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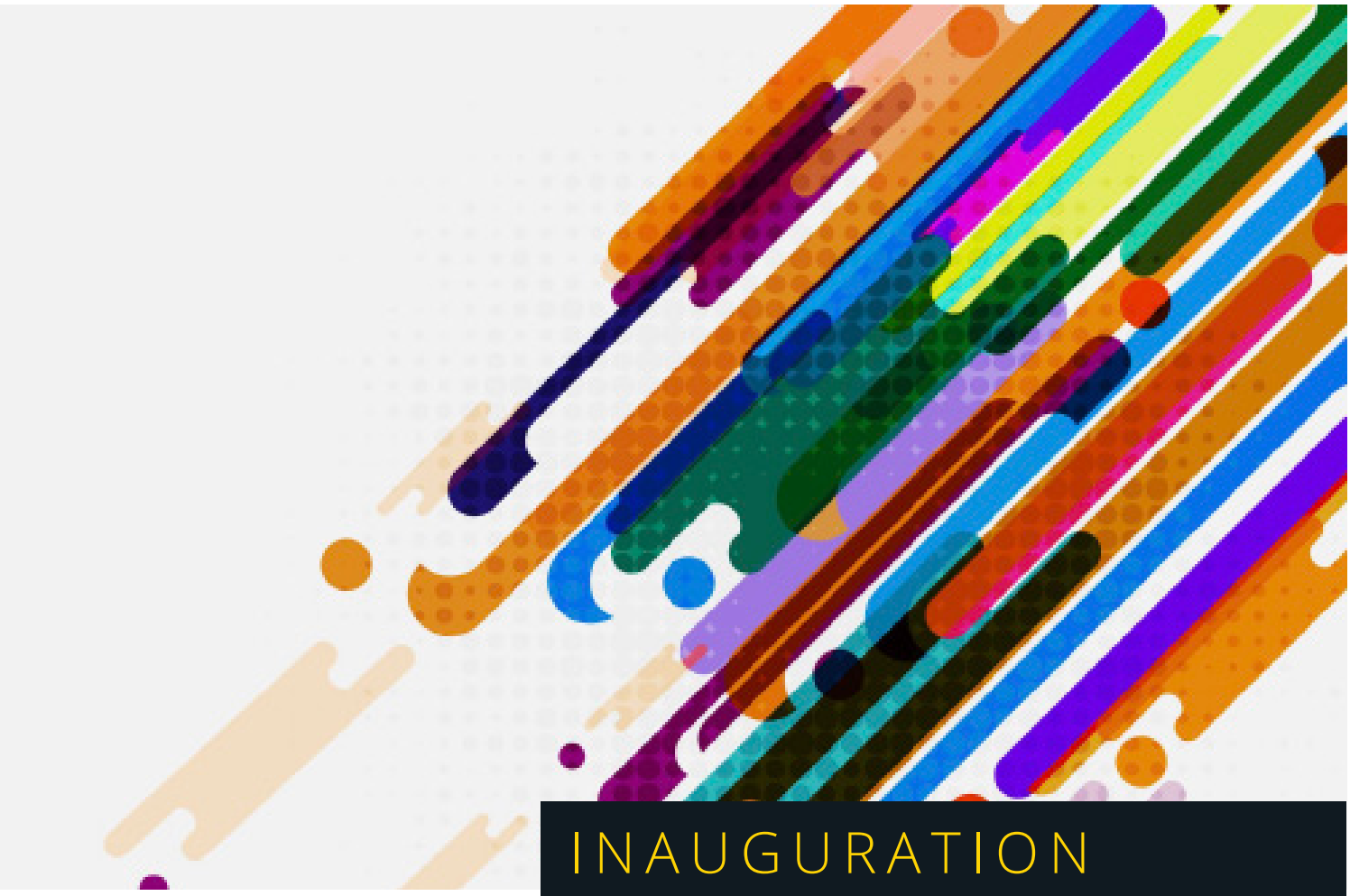

INAUGURATION

Diversity and Inclusion as Epistemic Values

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1. Abstract

In the past twenty years I have witnessed important changes in academia. In my own discipline there has been increasing attention to themes such as 'values in science', a field that has documented in detail the various ways in which values influence scientific practices and the decisions that stem from them. In parallel, the profession has strived to improve working conditions of professional philosophers, notably reducing gender bias, discrimination, and harassment, which have affected some groups of academics more than others. In this lecture, I argue that these two parallel lines of development about 'values' should be actually seen as *one*. More specifically, values such as diversity and inclusion are not just part of ethics, but are proper *epistemic* values to be integrated into our epistemic practices in philosophy and in science. Therefore, improvement at the level of the social dynamics *also* depends on embedding and incorporating values in our epistemic practices.

2. Opening

Rector Magnificus, Dear Colleagues, Friends, and Family members,

Today is a special day: my inaugural lecture as professor of philosophy and ethics of techno-science. I also hold the Westerdijk Chair. Johanna Westerdijk was the first woman to become a full professor in the Netherlands. Holding this chair allows me to speak up and empowers me to disseminate and practice values of diversity and inclusion in academia. Acknowledgements usually come at the end, but this one must come first: I wish to express my gratitude to the search committee that appointed me, for seeing things in my work that others have not; I would not be here if it weren't for them. I am wearing a gown, this evening, not because, as a professor, I am finally allowed to wear it, but because Utrecht University, just about the same time as I started my appointment here, allowed also non-full professors to wear a gown during PhD ceremonies. I am wearing a gown today because a symbol of exclusion has been turned into one of inclusion; at least, an important step in this direction has been made.

It is widely agreed that diversity and inclusion are fundamental values, perhaps as an effect of the pressure of being 'politically correct'. It is widely agreed that academia, let alone society at large, needs to be a place where diversity and inclusion are valued, fostered, and promoted. Many will agree that a diverse and inclusive academia can be created through symbolic changes such as who is allowed to wear a gown. Concrete actions to make this real are, however, more contentious.

This evening, I will propose that we can create a more diverse and inclusive academia *also* through our intellectual work. Diversity and inclusion are not just or solely ethico-political values that pertain to spheres of action in a social environment. They are *also* epistemic values that can profoundly change how we do research; a fortiori, diversity and inclusion as epistemic values also change the contents, or outputs of our research.

3. Parallel stories of emancipation

To explain what I mean by this, I will tell you about two parallel stories of emancipation.

The first story takes place in the academic debates in philosophy of science, and more specifically within 'the received view' in philosophy of science. I am not revisiting the history of philosophy of science here so let's have a base line. A large part of Anglo-Saxon philosophy of science (the field I've been trained in) adhered to the idea of the value-neutrality of science. Even when it is not explicitly adopted, it is tacitly assumed. How so? Decades of debates on realism, explanation, causation and what not, focus on 'science' only, or on 'concepts' only, leaving questions of ethics to ethicists. In this dominant view – as it often happens – dissonant voices did exist. I will only mention a pioneering paper on 'inductive risk'[1] that paved the way to a field – 'values in science' – that took some time to flourish, and that some scholars really fought hard to get off the ground. Interestingly, challenging the contents of the received view had to go hand in hand with a certain style of reasoning typical of the circles of analytic philosophy of science, implicitly holding onto the value-free ideal. To break through and introduce new ideas and a new vocabulary, scholars had to first play the argumentative game used by the mainstream[2]. In 2024, there still exist some 'recidivist' scholars, but thanks to the scholarship developed in science and technology science, shouting out loud that values do play a role in the scientific process, holding to these views does not make you look bizarre anymore. Luckily so.

The second story, which I reconstruct in a rather personal and anecdotal way, has to do with how the profession has changed over the years. When I started my PhD, more than twenty years ago, the majority of professional philosophers was male. At all levels. I won't give numbers, as they can be found easily. It was normal for a woman to be in the minority group in a conference, it was normal to receive a harsh and patronizing comment from a senior colleague, it was normal to be (more or less gently) harassed. You must have heard this story already many times, and I have been there too. As we speak, we women are definitively more numerous at all levels, we cover important roles in admin positions, in editing journals or hiring committees. It is *not* normal anymore to bully a colleague or to harass her or him. It still happens, but it is widely agreed that it is not okay. Diversity and inclusion have been claimed to be essential values of being in academia, academia should be an inclusive and diverse place – that's what we must strive for.

[1] Rudner, Richard. 1953. "The Scientist Qua Scientist Makes Value Judgments." *Philosophy of Science* 20, 1–6.

[2] See, for instance, Douglas, Heather. 2000. "Inductive Risk and Values in Science." *Philosophy of Science* 67, 559–79.

Now, these two stories are not usually connected. The first is about themes in a field that are subject to change. The second is about social norms that are also subject to change. My argument today is that these two stories *are* connected. Specifically, they are connected through a factor typically left out of the equation: my claim is that social practices and social norms are not independent from epistemic practices. The values we put into one, are and should be the values that we put into the other. And allow me to formulate a conjecture: if parts of the profession haven't improved enough, it is *also* because we haven't thought enough about our epistemic practices, and how values can change social norms via epistemic practices (and vice versa). In a nutshell: diversity and inclusion are *epistemic values*, not only ethico-political ones.

4. Epistemic values

To repeat, my argument is that values such as diversity and inclusion are also *epistemic*. This means that they are part and parcel of our epistemic practices. I would like, however, to make an even stronger claim: they influence our epistemic practices in a fundamental way, and thereby affect our epistemic outputs substantially.

I might be expected, at this stage, to delve into meta-ethical discussions on the very concept of 'value'. I won't. I am here building on existing scholarship in philosophy of science that has already made the point that while one may want to distinguish epistemic from moral values, these are *values* none the less[3]. Arguments to this effect are normally made to rebut the value neutrality defence. Take, for instance, a classic concern in the philosophy of the natural science, and typically physics, namely theory choice. Which values underpin such choices? The standard view has it that epistemic values such as simplicity or accuracy are the driver of theory choice, but contributions from feminist epistemology and the values-in-science literature has pressed to include others too, including novelty or applicability to human needs[4].

Recall, my objective is to argue that diversity and inclusion are epistemic values (too), or to put it in more general terms: there is a tight connection between social values and norms, and epistemic ones. Some arguments emphasizing the importance of diversity for epistemic practices have been made[5], however these are framed in terms of scientists' choices to accept or reject hypotheses. Building on this line of work, I want to extend the relevance of inclusion and diversity (i) for the *contents* of our theories, and (ii) to philosophical theorizing. To lend support to my thesis, I will do something that philosophers of science (in practice) typically do, namely looking into the practice of science. You'll see that even if words may differ, I am not alone in raising this concern.

[3] Douglas, op. cit.; 2009. Douglas, Heather. 2009*. Science, Policy, and the Value-Free Ideal*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.; Elliott, Kevin C. 2017. *A Tapestry of Values*. Oxford University Press.
[4] Longino, Helen. 1995. "Gender, Politics, and the Theoretical Virtues." *Synthese* 104, 383–97.
[5] Longino, Helen. 2002. *The Fate of Knowledge*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

5. Values in the practice of science

I offer two examples that are somewhat programmatic in that they reflect on methods and on why said methods are conducive of certain values. A third example is instead critical in character, showing how in some areas collaboration becomes de facto devalued (hence diminishing the types of epistemic values I'm interested in).

5.1. Mixed methods research and dialectical pluralism

Mixed methods research is an interesting area in the social sciences. From the very start and by intention, it has been set up to counter a methodological divide that has grown bigger and stronger since the time of positivism: the alleged opposition between qualitative and quantitative methods. This is accompanied with the widespread – but wrong – belief that quantitative methods are rigorous and objective while qualitative methods are subjective and largely idiosyncratic. Mixed methods researchers don't adhere to this division and believe in the value of adopting *both* methods in empirical research. There is abundant literature theorizing how the two approaches can be combined, giving plenty of practical guidance about when it is appropriate to start with a qualitative approach, when with a quantitative approach, and what different kinds of iteration bring about understanding a phenomenon. There is also abundant literature on the philosophical underpinnings of mixed methods research, and notably what kind of ontological and epistemological assumptions each one presupposes. Quantitative methods are typically associated with a positivistic approach, that means that reality is considered objective, there is a distance between subject and object. Qualitative methods are instead typically associated with interpretivism, namely the view that what we say about reality is the result of our interpretations of it.

For mixed methods theorizers such as Burke Johnson, these differences are not incompatible. But there is more. The reasons to work with mixed method approaches go well beyond ontology, epistemology, and methodology. They have to do with *ethics*. Johnson describes MMR as a "practice to engage in difference"[6], which already in itself is a beautiful way of characterizing a methodological approach! All three terms – practice, engage, difference - carry values beyond the methods themselves. Johnson explains that to practice MMR, one needs to be open to the world and to other researchers and stakeholders, because choosing a method is *also* a question of being receptive to the needs of the parties involved. When he describes MMR, his characterization focuses first and foremost on how individuals should collaborate, and for what purpose. It is for this reason that he dubs his take on MMR *dialectical pluralism*. Johnson effectively shifts the debate from methodology proper to ethics. First, we need to work out the values at the basis of research, then we can re-discuss which methods to use. Pluralism about methods is first and foremost an ethical need – diversity and

[6] Johnson, R. Burke (2017). Dialectical Pluralism: A Metaparadigm Whose Time Has Come. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *11*, 156-173.

inclusion are values that enter the epistemic sphere and profoundly affect our methods and the results.

5.2. System thinking

Let me give you another example of a methodological approach that calls for incorporating values as part and parcel of the methods. You might be surprised, because the example I will give is system thinking. System thinking has a long tradition and most people will associate it with the work of biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy. The systemic approach, that intersect with complexity approaches, is often associated with methods that became highly mathematized, and making use of computational approaches able to chew large sets of data – many will think of the work carried out, for instance, at the Santa Fe Institute in the US. This is all true. But as often happens, there are voices singing outside the choir.

The voice I'd like you to hear is that of Gerald Midgley, a system theorist that has put so much effort and work in trying to find unity in the various approaches developed within system thinking. He is the editor of a monumental collection that revisits the history of system thinking, highlighting its main conceptual tenets as well its methodological developments[7]. In itself, this is already an exercise in inclusion and diversity because his role as an editor was to give a comprehensive picture of what system thinking is; as he explains in the preface of the four volumes, he was concerned with what to *include*, rather than exclude. But there is more. Midgley presents his own take on systemism in a monograph titled *Systemic Intervention*[8]. We learn from Midgley that, surely, we need to understand what a system is, and that one of its core features is emergence. But we also learn from him that we can't study systems using *only* one methodological approach. In particular, we need methods (in the plural) that allow us to study systems considering the *people* that make up such systems. For this reason, quantitative methods are often insufficient, and we need to deploy qualitative methods as well. So here we somehow reconnect with the previous themes of mixed methods research. But Midgley goes even a step further: his reason for working in 'community operation research' is to drive change in society, to reduce social inequalities. You can't really reduce inequalities by sticking to one method, especially if that method assumes we can provide an objective account of reality, abstracting from *who* is being studied and *who* carries out the study.

I said this voice is dissonant, like a singer out-of-step with their choir that sings objectivity and value-free refrain; but to me this book has been a melody to listen to,

[7] Midgley, Gerald. eds 2003. *Systems Thinking*. Volumes 1-4. SAGE Library in Business and Management. SAGE.
[8] Midgley, Gerald. 2012. *Systemic Intervention: Philosophy, Methodology, and Practice*. Springer.

and has greatly inspired me to keep working on methodological pluralism, because there are important connections to be made between *methods and ethos*.

The two preceding examples were about visions for a field. They combine epistemology and ethics, and they plead for diversity and inclusion to be done at the levels of methods. These methods are deeply connected with ethico-political dimensions of research and policy. My next example, however, serves a different purpose. Sadly, things do not always go so well. We, as a community of scholars in academia, fail to practice diversity and inclusion. A lack that is visible both at the level of methods and at the level of ethics.

5.3. Biocuration

'Data science' is about more than crunching numbers with machines having high computational power. For this to happen, we first need to *prepare* the data. In the life sciences, there is a professional figure that has emerged in recent times, that of the *biocurator*. Biocurators organize, manage, enrich, and clean the vast data sets produced in the biosciences. This work is vital, because quality of data is key for the quality of outputs. STS scholars Sarah Davies and Constantin Holmer[9] took interest in this professional figure and in their work. They conducted ethnographic research to understand what happens behind the scenes, and what they found out is that their vital work is not recognized. Scientific publications, based on the preliminary work of biocurators, do *not* acknowledge their work; the experience of biocurators is not valued for career progression; biocurators remain in a limbo: their work is fundamental for the academic field of bioinformatics, but they are not considered academics. There is of course a lot to be said about this situation and how this is premised on a faulty concept of knowledge, originality of work, etc. Davies and Holmer, however, raise a point that is close to my concern relating to diversity and inclusion. Their criticism of biocuration is framed in terms of epistemic justice and of care, how this situation perpetuates dominant narratives of academic excellence, excluding from this excellence those who are, in the first place, making it possible. They contribute to the important work done in STS work documenting – and to some extent denouncing – these situations and go a step further. Davies and Holmer urge us to rethink these practices, to go towards what they call 'academia otherwise'. Their idea of 'academia otherwise' strongly resonates with me, and I wish to offer my two cents on how we can drive changes in our respective academic sub-fields.

[9] Davies, Sarah R. and Holmer, Constantin. 2024. Care, collaboration, and service in academic data work: biocuration as 'academia otherwise', Information, *Communication & Society*, 27, 683-701.

6. From theory to practice: another academia is possible

I now give some examples from my past and current work, *not* to show off, but to lend support to the idea that this is possible. It is possible to build an 'academia otherwise', but this requires thorough reflection on our practices. I started making 'academia otherwise' possible while I was *not* in a strong position as I am now, as a full professor. I make this argument now to empower others, to give a vocabulary, a framework, and a precedent to the practice. And for full disclosure: I haven't done it alone. More thanks will come at the end, but you need to know who's my big partner in crime here – her name is Phyllis Illari.

6.1. Causal mosaic as an inclusive and diverse causal concept

It is time for me to tell you another story, taken from the library of philosophical debates. Once upon a time, philosophers debated about *causation*. Causation is an evergreen concept in philosophical thinking, and the one that has fascinated me more than anything else. Since my PhD time, when I started delving into the literature on causation in philosophy of science, it was clear that the intention was to provide what Phyllis and I have recently called *The-One-Theory* (ToT) of causality. To provide ToT of causality means to give an account of what causality is, or of what causes are, that applies pretty much anywhere. So, if you say "I missed the bus because my alarm clock did not go off" or "*Helycobacter Pylori* causes gastric ulcer", your theory should be able to accommodate for all that, and potentially much more.

In analytic circles, philosophers, who are typically very cunning human beings, have engaged in endless fabrication of counterexamples. This is because, if a theory is aimed at so much generality, *one* counterexample should be enough to invalidate the whole theory. This battery of counterexamples has populated pages and pages of books and journals. It also goes together with a specific *style of argumentation*: an uncharitable knocking down the author and their theory – nothing is to be saved, because we have to make room to another ToT. And the game starts again. You might think that I am exaggerating, but I am actually not.

How can we break this vicious circle of uncharitable and destructive criticizing other philosophers' idea and trying to affirm our own? Phyllis' and my approach was to go *pluralist*. But being a pluralist is not tantamount to playing an 'anything goes' strategy. To begin with, it is a way of recognising *value* in what others have been doing. It has been motivated by a more sophisticated approach to causality that distinguishes between different types of philosophical questions and of scientific problems of causality. Thus we claim that what may help address one question or problem may be less suited for another. This should force the pluralist to provide a *rationale* for arguing in favour of any given combinations of concepts, depending on the case at hand. We have presented our pluralistic approach of *causal mosaic* in several publications, but

here I wish to stress an aspect that we started to make clear in print only very recently: causal mosaic is an *inclusive and collegial approach*. It is collegial and inclusive from an epistemic perspective as well as from an ethical and socio-epistemological perspective. As I said, we have presented the epistemic part quite often, so I now want to tell you the other part of the story, *also* because this is exactly what is *never* discussed in print: the values that guides our epistemic processes.

6.2. Inclusive conferencing and editing

6.2.1. The Causality in the Sciences Conference Series

In 2006, I was a junior postdoc at the University of Kent.[10] As part of the project, I organised, together with Jon Williamson, a conference on 'Causality and Probability in the Sciences'. That was the beginning of a long series of conferences. With Phyllis Illari and some other colleagues, we established, shortly thereafter, the 'Causality in the Sciences Network'. We organised conferences every year, and also numerous workshops to present work in progress. Phyllis and I always strived to diversify the list of invited speakers; most importantly, we gave voice to more junior scholars and we created a safe space for collegial and collaborative conversations. This meant, among other things, that harsh comments and nasty questions, as well as bullying or patronising behaviour, were strongly discouraged. We never *said* this explicitly, in the sense that we did not wrote down a code of conduct, but we led by example. As we speak, most conferences in philosophy adopt some code of conduct, and CitS has been such a place for many years. The quality of our exchanges *also* depends on social dynamics.

6.2.2. The editorship at the European Journal for Philosophy of Science

Phyllis and I continued to foster collegiality and inclusivity since 2017, when we were appointed as Editors-in-Chief of the *European Journal for Philosophy of Science* (EJPS). We chose associate editors with diverse backgrounds, and at different career stages. It is worth noting that we were appointed when neither of us was full professor, and did not even have a permanent job. We did more. We restructured the whole submission system of the journal, diversifying the categories for submission of manuscripts, thus making official space for contributions that were not in the dominant Anglo-Saxon tradition. We strived to always give editorial comments to authors, we edited reviews that were unnecessarily harsh or patronising in the language. We did our best to create a safe space for collegial and inclusive exchanges. Without compromising on quality of the epistemic part, there is *a lot* that can be done about the ethos. We dubbed our

[10] Incidentally, just this year, the University of Kent has shut down a very successful and innovative philosophy department, where I worked for several years, and I still find it a difficult piece of news to digest.

editorial approach 'inclusive editing', and only recently we decided them to put these principles black on white, as an editorial piece in EJPS[11].

6.2.3. The Routledge Handbook of Causality and Causal Methods

Our approach to inclusive editing went a step further when we started working under contract with Routledge for the *Handbook of Causality and Causal Methods*[12], which will be out early next year. Handbooks are the pinnacle of prestige. Handbook chapters don't count much in terms of original research if you apply for jobs, but everyone will agree that if you make it into a handbook, clearly you are a 'big shot' in the field. We decided to invite very few 'big shots' in causality, and only if we thought that they might have something new to say, over and above, the numerous publications they already had. We decided instead to give voice to less known scholars, to those who would not self-identify as 'causality peeps', to scientists trying to establish a dialogue with philosophers, but failing because most of the time, we philosophers, are nasty, exclusive people protecting our inner circles of old boys or girls. Now, if you decide to have so many different people at your party, you also need to make sure they start knowing the other guests; thus, we organised collaborative workshops to present and get peer feedback on preliminary ideas for the chapters. Then, we decided that double masked peer review was very ill-suited to our project. We instead set up a system that we called 'crowd-sourced collegial peer review'. Every author was asked to pick a chapter from their section, and one outside their section, and provide comments via a simple Google Drive platform. Result: nearly everyone took part in the peer review, all comments were constructive and collegial, we all learned from each other and improved our chapters. No gate keeping, no patronising, no bullying. Our values of diversity, inclusion, and collegiality have led to a high-quality result, from an epistemic perspective. The ethical and epistemic dimensions are connected, values *are* part and parcel of the epistemic process, diversity and inclusion *are* epistemic values too.

[11] Illari, Phyllis, Russo, Federica, Šešelja, Duña, Frisch, Mathias. 2024. Inclusive editing: a collegial approach to academic knowledge making. *European Journal for Philosophy of Science*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13194-024-00616-2

[12] Illari, Phyllis and Russo, Federica (eds). *The Routledge Handbook of Causality and Causal Methods*. Routledge. Forthcoming 2025.

7. Care and co-creation at the heart of philosophy

As I see it, my point about diversity and inclusion as epistemic values needs to get even more concrete by calling for a revision of what we take philosophy to be, or what we consider good ways of doing philosophy to be.

A lot has been done, trying to set up best practices, for instance in the context of conferencing. But more needs to be done. A good starting point is the acknowledgement of the value of collaboration, and how much we *always* rely on others' and on others' work[13]. This connects the epistemic and ethical dimension through a concept of knowledge that, far from a highly intellectualist reconstruction, is instead relational and distributed. I will not further develop on how to re-design the concept of knowledge. Instead, in closing my lecture I wish to bring attention to two further ideas: care and co-creation.

'Care' is associated with an ethical approach that is relational; it focuses on connections and relations with others, it requires being present, generosity, and understanding.[14] While a caring perspective in ethics has been proposed from camps close to feminist scholarship, in the literature an argument has been made that caring should not be solely associated to a feminine attitude, identified in the iconic idea of motherhood. There is however another 'extension' of care, beyond gender, that we need to do, and that is to apply the concept of care to epistemology. I am not aware of substantial work in this direction, although little seeds can be found[15]. It seems to me that *caring* can profoundly change how we see the epistemic process of developing ideas, from thinking to writing and publishing. Caring can change how we engage with problem selection, with other scholars' views, with editing practices, and ultimately with assessing our respective contributions.

Related to the introduction of care as a foundational part of our philosophical work, we need to significantly go counter the idea of the solo genius and the lonely philosopher. Here, the idea of 'co-creation' can do a lot for us. To begin with, philosophical theories, concepts, and ideas are not generated from nowhere, they do not fall from the sky. They are really *created*, in a sense very similar to an artefact – we could call them *semantic* artefacts. But most importantly, and to echo the point made earlier about the role of peers and contexts in our work, we really *co*-create them. Co-creation is an approach that has roots in the corporate sector, with the goal of designing better (i.e.,

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[13] On this, see e.g. Kidd, Ian James. 2016. Intellectual Humility, Confidence, and Argumentation. *Topoi* 35, 395–402. This is also a good place to acknowledge the assistance of Emma England and Federico Boem, who thoroughly read earlier versions of this text, in English and in Italian.

[14] Gilligan, Carol. 1993. *In a Different Voice*. Harvard University Press; Thayer-Bacon, Barbara. 1997. Caring's role in epistemology. *Inquiry: Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines* 17, 20-31.

[15] In personal communication, Anne Beaulieu told me about that her current research also considers the concept 'care' as part of methodology and epistemology.

more sellable) products by involving consumers into the design process. While the intentions were clearly favouring the capitalist and consumeristic ideals, the idea of co-creation has travelled to the public sector, and even to health care, as a way of involving citizens, and then patients, in processes where they should be central.[16]

I would like to suggest that philosophy is also a co-creation activity, one in which we ask why we embark in a philosophical project, how we plan to carry it out, and especially *for whom* we do it. I am pleased not to be alone in starting to think of philosophy as co-creation[17], and I hope we will – together – offer a more substantial account of philosophy as co-creation.

[16] Ind, Nicholas and Coates, Nick. 2013. The meanings of co-creation. *European Business Review*, Vol. 25, 86-95; Cassam, Quassim 2016. Virtues and vices of real-world co-creation. In Integration and Implementation Insights. A community blog and repository of resources for improving research impact on complex real-world problems. Accessed on 20 Oct 2024. URL: https://i2insights.org/2016/05/26/co-creation-virtues-vices/

[17] Lubomira Radoilska, for instance, is developing similar ideas from the perspective of applied ethics, in collaborative projects with health care services.

8. Conclusion

My time is nearly up. Diversity and inclusion are the new mantra in academia. Nobody would dare to disagree. How to make academia a genuinely diverse and inclusive place is the hard question. Science and philosophy are not just value-laden practices; they are also value *promoting*. The ways in which we can promote values also concerns our daily practices: how we engage with the extant scholarships, how we run editorial projects, and conferences. All this points towards diversity and inclusion to be not just ethico-political values, but proper *epistemic values*.

9. Acknowledgements

There are many people I'd like to thank, many more I can mention here.

Let me begin with thanking my family, that normally comes last in academic acknowledgments. Thank you, Sofia, my daughter; parenting is the most difficult thing I've done so far, and you challenge me every single day to find balance in my multiple selves – mother, wife, daughter, and academic. Thanks to Giuseppe, my husband, for being the person that always pushes me to go beyond my limits. And to my parents, Paola and Sergio, for being here; we academics take to the skies every other day, but for them it is a considerable effort to be here, and thanks to my siblings, who are attending online and I know they would have liked to be here on this day.

My first academic thank-you goes to Phyllis Illari, my philosophy sister. As we often say, we started sharing an office, and we ended up sharing a vision for the field. We've gone a long way, but we are not done yet. I hope we'll be together for much longer.

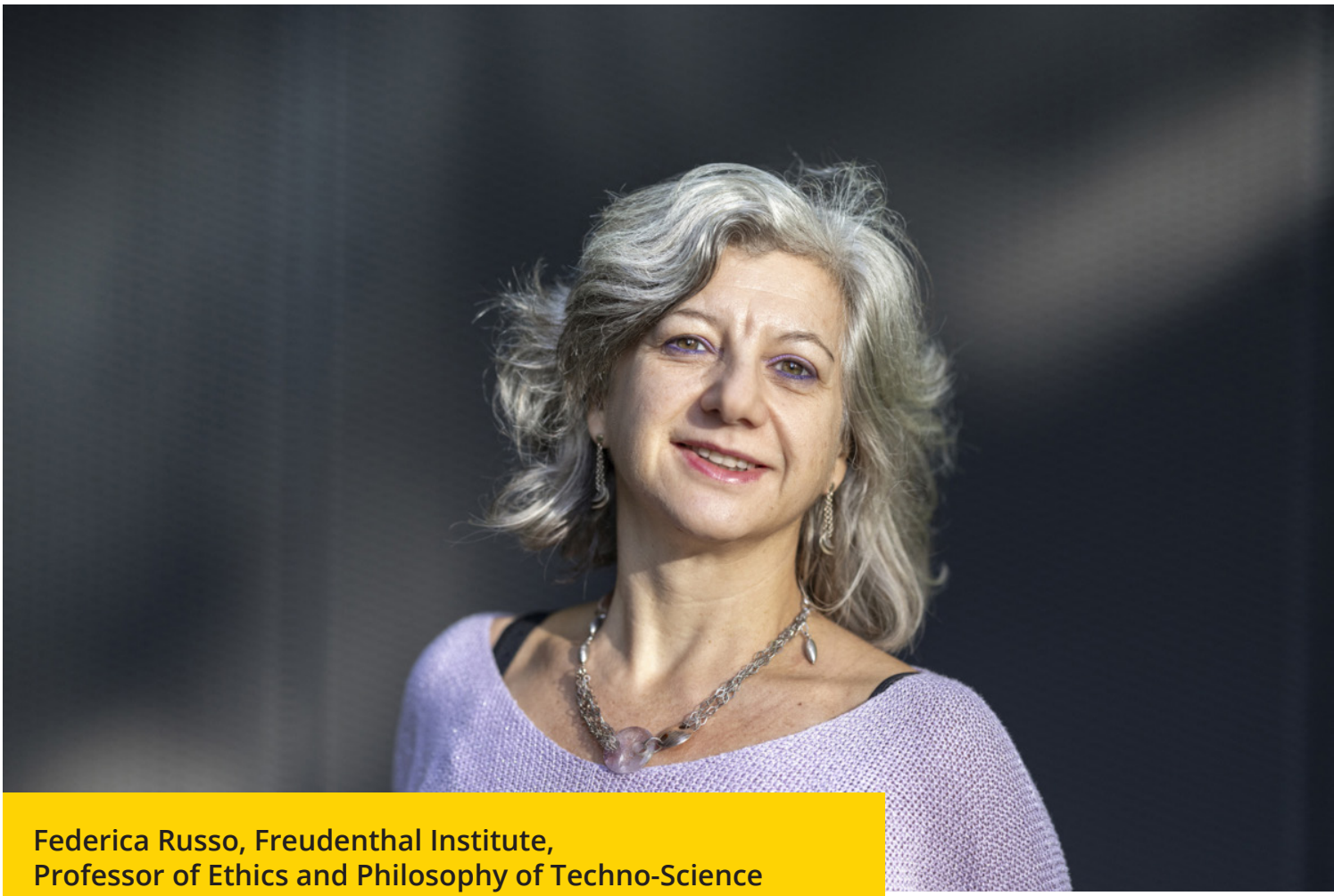
My academic past. My deepest thanks to Michel Mouchart and Guilllaume Wunsch. They were in my PhD committee, they have been my mentors for a long time, and finally my colleagues. They taught me a great deal, over the years, about doing research. About content, but also about ethos. From Michel, I learned that we have a privilege, as academics, to choose our themes and collaborators, and so we should choose wisely, especially the people. From Guillaume, I learned that, in the difficult situation between saving a paper and saving a relationship with a colleague, you save the relationship.

I spent nine years at the UvA, before joining UU. I won't lie, these have not been easy years, but I wish to thank Arianna Betti for being a role model, and a friend. I am also grateful for the opportunities that colleagues at the IAS and IIS have provided me with, and that allowed to rethink my research profile. Last but not least, I wish to thank Jean Wagemans, for enlarging the horizon of what one can do with causal pluralism.

And the present. Thank you all, colleagues at the Freudenthal Institute! A forward-looking hiring committee chaired by Toine Pieters saw in my profile what many others have dismissed, appointing me as Westerdijk chair. To me this is recognition of the multiple cultural clashes, the glass ceilings I hit, and power struggles I encountered over the years. What I said tonight has been the hallmark of my academic activities for long time, and I now am entitled and empowered to make this argument in the open.

Today is a day of joy and satisfaction, undoubtedly. But I must also recall (to myself, in primis) that I'm here after a long and tough journey. I equally thank those who made the journey hard, in various ways. These people often hide behind the curtain of 'the system'. The system is made of people. But I thank you, people who made it hard, because you also made me who I am. Dixi.

Utrecht University



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