Rigor or rhetoric: Public philosopher and public in dialogue

Abstract

Brian Leiter (2016) throws down two gauntlets to philosophers engaged in dialogue with the broader public. If, with the first, public philosophers recognize that they cannot offer substantive answers but only sophisticated method, they nevertheless fail to realize that said method does not resonate with the very public whom they purport to help. For, with the second, that method does not engage the emotivist and tribalist cast of contemporary public discourse: emotivist because a person's moral and political beliefs are a function of emotional attitudes or affective responses for which she adduces reasons post hoc; tribalist because the person tracks not the inferential relation between beliefs but her similarity with interlocutors. In order to understand the full extent of this critique, it is necessary, first, to parse strands of public philosophy, distinct discursive sites, and pictures of philosophical practice and, then, to probe the critique's empirical groundedness and intended scope. These elements in place, it is then possible to sketch public philosophy reconceived along Leiter's lines as equal part rigor and rhetoric. That sketch may be somewhat filled out through two tactics employed in Jeffrey Stout's (2004, 2010) work. These form part of a toolkit for philosophical dialogue whereby philosophers get a discursive grip on non-discursive factors underlying public discourse *and* push back on Leiter's dilemma.

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0. Introduction

Brian Leiter (2016) undercuts familiar versions of public philosophy. Accordingly, I first put forward three strands of public philosophy as well as two standard pictures of philosophical practice, one naïve, the other sophisticated and compare versions and pictures across two deliberative sites. I next sketch Leiter's two paradoxes of public philosophy and show how emotivism and tribalism undermine the standard pictures and motivate a revised picture, the lucid. I then briefly press questions regarding the two paradoxes' empirical grounding as well as their scope. Lastly, I assume that this picture obtains and appeal to Jeffrey Stout's (2004, 2010) work to show how philosophical dialogue, through pressure on the person's self-image as "decent" or "reasonable" and appeal to "moral perceptions", may yet influence public discourse.

1. Public philosophy: three strands, two sites, two pictures

For the sake of clarity, I define the key ideas of Leiter's (2016) overview of public philosophy. I begin with the notion of "public philosophy", three strands of which are present in the paper. Leiter is concerned foremost with a restricted sense:

> **(D1)** "Neoliberal" public philosophy is the practice of bringing rigorous philosophical reasoning (e.g. deductive argument, conceptual analysis, appeal to linguistic usage or intuition, etc.) to bear on more or less urgent matters of direct or indirect interest to persons or groups in society with the aim of impacting public policy.

This strand qualifies as "neoliberal" in that it exemplifies a "way of thinking that has dominated the capitalist world completely since the 1980s, in which every human activity justifies itself by its contribution to something for which there is demand in the marketplace" (Leiter, 2016, p. 51). Put differently, "neoliberal" public philosophy aims to supply philosophical rigor in response to a demand for philosophical expertise, whether that demand be internal (university or department assessing "impact" or "relevance") or external (public or private sector seeking expert opinion).

Although Leiter's attention is squarely on this "neoliberal" strand, his account makes room for two further strands. He briefly alludes to:

> **(D2)** "Broad" public philosophy is the practice of exposing members of the public to rigorous philosophical reasoning (e.g. deductive argument, conceptual analysis, appeal to linguistic usage or intuition, etc.) and general philosophical conclusions on a range of topics of "public interest" with the aim of promoting critical reflection on the public's part.

In truth, the author might dub this strand "tautological": all philosophy is public philosophy in the sense that it is "relevant and significant to anyone – including presumably members of the 'public' – who want to know what is true or to know what they do and do not know" (*idem*.). By his lights, this is, however, "obviously not what is meant by 'public philosophy'" (*idem*.). As Leiter's critique seeks to undercut **(D1)**, I assume in the following that, to his mind, this leaves **(D2)** relatively intact. I question this assumption in the last part of §2.

Lastly, a third and final strand is left standing:

> **(D3) "**Narrow" public philosophy is the practice of deploying forms of philosophical rhetoric (e.g. evocative description, historical understanding, causal explanation, critical genealogy, utopian appeals, etc.) to bear on more or less urgent matters of direct or indirect interest to persons or groups in society independent of any aim to impact public policy.

I label this strand "narrow" as opposed to "broad" because Leiter attempts to show how a practical but chastened "neoliberal" public philosophy finds more solid footing: first, by decoupling "public philosophy" and "public policy" (p. 62); second, by calling attention to the rhetorical practices of past philosophers of public stature, notably, Marx and Nietzsche (p. 64). In a word, understanding why **(D1)** misleads us as to what philosophy may accomplish helps us better to define aims and manage expectations for **(D3)**.

A significant challenge to understanding Leiter's account is the vagueness latent in **(D1)**. While the definition says much about what the neoliberal public philosopher wishes to accomplish and which discursive means she employs, it leaves indeterminate where she undertakes her task, to whom she addresses herself and how and whether she interacts with the addressees. For the author paints in broad strokes: the neoliberal public philosopher engages in "public debate" (pp. 53, 55, 62), "public discourse" (pp. 59, 62, 63) or "moral thinking in the public sphere" (p. 62) and addresses simply "the public" (pp. 51, 64). Yet this leaves unclear whether the discourse is uni-, bi- or multidirectional, whether there is the opportunity for default-and-challenge interactions, whether the speakers, participants, etc. claim philosophical or other expertise, whether a specific goal is to be attained (e.g. consensus, convergence of opinion, etc.) and so on.

Undoubtedly, Leiter is aware of that vagueness. In fact, his specific examples may somewhat close the gap. Regardless, I propose two discursive sites whereto Leiter's critique may be addressed and wherein its reach may be assessed:

> **(S1)** A "pedagogical" discursive site involves a (more or less) formal unidirectional exchange between a public philosopher and an audience comprising philosophical lay persons, public officials, experts, stakeholders, etc., with interaction (mostly) confined to questions and answers and taking place within a limited timeframe. This site aims at educating and informing the audience.
>
> **(S2)** A "interactive" discursive site involves a formal or informal bi- or multidirectional exchange between a public philosopher and an audience comprising philosophical lay persons, public officials, experts, stakeholders, etc., with interaction taking the form of presentations followed by questions and answers or a feedback session of comments and challenges, etc. and taking place within a (more or less) limited timeframe. This site aims at a joint learning experience for philosopher and audience.

I do not pretend to have exhausted the conceptual range of possible discursive sites[1], nor claim that a discursive site cannot be alternately pedagogical and interactive. These are merely rough-and-ready distinctions with some basis in the text and which allow us to get a better grip on Leiter's central claims.

Finally, before moving on to the substance of Leiter's challenge, I also give two standard pictures of neoliberal public philosophy to illustrate how it might be practiced by the public philosopher in **(S1)** and **(S2)**:

> **(P1) Naïve:** Public philosophy involves using abstract reasoning to generate substantive (normative) principles which are straightforwardly applied to problems facing persons or groups in society.[2]
>
> **(P2) Sophisticated:** Public philosophy involves using abstract reasoning to distinguish unlike arguments, concepts, cases, etc. and to bring clearer into view underdetermined norms, aspirations, ideals, etc. and their range of applicability, without issuing in a straightforward resolution of problems facing persons or groups in society.[3]

To illustrate briefly how neoliberal public philosophy may differ between discursive sites and pictures, consider two philosophers, Alberta and Bernadette. Suppose that Alberta is participating in **(S1)** on the subject of healthcare rationing. As a "pedagogical" discursive site, this exchange may foresee a presentation from Alberta before opening the floor to questions from public officials, experts, stakeholders or lay persons. In her presentation, Alberta works from the norm of equity to argue for a healthcare lottery and grounds her claims in her philosophical expertise. In her answers, she is adamant that equity is our predominant concern and that a healthcare lottery is its only suitable institutionalization. For Alberta, the takeaway concerns her success in persuading her audience that the norm of equity and a lottery healthcare represent the best solution in healthcare-rationing.

In contrast, Bernadette is participating in **(S2)**. As an "interactive" discursive site, this exchange may take the form of a roundtable or moderated discussion. In her opening words, Bernadette identifies competing norms, such as efficiency, equity and maximin, to argue for a balanced allocation strategy but does not consider that her philosophical training lends her any special "authority" (cf. Rawls, 2007, pp. 1-2). Moreover, in her subsequent interventions, Bernadette remains sensitive to novel uses and unforeseen shortcomings of those norms which follow-up remarks may bring to her attention and in light of which her initial survey must be further articulated and supplemented. For Bernadette, the takeaway lies in getting discussion started on a multifaceted issue and

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[1] Other discursive sites might take shape as hearings collecting expert testimony to inform problem-solving or think-pieces aiming to generate societal uptake of a question of broad philosophical interest to the "maxi-public" (Suiter and Reuchamps, 2016).

[2] Although there may be no public philosophers practicing the "naïve" picture, it forms the target of Leiter's first paradox. While it might thus be considered an "empty" concept, we can get an idea of what such a view might look like in Daniels's (1996, pp. 334-338) report on "principlism" and the critical discussion surrounding Beauchamp's and Childress's (1979) four principles for bioethics. In later editions, the latter repudiated their simplistic view.

[3] More philosophers would second this picture. One prominent example is Williams (1994) wherein he expresses a parallel view about moral philosophy. See also Daniels (1996) on top-down versus bottom-up approaches in bioethics.

jumpstarting "collective intelligence" (Landemore 2012) to test possible solutions against differently weighted priorities.

From the above contrast, it is clearer to what extent the discursive site and the picture of public philosophy influence the shape of any given instance of neoliberal public philosophy. Were we to place Alberta in **(S2)** and Bernadette in **(S1)**, the interaction's tenor and stakes would prove importantly different. For Alberta, the takeaway would instead consist in identifying lingering questions and concerns which the norm of equity and its proposed solution, a healthcare lottery, must confront in order to be the most broadly convincing, adequate solution. For Bernadette, the takeaway would lie rather in showing her audience the importance of approaching the topic of healthcare rationing from different perspectives. Wherefore the need to supplement the original paper by calling attention to the interaction between speaker and place, time and purpose, in determining outcomes (see Table 1). Yet, whatever the site or context, Leiter holds that neoliberal public philosophy falls prey to two paradoxes, the subject of §2.

Table 1: Outcomes of coupling between discursive sites and pictures

	(P1) Naïve	**(P2) Sophisticated**
(S1) Pedagogical	Persuasion	Diversity education
(S2) Interactive	Enhancing persuasion	Collective intelligence

2. Leiter's challenge: Two paradoxes and the third picture

Leiter (2016) formulates two paradoxes targeting any contribution of "philosophical insight or knowledge or skill to questions of moral and political urgency" in a community (p. 51). The first holds that what expertise philosophers "offer can not *[sic]* consist in any credible claim to know what is good, right, valuable, or any other substantive normative proposition that might be decisive in practical affairs" (p. 53). If philosophers cannot offer credible knowledge claims on substantive matters, Alberta's initial claim and subsequent insistence that equity is our only concern in healthcare rationing and that a healthcare lottery is its only suitable institutionalization come into question. Because she subscribes to **(P1)**, the naïve, she holds that substantive normative principles straightforwardly generate solutions to society's problems. Yet her claim and insistence seem misplaced should she lack credible knowledge claims on substantive matters. Hence, by casting doubt on just such knowledge claims, the first paradox undermines **(P1)** and, consequently, Alberta's neoliberal public philosophy.

All the same, this leaves **(P2)**, the sophisticated, untouched, as well as Bernadette's efforts. For the credibility of Bernadette's public intervention hinges not on a knowledge

claim of substantive matters but on the skilled deployment of reasoning and abstract theory to distinguish cases and explicate implicit norms, etc. For Leiter, **(P2)** is similarly undercut by building on the first paradox. He grants that, even without substantive normative knowledge, philosophers may offer "a *method* or *way of thinking*" (*idem*.). From a set of beliefs, philosophers work out rational commitments, e.g. believing *x* commits one to *y* but not to *z*. This "discursive hygiene" involves "parsing arguments, clarifying the concepts at play in a debate, teasing out the dialectical entailments of suppositions and claims" (*idem*.). The paradox lies in that such hygiene, public philosophers' nominal contribution, plays "an only erratic, and highly contingent, role in how people form beliefs about matters of moral and political urgency" (p. 55).

Thus, Bernadette's contribution is similarly built on sand. For, if the form of her intervention does not directly engage the processes behind belief- and attitude-formation and, therefore, does not stimulate concerted reflection, problematization and collective problem-solving, Bernadette's approach of parsing competing notions and remaining sensitive to novel uses is unsuited for, if not irrelevant to, the outcomes which she seeks in the wake of her intervention. From the lack of fit between the form of her intervention and the mechanisms guiding belief- and attitude-formation, it follows that the second paradox undermines **(P2)** and, by extension, Bernadette's version of public philosophy.

If the two paradoxes can be sustained, public philosophy would have to be reconceived, notably as **(D3)**. But therein lies the rub. To sustain the paradoxes, Leiter must at once elaborate the mechanisms guiding belief- and attitude-formation and bulwark **(D2)**, broad public philosophy, against those mechanisms' reach. I first consider his elaborating before returning to the "bulwarking" at the end of this section.

Leiter fleshes those mechanisms out through the psychological phenomena of emotivism and tribalism. Emotivism limits public philosophy as "discursive hygiene": "Ethical disagreements are at bottom a function of disagreement in attitudes, rather than disagreements about beliefs" (p. 53).[4] He adds that "the connection between particular facts and our attitudes is just a contingent *psychological/causal fact*" such that, "if our beliefs change, our attitudes often change too" (p. 54). Accordingly, public discourse may concern two kinds of conflict. If between beliefs, the conflict may be ended by ensuring convergence between beliefs through appeal to reasons. If between attitudes, the conflict admits of no clear-cut solution as attitudes are less reason-responsive.

This warrants Leiter's seeming conclusion that no rules govern the *necessary* transformation of and causal interaction between beliefs and attitudes. For a given belief may provoke change in another belief or attitude without one's being aware thereof. Likewise, one may mistakenly attribute change in a given belief to another belief or attitude. There is no available conceptual apparatus for reliably tracking and predicting those causal connections. That being said, one wonders whether Leiter overstates his case regarding the absence of rules.

Two points bear mentioning. First, in fairness to Leiter, nowhere does the author explicitly state that there are no rules governing "changes in belief about the logical or inferential relations between beliefs or between beliefs and attitudes" (p. 55). Certainly, this conclusion might follow from his observation that discursive hygiene operates "through causal channels we do not yet understand very well" (p. 63), but the phrase "no

[4] Leiter associates this position with "The Nature of Ethical Disagreement" in Stevenson (1963).

rules" only appears in a passage recalling Philippa Foot's (1958) criticism of Stevenson. Although Leiter then remarks that "Stevenson had it exactly right" about the contingent, psychological character of changes in belief, this does not strictly commit the author to the "no rules" view.

For, moving to our second point, Leiter could admit the existence of rules governing "changes in belief about the logical or inferential relations between beliefs or between beliefs and attitudes" all while maintaining that, for practical purposes, there are none. It would suffice that such changes are causally overdetermined. Put differently, even if there are rules, one may be hard-pressed to know which to invoke in order to explain a given change[5], without simultaneously appealing to one's own "pro- and con- attitudes about the kinds of arguments that influence attitudes" (Leiter, 2016, p. 54).

An example may help clarify this point. Suppose a person believes that the electoral system is unjust due to her moral beliefs about autonomy, religious beliefs about temporal power or social attitudes about democratic politics. To change this larger belief, one might try several strategies. One appeals to ethical considerations counter to her moral or religious beliefs (*e.g.* the temporal-spiritual power divide is necessary), to unethical considerations about her self-interest (*e.g.* the electoral system best preserves her own (group's) freedom of belief) or to opposed social attitudes (*e.g.* a sense of public service). If the person then believes the electoral system just, there are several prima facie possible explanations of that change in belief, only some of which owe to discursive factors. The change might also owe to non-discursive factors, such as sociological determinants (e.g. tipping points) or cognitive biases identified by experimental psychology (e.g. elaboration likelihood model). Moreover, recall that the person herself may be unaware of or mistaken about the belief which provoked the change.

Resultantly, neither person nor interlocutor nor observer will be able to ascribe conclusively the change to the discursive factor of philosophical reasoning (e.g. ethical considerations) rather than other discursive factors (e.g. self-interest or social attitudes) or even non-discursive factors (e.g. biases). While it may still prove possible retrospectively to advance different, more or less plausible hypotheses regarding the change, this does not affect the substance of Leiter's claim, only its details.

With this, the author turns to "tribalism", the view that "the propensity of creatures like us to identify with those 'like themselves,' and to view others as unacceptably different, deficient, depraved, and perhaps dangerous" ensures that "prejudice and bias are dominant forces in human life" (p. 59). Tribalism directly impacts discursive hygiene and public discourse in three ways. First, the person tracks not the inferential relation between beliefs, attitudes and reasons but her similarity with interlocutors. Second, she is predisposed to adopt divergent discursive stances towards similar and dissimilar interlocutors. In just the same measure that she is more likely to accept a similar person's beliefs, attitudes and reasons as good and deem the latter a rational actor or a locus of human dignity, she is more likely to dismiss a dissimilar person's beliefs, etc. as bad and to view the other as irrational or unworthy of dignity. Third, unremarked by Leiter, her beliefs, attitudes and reasons are most responsive to pressure coming from those similar

[5] A parallel lesson may be drawn from the political science institutionalist literature explaining the rules or mechanisms governing institutional changes (cf. Hall and Taylor, 1996). Given multiple explanatory models, a phenomenon might be explained by one or more of them or even none at all (cf. Schmidt, 2010). The history of ideas may also be read in this way.

to herself, yet those similar to herself are least likely to pressure her on her beliefs, etc., whether due to self-sorting, group polarization (Sunstein 2002), etc..

Again, an example may help. Consider a person who believes that a progressive income tax is just, be it for moral reasons about fairness, religious reasons about charity or social attitudes about wealth. At the level of belief- and attitude-formation, according to tribalism, she will judge the taxation system fair insofar as it benefits those similar to herself and penalizes the dissimilar, for the former alone deserve her moral concern. At the discursive level, were another to challenge her belief that the taxation system is just or her supporting attitudes or reasons, the likelihood of her engaging that challenge hinges on that person's similarity with herself.

In sum, if "moral change depends fundamentally on the emotional attitudes" and "these attitudes tend in a strongly Tribalist direction" (Leiter, 2016, p. 60), discursive hygiene must overcome attitudinal recalcitrance *and* sensitivity to (dis)similarity. Despite his vigorous critique, Leiter maintains that public philosophy can move forward, albeit under other garb. One can hold without contradiction that a.) philosophers ought to apply theory to urgent matters and b.) public philosophers are most likely to broaden persons' regard for others when they appeal to emotions and similarity, not inferential connections between beliefs, attitudes and reasons. Discursive hygiene may still indirectly track beliefs and attitudes' evolution, and the discipline of law suggests that logical entailments can constrain attitudes when rationalizing one's position (pp. 62-63). Rhetoric does not obviate rigor, yielding a revised picture:

> **(P3) Lucid:** Public philosophy involves using a.) abstract reasoning to generate substantive (normative) principles, to distinguish unlike arguments, etc., to bring into view undetermined norms, etc., in the hope that this may constrain acceptable attitudes *and* b.) rhetoric to engage non-discursive, emotional or similarity-based factors underlying belief- and attitude-formation.

This "lucid" picture enables us to shift from **(D1)**, neoliberal public philosophy, with its focus on influencing public policy to **(D3)**, narrow public philosophy, with its emphasis on philosophical rhetoric (e.g. evocative description, historical understanding, etc.) with, nonetheless, particular attention to urgent matters.

To illustrate **(P3)**, consider a third philosopher, Christiane, participating in **(S1)**, a pedagogical site, on healthcare rationing. Christiane adopts a threefold strategy regarding her audience. First, she identifies competing norms, e.g. efficiency, equity and maximin, to formulate a balanced allocation strategy. Second, she recognizes that others desire principles to justify their belief and that, should no felicitous principles emerge or there be conflict with overarching legal or technical rules, they may be amenable to revising that belief. Third, she appeals to emotions in order to elicit opposed affective reactions.

Before moving on to the final section, I should briefly assess two issues set aside above. On one hand, does Leiter provide sufficient evidence to back his claim that public discourse is subject to emotivism and tribalism, and how well does his description fit everyday experience? On the other, how successful is Leiter in bulwarking **(P2)**, broad public philosophy, against the two paradoxes undercutting **(P1)**, neoliberal public philosophy?

As to the first, Leiter's evidence that public life is insensitive to discursive hygiene falls short of systematicity. To establish his emotivism claim, he at times references findings from moral psychology about the sources of moral judgment and motivation (pp. 57-59), which gesture towards affect-motivation or affect-morals internalism. At others, the evidence is more observational, even anecdotal: the Steven Salaita controversy; Hindu nationalist fabrications; the argumentative merits of Peter Singer's (1975) case for animal liberation and his international reception; Legal Realist judicial practice (Leiter, 2016, pp. 55-57, 61-62, 63). To motivate his tribalism claims, Leiter advances similarly mixed considerations. In places, he appeals to selectionist explanations from the natural selection literature to understand tribalism's hold over human nature (p. 60). In others, the claim that tribalism is "the curse of our species" rests on historical narrative about the post-1945 world-order and remarks on the Marxian ideal of species-being (p. 59).

I will just briefly suggest two ways in which Leiter's claims about emotivism may lack sufficient warrant. First, more time could be spent fleshing out the precise interrelation between "social intuitionist" moral judgment, moral-emotional processing and sentimentalism. Second, Leiter's observational evidence might be opposed by further observational evidence. Supposing that there are instances of public discourse wherein participants put forward arguments structured in terms of abstract reasoning and hold one another to account on grounds of consistency, etc., this suggests that the public is, at the very least, not wholly insensitive to discursive hygiene (though still short of highly sensitive).[6] Leiter would undoubtedly reply that such evidence is compatible with his emotivist charge inasmuch as consistency factors not into how participants form their beliefs but, instead, into how they relate the reasons adduced for their affective responses. That said, this suggests that Leiter's case regarding the public is easily overstated.

Concerning the second question, namely whether **(P2)**, holds its ground against the two paradoxes undercutting **(P1)**, one wonders whether Leiter does not understate his case as regards philosophy and philosophers on two counts. On one hand, although the two paradoxes seemingly afflict **(P1)** alone, it is unclear why they do not also undercut **(P2)** whereof the primary tool is also discursive hygiene. If the author's charge is that the public is not insensitive to discursive hygiene solely in urgent moral or political matters of public policy but to discursive hygiene *tout court*, then **(P2)** is as affected by the second paradox. To counter this, he would need to show that affect does not factor into judgment about reality, knowledge, etc. and that emotivism and tribalism are confined to "how people form beliefs about matters of moral and political urgency" (p. 55). Otherwise, other fields of philosophy, e.g. metaphysics, aesthetics, will prove no less relevant to the public. In a word, a scope problem looms in Leiter's account.

In fact, this problem suggests a second, more troubling worry. If emotivism shapes, at the very least, belief- and attitude-formation about moral and political matters, then the two paradoxes apply, albeit in a lesser measure, to philosophical discourse with philosophers. Leiter is seemingly cognizant of this difficulty: "That this rather obvious point [that Singer's claim that suffering per se is abhorrent, regardless of species, is a matter of brute moral attitude] is not much acknowledged in the philosophical literature should make even philosophers wonder what role discursive rationality as opposed to other forces are playing in their arguments" (p. 61). Combined with his discussion about the absence of "rationally obligatory" beliefs (p. 62), this brief acknowledgement makes it curious that

[6] As pointed out by one conference participant, the debate surrounding the May 2018 Ireland abortion referendum showed that the public did not simply emote but also gave arguments resembling a sort of "guerrilla philosophy".

he restricts the paradoxes to dialogue with the public and thereby invites a species of philosophical prejudice. That is, barring this isolated remark, one might come away with the impression that philosophers are rational superbeings, masters of discursive hygiene, rather than fallible creatures having studied reasoning and abstract theory. It would be worth considering the merits of exposing the public to specifically philosophical virtues, e.g. discursive hygiene, through such strategies as growing philosophy programs in schools.[7]

Tribalism is no less a problem in philosophy. For one can point to how considerations of similarity may factor into the philosophical equivalent of ideological purity tests, be this in terms of one's intuitions (regarding one's answer to, say, Putnam's (1975) Twin Earth experiment or Goldman's (1976) fake barn case) or one's political leanings. Similarly, one might worry about clientelism in hiring or conference invitations. Regardless, to answer questions about emotivism and tribalism within philosophy would require a sociology of the discipline.[8]

3. Public philosophy after Leiter's paradoxes: Two tactics

For the sake of illustration, grant that Leiter has matters right. This means that: a.) on reflection, one finds that his approach accurately describes and introspectively fits everyday experience; b.) emotivism and tribalism withstand common objections (e.g. the Frege-Geach problem[9]). Using Stout's (2004, 2010) work, I now sketch two tacks which a public philosopher might employ in **(D3)** to influence public discourse on **(P3)**, the "lucid" picture.

The first consists in accepting the phenomenon of post-hoc rationalization and in managing one's discursive expectations. Stout (2010) elaborates a typology of opposition to same-sex marriage which may serve a similar purpose (p. 533). He outlines how the beliefs of religious opponents to same-sex marriage may be analyzed by the role that reasons play in rationalizing their opposition. "Sadistic homophobes" use religious rationalization wittingly as a cover for the emotional attitude motivating their opposition. They are not tracking reasons for that opposition, and, consequently, they will not react to pressure from reasons. As "trolls", they are playing a game rather than seeking better informed or more adequate beliefs. In short, public philosophy, either as discursive hygiene or rhetoric, will not reach them.

In contrast, "unwitting homophobes" use religious rationalization, unbeknownst to themselves, as a cover for the emotional attitude motivating their opposition. They are not tracking reasons for that opposition, but they may react to pressure from the right kind of reasons in that they are hateful but unaware of their rationalizations as such. They consider themselves "decent" or "reasonable" and desire to continue regarding themselves as such, providing an argumentative foothold for rhetorical pressure, in

[7] For what it is worth, Leiter would in all likelihood maintain that the impression is mistaken and that he himself favors expanding the discipline in this way. After all, his account only implies a difference of degree between philosophers and philosophical lay persons, not one of kind, and one would do well to remember that he advocates the continued public use of "discursive hygiene" in **(D3)**.

[8] For one such attempt, see Rhode's (2017) study finding that articles in leading philosophical journals practice persuasion (rather than inquiry or discovery) dialogue. Leiter (2016) himself cites a work of sociological importance, Brandt (1959) (p. 54).

[9] Of which the author is aware (p. 54, n. 8).

appeals to their "decency" or "reasonableness" (or even face-to-face interaction with a person whom they otherwise condemn).

Lastly, "well-intentioned opponents", though not homophobic, have a negative emotional attitude and find religious teachings a plausible explanation therefor. For these opponents, "reasons are playing a greater role in the formation of their political position in the first place" (*idem*.). Accordingly, even if they are mistaken on the reasons for their opposition, their opposition tracks reasons rather than (or in addition to) affective responses or similarity. Hence, well-intentioned opponents are more responsive to pressure on the reasons for their opposition. Through reason-giving, one "show[s] them that their scriptural reasons for opposing same-sex marriage fail to cohere with other commitments they hold with equal or greater confidence" (*idem*.). Public discourse can accommodate post-hoc rationalization provided that interlocutors distinguish the kinds of ill-intentioned, mis-intentioned or well-intentioned reasons adduced and adjust their expectations and tactics (see Table 2).[10]

Table 2: Summary of anti-homophobia discursive strategies

	Homophobic?	**Aware of rationalization?**	**Successful engagement?**
Sadistic homophobe	Yes	Yes	None
Unwitting homophobe	Yes	No	Pressure on sense of decency or reasonableness
Well-intentioned opponent	No	-	Reason-giving

As to the second tack, one might take an instrumental view of discursive hygiene: successfully applying rhetorical pressure depends partly on discursive hygiene and other-knowledge. Indeed, the interlocutor may draw on discursive hygiene to gain knowledge of the person's inferential commitments whereby she may identify those emotional appeals most likely to generate rhetorical pressure on the person's beliefs, attitudes or reasons.

[10] Notably, Stout suggests that interlocutors call attention to the role which non-discursive factors play in upstream belief-formation. For an audience of mis- or well-intentioned opponents, this includes the distinction between genders and its importance to the division of labor and inheritance rules (pp. 533-534). That said, changes in the social structure over time may further dialogue more than discursive tactics employed by public philosophy.

Such emotional appeals might consist in the exchange of "moral perceptions". Stout (2004) scrutinizes one such exchange in the Edmund Burke-Thomas Paine controversy over democracy and custom (pp. 216-224). Whereas Burke paints for readers a vivid word-picture of Marie Antoinette's suffering at revolutionary hands, Paine counters with a detailed account of the poor's miserable living conditions. Through an intimation of their readers' rational commitments, both Burke and Paine were able noninferentially to lead readers to their own inferential connections concerning what constituted proper treatment of the parties involved. While the emotional attitudes constitutive of moral perception are "noninferential, they are inferentially connected to moral passions, like awe and pity, and the actions for which they serve as warrant" (p. 217). Put differently, inferential relations unearthed by discursive hygiene may allow us to get a discursive grip on non-discursive factors underlying beliefs, attitudes and reasons.

4. Conclusion

After outlining two standard pictures of neoliberal public philosophy, I followed how Leiter's two paradoxes, through emotivism and tribalism, undercut those pictures across two discursive sites. This gave rise to a revised, "lucid" picture of public philosophy about which I pressed questions concerning its empirical grounding and its scope. Finally, I illustrated two positive discursive tactics from Stout's work: pressure on the person's self-image and appeal to "moral perceptions". In the end, I concluded that, even if emotivism and tribalism are principally constitutive of attitude- and belief-formation, this does not preclude their responsiveness to the right kinds of reasons, for which "discursive hygiene" may yet serve a purpose.[11]

[11] My thanks to the audience for helpful questions, comments and pushback.

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