RETHINKING THE SOURCES OF NORMATIVITY IN ETHICS
GUEST EDITORS' PREFACE

ANDREAS FUNKE
Law School, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (Germany)
andreas.funke@fau.de

ROBERTO REDAELLI
Centre for Studies in Neo-Kantianism (CENK)
Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (Germany)
roberto.redaelli@fau.de

ABSTRACT
The paper offers a concise introduction to the special issue of *Ethics e Politics* "Rethinking the Sources of Normativity in Ethics". To this purpose it outlines the intellectual scenario within which the contributions of this special issue are embedded and the overarching goal of redefining the question on the sources of moral normativity through an interdisciplinary framework. The paper moreover provides an overview of each contribution categorized in thematically distinguished areas.

KEYWORDS
Normativity; Ethics, Primatology; Sociology; Law;

Christine Korsgaard's influential 1992 Tanner Lectures on Human Values initiated a lively debate in philosophy over the identification of the sources of normativity in the field of ethics. Several eminent scholars in contemporary philosophy have contributed to this debate. C.A. Cohen, R. Geuss, T. Nagel, and B. Williams have provided significant observations in their excellent commentary to Korsgaard's Tanner Lectures; the debate has also attracted the attention of scholars from the fields of phenomenological and of hermeneutic philosophy in recent publications. Such manifold theoretical perspectives, developed over the last two decades, provide us with tools to undertake the effort of understanding the conditions for the appearance of the normative profile of ethical concepts and judgments, i.e. the source of their cogency and therefore their ability to guide our

actions. Nevertheless, in addition to the various responses offered by philosophical inquiry (from Korsgaard's neo-Kantian solution to Crowell's Heideggerian one) there are others that have crossed the boundaries of the philosophical debate, investing other fields of inquiry and revitalizing the ambitious Nietzschean project of tracing a genealogy of morality.

In some cases, such genealogy has, in current studies, taken on a phylogenetic point of view, addressing the goal of outlining a natural history of human morality (e.g. M. Tomasello; R. Wrangham). Other studies have pursued an ontogenetic perspective of sociological nature (e. g. E. Fittipaldi; M. Tomasello), based on child psychology and psychoanalysis; in such cases, psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists have committed to identifying the different sources of normativity, highlighting the role played by phenomena such as cooperation, education, and aggression in the process of development of the ethical sphere.

Such a diverse and interrelated set of questions is addressed by this special issue of *Ethics and Politics*. The present issue brings together some of the most fruitful results from the debate around ethical normativity in different disciplines. Starting from an interdisciplinary perspective, our aim is to outline and analyse the conditions of the emergence of ethical normativity.

For this purpose the issue collects contributions from representative authors who have addressed, and do address today, the question of the origin of normativity, in different fields of knowledge: law, primatology, sociology, psychoanalysis, and philosophy. In this sense, the issue is meant to embrace investigations that focus both on the problem of the genesis of moral concepts as well as works interrogating the sources of the normative claims put forth by moral conceptions. Therefore, the volume takes up the Nietzschean question about the conditions by which human beings create value judgments, but it moreover attempts to answer the closely related question, posed by Korsgaard, concerning the right of these concepts and judgments to impose laws on us.

Richard Wrangham, in his contribution *The execution hypothesis for the evolution of a morality of fairness*, first inquires into such questions by pursuing an evolutionary perspective. To explain why humans tend to behave morally, the primatologist brings to light the causal link between the fact that human beings are the only species known to have a morality of fairness, and the fact that they are the only species in which the social hierarchy is headed by an alliance (a 'reverse dominance hierarchy'). It is argued that the outcome of this alliance exercises a powerful selective pressure against antisocial behaviour and in favour of pro-sociality, which elicits the emergence of normative emotions.

Wrangham's ample phylogenetic perspective is complemented by the ontogenetic approach of Edoardo Fittipaldi's contribution. Focusing on normative emotions, Fittipaldi claims that norms are to be understood as expectations based on "normative" emotions. The author's argument is that anger, indignation, disgust,

guilt, shame, and pride are the primary "normative" emotions which derive from the interaction between infant and caregiver.

Natalia Satokhina and Andreas Funke address the issue of normativity in the field of Law. Satokhina's contribution is a *Hermeneutic Account of Normativity of Law*. Addressing the theory of hermeneutic experience as an experience of understanding, the author brings to light the connection between the normativity internal to the hermeneutic experience and formalized normative systems. On the grounds of these preliminary considerations, Satokhina reads the modern crisis of law as an integral part of the general crisis of meaning that is investing our society. Andreas Funke focuses on the particular way in which the normativity of law operates. According to a common view, law distinguishes between two levels, that of the applicable legal norm and that of the application of the legal norm. But this distinction, albeit analytically justified, tends to tear apart the normativity of law. To bring this out, Funke illuminates the normativity of law from the perspective of the autonomy of those who are said to obey the law.

Alessio Rotundo, Andrea Staiti, and Roberto Redaelli propose reflections on the problem of normativity, respectively in the phenomenological and Neo-Kantian fields of inquiry. On the one hand, Rotundo draws a clear textual analysis of the development of phenomenological reflection in Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, expounding the connection between reason, normativity, and history. On the other hand, Staiti highlights Husserl's theory of "specifically normative concepts" and the original conception of normativity that originates from this theory.

In the Neo-Kantian field, Redaelli proposes a set of preliminary considerations furthering the development of a theory in the first-person-plural "We", inspired by the Neo-Kantian philosopher Heinrich Rickert. To this purpose, Redaelli's contribution illustrates the unique nature of the ethical reflection embodied in Rickertian philosophy.

The sophisticated contribution by Carla Bagnoli focuses specifically on the question of normativity posed by Korsgaard, illustrating the complex nature of the phenomenon of moral normativity and the need to tackle this phenomenon by thematizing not only the first-person deliberative stance, but also different practical stances. The final contribution to the issue consists in a "virtual" dialogue between Christine Korsgaard and Andrea Staiti on the theory of moral normativity proposed by the former. In the dialogue with Staiti, Korsgaard clarifies some points of her philosophical proposition and answers to some of the criticisms made to her position, providing a significant contribution to the set of questions laid out in the debate.

Korsgaard's own words significantly set the final piece to this issue of *Ethics and Politics*. The task of this special issue is to provide the reader with a preliminary overview of the different responses currently given to the question of normativity in diverse fields of knowledge, and at the same time, to initiate a trans-disciplinary and

fruitful conversation that shall enrich current and future investigations on normativity.