Action: respond to our copy-editing questions

Select each question and describe any changes we should make on the proof. Changes against journal style will not be made and proofs will not be sent back for further editing.

AQ1. Please check the spelling and accuracy of all author names and affiliations, particularly for any of your co-authors. Please also check that author surnames are correctly identified with a Pink background. This is to ensure that forenames and surnames are tagged correctly for online indexing. **Incorrect names and affiliations may lead to an author not being credited for their work by funders, institutions, or other third parties.**

AQ2. If your manuscript has figures or text from other sources, please ensure you have permission from the copyright holder. For any questions about permissions contact jnls.author.support@oup.com.

AQ3. Please check that funding is recorded in a separate funding section if applicable. Use the full official names of any funding bodies, and include any grant numbers.

AQ4. You may need to include a "conflict of interest" section. This would cover any situations that might raise any questions of bias in your work and in your article's conclusions, implications, or opinions. Please see here.

AQ5. Please provide at least 5-10 keywords.

AQ6. Please note that the reference "Thomas McCarthy (2009)" is not listed in the reference list. Please add it to the list or delete the citation directly in the text.

AQ7. Please provide the missing tile of the chapter for reference [Adorno (1998)] directly in the reference.

AQ8. Please provide the missing tile of the chapterfor reference [——. (2006)] directly in the reference.

AQ9. Please provide the publisher location (city/state/country) for reference [Anderson (2014)] directly in the reference.

AQ10. Please provide the missing title of the chapter for reference [——. (1975)] directly in the reference.

AQ11. Please provide the missing title of the chapter for reference [Kant (1974)] directly in the reference.

AQ12. Please note that the reference [Larmore (2008)] is not cited in the text. Cite it in the text or delete it from the reference list by making changes directly in the text or references.

AQ13. Please note that the reference "McCarthy (XXXX)" is not cited in the text. Cite it in the text or delete it from the reference list by making changes directly in the text or references.

AQ14. Please provide the year of publication for reference "McCarthy (XXXX)".

These proofs are for checking purposes only. They are not in final publication format. Please do not distribute them in print or online. Do not publish this article, or any excerpts from it, anywhere else until the final version has been published with OUP. For further information, see https://academic.oup.com/journals/pages/authors

Figure resolution may be reduced in PDF proofs and in the online PDF, to manage the size of the file. Full-resolution figures will be used for print publication.

Action: check your manuscript information

Please check that the information in the table is correct. We use this information in the online version of your article and for sharing with third party indexing sites, where applicable.

Full affiliations Each unique affiliation should be listed separately; affiliations must contain only the applicable department, institution, city, territory, and country	University of Calgary Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Group Contributors The name of the group and individuals in this group should be given, if applicable (e.g. The BFG Working Group: Simon Mason, Jane Bloggs)	NA
Supplementary data files cited	
Funder Name(s) Please give the full name of the main funding body/agency. This should be the full name of the funding body without abbreviation or translation, if unsure, see https://search.crossref.org/funding	NA

AQ1-AQ4

CRITICAL NOTICE

1.5

Reviving the Project of Moral Progress: A Pragmatist Attempt and its Limits

Agnes Tam

1.10

Moral Progress
By Philip Kitcher
Oxford University Press, 2021. xxii+173 pp.

1.15

If I were to ask you to name the most important concept in moral and political philosophy today, your answer might be 'justice', 'equality' or 'freedom'. But for an intellectual in eighteenth-century Europe, the most likely answer would have been 'progress'. Living in the Age of Enlightenment, marked by major scientific revolutions, rapid economic growth and the fall of absolute monarchy, 'progress' appeared to be an apt description of the arc of history, as well as a moral imperative for human action. But the climate of optimism did not last long. The world wars, colonial conquests and environmental devastation that followed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries destroyed many things, including the faith in progress, both as a fact and an ideal. As Theodor Adorno remarked, 'it could be said that progress occurs where it ends' (Adorno 1998: 150). And so it did.

1.20

1.25

Interestingly, over the past decade, the philosophical discourse of progress has been experiencing something of a revival. The book *Moral Progress* marks a significant contribution to that revival. Edited by Jan-Christoph Heilinger, the book records Philip Kitcher's three-part Munich Lectures in Ethics from 2019 and includes commentaries from Rahel Jaeggi, Susan Neiman and Amia Srinivasan. Despite its short length and accessibility, the book is rich in philosophical perspectives and empirical insights. In this critical notice, my aim is to situate this work within the larger debate on moral progress and evaluate Kitcher's pragmatist attempt to re-establish the concept's relevance and validity. Specifically, I identify three challenges any such attempt faces, viz. *metaphysical*, *epistemic* and *motivational*. I argue that while Kitcher's Deweyan attempt is successful in overcoming the first two, it is less so with respect to the last challenge. In the hope of sparking more discussion on the topic of moral progress, I end by suggesting possible ways to implement moral progress that are less democratic and less scientific but more communitarian and more artful than the Deweyan method.

1.30

1.35

AQ5 1.40

1.Progress in Context

To better appreciate the ambitions and merits of Kitcher's pragmatic progress, it is crucial to first understand the difficulties that its predecessors encountered, which takes us all the way back to the Enlightenment. In

1.45

Analysis Vol. XX | Number XX | XX 2023 | 1–12 doi: https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/anad094
© The Author(s) 2023. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of The Analysis Trust. All rights reserved. For permissions, please email: journals.permissions@oup.com

sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, progress by any measure – quality of life, political freedom, social mobility and scientific understanding, to name just a few – was an indisputable fact, at least to the Enlightenment thinkers. The only philosophical question at the time was how to account for the fact of progress.[1] To oversimplify, two answers were given: one *teleological*, the other *non-teleological*.

On the teleological account, defended notably by Hegel (1953, 1956, 1975), progress occurs because that just is the logic of history. Hegel argues that this logic is 'Spirit' (*Geist*), the essence of which is 'Freedom'. The myriad events of world history, including wars, conflicts, and the development of the modern state, are the gradual manifestation of Spirit. If this sounds deterministic, that's because it is. The *telos* of history is predetermined independent of the causal chains of events in the natural world. The role of the philosopher is to discover the *telos*, interpret the meanings of historical phenomena in light of that *telos* and reconcile our experiences with it. More controversially, Hegel offers his own interpretation of historical progress. As he speculates, Spirit unfolds itself over four stages of freedom, beginning from 'Oriental despotism' in China, India and Persia, to the city–states and republican systems in the Greek and Roman worlds, to the Protestant Reformation in the German world, and finally fully objectifying itself in the form of constitutional monarchy in Prussia.

By contrast, on the non-teleological account, commonly attributed to Immanuel Kant, progress is not predetermined but made possible by rational human agency. According to Kant's philosophical anthropology, as members of the human species, unlike other creatures in nature, we can rise above our instincts and set our own ends (Kant 1974, 2005). This rational capacity gives rise to a sense of self and self-esteem in us, but it also creates an urge to dominate each other. These unsocial tendencies run into tension with the social tendencies, including love, sympathy, humanity and the need for friendship. These conflicting tendencies provide the condition for the further development of reason. Specifically, reason disciplines our unruly passions and enables us to live in union as free and equal citizens. Thus, reason is the major vehicle of progress. But, as Kant notes, reason can only reach its fullest expression in free and peaceful circumstances. Institutions of freedom must enable citizens to think for themselves, to challenge customs, traditions and authorities without fear. Crucially, in contrast to the teleological account of progress, the political institutions of peace and freedom are not the *manifestation* of the law of history but the *conditions* for progress. In this proto-naturalist account of progress,

1 In its first iteration, there was no distinct domain of progress. Progress broadly refers to improvements in various aspects of human experiences—moral, scientific, technological, economic, and aesthetic.

the role of the philosopher is not to discover the *telos* of history, for there is none; rather, as an expert in reasoning, the philosopher is the engineer of progress.

To sum up, the Enlightenment thinkers give two different answers to why humanity has moved, is moving, and will continue to move in a desirable direction. The first appeals to the progressive law of history, whereas the second appeals to the progressive development of reason. Both accounts of progress were heavily criticized in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Three main strands of criticisms can be identified: metaphysical, epistemic, and motivational. Let me elaborate on each strand.

The teleological account of progress is the central target of the metaphysical critique, according to which history is thoroughly *contingent* (see, for example, Hayek 2011). There are two arguments for this, one from evolutionary science and the other from empirical history. The attraction of the evolutionary sciences, especially Darwinian functionalism, is that we can explain the existence of life forms without violating the laws of physics. According to the law of evolution, organisms have no final goals; their developments are functional adaptations to their local, ever-changing environmental conditions, driven by the pressure of natural selection. The traits that function to enhance an organism's reproductive fitness (i.e. to pass on genes to the next generation) are those that would be selected for. To say that there is a predetermined and discoverable end of history, formed independent of the process of adaptation, is, to quote F.A. von Hayek, 'an absurdity' (Hayek 2011: 94).

But evolutionary scientists are not the only ones who find the teleological story of progress naïve; historically minded philosophers also find little warrant for it. Having personally experienced the horrors of the world wars and the Holocaust, Theodor Adorno wrote, 'We can find nothing in reality that might help to redeem the promise inherent in the word "progress"' (Adorno 2006: 143). Walter Benjamin (1969), too, famously evoked the metaphor of the 'storm' to understand what 'progress' really is. It is a force of violence that irresistibly propels humans into the future. As for the philosopher's role, there is no meaning for them to discover, only contingencies and fractures in history to reveal. In other words, progress is an illusion.

Even though the non-teleological account of progress is free of the metaphysical overtones, its obsession with 'reason' draws criticisms in both epistemic and motivational forms. Critics argue that reason is an unreliable guide to human development, if not a tool of domination. In Charles Larmore's view, reason can never be free of self-congratulatory bias (2008: 20). Reason cannot help us survey human affairs from afar, taking the stance of a neutral spectator, suspending our interests and commitments. On the contrary, reason interprets historical events through our parochial lens, evaluating our status quo as good and attributing agency to ourselves. Reason cannot set

objectively valid goals for human action. Arguably, Hegel's Eurocentric, four-stage narrative is the best example of such self-congratulatory bias.

More worryingly, due to its entanglement with power, reason can become a tool of domination (Allen 2016). As Foucauldians argue, reason generates 'truth regimes' which rationalize hegemonic institutions and social norms as natural, inevitable and normal. For example, Thomas McCarthy (2009) argues that reason generates Eurocentric notions of the good and of human nature, institutions which serve as a rationale for the so-called 'civilizing' mission of the West, falsely legitimizing racism, colonialism, and imperialism.

Other critics may not necessarily doubt the epistemic potential of reason, but they question its motivational power. Contrary to Kant, many Marxists believe that the engine of progress is not reasoning (alone) but revolutionary struggles. At the core of this belief is the view that human life is primarily determined by its material conditions. For example, the exploitation of the working class cannot be brought to an end until its material conditions, including the productive forces of capitalism and the social relations governing the ruling class and the proletariat, are fundamentally altered through class struggle. To sum up, critics of the non-teleological account of progress do not necessarily think progress is illusory; they simply do not share the Enlightenment thinkers' faith in reason improving the human condition.

2.Reviving Moral Progress: Kitcher's Pragmatist Account

Even though the Enlightenment discourse of progress has failed to stand up to the tests of science and history, an increasing number of moral and political philosophers are reviving it, and with good reason. The twenty-first century marks another epoch of social change. On the one hand, social movements are winning battles in securing human rights for previously marginalized people; on the other hand, illiberal populism is destabilizing democracy while the climate crisis threatens to annihilate humanity. To make sense of these trends and to evaluate and guide social change, it seems that we need a concept and a method of progress after all. This is precisely Kitcher's goal. As he writes, 'the history of our moral progress has been chancy, blind, bloody and constantly vulnerable to backslidings and reversals. Through an examination of that history, philosophy should seek to understand how to do better' (xii). Below, I reconstruct Kitcher's pragmatist attempt to reboot the discourse of progress in light of the three core challenges outlined above.

Kitcher's first order of business is to show that progress is not an illusion. No one today takes seriously Hegel's idea that there is a progressive logic of history propelling humanity steadily upward, from East to West, independent of causal relations in the natural world. To naturalize moral progress, Kitcher tells a story of moral progress in accordance with the law of evolution. In his view, morality, like biology, is a cumulative product of

the long process of adaptation to selection pressures. Specifically, morality is a set of social technologies that evolved culturally from our ancestors in the hunter-gatherer societies to solve the 'ur-problem', i.e. limited responsiveness to others' desires, needs and perspectives (50–51).[2] Like our closest relatives, chimpanzees and bonobos, our ancestors *Homo sapiens* had to compete for scarce resources to survive in harsh environments. But unlike our closest relatives, *Homo sapiens* learned to band together to enhance their biological fitness. Due to the 'ur-problem', cooperation was at first fragile, destabilized by free-riding and the strong dominating the weak. Moral attitudes (e.g., solidarity, pride, respect), rules and practices (of fairness and sanction), and institutions of the common good were gradually developed to solve 'the problem of expanding human responsiveness' (52), allowing human societies to grow in both size and complexity (54). In Kitcher's evolutionary story of moral progress, there is no *telos*, not even objective 'reasons' for us to discover. Moral progress consists in 'problem-solving' and in the functional refinement of the social technology to solve the problem of limited sympathy. As Kitcher puts it, pragmatic progress is a form of 'progress from' not 'progress to', for there is no final destination. So long as there are new problems, the process of adaptation continues, in unpredictable ways.

If the Darwin in Kitcher naturalizes moral progress, the Dewey in him reconciles moral progress with the fact of tragic reversals. As Kitcher acknowledges, moral progress can go smoothly and peacefully or haphazardly and violently. In other words, pragmatic progress is neither linear nor global. The chance of successful adaptation depends crucially on whether the society in question embeds its social technology in collective intelligence. But Kitcher is careful not to worship reason as his Enlightenment predecessors did. Instead, he insists that it is not the capacity of reason *per se* that guides moral progress, but rather the *method* of reasoning, which he calls 'ideal conversation' or 'democratic contractualism'. As I understand it, there are four normative constraints to the conversation, which jointly increase its reliability in identifying and solving the 'ur-problem'. Let me elaborate.

The first constraint is structural: the inquiry must be 'democratic' (37). Through direct participation or representation, the perspectives of all 'stakeholders', that is, 'all those affected by the challenged practice and all those who would be affected if that practice were to be amended', should be included as inputs (37). Drawing on history, Kitcher argues that inclusion is key to problem identification. For example, the oppressive nature of chattel slavery and persecution of homosexuals went unnoticed because of 'exclusion' (33). In the respective cases, the slaveholders and traders and the

2 Kitcher sometimes calls this problem 'limited sympathy' or 'altruism failures'. He understands this as an innate psychological condition, amenable to cultural modification.

heteronormative majority were deaf to the 'cries of the wounded', because the slaves and 'perverts' had no or inferior standing to participate in inquiry.

The second constraint is scientific or epistemic: all parties to the inquiry must employ the 'best information available' in the situation (37). Drawing again on history, Kitcher claims that information helps solution-identification. For example, information about political economy helped expose the myth that abolition would devastate the livelihood of Southerners. So too information about contraception opened people's minds to new and better social roles for women (81–82).

The last two constraints are psychological: mutual respect and individual autonomy. Unless all parties are willing to offer their sympathetic ears to and engage with one another, the wider spread of stakeholder perspectives and accurate information cannot receive the uptake needed to produce a good solution. Individual autonomy helps forestall the problem of 'false consciousness', which Kitcher defines as

> the product of situations in which the community's moral practice declares that some ideals of the self are appropriate for one group within the community but not for the rest, when some members of the latter group could in principle profitably pursue the ideals denied to them, and when at least some members of that group acquiesce in the moral claim that those ideals are not for them. (66)

False consciousness, as Kitcher speculates, was a key obstacle to problem identification in the case of patriarchy. Patriarchy persisted not because men were set apart from women, at least not in the same way slaveholders were from slaves. Rather, it persisted because many women did not even protest. Lacking the capacity to step back and reflect on the adequate range of options for one's life plan, women and men alike could not imagine women leading a good life outside the domestic sphere.

In sum, the more rigorously a society regulates its process of cultural evolution with the normative constraints of democratic inclusion, full information, mutual respect and sufficient autonomy, the more likely it is that the society will be guided in a desirable direction.

While Deweyan *inquiry* tends to produce the cognitive conditions required for problem-solving, Deweyan *society* is also necessary to implement the output of the inquiry in conduct. In my reading, this is Kitcher's attempt to fend off the motivational critique (97). Improved beliefs alone do not necessarily motivate change in conduct; beliefs must be incorporated into the 'ambient moral culture', namely our societal habits (89–91). While Kitcher leaves out the details of the engines that change our societal habits, he does highlight the importance of moral education. Deweyan societies institute moral education that fosters the ability of all citizens to engage in and imagine ideal conversations. This will include instilling the relevant dispositions to inquire and experiment, sensitivities to the needs, desires and perspectives of others,

as well as powers of imagination. To stabilize and transmit moral progress from one generation to the next, Kitcher further notes the importance of legal institutions and socialization (96). As he repeatedly emphasizes, moral progress must go beyond cognitivist change.

3.*Evaluating Kitcher's Pragmatist Account*

Does Kitcher's Deweyan account succeed in rebooting the discourse of moral progress? All three commentators think so, to varying degrees, and I agree. The consensus in the book appears to be that the Deweyan project meets the metaphysical challenge. However, despite Kitcher's best efforts, he is still haunted by the Enlightenment ghost of reason, thereby misinterpreting how problem-solving progress actually came about. In my view, the Deweyan method can be salvaged from the critique, but only partially. That is, on the one hand, siding with Kitcher, I think the Deweyan method, with some modifications, is crucial for *identifying* problems; on the other, for *solving* problems, we need to break free from democratic and scientific thinking. Let me take each point in turn.

Echoing critics of the Enlightenment, Srinivasan, Neiman and Jaeggi argue that reason is not really the engine of moral progress, not even in its democratic form. As Srinivasan puts it,

> The history of much moral progress has not been fundamentally a history of conversation at all, but a history of power: the wielding of power by the dominant against the oppressed, and the eventual seizing of that power…by the dominated. (109)

Reminding us of the naivety of the rational model, Neiman writes,

> I fear his [Kitcher's] approach is much too cognitive, relying on a moral community…to examine moral quandaries in good faith…If a majority of agents were engaged in sincere moral inquiry to begin with, the battle would be more than half won. (111)

And to stress again the role of power, Jaeggi says,

> The ideal conversation that would lead to moral progress is not only obstructed by epistemic errors, failures of empathy, and false consciousness, but by *deep-seated social structures of domination.* (127, emphasis in original)

The fundamental objection here is that Kitcher misreads history and thereby misdiagnoses the problem that needs to be solved. The fundamental problem in the cases of slavery, racism and sexism is not psychological (limited sympathy) or epistemic (the lack of information) but rather structural domination. As Neiman points out, many slaveholders and traders knew that the practice of slavery caused suffering. To illustrate the structural problem,

Jaeggi uses the historical example of domination of women in 20th-century Germany. The law at that time tolerated marital rape. A husband could even freely dispose of his wife's property and dissolve his wife's employment contract at will. The point is that patriarchy goes beyond moral blindness and false consciousness; it is deeply embedded in social relations, productive forces and the superstructure.

If power is the problem, what is the solution? Critics agree that the answer is not reason, for it cannot neutralize power. Neiman prefers the sentimentalist answer. Citing Anthony Appiah, she proposes using the engine of emotion, more specifically the emotions of collective shame and honour (156). In Appiah's reading of history, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, footbinding and duelling were not brought to an end by enlightenment. The relevant communities knew the practices were wrong long before they ended. The practices ended rather because people were shamed. By contrast, Srinivasan and Jaeggi prefer the Marxist answer: power struggle. As evidenced by the Civil Rights Movements and the Indian revolt against British Rule, Srinivasan highlights the role of violence, material struggle and even death (109–110). Power needs to be seized and change comes via force. For Jaeggi, power struggle creates the situation of a 'crisis', exposing 'dysfunctions, dissonances, and inner contradictions' of the status quo, and such crises precede all major social transformation (124).

If the critics are right, then while Kitcher has succeeded in making sense of progress as a process of problem-solving, he has not really provided us with a problem-solving tool. In fact, it is not even clear that the critics think such a tool exists. Taking us back to the stormy picture of history I introduced earlier, Srinivasan and Jaeggi suggest that on the path to moral progress, there really is more luck than human agency, let alone rational agency, than we philosophers would like to admit.

In my view, the critique from power is important but only partially right. In defence of Kitcher, Deweyan inquiries, scientific and democratic in their form, still play a key epistemic role in identifying problems. As I alluded to earlier, there are not one but two voices in Kitcher's pragmatic story of moral progress: one from Darwin and the other from Dewey. I agree with the critics that Kitcher mischaracterizes the core problem facing progress as that of 'limited altruism', when it is one of structural domination. But the mistake is not Deweyan. As Allen Buchanan (2020) rightly argues, evolutionary psychology tends to reduce moral problems to problems of cooperation among strategic actors, and moral progress to the functional refinement of rules of cooperation. This might well have been true of our ancestors in hunter-gatherer societies. But this narrow interpretation of morality and of moral progress hardly informs us as to how moral progress comes about in the modern age. The oversight of structural domination, as I see it, is one unfortunate consequence of the Darwinian story of progress. In contrast, the Deweyan story of progress does not preconfigure the nature of the

problems. A more charitable and coherent reading would suggest that the precise nature of the problem, domination or otherwise, would have to be justified by all the stakeholders in the democratic inquiry. For example, if the slaves or their representatives claim that it is the unfair distribution of opportunities and status that wrongs them, and on the conditions of full information, mutual engagement and sufficient autonomy, their interlocuters agree, then the Deweyan inquiry in fact guides a society to a solution that requires redistribution of power and status.

To be sure, my re-reading of the Deweyan method is still overly harmonistic and rationalistic. In fact, I am in full agreement with Kitcher's critics that the history of moral progress is violent and that sincere inquiry is rather impotent in destabilizing oppressive structures. My disagreement is only that power struggle cannot replace democratic inquiry, as far as problem identification is concerned. My view is heavily shaped by Elizabeth Anderson's (2014) non-ideal model of Deweyan progress. As Anderson argues, contentious politics, in the forms of social movements and resistance, is usually necessary to destabilize social norms and trigger collective reflection. But without collective reflection, the relevant community cannot identify what is wrong with the status quo. Contra Srinivasan, I take the view that intelligent inquiry needs to be forced but that genuine and stable moral progress cannot be.

4. *Beyond Pragmatic Inquiry*

If my argument above is correct, the Deweyan method, as a democratic and scientific form of inquiry, need not be insensitive to power. It can even play a key role in identifying problems for stakeholders. In the remainder of this essay, I will set out what I take to be a genuine limit of the Deweyan method and show how overcoming it requires us to unshackle our imagination from democratic and scientific inquiries and to incorporate communitarian and artful storytelling.

As seen, in Kitcher's story of moral progress, the starting point is a problem. The problem selects the relevant participants of the inquiry, namely all those affected. This, I think, is a correct first step. Under the constraints of full information, mutual respect and sufficient autonomy, the affected are then to identify and implement the solution in their Deweyan society. This, I think, is the wrong next step. In my view, there is more than one set of problem-solvers for any single yet complex social problem such as economic exploitation, patriarchy, or racism. Kitcher need not deny this. But here is the crucial point: each problem-solver faces their own normative, epistemic, and psychological constraints, which might come into tension with the constraints of democratic contractualism.

Elsewhere, I have argued that the particular *communities*, in contrast to all the stakeholders, are typically the problem-solvers (Tam 2020a). Why do I draw a wedge between 'the stakeholders' and 'the problem-solvers?' The reason

is ontological: communities are partly constituted by the particular stories they tell themselves (Tam 2020b). For communities to change *their* norms and commitments, the members of the communities, not all the affected, have to reinterpret, re-tell and re-enact the story constitutive of *them*, providing *reasons-for-them*, normative and motivational, to change. These we-constitutive stories are local in authority and perspectives, which some of the affected might not share. Consider the case of British abolitionism. While centuries-long slave revolts and resistance played a role in this episode of moral progress, the end of the British slave trade did not happen until the Quakers abandoned arguments from universal moral principles and recast themselves and those who joined them as 'heroes' in their English story of freedom, on a path to save the national grace from the 'villains', i.e. the colonials. These engineers of moral progress were storytellers, appealing to local authorities and texts (i.e. the English court and law) and rebuilding the English character as the torchbearer of freedom. The perspectives of some of the affected, including the slaves, freed slaves, and people racialized as black at most played a background, if not irrelevant, role to the English story. Nor was it clear they wanted to be a part of the English's imperial story. If this reading of the history is correct, then the democratic norm did not apply to the process of identifying and implementing the solution. A more exclusionary communitarian norm was applied to respect the particularity of we-the-Britons.

Not only does the shifting of the perspective from problem to *problem-solver* move us away from the democratic norm of inquiry, but it also moves away from the scientific norm. Many political philosophers explicitly or implicitly acknowledge that particular communities are partly constituted by the stories they tell themselves, but they overlook the fact that stories are *works of art*, not *laws*. They have presented us with numerous accounts of democratic deliberation to improve moral laws scientifically, subjecting them to standards of justification, objectivity, rationality and truth. As a pragmatist, Kitcher has rightly questioned the ideal of moral objectivity. Yet Kitcher has not fully liberated the project of moral progress from the scientific model of progress, thinking that more informed, rational argumentation could improve moral practices. As I conceded, this may well be necessary for identifying problems, but to solve them and implement solutions, the problem-solvers must understand the problems in their own frame. That is, they must conceive of the problems through the stories they have led and re-tell and re-enact their stories. All of these, as I suspect, require aesthetic norms and processes. While a full defence is impossible here, let me suggest how the discourse of moral progress can benefit from a narrative turn.

As co-authors, actors and readers of our own stories, we are not necessarily aspiring to truths, at least not historical or scientific truths. Elsewhere, Will Kymlicka and I have argued about the ineffectiveness of informational campaigns and scientific education in the animal rights movement's attempts to end cruel factory farming (Tam and Kymlicka 2023). What local communities

really need are hermeneutical resources to reimagine the roles of animals in the particular historical and dramatic scripts that shape them. We might need to appeal to origin stories, including myths and folklore – and if such things do not exist, we need to create them. The sociologist Frederick Mayer (2014) has shown us that narratives can be a powerful engine of progressive social movements. They 'engross and persuade' us, 'construct common interests', 'compel cooperation', 'coordinate behaviour', and 'assure us of our mutual commitment to collective action'. When Martin Luther King Jr. said that 'the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice', he was not conveying to all affected a metaphysical truth about history. Rather, he was trying to enlist blacks and their allies into an engrossing story of resurgence, redeeming the past suffering and violence of the oppressed. What is a meaningful, beautiful, vital, resonant and engrossing story? I don't know. But I am quite certain that it is not just truthful. To expand the toolbox of moral progress, we must learn how to properly aestheticize lived experiences (see Moody-Adams 2022 for a refreshing and timely work in this regard).

5. Conclusion

In this notice, I have shown how Kitcher has succeeded in rebooting the discourse of moral progress. Brandishing insights from evolution, history and pragmatism, Kitcher frees the concept of moral progress from its metaphysical overtones and recentres it within moral and political philosophy in the service of improving the human condition. However, as much as Kitcher has illuminated how 'reason' can be refashioned and reorganized to identify problems, I doubt its efficacy in solving such problems. As I have argued, to mobilize problem-solvers, that is, the particular communities affected, they must recognize the problems as *their* problems and solve them under *their* particular constraints. To do this, we need to tell, share and enact better stories. This method is probably more communitarian and artful than the Deweyan one. All of this is to concur with Kitcher that there are many modes of moral progress. We are only at the beginning of the path to moral progress.

University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
agnes.tam@ucalgary.ca

References

AQ7 Adorno, T.W. 1998. *Critical Models*. Trans. H. Pickford. New York: Columbia University Press.

AQ8 —— 2006. *History and Freedom: Lectures 1964–1965*. Trans. R. Livingstone. Cambridge: Polity.

Allen, A. 2016. *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Anderson, E. 2014. *Social Movements, Experiments in Living, and Moral Progress: Case Studies from Britain's Abolition of Slavery. The Lindsey Lecture*. University of Kansas.

Benjamin, W. 1969. Theses on the philosophy of history. In *Illuminations*, ed. H. Arendt, 253–264. New York: Schocken.

Buchanan, A.E. 2020. *Our Moral Fate: Evolution and the Escape from Tribalism*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Hayek, F.A. von. 2011. *The Constitution of Liberty: The Definitive Edition*. New York: Routledge.

Hegel, G.W.F. 1953 [1824]. *Reason in History, a General Introduction to the Philosophy of History*. New York: Liberal Arts Press.

——. 1956 [1824]. *The Philosophy of History*. New York: Dover Publications.

——. 1975 [1857]. *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*. Trans. H.B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kant, I. 1974 [1798]. *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Standpoint*. Trans. M.J. Gregor. The Hague: Nijhoff.

——. 2005. Idea for a universal history with a cosmopolitan aim. In *Kant's Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim: A Critical Guide*, eds. A.O. Rorty and J. Schmidt, 9–23. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Larmore, C. 2008. *The Autonomy of Morality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mayer, F.W. 2014. *Narrative Politics: Stories and Collective Action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McCarthy, T. *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moody-Adams, M. 2022. *Making Space for Justice: Social Movements, Collective Imagination, and Political Hope*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Tam, A. 2020a. Why moral reasoning is insufficient for moral progress. *Journal of Political Philosophy* 28: 73–96.

——. 2020b. The legitimacy of groups: toward a we-reasoning view. *Analyse & Kritik* 42: 343–67.

Tam, A., and W. Kymlicka. 2023. Being popular and being just: how animal protection organizations can be both. In *The Ethics of Animal Shelters*, eds. V. Giroux, K. Voigt, and A. Pepper, 223–246. Oxford: Oxford University Press.