and spirit of the international research networks forged by the author, granting the reader the privilege of witnessing philosophical practice in real time, as objections are addressed, concepts refined, and theoretical consensus transparently and clearly constructed.

In the introductory interview, conducted by Prof Dr Milene Consenso Tonetto, Dall'Agnol recalls his trajectory from his formative experiences at the University of Caxias do Sul and postgraduate studies at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul to earning his doctorate at the University of Bristol in England, as well as his postdoctoral research periods at the Universities of Michigan and Oxford. This academic itinerary reflects a path of intellectual maturity marked by a significant methodological shift: the departure from an initial Husserlian phenomenological model in favour of adopting the tools of analytic philosophy. This shift was spurred by a reading of thinkers such as Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and G. E. Moore. From this analytic framework, Dall'Agnol articulates a distinctive view on the nature of philosophy. For the author, philosophical activity ought to be understood essentially as a search for wisdom; that is, not as an accumulation of abstract doctrines and/or inflated metaphysical systems, but as fundamental know-how. This practical knowledge guides human beings on how to employ available knowledge to act rightly and live a good, flourishing life. It represents an attitude that adopts an agnosticism towards undecidable metaphysical issues, without making any concessions to moral scepticism or value relativism. In the philosopher's view, contemporary ethical reflection has the inescapable duty to serve as a beacon for technoscientific progress, providing axiological guidance for humanity to confront pressing existential threats, such as the climate emergency, the risk of nuclear conflict, and the challenges posed by artificial intelligence.

This conception of philosophy as practical wisdom leads to profound developments in how Dall'Agnol approaches the history of ethics and the status of moral knowledge. Re-reading Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, the honouree develops an original interpretation that highlights the deep ethical dimension of that work. Rather than viewing the text merely as a treatise on logic and representational language, Dall'Agnol stresses Wittgenstein's famous distinction between what can be said and what shows itself. Moral value, from this vantage point, does not belong to the realm of contingent facts that can be described by empirical propositions; it shows itself in the attitude of the moral agent and in the forms of human action. This methodological insight distances ethics from intellectualist models that attempt to reduce right conduct to the mere apprehension of informational data, laying the foundations for the construction of his original metaethical framework. On these themes, Dall'Agnol debates with prominent figures in the philosophical landscape, such as Borto Valle, Alessandro Pinzani, João Hobus, Idalgo Sangalli, Maria Borges, Daniel Perez, and Ivan Domingues.

It is in the field of metaethics that Darlei Dall'Agnol's originality reaches its apex with the elaboration of the thesis of Practical Cognitivism. Historically, metaethical debate has been divided between cognitivist currents — which contend that moral judgements express beliefs capable of being true or false — and non-cognitivist positions, such as emotivism and expressivism, which view morality merely as the expression of subjective feelings, attitudes, or desires lacking cognitive status. Dall'Agnol rejects this false dichotomy by offering an innovative conceptual alternative. He maintains that moral knowledge is possible, but cautions that a category mistake is committed when one attempts to explain it along the lines of theoretical, propositional knowledge — so-called know-that. For the author, moral knowledge is a sui generis modality of know-how, structured around individuals' capacity to learn, understand, and follow moral rules in everyday practice.

The driving element of this metaethical engineering is the concept of intrinsic value. Dall'Agnol argues that human beings possess the practical faculty to recognise and attribute intrinsic value to certain objects, actions, persons, and sentient beings. To possess intrinsic value means having an importance that does not depend on any instrumental utility, economic benefit, or contingent self-interest. Intrinsic valuation is thus the irreducible component of morality; it is what moves the will and provides reasons for action, internally connecting the cognitive apprehension of a rule to the motivation to comply with it. By reinterpreting G. E. Moore's classic Open Question Argument, Dall'Agnol demonstrates that attempting to define the moral good in terms of natural or metaphysical properties fails

precisely because moral value resides in the act of valuation that underpins knowing how to act. In this manner, Practical Cognitivism refutes both moral scepticism and moral relativism, safeguarding the objectivity and reasonableness of ethical judgements without having to resort to mysterious metaphysical entities or to moral facts external to and independent of human activity. In the arena of metaethical ideas, Dall'Agnol engages with philosophers of great stature, among whom are Marciano Spica, Vicente Vidarte, Dennis Rohaltyn, Silvio Kavetski, Frederick Rauscher, Monica Franco, Peter Railton, David Chico, and Léo Peruzzo.

The robustness of Practical Cognitivism at the metaethical level leads directly to the formulation of an ambitious and integrative normative theory, which Dall'Agnol terms the Reformed Triple Theory. Debates in normative ethics have frequently been marked by rivalries between three major traditions: virtue ethics of Aristotelian origin, which emphasises character and human flourishing; consequentialism, which evaluates the morality of acts by their practical outcomes for well-being; and Kantian deontology, which prioritises duty and adherence to universal rules. Engaging critically with the effort towards theoretical convergence initiated by the British philosopher Derek Parfit, Dall'Agnol maintains that these three strands are not incompatible models, but rather complementary perspectives that capture essential and indispensable aspects of moral experience.

The theoretical unification proposed in the Reformed Triple Theory is articulated through the First Ethical Principle (PEP), which operates as the supreme norm of justification and guidance in Dall'Agnol's work. The PEP establishes that a moral agent ought always to act in accordance with rules that promote actions valuable in themselves, yield the best outcomes for all affected parties, and can be impartially accepted by virtuous individuals. The principle thus functions as a triple-check compass: it demands aretaic sensitivity to judge concrete situations with practical wisdom, consequentialist consideration of the actual impact of actions in the world, and deontological rigour to ensure that the rule can be universalised without moral contradiction. In offering this synthesis, Dall'Agnol constructs a normative framework capable of providing solid public justifications for life in society, fostering rational consensus that transcends dogmatism and ideological sectism. Making contributions to this part of the work are the philosophers Roger Crisp, Cinara Nahra, Delamar Volpato Dutra, Andrei Lodéa, Jonathan Orozco, and Jean-Christophe Merle.

Dall'Agnol's philosophical reflection does not end in abstract normative speculation; it seeks to test its efficacy and validity in the complex domain of actual human choices, crystallising in bioethics and applied ethics under the concept of 'respectful care'. Contemporary bioethics is marked by a conflict between two opposing models: on the one

hand, a radical individualistic autonomism that treats individual will as absolute to the detriment of community ties and vulnerabilities; on the other, a beneficent paternalism in which healthcare professionals or institutions make authoritarian decisions in the name of the patient's supposed good, disregarding their freedom of choice. Sensitive to this limitation, Dall'Agnol proposes respectful care as an innovative analytical framework.

Respectful Care achieves a balanced and fruitful synthesis between the ethics of care and the ethics of universal respect. The dimension of care embodies an attitude of active zeal, affective attention, and responsibility towards the preservation and flourishing of vulnerable living beings, whether human beings in conditions of physical and social fragility or non-human animals. The dimension of respect, meanwhile, incorporates the imperative Kantian demand to recognise every person as an end in themselves, endowed with an inalienable dignity that can never be reduced to a mere means for external ends. Respectful Care is therefore not a sentimental disposition, but a rational and compassionate attitude that demands engagement in promoting the autonomy of the other while simultaneously acknowledging their contextual limitations and mutual interdependence.

The operational efficacy of Respectful Care manifests itself in the concrete dilemmas addressed in the fourth part of the volume. In the sphere of end-of-life decisions, such as the debate surrounding euthanasia and assisted suicide, applying this perspective enables respect for the terminal patient's autonomy and sovereign will without relinquishing the obligation to care for them and provide comprehensive palliative support. In public health, Respectful Care provides axiological criteria for the fair and equitable allocation of scarce resources within the Unified Health System (Sistema Único de Saúde — SUS), balancing maximum social utility with the unrestricted protection of the most vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the scope of this concept extends to twenty-first-century challenges, informing debates in the ethics of artificial intelligence — where respect for human dignity must guide algorithmic development — and inspiring proposals for global environmental governance to safeguard the biosphere and future generations amidst the climate crisis. Debating these topics with Dall'Agnol are the philosophers Stephen Darwall, Maria Clara Dias, Alcino Bonella, Telma Birchal, Gilmar Szczepanik, Marco Azevedo, Nick Zangwill, and the honouree's own son, Gustavo Dall'Agnol.

A meticulous reading of Do cognitivismo prático ao cuidado respeitoso reveals the potential of an intellectual system that began with the investigation of the limits of language and practical reason and culminated in the formulation of applied ethical frameworks with significant social impact. Throughout the book, one perceives how Darlei Dall'Agnol's

original concepts — the understanding of philosophy as Socratic know-how, Practical Cognitivism grounded in intrinsic valuation, the Reformed Triple Theory guided by the First Ethical Principle, and the bioethics of Respectful Care — are closely interwoven within a theoretical architecture. The work not only pays tribute to the career of one of the leading figures in Brazilian moral philosophy, but also plays the crucial role of demonstrating the maturity of Brazilian philosophical production. By combining analytical conceptual rigour, international critical dialogue, and a commitment to transforming human reality, the work consolidates Dall'Agnol's legacy as an indispensable contribution for anyone who believes that clear thinking is the first step towards acting with responsibility, respect, and care in the world.

Despite the criticisms raised throughout the book by various philosophers, a few observations remain to be made regarding the difficulties faced by Dall'Agnol's positions. Here I briefly list three imbroglios that may in some way affect Dall'Agnol's stance: (a) the apparent rule-following paradox and the infinite regress; (b) the problem of the assumption regarding human nature; and (c) the strange idea of mental causation and the ontological status of practical states. Let us begin with (a).

(a) The author grounds Practical Cognitivism by defining moral know-how as the capacity to "follow rules". However, this premise collides with the rule-following paradox set out by Ludwig Wittgenstein (Philosophical Investigations, §201) and formalised by Saul Kripke (1982). Kripke maintains that no action could be determined by a rule, because any course of action can be interpreted as being in accordance with it. If moral know-how is merely practical alignment with a rule, the criterion of correctness for that rule can only derive from community consensus and habit (the Wittgensteinian "sceptical solution"). The difficulty for the author's position lies in the fact that, if rule-following reduces to the contingent customs and usages of a linguistic community, his system may collapse into a conventionalism or cultural relativism. To avoid this and guarantee the universality of the First Ethical Principle (PEP), the author would need to postulate a meta-rule that determines the correct application of the practical rule; however, this triggers the classic infinite regress exposed by Gilbert Ryle (1949), in which the application of any rule requires a prior rule for its application.

(b) The second potential difficulty for Dall'Agnol's theory lies in the assumption surrounding human evolutionary nature. In his writings on bioethics and normative ethics, Dall'Agnol appeals to neurobioethics and human evolutionary nature to anchor the faculty of "intrinsic valuation" as a natural practical-cognitive trait of the species — a faculty that, in

itself, seems strange to possess, though strangeness is not a problem in itself. This alliance generates a major problem when confronted by the Evolutionary Debunking Argument (Street, 2006; Joyce, 2006). If our capacity for intrinsic valuation is a product of natural selection, our evaluative dispositions were shaped to maximise reproductive success and the contingent survival of the species (fitness), not to track objective moral truths. Dall'Agnol attempts to maintain that this evolved faculty yields universal and impartial normative judgements (demanded by the PEP and Kantian respect). The author fails to explain the "miraculous coincidence" of how amoral selective pressures could have produced a practical capacity that perfectly aligns biological know-how with the abstract and impartial demands of moral universalism.

(c) Finally, in attempting to maintain cognitivism without assuming a "deep" metaphysical realism, Dall'Agnol conceptualises intrinsic valuation as a practical state capable of apprehending value and, simultaneously, motivating action. In the philosophy of mind and action, this fusion attempts to create a "besire" (a hybrid state of belief and desire, as discussed by Michael Smith, The Moral Problem, 1994). This construction may incur J. L. Mackie's "Argument from Queerness" (1977): mental states that possess the cognitive property of apprehending reality while simultaneously exhibiting a "direction of fit" capable of intrinsically moving the will would be ontologically bizarre entities — even if I myself do not agree with Mackie's position, it ought to be taken into consideration here. Under the lens of the causal closure of the physical world (Kim, 2005), if practical valuation is neither a belief with propositional content and defined truth-conditions, nor a simple physical/conative state, Dall'Agnol leaves the mechanism of causal efficacy unexplained: how exactly does a non-propositional moral know-how exert causal force upon the agent's brain to overcome competing egoistic motivations and neurobiological impulses?

Well, as with any position in philosophy, Dall'Agnol's theory faces difficulties that are relevant not only to the author, but also to anyone who reflects on morality in its completeness (from metaethics, through normativity, to its practical application). An attentive reader will see that there is much to be learned, grasped, and explored in the work of one of the most relevant contemporary philosophers in Brazil, who unquestionably becomes a truly significant figure for discussions in ethics.

Here I take the liberty of saying a few words about Dall'Agnol as a person. More than a great researcher, he is also an excellent friend and supervisor. He assisted me at various moments during my postgraduate studies, just as he did with several other postgraduate colleagues and continues to do. The book now published is a wonderful tribute to the man

and the philosopher that Darlei is, without a doubt. I conclude by wishing my dear supervisor all possible well-being, that life's trade-offs may not be limiting, that injustices may be remedied, and that you may have many pro-attitudes towards that which possesses good-making properties.

For those interested in accessing the book, it can be downloaded free of charge from the Editora Unicentro website (https://www3.unicentro.br/edunicentro/e-books/).

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