



BECAUSE IT WAS YOU, BECAUSE IT WAS ME
ANNA MARMODORO

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I write my Yearbook entry just after having left Wiko, after ten amazing months. The last few days there were dominated by a collective sense of melancholy, turned into palpable sorrow when the very last dinner was announced. I was struck by how distressed we all

seemed to be at departure time, and I can only explain it as the B-side of our experience: flip over that sense of sorrow, and you'll discover the happiness of our stay there!

That everything would have gone so well wasn't obvious at the start of the year, when I met for the first time my Co-Fellows and the Wiko dream team: in a sense, every year and cohort of new Fellows at Wiko is an experiment in intellectual chemistry. But importantly, for each Fellow, too, a year at Wiko is an experiment of dislocation from the familiar in the pursuit of ambitious intellectual goals.

My own goals were for sure, I readily admit, *very* ambitious, because in a bout of extreme optimism at the start of the year, I not only set out to pursue the research plans I had submitted with my application to Wiko, but also aspired to write a new short monograph on a different research topic. I remember insisting with the relevant staff at Wiko, asking them to please change my web entry by adding a "Further" paragraph, which was in effect a second research plan for the year. And then came the wise words of Helga Nowotny, who visited Wiko at the beginning of the academic year and shared with us Woody Allen's line, "If you want to make God laugh, tell Him about your plans."

Yes, perhaps my initial plans for the year at Wiko might have made God laugh at how ambitious they were. But even if I did not achieve what I had specifically set out to achieve, I feel an exhilarating sense of success at the end of the year. Academically, it was a year of intellectual exploration and discoveries. Firstly, I consolidated my ground by finishing up a series of outstanding projects: a paper in defence of the philosophical soundness of the view according to which properties (such as being red, square, or human) are Aristotelian universals instantiated in concrete objects (this tomato, this table, Socrates); and a paper arguing for the "utility" of appealing to causal powers in our scientific and metaphysical explanations of the world. The final versions of both papers were tried out at events at which I was invited to speak: for instance, the annual meeting of the Società Italiana di Filosofia Analitica and the conference on "Connaissance philosophique & connaissance des essences" at the Collège de France. They are now published.

In the meantime, I laid the foundations of three new editorial projects: three edited collections on (as widely different topics as) Omnipresence; Artificial Dispositions; and the philosophy of Joachim of Fiore (an Italian thinker who flourished in the 12th century). (For the Fellows to come: this last idea was *not* inspired by the existence of a small Italian restaurant in Grunewald called "Trattoria Gioachino"; but the coincidence of there being such a restaurant in the neighbourhood was intriguing! Did they hold reading groups of Joachim's texts there after dinner? I never got to find out...)

As the good, happy routine of life at Wiko and Villa Walther started having a deeper, beneficial impact on me and the winter was setting in, I started the most adventurous of my philosophical undertakings this year and one of the most adventurous in my entire career thus far, and on a research topic that I had not anticipated I would investigate while at Wiko. The topic is as old as philosophy itself. It concerns the metaphysics of change and what the ancient thinkers of the first millennium BC thought about it. Change is an everyday phenomenon. Everything changes in nature. Yet, change is a challenge to metaphysicians, of all times. For change presupposes that what changes is one, but makes it different from itself, by changing it, still requiring it to be the same one. *Oneness is both presupposed and denied by change*; so, what is the number of change? I submit there is much to learn from the way the ancients thought about individuation and about counting things that change. I will say no more here, but... watch this space for more to come! As part of this research strand, I delved into the fantastically interesting metaphysics of Philolaus, an ancient Pythagorean philosopher whose work survived to us only in 11 fragments and, indirectly, in Plato's dialogue *Philebus*. The challenge of reconstructing a theory out of this slim textual evidence was irresistible and occupied me for a good part of the spring.

Spring in Berlin was lovely! Grunewald buzzed with life: birds, frogs, bunnies, and flowers, all around the lakes... As a *meta*-physician, I usually pay little attention to my physical surroundings; but the beauty of nature was impossible to ignore in Grunewald, and with it came a sense of extra vitality and energy – which I found myself investing in working on two different new research papers on late antique philosophy: one on Themistius (who flourished in the 4th century) and one on Gregory of Nyssa (also in the 4th century).

What about the rest of my research plans for the year at Wiko?? The first and initial project was to write on the origins of the mind-body problem, which I submit entered the history of philosophy due to an assumption made by Aristotle. Aristotle's assumption, which has been deeply influential, even on us today, is that only items within the same ontological category can interact causally (e.g. the physical with the physical, but not the physical with the mental). The second additional project I mentioned above was to write a short monograph on *Properties in Ancient Metaphysics*, as described in my Wiko video (<https://www.wiko-berlin.de/en/wikotheque/multimedia/anna-marmodoro>). Neither of the two initially envisaged projects was completed during my stay at Wiko. But they are in the making, and without Wiko they would not even have been initiated. Thanks to Wiko though, much more came to be in the making and has now been accomplished.

The serendipity of what has actually come to be accomplished during the year is a testimony to one of the qualities that I have appreciated the most in the academic approach that our current Rektorin, Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, and Daniel Schönplflug, Head of Academic Programs, embody at Wiko. They value, encourage, and support academic freedom. This freedom is above all what makes Wiko an ideal home for curious minds, brave explorations, and exciting discoveries.

And yet, Wiko is not the home of lonely researchers buried in their books and their studies. Wiko encourages interactions – in its “legendary” Tuesday Colloquia, but also around the dining table over a plate of lovely gnocchi, around the coffee machine, or while sipping a glass of wine on the balcony of Villa Jaffé. Hospitality at Wiko is generous and warm, and it materialises just by evoking the genie of the place, Dunia Najjar, and her formidable staff. And Wiko’s hospitality extends to every aspect of the Fellows’ well-being: from keeping us healthy and safe during the nth pandemic wave, to discovering for us and booking shows and museum tickets, to finding the ideal hairdresser, etc. Thank you to ALL of you at Wiko!! And especially to Vera Pfeffer and Maike Schaper.

Wiko is not a place on the map – Wiko is a place in the mind. A place that one *discovers* by being physically based at the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin; but a “place” that one never leaves, even when leaving the Institute. Because it was all of you, because it was me, with all our individual ways of being colleagues and friends – that this is a place that I loved. A place of freedom, which I valued and will always feel to be home.

And the new ideas...? Here are some highlights from the research topics I mentioned above.

Instantiation – What is it, metaphysically, for a universal to be instantiated in a concrete particular? Philosophical controversy has been on-going since the beginning of philosophy itself. I contribute a novel account of instantiation developed on the basis of Aristotelian premises (but departing from the mainstream interpretation according to which Aristotelian universals are instantiated by “combining” hylomorphically with matter). The key stance is that, for Aristotle, each substance is one, i.e. single (in addition to also being a non-recurrent particular). I show that for Aristotle, the oneness of substances is primitively assumed, and, importantly, cannot be derived from the composition of parts, not even holistic composition. However, parts undermine oneness; it follows that instantiated properties are *not parts* of substances. However, if they are not parts of the substances they are in, what are they? Aristotle shows they are *qualifications* of the substances they are in.

However, don't qualifications undermine the singleness of a substance? I show that Aristotle makes sure they do not. The way he does it is new, then and now. Qualifications are hybrid entities, sacrificing their own discreteness *qua* properties, while adopting the discreteness of the (metaphysical) subject they qualify. But then, how can a universal quality *recur* in many substances, if, when instantiated, it assimilates the discreteness of each of these substances? This is a key Aristotelian stance: the *quality* recurs, not its *qualifications*. Qualities are *abstracted* from the instantiated qualifications of similar objects, e.g. "wisdom" is abstracted from many "wise" people; "wisdom" (the universal) is individuated bottom-up from its instances, by abstraction.

Dynamic Powers: The Black Box of Metaphysics – Change does happen in the world. Powers/forces/potentialities are posited in physics and in metaphysics as the "engines" of change. Without their *dynamic* contribution, that change happens would be a mystery in nature. And yet, no explanation of what makes powers dynamic has been offered in physics or in metaphysics, including power ontology. Their *dynamism* is always assumed as primitively given, when positing powers. I identify the dynamism of powers as the Black Box of metaphysics and investigate what is possible to find out about it.

Philolaus – I believe Philolaus' theory of harmony has been greatly influential in the history of philosophy and the sciences. Here is the difference between Democritus and Philolaus. Democritus' atoms are an example of how to articulate reality into parts, thereby grounding number on reality – a world of atoms is a readily countable world. However, Philolaus upped the ante by providing a general model of how number can be grounded on reality by showing that *number is grounded on reality by setting limits on the unlimited*. This is a *schema* of how to ground number on reality – the limits set boundaries onto the unlimited, thereby articulating it into segments/parts that can be counted. What is significant in my redescription of what Philolaus proposes is that the limits bring to the unlimited their own *individuation criterion*, which is *independent of/extrinsic to the nature of the unlimited*. Let me explain: If we look at today's Set Theory, which in my understanding is an application of Philolaus' model of "numbering" reality, we may consider a set, say the Set of Green things. *What* every member of this set is, is determined by its own individuation criterion, and not by the colour green. That is exactly how it is with Philolaus' limits, too. They each bring in an individuation criterion that is independent of the continuum they articulate, thereby bringing number to this continuum.

Themistius – The most surprising assumption of Themistius is that *what is truly good* is one and the same for all philosophical theories of his time; he offers an analogy between philosophy and medicine: all doctors concur on what health is, for all men; and yet, there are multiple ways in which one may lack health and multiple ways to restore it; similarly with the true good which is one and the same for all philosophers. Themistius assumes that there is a single über-theory of the good for all philosophical schools; and all ancient ethical theories are merely ways to get people to come to be as close as possible (given their conditions) to understanding it. I have a novel explanation to offer of what Themistius meant by this (to us very surprising!) claim.

Gregory of Nyssa – The challenge I focus on is Gregory’s account of the *creation of matter* by God and his philosophical response to difficulties for his account that stem from Aristotle’s *Stripping-Away Argument* (SAA). I examine, in parallel, the account of the creation of matter offered by Basil of Cesarea. I argue that both philosophers *use* Aristotle’s argument to build and establish their respective ontologies specifically on the nature of matter; but additionally, that they also *argue against* certain conclusions they derive from SAA. Both Gregory and Basil read Aristotle’s SAA as requiring an underlying *characterless material substratum*, which God would not have been able to create. I argue against Gregory and Basil, showing that Aristotle’s SAA is not committed to the conclusions they draw. I also examine Calcidius’ response to Aristotle’s SAA, and I argue that the way I understand Aristotle’s argument was available, at least implicitly, at the time of Gregory and Basil, in Calcidius’ own way of engaging with SAA.