ROBUST MORAL REALISM: PLURALIST OR EMERGENT?[1]

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ABSTRACT

In Retrieving Realism, *Taylor and Dreyfus aim to correct mistaken modern assumptions and their post-modern reactions in order to affirm a robust realism about a world for scientific and moral exploration. Their critiques and solutions have much in common with Polanyi's approach; they all emphasize tacit body-knowing, background frameworks, and our ability to develop epistemological structures that better and better grasp the world considered independent from us. Dreyfus-Taylor and Polanyi diverge, however, when it comes to choosing a framework from which to understand a robust moral realism. The former endorse a Heideggerian "reveal but conceal" pluralist approach, while a Polanyian view advocates a "progress but with risk" emergentist approach. I argue that the emergentist approach provides a better defense against deflationary realism and better reconciles apparent contradictions, such as physical causality and free will, engaged contact and progress in knowing reality in-itself, and cultural relativism and objective morality. While a pluralist account may have the strength of endorsing tolerance, it is more vulnerable to an ethical relativism; and while an emergentist view is more clearly at risk of illicit dogmatism, it has the strength of endorsing the search for moral truth that we all can share.*

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In *Retrieving Realism*, Charles Taylor and Hubert Dreyfus look at deeply-seated modern assumptions that can distort our relation to the world and encourage us to experience it as meaningless and distant. Much like Michael Polanyi, they see modern epistemology as at least partly responsible for undermining our belief in the reality of human values and free will. They unravel to the roots these distorting assumptions that can "colonize common sense" and, by standing on the shoulders of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Samuel Todes and Hans-Georg Gadamer, they magnificently show us how we actually do connect with the world and each other in a meaningful way. But they are after much more than this. Once contact is established, a realism can be deflationary or robust. They want a "robust realism" that affirms science's ability to progress in discovering reality. They also want a robust realism that affirms our ability to discover and weigh true values.

To bolster their robust view against Richard Rorty's deflationary realism, they move towards ideas we find in Michael Polanyi and C.S. Peirce, such as the building of tacit epistemological structures that can accurately capture an independent reality in the long run. However, in the last chapter they advocate a pluralistic conception of reality that is in tension with their notion of a "fusion of horizons" and a progressive supersession to more and more adequate views. Advocating pluralism can defuse some dangers surrounding too strong a conception of progress, but pluralism applied too soon can also re-introduce a realist's version of the relativism that they worry about in Rorty's account (65).[2]

I argue that explicitly framing their insights in Polanyi's emergentist "progress but with risk" picture rather than Heidegger's pluralistic "reveal but conceal" picture would strengthen Taylor and Dreyfus' argument against deflationary realists like Rorty and better legitimize their conception of progress in moral knowledge. A stratified emergentist account is also a more thoroughgoing application of gestalt holism than a flat pluralism and better reconciles apparent contradictions in a unified framework, such as the co-existence of (1) causal determination and rational freedom, (2) engaged contact and progress in knowing reality in-itself, and (3) cultural relativism and objective morality. While there are dangers and benefits to each approach, viewing ethical truths as emergent achievements allows for a plurality, but also presents a stronger hope for a new, shared moral reality.

Realism Lost: Distorting Assumptions and Their Dangers

Taylor and Dreyfus identify the assumptions that can distort our understanding of the world: (1) the "dualist sortings" of inside from outside (mind-matter, mind-world, brain-body, but also form-content, original-copy and mold-filling [46]), (2) a mediational view of how the two are then bridged (representations or ideas in the mind depicting the world), (3) a foundationalist approach (a reduction to atoms of

experience and rebuilding knowledge from them), and (4) a "monological" (as in an individualistic monologue) understanding of how we come to know the world and establish meaningfulness. This last assumption divides us not only from the world, but from each other, making the project of knowing the world seem a more individual matter than it actually is.

The root problem here is the way an inside-outside distinction is conceived; we start to posit and problematize a widening gulf between our minds and the world beyond it. This distance breeds both skeptical and anti-realist views that encourage us to doubt that we can ever know reality as it is, if there is such a thing. The dualist sorting of a mind or brain *in here* and the world *out there* even makes the notion that we are living in constant illusion—like a brain in a vat or Neo hooked up to the Matrix—seem like a real possibility when it is merely a fanciful possibility (95-97).

This separation between mind and reality also leads to seeing the world outside as comprised solely of physical configurations that are completely separate from human values, which then come to seem inner and mental and thus appear to be merely projected upon the outer world. Conceived as two entirely distinct and contradictory notions, the realm of determinate physical causes (expressed as value-free facts) seems to negate any reality for a realm of human meanings and freedom. Hence the skepticism about the reality of the world, or our ability to know it, is surpassed only by an even stronger skepticism about the possibility of finding truth in any assessment of human values. If only the "outer" physical facts count as real, the values of Hitler and Mother Theresa are equally good or evil, and both are illusory fabrications, to be judged, perhaps, only by their usefulness to those who adhere to them. This last caveat reflects the sort of non-realist relativism about values that Dreyfus and Taylor worry about with Rorty's approach.

Answering Rorty's Challenge: Building Epistemological Structure

Taylor and Dreyfus overcome any continued skepticism about the existence of reality and meanings by providing a "contact" picture that displaces traditional mediational or representational pictures. Their contact picture, complemented by Wittgenstein's notion of language-games and Gadamer's notion of a fusion of horizons, also takes away the primacy that Descartes and Locke put on the abilities of an isolated individual. They see how we develop, learn and grow together as we, together, engage and even "coproduce" (93) reality–but how this contact is conceived is crucial. Rorty also allows that our linguistic categories come from pragmatic engagement, but he cannot imagine stepping outside of language for it to be fitted against a world that is apart from us (58). Rorty thus advocates a "deflationary" realism: for him, the philosophical question of a correspondence of true sentences to a world does not arise, precisely because we cannot separate language from the world enough for a correspondence to make sense.[3]

Re-describing the world can change our "truths," but we cannot get an independent stance from which to judge when one description is a better than another. Connecting scientific and moral "truths" with how our community agrees to talk makes Rorty's view look nonrealist and relativist (65), but Taylor and Dreyfus can run into a similar sort of trouble if they cannot adequately address "Rorty's Challenge" (132).

To get their robust realism, Taylor and Dreyfus must be able to tell us how we can get to reality *in itself* when we start from an engaged perspective that describes reality as it is to us. Too great a conceptual distance from reality and we succumb to skepticism; but too close and we succumb to "deflationary" realism. Their arguments against Rorty here rely heavily on their ability to substantiate the notion of progress in science (and morality) towards better and better accounts of the structure of reality as it is apart from us (142).

Here Taylor and Dreyfus import notions of "essences" and "natural kinds," along with "rigid designation" that allows language the ability to correspond to instances of such kinds (141, 142).[4] In attempting to reformulate philosophical distinctions rather than escape from their spell, Taylor and Dreyfus are moving away from Wittgenstein's own deflationary account. Taylor and Dreyfus effectively use Wittgenstein's notion of language-games to exposes flaws in a "monological' approach, but for Wittgenstein, we are also supposed to resist the pull of language that makes us build up philosophical categories such as "truth" and notions such as the idea that language "corresponds" to "reality in itself." Rorty, following Wittgenstein, wants us to "walk away" from such talk (132); Wittgenstein and Rorty would both see new efforts to make realism robust as a backsliding to representationalist notions.

Here Polanyi remains a more steadfast ally than Merleau-Ponty and even Heidegger. Engaged coping and contact is consistent with tacit knowing and indwelling, and both give us a participatory understanding of reality. But the structure of tacit knowing helps us see how we can develop better and better structures for knowing reality as it is (conceived) independently from us. To extract us sufficiently from engagement, Taylor and Dreyfus describe our movement from protoconceptual agents, to engaged agents, to the (responsible) agency of decentered knowers (69). Framing this as the emergence of tacit structure for grasping an independent (and emerging) reality, as Polanyi does, helps strengthen Taylor and Dreyfus' argument, for then we can better see the advancement of science in the post-Galilean "decentered" theories/conceptions as a continuation of the preconceptual task of "getting it right" (76) rather than a backsliding. This is indeed part of their strategy (as they indicate on page 138) but it tacitly imports a developmental and even emergentist approach that Polanyi helps make more explicit.

Polanyi provides a general *from-to* structure common to both motor and linguistic skills that allows us to see how one epistemic stage can build on another. The *from-to* structure of tacit knowing is a gestalt in which the focal understanding (the *to*)

is irreducible to the individual clues that comprise it (the *from*). Also, the focal can become a tacit clue in a further integration. Tacit knowing structures can develop, that we effortlessly see through, and so representational intentionality can be built upon motor intentionality.

Taylor and Dreyfus recognize (with Merleau-Ponty) that "motor intentionality makes representational intentionality possible" (50) and that the meaningful proto-conceptual makes the conceptual and the theoretic possible.[5] The *from-to* structure gives an indication of how we can move *from* the sub-symbolic experience *to* concepts, and *from* concepts *to* conceptions, and *from* conceptions *to* theories, and how these (at each stage) can shape/inform the world and our experience of the world, but also can act as better and better tools for reaching out to discover and understand an independent reality.[6] We dwell in, or tacitly move through, these structures when we reach out to an experience of the world, just as we can move through our nerves, muscles, and the stick in our hand to feel focally the dimensions of a dark room. We are integrally entwined with reality, but our concepts can bring reality to light. This reality, for Polanyi and Peirce, includes natural kinds. Since "universals" (Polanyi, *KB* 149) or "generals" (Peirce) can have real effects and "manifest themselves on an indeterminate range of future occasions" (*KB* 168) they count as real and would divide into kinds based on properties that are "essential" to them.

Taylor and Dreyfus outline in eleven steps the development of "skillful perception and action" that can produce justified true beliefs about the world (summarized on pp. 88-89). They note how these epistemological skills build one upon the other and how all work together tacitly and so any individual stage is typically only noticed when it breaks down (88). Taylor and Dreyfus in effect show how we develop enough tacit knowing structure to become capable of *speaking* about our "coproduced" (93) reality in a meaningful correspondence of words and things, and how we can test, so as to *know* when we get it right. This development shows how we start with an entwined contact with reality as a participatory co-production, but also shows the way we develop structures for knowing, concepts, conceptions and theories that have the requisite distance to either match the structure of the world, or not.[7]

As Taylor and Dreyfus move from "engaged" or "absorbed coping" to the view that we can know a world as it is in itself apart from us, they recognize that they begin to lose the support of Merleau-Ponty (135), but they also seem to lose Heidegger.[8] This is not just because Heidegger would be unhappy to see us pursue the "de-worlding" approach of science as the proper and paradigmatic way to unveil Being, but because for Heidegger with any revealing there is also a concealing, and this does not reflect well the robust notion of scientific progress that Taylor and Dreyfus express. Their effort to keep Heidegger close strains at the notion of progress and draws them towards the pluralistic conception that manifests explicitly in Chapter Eight.

Reconciling Incompatibility: Emergent "Progress but with Risk" vs. Plural "Reveal but Conceal"

In Chapters One through Seven, we see Taylor and Dreyfus advocating something that fits well the framework of Polanyi's development of the tacit structure for *knowing*, but we also see them tacitly embrace some version of an emergentist picture of *being* as well. We see this in the evolutionary progress from the sort of things that are in the causal domain of physical determination to those that can use reason and be free. They provide a picture in which some animals do not yet have the type of freedom that reason gives us, but still have protoconceptual awareness that sets the groundwork for our concepts and beliefs. We can see that the type of beings that we are is dependent upon but not reducible to features that some animals display (77). Here Polanyi's epistemic gestalt holism of a *from-to* structure is echoed in his ontic gestalt holism of a *subsidiary-emergent* structure. With Polanyi we see (and Taylor and Dreyfus would likely acknowledge) that the ontogenesis of the knowing structures that they describe in human beings reflects the phylogenesis of the emergence of one sort of being from another sort. The development towards becoming "decentered" responsible knowers reflects the emergence of the sort of being that is rational and free from a sort of being that is causally determined.[9]

According to Polanyi, each such stage of development in knowing or being is an achievement that also bears new risks (*PK* 387-389). At "every step" of advance there is "an additional liability to miscarry" (*TD* 50). With the emergence of animal life (with degrees of freedom) from non-life, and with the emergence of "higher" forms of life (with more degrees of freedom) there is a greater possibility for growth and movement, but there is also the possibility of deformity and death that did not exist before. Similarly, with the emergence of structures for knowing, we have more chances for getting it right, but we also have more opportunities to go wrong. So while there is no room for skepticism or solipsism at lower levels of animal engagement, at higher levels we can have true beliefs, but we can be mistaken, and we can even become deluded. Humans also gain a freedom from nature that allows us not only to think about it in concepts but allows us to become accountable for our actions. Morality can be seen as a further emergent achievement bearing risks. So while there is no notion of evil at lower levels, at higher levels we have opportunities to do good, or to commit evil acts.

Whereas an emergentist picture sees progress, but with risk of distortion or error, Heidegger tends to see every revealing as simultaneously a concealing; so advancing one line of questioning reality (e.g., pursuing science) detracts from other possible manifestations of reality (e.g., seeing gold as sacred—if the ancient Egyptians were right) and the different manifestations need not be reconcilable. While emergentism is a stratified form of pluralism that shows a way to reconcile contradictory notions together in relation to each other, a flat pluralism lacks this developmental structure. So, while Taylor

and Dreyfus present something like an emergentist account of how freedom builds up from a world dominated by physical causality earlier in the book, in Chapter Eight, where they develop a pluralistic account, they emphasize that causality and freedom may be forever irreconcilable (158), and a natural kind might even have two incompatible essences, e.g., gold may essentially be *both* atomic #79 and sacred (151,152,156).

A flat pluralism opens up the possibility of a natural kind having several essences, but also seems to see these as belonging to it from the very beginning, awaiting discovery, albeit from different approaches (152). Emergentism, in contrast, proposes an ontic gestalt holism that properly remedies the foundationalist picture by supplementing its good method (23) of analysis to parts (and their essential properties) with both (1) the emergence of irreducible wholes/beings (with novel properties) and (2) the notion that emergent wholes/relations can act on their subsidiary conditions (perhaps, at times, unlocking novel properties in the parts). In this picture, even gold (if the Egyptians were right) could take on a new property that is essential to it at different level of engagement, but it would likely not be a feature that was always actually essentially there at the start.

Just as the atomic bits are meaningless without the holistic context of their relations, so atomic parts of a system can get some of their properties from the emergent whole. It is therefore possible that in some cases emergence can change the subsidiaries by bringing out possibilities in them that weren't there before via a new configuration of complex relations.[10] This, in a way, is analogous to how the past can change when we supersede to a new background framework for understanding: the meanings of past events and actions transform in the new context.

Middle Ways between a Reductionist's Monism and a Flat Pluralist's Relativism

Taylor and Dreyfus recognize that the notion we have of scientific *progress* presupposes "one shared reality" as well as notions like "correspondence" and "truth" (147,155). Scientific progress also presupposes, at least as a regulative notion, that we can work towards one unified picture of our one shared reality. If flat-worlders are willing to live with a different set of anomalies than we do, we want to say they are mistaken about our one shared reality. We do not move to a plural conception of reality in which their understanding reveals something concealed to us but is equally valid.

Similarly, if we want a robust realism about values, we want to be able to say that some actions are right and some are wrong. We want progress towards a common fusion from which we can judge together when one set of values is better than another. We do not say that cannibalism reveals something important that is lost to us, but is just as good a practice as any other. We want to say it is a distorted or degenerate practice.

Dreyfus and Taylor's argument against Rorty relies on our ability to "get it right" in a unified story about natural kinds in one shared reality ("science as *world picturing*," 144). In both science and morality, applying the notion of a plural reality *too soon* not only detracts from Dreyfus and Taylor's argument, but also from the hope they provide for supersession to higher values in the moral domain. Without the ruling presumption that I am attempting to discover something that is universally true for everyone via a third-person or transcending view in science *or* morality (Polanyi's "universal intent" [*PK* 37] and Taylor and Dreyfus's "view from nowhere" [69]), pluralism may kick in too early and lead to the stalemate of a realist's relativism in which my world and its values are just as real and just as true as yours. If a pluralist reality, rather than a unified shared reality, becomes our ruling presumption and regulative default, then relativism follows prematurely.

There are indeed good reasons for introducing pluralism at some point: rocks are different than humans and have different properties; we can act freely they cannot. But there are different ways of understanding pluralism and some are more consistent with a robust view of progress than others. Emergentism endorses a developmental and functionally layered picture that resists a reduction to a pure ontological monism, but also resist the relativism of a premature or unconstrained pluralism.

Taylor and Dreyfus see their pluralism as a third alternative between relativism and scientism (154). Emergentism has been described as a third alternative between pluralism and monism.[11] If we see pluralism without any notion of fusion of horizons or supersession into a unitary picture as the relativism (at the far left of the scale), and if we see reduction of everything to the most general science, i.e. physics, as the monism (at the far right of the scale), then we see that Polanyi's emergentism and Taylor and Dreyfus's pluralism are both middle alternatives. Taylor and Dreyfus's pluralistic view is closer to a relativism, but resists the notion of irreconcilably conflicting yet equally true conceptual schemes via the unity that comes with the possibility for a "calibration" of diverse languages and the supersession of distorting frameworks.

Polanyi's view is closer to monism but resists pure identity of all beings to the physical via the plurality that comes with the notion of emergence. The move from left (a relativist's pluralism) to right (a reductionist's monism) comes with the degree to which a successful fusion of horizons, or supersession of conflicting frameworks, can unify diverse conceptions of reality in a common explanatory matrix. The more we do that, the more we tend to see the unification of the plurality of objects in a common sort of being. When it comes to science, as Taylor and Dreyfus point out (155), how much diversity can be brought into unity is largely a matter of empirical investigation, but when unifying moral reality in a common matrix, how much progress we can achieve also depends on what we decide to do. Here is where adopting a "progress but risk" or a "reveal but conceal" approach can make an important difference, since,

among other things, the former can provide a stronger motivation for seeking mutual understanding.

Toward a Robust Emergentist Ethics[12]

Taylor and Dreyfus affirm that "earlier peoples…neither simply *discovered* universal truths about nature and the gods nor *invented* their descriptions of them, but drew on their form of life to *reveal* reality from their own perspectives" (151). The word "reveal" here packs in both discovery and "co-production." While some assessments are merely discoveries of what already is, and some are projective fabrications, some discoveries can manifest co-productions. If this might happen with metals, how much more so with morals? Moral truths reveal possibilities for our interacting with each other and the world in better or worse ways, but the co-produced realities of our human meanings can diverge.

The divergence of moral realities, like the evolution of creatures with freedom, points us towards emergentist conceptions of reality in which divergent cultural "human meanings" build on, but are not reducible to, the "life meanings" common to all human ways of living (108). Although the creation of life meanings is itself a holistic endeavor, to try to understand divergent human meanings on the basis of these would be a "bottom up" approach. To assure us of contact with each other—and to understand each other's communally coproduced world—Taylor and Dreyfus introduce and develop Gadamer's notion of a fusion of horizons that can link us to each other. This fusion of background horizons presents the possibility of coming to at least partially "calibrate" (129) our language/conceptual scheme and background with that of others in a holistic manner. This allows us to understand each other in the realm of *human meanings* even when one's culture and language is radically different and an approach via our common *life meanings* is insufficient.

But the fusion of horizons and dialogue might do more than calibrate schemes: it can bring us to an understanding that supersedes each interlocutor's conceptual scheme. Through dialogue and investigation, we can achieve less distorted understandings of nature itself and what is really good. This notion of supersession brings Taylor and Dreyfus to the idea that both our knowledge of reality and of values can progress (143, 162). In science, we can come to see that Einstein's theories better display the structure of the universe than Newton's, and, in morality, we can come to see abolishing slavery better reflects moral reality than condoning it.

When we encounter a foreign culture with very different moral values, Taylor and Dreyfus present the hope that we can fuse horizons and perhaps even supersede both our perspectives in a new common conception about what there is. But, if reality is considered irreconcilably pluralistic, there is less theoretical motivation to attempt supersession, and if reality is not emergent, supersession to a common framework would

only be possible if a better way actually already happened to *pre-exist* our discovery (just as gold already has two essences in a flat pluralistic picture, if the Egyptians were right). In an emergentist picture, where moral realities diverge, divergences can also converge in a new emergent way of being. The discovery of a mutually better way of being can be a *co*-coproduction of reality that arises from people together in a community engaging the affordances reality presents. Again, Taylor and Dreyfus already tacitly accept some form of an emergentist picture and would not deny this possibility, but it comes across as a robust possibility in the "achievement but risk" view and can come across as an unlikely hope in the "reveal but conceal" picture. In Heidegger's conception, *Dasein* is the sort of being that "takes a stand on itself" (161). We have "disclosed" different ways of understanding human nature, and each brings a different conception of the good (162). This also raises the possibility that we can disclose ways of becoming that are different and better together, but Taylor and Dreyfus seem to look for these possibilities in some pre-existing fixed nature that is there for us to discover (162), and our gain in one direction might be a loss in another.

I have suggested that the emergentist picture reconciles apparent contradictions with regard to causality vs. freedom and intractable engagement vs. truth better than a flat pluralism can; it also better reconciles the notion of an objective morality together with a cultural multiplicity. It does not force us to claim that past or different cultures with practices we find abhorrent were simply wrong, but also it does not force us to say they were just as right as we are, which would generate a relativism. It is possible that for the sort of creatures we were, in the sort of conditions in which we lived, one way of living was better than another, e.g., one that focused on survival and reproductive pleasure. But as we advanced to the kind of creatures that we can be, we discovered that values that work towards our flourishing together as a community really do enrich us more, and these values manifest as moral truths. And so we can begin to put values in a rough hierarchy: typically, those that deal primarily with survival are lower than those that deal primarily with community. Accordingly, we find that cannibalism, or Hitler's xenophobic impetus to exterminate others, can be seen as appealing primarily to the lower values of mere survival, rather than the higher values involved in building relationships that Mother Theresa displayed.

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy in psychology might be the sort of general ordering that displays one parsing of the emergence of values in history; psychology may replicate moral history in the way ontogenesis can display features of phylogenesis.[13] In this stratification, we would move from (1) physiological needs (2) to safety, (3) to loving and belonging, (4) to self-esteem, and on (5) to self-actualization (in the context of a community).[14] Each higher level is dependent on the lower level for the possibility of its manifestation, but the higher provides more human fulfillment than the lower can on its own. The higher level also transforms our understanding of the role of the lower

levels; it alters both our essential nature and our understanding of the past. Once the higher value is discovered, the lower value becomes defeasible. Acting from the lower value in disregard of the higher would be a temptation to reversion that might arise in circumstances where the lower value seems to take (and formerly took) precedence.

There can be progress, however, since values come in holistic systems, it is very difficult to judge baldly when one value or action is better than another. Emergent moral developments in our way of being are easier to recognize large-scale across cultures over the course of history. Thus Taylor and Dreyfus can see such shifts in the changes that came with the onset of the Axial age (166). They can also be easier to see within the development of our own culture (human meanings), where we believe we have a good enough grip on the language ["broadly construed" so as to reflect a shared way of life (127)] to recognize real progress, such as in the abolition of slavery or in the institution of voting rights for women (163).

But when we reach deep into history to examine a particular culture's belief (e.g., to see if gold has a sacred essence), or when we look at a very different current culture (e.g., to understand values that seem to subjugate women), we do not—and cannot—have the same confidence, since we don't "speak their language"—even though we do share some common forms of life and can translate much.

Pluralism is thus indeed the safe default position. But theoretically we can and should espouse the same confidence in our ability to share a superior and common view of moral reality with divergent others if we could take on *their* language and fuse our horizons. This would be a first step toward being able to rationally discuss and weigh values with them, and between them and us. And in the attempt to fuse, we might supersede with them to a new common view in which our individual differences may come to have a different role or significance.

Explicitly acknowledging emergentism can give Taylor and Dreyfus more encouragement in the possibility for convergence where some overlap begins to show, but where the basal reasons for the overlap are very different. Emergentists have the notion of "multiple realizability" by which different lines of evolution can develop common properties in different ways. Squirrels, fish and birds developed the ability to soar; bees, butterflies, and birds make use of different principles to fly. So the reality of soaring or flying can be realized in multiple ways. The lesson here is that all the background information, ideas and even values do not need to line up and calibrate in order for important superseding agreements and realities to develop.[15] Where we come from is important, but from an emergentist perspective where we want to go to together is even more important. The notion that a fusion and supersession can be an emergent co-coproduction gives more hope for co-discovering even better ways to be—but it can happen only if we are willing to put our current identity at risk. As Taylor and Dreyfus note, truly understanding each other "always has an identity cost" (125). If the

new way of being truly supersedes, however, we would look back and see that we were smaller and wrong to understand some of our practices in the way that we did, and would be glad for who we are now.

Pluralism can risk relativism, but it also does a good job of recognizing that each culture can produce valid notions of what is good and true, even if we can't recognize them from our perspective. In contrast, the danger of an emergentist view is ethnocentrism. The optimism that science provides may move too quickly into the moral domain. We can then be faced with the Spencerian notions of progress that proved to be historically destructive in less cautious hands. Visions of the overmen and eugenics are called to mind. Wars, revolutions and genocides have been fought in the name of stamping out the purportedly morally or genetically inferior.

This real danger is what makes us tread so carefully when we come to discuss progress in moral realities. In a way, the divide between fact and value was a safeguard against the dangers of claims to moral progress. Science can safely advance so long as it was thought to make no moral claims. In *Retrieving Realism*, Taylor and Dreyfus break down the barrier between consciousness and world and between fact and value. Pluralism provides a good safeguard to a multiplicity of real values. The safeguards that emergentism has against ethnocentrism are the very values that developed through our history and efforts at progress. The guiding values of autonomy and freedom—and with them the right of people to choose even what we might consider a less satisfying life—are more important than forcing our values on people. This value of tolerance, though generally advocated by pluralists, may actually have a better ground in an emergentist framework; in a pluralist framework, tolerance might more properly seem like a local cultural value rather than the revealing of a universal value that we should all respect. We also see in progress itself the guiding value of being open to changing ourselves. In an emergentist view, we must risk our own identity to gain a perspective on the other from the inside. Only then can we actually know whether or not we have understood them well enough to be able to weigh the better and worse. And only if we are open to that sort of risk would we be open to seeing what we might achieve together.

Conclusion: Framing a Robust Realism for Science and Morality

Taylor and Dreyfus and Polanyi overlap in explicating how engaged coping (tacit knowing) can overturn atomism and foundationalism (reductionism) and put us inextricably back in reality (indwelling). They show how we can restore the validity of human meanings (personal knowledge), and they bring us to a conception of natural and moral reality that scientists and communities of inquirers can successfully and progressively investigate (dialogue, fusion, discovery, supersession). It is in this last claim for a robust realism where Taylor and Dreyfus most conspicuously slide off

Wittgenstein's shoulders, but they also distance themselves from Merleau-Ponty and even Heidegger in their efforts to reform rather than abandon some key philosophical issues and distinctions—not least of which is the modern optimism in the possibility of scientific and moral progress.

Throughout their first seven chapters, Taylor and Dreyfus' ideas closely associate with the ideas of Polanyi. They, in effect, affirm the emergence of tacit structures of knowing and the emergence of different sorts of entities. But in the end they frame their insights in a Heideggerian pluralist "reveal but conceal" view. While emphasizing pluralism allows them the latitude they want for different meaningful valuations of reality, it can detract from the optimistic notion of progress in knowing the real that they deploy against Rorty's "deflationary" realism, and also detract from the cautious progress they advocate in the moral realm.

A Polanyian emergentist "achievement but with risk" view more naturally gives direction to discovery. It can also reconcile contradictory notions in a way that is more satisfying than a flat pluralism. It can reconcile causality and freedom, engaged contact and robust knowledge, natural kinds and multiple essences, and moral progress and relativism. Taylor and Dreyfus tacitly endorse something like a developmental/emergentism view, but explicitly endorsing it would give more force to their argument against Rorty and reduce their exposure to a realist's version of relativism. There are dangers and benefits in taking either an emergentist or pluralist perspective, but an emergentist picture gives Taylor and Dreyfus more of what they want for a robustly real world with robustly real values.

A "reveal but conceal" pluralism accounts for our sense that there is gain but there is also loss in modern culture (167). But "gain and loss" is, in some sense, inevitable in an emergentist account as well, since a superseding picture is the outcome of a gestalt. With a new holistic organization, some benefits of former (incomplete) discoveries are indeed lost, but they are given up because we find a better or more adequate (complete) overall way of understanding or being—at least in the long run. Often these feelings of loss come at a stage when we are in the throes of dissolution; when anomalies arise that call for a new integration to a new understanding. At times such as these, emergentism provides more motivation and more hope for a supersession to a shared moral reality that can, as Taylor and Dreyfus say, "[realize] the highest and the best of human potential" (162).

ENDNOTES

[1]This essay is a greatly abridged version of a chapter in the forthcoming book, *Charles Taylor, Michael Polanyi and the Critique of Modernity: Pluralist and Emergentist Directions*, Charles W. Lowney II (ed.), (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

[2]Page numbers standing alone will refer to Dreyfus and Taylor's *Retrieving Realism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

[3]In seeing that Rorty and Davidson are still trapped in a "mediational" picture that makes any escape from language seem like nonsense, Taylor and Dreyfus are in good company. Hintikka sees Wittgenstein and Rorty both as trapped in "language as the universal medium" assumptions. See Jaakko Hintikka, *Lingua Universalis vs. Calculus Ratiocinator, Selected Papers*, Volume 2 (Dordrech: Kluwer Academic, 1997). I included Davidson in this group in my dissertation, "The Tacit and the Ineffable: Frege and Wittgenstein on the Distinction between Language as a Calculus and Language as the Universal Medium" (Boston: Boston University Library, 2005). In an extreme version of the "universalist" position, it no longer makes to talk about one language connecting up with one world, and this is where deflationary accounts are born.

[4]I prefer Frege's notion of *Bedeutung* over Kripke's notion of rigid designation, but the main point stands. See my "From Epistemology to Ontology to *Epistemontology*," *Tradition and Discovery* 40:1 (2013-2014):16-29. See my "The Tacit in Frege" in *Polanyiana* 17:1-2 (2008):19-37 for more on how Frege's distinctions between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* and concept and object can relate to Polanyi's epistemology.

[5]On the protoconceptual as meaningful, see Taylor and Dreyfus's differences with John McDowell on page 80.

[6]In "Frege" (2008), I show how the *from-to* structure can provide a model for understanding concept formation, and the "unsaturated" (tacit) role of concepts in presenting objects.

[7]In "*Epistemontology*" (2014), I attempt to provide a Polanyian picture of where knowing and being go together inextricably—at the level of protoconcepts—and where they break apart to allow for the correspondence between knowing and being that Polanyi emphasized.

[8]They surmise that Merleau-Ponty, like Husserl, leaned too strongly toward a constructivist or idealist understanding of reality (135). They lose Merleau-Ponty for other reasons as well, because in his more mature view he wished to move beyond the inside-outside, intellectualist-empiricist, idealist-realist metaphysical distinctions, and he regretted that he had not done so as successfully as he would like because he started from the "consciousness-object" distinction. See Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 200.

[9]Another indication of ontic emergence, discussed later, comes with the development of "human meanings." If we have a robust realism of values, then these can reveal an emergent reality as well.

[10]See Crosby, "Emergentism, Perspectivism, and Divine Pathos," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy*, 31:3 (September 2010):196-206.

[11]See Olivier Sartenaer, "Neither Metaphysical Dichotomy nor Pure Identity: Clarifying the Emergentist Creed," *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 44 (2013):365.

[12]For more on Emergentist ethics see my, "Morality: Emergentist Ethics and Virtue *for Itself*," *Tradition and Discovery* 36:3 (2010):52-65 and "From Morality to Spirituality: Society, Religion and Transformation," *Tradition and Discovery* 37:1 (2010):19-38.

[13]Another way of seeing a history of moral progress in psychological development is Lawrence Kohlberg's. He sees egoist concerns and internalization of parental command developing towards utilitarian ethics, which then develop towards Kantian and contract based theories. In contrast, Carol Gilligan can see *care* as a further development in this dialectic rather than a reversion to earlier moral stages. See her *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[14]This caveat brings out the concerns of Charles Taylor, who places authenticity in the context of a "horizon of significance" and those of Gilligan (1993), who emphasizes relationship and care. See Taylor's *Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, (1991).

[15]Taylor and Dreyfus start to see this sort of a convergence between very different cultures in how women in the Republic of Iran have the right to vote for reasons different than in Western democratic states (163,164). Republics are institutions that might be an emergent development that reflects a higher-order "overlapping consensus" that is multiply realizable in different cultures. Seeing the more or less successful republics in cultures that are very foreign to us (Turkey and Iran), in which women have the right to vote, may be an important overlap and promising development.