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Sergio Cremaschi

**Normativity Within the Bounds of Plural Reasons.
The Applied Ethics Revolution**

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The first chapter of this short book tries to reconstruct a plot, or a hidden agenda, in the twentieth-century ethical discussion. It singles out two starting points for the Anglo-Saxon and the Continental discussion, to be identified with the philosophies of Sidgwick and Nietzsche, both supporting some kind of ethical scepticism. It discusses how far the diagnosis formulated by Karl-Otto Apel of a 'parallel convergence' between Existentialism and Analytic philosophy in separating facts and values and thus justifying 'decisionism' is useful in making sense of the agenda of the discussion.

The second chapter discusses the reasons for two parallel U-turns at about 1958 which brought back to the forefront two traditional schools of normative ethics, Kantian and Utilitarian, and the reasons for criticism from the heterogeneous alignment of virtue ethicists.

The third chapter discusses the phenomenon of emergence of 'applied' ethics from the Seventies, the reasons, both theoretical and political, for the revival, the point to which applied ethics may look like a grand return of casuistic and natural-law ways of thinking, and the difficult coexistence between general normative ethics and procedures for settling issues reasonably while ethical dissent is more alive than ever.

Sergio Volodia Cremaschi (Bergamo 1949) is Professor of Moral Philosophy at the "Amedeo Avogadro" University at Vercelli (Italy). His publications include a few books in Italian: one on Spinoza's ethics and philosophy of mind (*L'automa spirituale*, Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1979), another on Adam Smith's epistemology, ethics, and economic theory (*Il sistema della ricchezza*, Milan: Angeli, 1984), a history of ethics in three volumes (*L'etica del novecento*, Rome: Carocci, 2005; *L'etica moderna*, Rome: Carocci, 2007; *Le origini dell'etica occidentale*, Rome: Carocci, forthcoming), an anthology on the Continental/Analytic Divide (*Filosofia analitica e filosofia continentale*, Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1997). Besides, he published extensively on topics of ethics, epistemology, and philosophy of economics among other journals, in *Studia Leibnitiana*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *History of Political Economy*, *Science in Context*, *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*.

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