Introduction[1]

Clare Mac Cumhaill and Rachael Wiseman

Mary Beatrice Midgley (née Scrutton) was born in London in 1919 and died in Newcastle in 2018, a few weeks after the publication of her final book, *What is Philosophy For?* (Midgley, 2018). She was the daughter of Lesley (née Hay) and Tom Scrutton, chaplain at Cambridge's King's College Chapel. In 1878 Midgely's grandfather, Thomas Edward Scrutton, hosted the first meeting of the Cambridge Moral Sciences Club in his college rooms. Though Midgley remembered little of her Cambridge years (the family moved to Dulwich when she was five), Lesley recalled G. E. Moore scandalizing the 'local ladies' by taking his children out in a pram: 'Not at all right for a man…' they said (Midgley, 2005, p. 25). Midgley's aunts on both her father's and mother's side received a University education (at London, Durham and Cambridge) long before women were granted degrees. Both her parents held progressive views on education and social justice – Tom Scrutton was a regular at Hyde Park's Speakers Corner. They sent their daughter to Downe House, a girls' school founded by Olive Willis and inspired by pragmatist John Dewey's philosophy of education. Willis placed an emphasis on non-hierarchical, intergenerational friendship, creativity and the outdoors.

Midgley 'went up' to Oxford in 1938 to study Mods and Greats, and was joined at Somerville College by Iris Murdoch. The pair would remain life-long friends. When Mary Scrutton married Geoffrey Midgley in December 1950, Murdoch was her bridesmaid. During the war, Midgley and Murdoch attended refugee scholar Eduard Fraenkel's legendary *Agamemnon* classes, along with R. M. Hare and Frank Thompson (Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman, 2022, pp. 38-41). They were tutored in philosophy by conscientious objector and theologian Donald MacKinnon; both credited him with showing them that moral philosophy could be done seriously, at a time when the subject was dominated by the Intuitionists David Ross and H. A. Prichard and under attack from the moral subjectivism spawned by logical positivism (Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman, 2022, pp. 87-92). After graduating in 1942, Midgley conducted war work in the Ministry of Production in London, before returning to Oxford in 1945, initially as Gilbert Murray's secretary. In 1947 she began working towards a D. Phil. on Plotinus under the supervision of E. R. Dodds. During that period, she lived in Park Town, close to the home of Philippa Foot (née Bosanquet). Foot had been a year below Midgley at Somerville, and Midgley met her in 1940, along with Ruth Collingwood (daughter of R. G. Collingwood). Between 1946 and 1950, Midgley was a regular visitor to Foot's home, often along with Murdoch (who for a time lodged with Foot) and Elizabeth Anscombe (who lived nearby on St John Street and was by then working with Ludwig Wittgenstein). Anscombe had been a year ahead of Midgley at Oxford, and the pair were acquainted as undergraduates through Jean Coutts, a mutual friend who went on to marry J. L. Austin (against both Midgley and Anscombe's advice). In her memoir, *The Owl of Minerva*, and in numerous writings, Midgley recalls the discussion that took place among the four in Foot's living room in those early post-war years (Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman, 2022, chs. 4 and 5).

[1] Much of this introduction is based on research for our *Metaphysical Animals: How Four Women Brought Philosophy Back to Life* (2022).

> I do remember talking then a good deal with [Iris], as well as with Philippa and Elizabeth Anscombe, about Oxford moral philosophy and what should be done about it. Indeed I think that this was when we all hammered out our various thoughts on that topic, a lot of which we later published. (Midgley, 2005, p. 147)

While working toward her D. Phil., Midgley took a number of graduate classes, most notably refugee scholar Richard Walzer's class on Aristotle's *De Anima*. The class also included Peter Strawson, Anthony Flew, Peter Geach and Elizabeth Anscombe.

Following her marriage to Geoff Midgley, and after a brief stint as a lecturer at Reading, Midgley abandoned her D. Phil. and moved to Newcastle-upon-Tyne where Geoff had a lectureship. From the early 1950s to the 1970s, she was a regular contributor to BBC radio's Third Programme (on topics ranging from A. H. Whitehead to Mrs Humphrey Ward) and wrote book reviews for the *New Statesman*, while bringing up her three sons: Tom (b. 1952), David (b. 1953) and Martin (b. 1958). During this time, she studied work in the fledging field of ethology, an interest first sparked in the early 1950s on reading Konrad Lorenz' *King Solomon's Ring*.[2] In 1962, she joined the department as a Lecturer in Philosophy and remained there until 1980. Shortly after her retirement the department came under threat from cuts imposed by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government, and a broader climate that no longer saw point of small departments in the provinces that were not delivering 'research excellence' (Midgley, 2018, pp. 8-9). Midgley led an ultimately unsuccessful campaign to save her department, attempting to solicit support from leading philosophers. *Philosophy* published her plea as a guest editorial:

> [W]here are the clear public statements by leading philosophers about why philosophy matters? Where have they told us why it is not a trivial subject, not an outdated ritual, not a pedantic, incomprehensible waste of time, not, when things become hard, the obvious and proper first candidate for the chop? (Midgley, 1988, p. 1)

Midgley wrote personally to 'all the distinguished philosophers I could think of saying "do please do something about this destruction"'. A. J. Ayer answered with a supportive letter to *The Times*, but she was largely met with silence.[3]

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The 1970s were a period of remarkably intellectually fecundity for Midgley, which culminated with the publication of her landmark *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature* (Midgley, 1978b). The 1973 paper from which that monograph grew, 'The Concept of Beastliness', is included in this volume. The paper caught the eye of Max Black at Cornell who invited her to give the series of lectures on which *Beast and Man* would be based. In it, she brought her Aristotelian and (through MacKinnon) Thomist education into conversation with ethological studies in animal behaviour and recent influential work in socio-biology. The result is a detailed exploration of the kind of natural necessity that is now associated with the work of Philippa Foot and Michael

[2] See Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman (2022, Ch. 7).
[3] See Midgley (2005, p. 208). Also, Ian Kidd, 'Midgley on the 1980s Battle to Save Philosophy', < https://www.womeninparenthesis.co.uk/midgley-on-the-1980s-battle-to-save-philosophy/>

Thompson, and which was already present in sketch-form in Anscombe's pioneering 'Modern Moral Philosophy'.[4] Anscombe suggested that normativity with respect to the virtues might be fruitfully compared to the normativity in statements such as that '*man* has so many teeth', where the number is 'not the average number of teeth men have, but is the number of teeth for the species'.[5] She says that, analogously, *man* 'regarded not just biologically, but from the point of view of the activity of thought and choice in regard to the various departments of life … "has" such-and-such virtues'.[6] Midgley likewise considers what is natural for our species, and what is necessary for animals of our kind to flourish. She emphasizes several still undertheorized (at least in analytic philosophy) human needs, including those of territory, family, and personal space.[7] Recent scholarship has noted the connections between Midgley and Anscombe, and Midgely and Foot on this score, while also noting the respect in which Midgley is pioneering (and truer to Aristotelianism) in providing a scientifically-informed defence of natural normativity.[8]

Midgley accordingly rejects the Fact/Value dichotomy as she sees it playing out in the 'modern' moral philosophy that is the subject of Anscombe's critique. She targets specifically R. M. Hare (who is a principal philosophical target too of Murdoch, Anscombe and Foot) but also (following Murdoch) Sartre. In a moving passage from *Beast and Man*, which appears also in 'Dover Beach' (this volume), she writes:

> The really monstrous thing about Existentialism is its proceeding as if the world contained only dead matter (things) on the one hand and fully rational educated human beings on the other—as if there were no other life-forms, The impression of desertion or abandonment which Existentialists have is due. I am sure, not to the removal of God, but to this contemptuous dismissal of almost the whole biosphere—plants, animals, and children. Life shrinks to a few urban rooms, no wonder it becomes absurd.[9]

Midgley opens *Beast and Man* by saying: 'We are not just rather like animals; we *are* animals'.[10] With this italicization she counters any impression that to liken us to animals is *mere* metaphor. At the same time, she highlights the respect in which metaphors constitute a powerful way of grasping reality. Midgley's philosophy is, like Murdoch's, highly sensitive to the ways in which myths, pictures, metaphors and stories shape thought and action.[11] ('[N]obody's life will be quite the same again after he has read the *Agamemnon* properly', she reflects in 'The Game Game', this volume (Midgley, 1974, p. 248)). Thus, the mythology of the 'Beast Within' (the irrational, emotional part of the human soul) and the 'Beast Without' (the ferocious, amoral animal-predator) is liable both to render our own nature obscure and to alienate us from the rest of the animal kingdom. For instance, when philosophers treat the wolf 'as he appears to the shepherd at the moment of seizing the lamb from the fold' they misunderstand and mischaracterize the life of the wolf (Midgley, 1978b, p. 18). Ethologists, by contrast, 'having taken the trouble to watch

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[4] Anscombe (1958). See also Foot (2001) and Thompson (2004).
[5] Anscombe, 'Modern Moral Philosophy', p. 14.
[6] Anscombe, 'Modern Moral Philosophy', p. 14.
[7] See, e.g., Midgley (1973 pp. 134-35).
[8] See Connell (2019). See also Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman (2022, p. 118).
[9] Midgley, (1975, pp. 18-19); quoted in Midgley (2006, p. 213).
[10] Midgley, (1975, p. xiii).
[11] For worked through applications of this idea, see her (1999) and (2000).

wolves systematically, between meal-times, and have found them to be, by human standards, paragons of regularity and virtue' (Midgley, 1973, p. 113). Other animals, ethology reveals, live ordered, regular lives that are in certain respects very like, and often intersect with, our own. As Midgley later shows in her *Animals and Why they Matter*: we live, essentially, in 'mixed community' (Midgley, 1983b, pp. 112-24). Both the hypostatization of the 'Beast Without' as a 'lawless monster to whom nothing is forbidden' (Midgley, 1973, p. 117), and the attribution of our own desires and impulses to a 'Beast Within' who must be tamed by reason, involve false imagery. 'If then there is no Lawless Beast outside man, it seems very strange to conclude that there is one inside him', Midgley observes. 'It would be more natural to say, the beast within us gives us partial order; the business of conceptual thought will only be to complete it' (Midgley, 1973, p. 118).

The Platonic strand of Midgley's thinking, with its close attention to the importance and necessity of metaphor and myth, chimes with aspects of Murdoch's thought as well as with that of MacKinnon. MacKinnon was taught by Ernst Cassirer, who was joined by several other members of the Warburg school – and indeed by the Warburg Library – when anti-Semitic Nazi legislation forced them to seek refuge in Oxford and London. Heinz Cassirer, Ernst's son, taught Kant to Midgley, Foot and Murdoch. There is good reason to suppose that a characteristically Warburgian emphasis on symbol inflects Midgley's thought.[12]

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Like Moore and the Intuitionists Prichard and Ross, then, Midgley is a moral realist. But, unlike those theorists, goodness for her is both natural (connected to the needs of human animals) and in its more specific manifestations (courage, patience, honesty, etc) culturally shaped, in part because we are social animals. Like Foot and Anscombe, Midgley emphasises the goodness of those aspects of human culture that are necessary to anything we would recognise as human life – again following Anscombe and considering *man* 'not just biologically, but from the point of view of the activity of thought and choice in regard to the various departments of life'.[13] In 'The Game Game' she assigns to this class: speech, sex, playing games, walking upright, weeping, laughing, loving one's children, marriage, property, and promising (Midgley, 1974, p. 252).

Friendship is also to be found in this vicinity. *Pace* Moore (in his *Principia Ethica* (1903)) friendship for Midgley is not something to be passively intuited, contemplated and admired:

> Do we *need* our friends? Or do we – ideally – just contemplate them admiringly? In the second case, a touristic stroll past the maximum number of human exhibits might be the best arrangement. We would observe each appreciatively, but never become entangled. In the first case, however we strike roots in each other's being. This is certainly alarming. Root-striking, if misplaced or overdone, can of course be very pernicious. Unbridled mutual dependence paralyses people, making them incapable of individual action. But this cannot show that all dependence is wrong, that no such roots are needed. (Midgley, 1983a)

[12] See Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman (2022, Ch. 7).
[13] See Anscombe (1969).

Recognition of our essential dependency on each other – *we strike roots in each other's being* – as well as, relatedly, a conception of culturally-inflected human needs that are expressive of human nature, is also at the heart of Midgley's critique of Behaviourism and Existentialism. In her 1978 paper, 'The Objection to Systematic Humbug' (this volume), she recruits the deeply social structure of human life to argue against the presupposition, common to both Hare and Sartre, that we enact our will in a homogenous vacuum in which, through our choices, value is created. In this paper, Midgley makes explicit use of Murdoch's celebrated vignette of 'M&D' (from 'The Idea of Perfection' (Murdoch, 1970, pp. 16-18)). A mother-in-law (M) regards her son to have married beneath him. While behaving impeccably towards her daughter-in-law (D), she inwardly judges her to be vulgar, undignified and unpolished (Murdoch, 1970, p. 17). Later, recognizing her own snobbishness, she contrives to 'look again' at D. She discovers that what she hitherto took to be a lack of dignity was youthful spontaneity, etc. Despite this change in outlook, M's outward behaviour is constant throughout. Murdoch uses this example to make concrete and familiar what inner, private moral progress involves while also undermining the supposition that it is only public acts [that] are morally evaluable. Instead, Murdoch urges that the re-evaluation that M undertakes is moral work. That work, she insists is ongoing, processive and – crucially for Murdoch – private and personal. Midgley aligns herself with Murdoch in this respect, but goes further: just as M is able to progressively improve her 'vision' of D, Midgley stresses that feeling, sentiment and motive can also be 'educated'. Here she strives to reintegrate our 'inner and outer lives'. Since Utilitarianism begins from an attempt to isolate outward worldly action – after all, it is the consequences of public acts that Utilitarianism weighs – this critique constitutes a deep yet psychologically resonant response to Moore (who denied that feeling had an active deliberate side). At the same time, against Kant, Midgley relocates feeling and motivation inside the sphere of reason. In both these attacks, and in their style, Midgley can be read with Anscombe, who advocated that moral philosophy 'should be laid aside at any rate until we have an adequate philosophy of psychology' (Anscombe, 1958, p. 1).

Midgley deals with the philosophically bewildering topic of *practical reason* in a typically disarming fashion, contrasting Rationality with 'systematic humbug' (Midgley, 1978a). Each of us faces a lifelong task of integrating always competing and conflicting concerns, demands and identities, she observes, before noting that 'in common speech' the name for 'this wish, this feeling, this motive' is nothing other than 'reason'. 'Making sense of one's life is what "reason demands". Going to pieces is "losing one's reason"' (Midgley, 1978a, p. 155). A central part of this task is reconciling feelings, emotions, and motives, with actions, words and deeds. A life – and so a philosophy – where the logic of emotion and will, are 'dislocated' is 'not just unfamiliar, but deeply unintelligible and inhuman' (Midgley, 1978a, p. 155). A life of 'systematic humbug', would Midgley thinks, soon prove itself unliveable (Midgley, 1978a, p. 158). She offers a characteristically domestic image to capture the hopelessness of trying to cleave apart the inner and outer worlds - 'it's no use trying to unscrew the outside from the inside of the teapot' (Midgley, 1978a, p. 169). Elsewhere she writes of how Bertrand Russell dismissed his son's fear of the dark as 'irrational' (Midgley and Hughes, 1984, p. 203). But for Midgley what our animal nature tells us is properly sensible – for animals like us, who rely so heavily on our vision, it is quite reasonable to associate darkness with danger.

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Midgley's philosophy – like Anscombe's, Foot's and Murdoch's – is best seen in the context of Wittgenstein's later work. Midgley first encountered Wittgenstein's philosophy through MacKinnon in the early 1940s, and when she returned to Oxford for her D. Phil. Anscombe shared with her parts of what would later become the *Philosophical Investigations*. Midgley takes much from Wittgenstein, but her work is often critical of the ways in which Wittgenstein's ideas have been distorted or simplified by philosophers looking for a quick fix. In the 'The Game Game', she takes issue with Behaviouristically-inclined philosophers, inspired by Wittgenstein, who have filled the pages of journals with unrealistic discussions of Games and Rule Governed Practices in hope of finding a simple answer to a complicated question. 'Some time ago', she begins that paper, 'an Innocent Bystander, after glancing through a copy of *Mind*, asked me, 'Why do philosophers talk so much about Games? Do they play them a lot or something?' (Midgley, 1974, p. 231). Her more specific target is again R.M. Hare, who had argued that promising is a game that we may or may not choose to play (Hare, 1964). For Midgley, as we have seen, this cannot be right: promising is essential to our form of life. Hare's discussion, Midgley observes, starts from the idea that a game as 'a self-contained system' – a sphere of activity that we can opt in and out of without changing its surroundings. But Midgley argues this is not true of promising and, more interestingly perhaps, it is not true of games either. Hare's treatment of games is, she thinks, characteristic of those readers of Wittgenstein who fail to understand his metaphor of family resemblance. One can deny that there is some element that must be general or common to all things that fall under a concept without it following that there is no underlying unity to items we group as having a family resemblance. In the case of games, Midgley's positive point is that we are a playful species. Games are a ritualized form of conflict and, as such, are continuous with the rest of human life. Those philosophers who play 'The Game Game' then are those who both misunderstand what a language game involves for Wittgenstein and what games are.

Midgley's Wittgenstein is also not the figure taken up by 'Ordinary Language Philosophers', for whom 'meaning is use'. She begins 'Is 'Moral' a Dirty Word?' (this volume) by issuing a sharp reprimand to those tempted by this philosophical shortcut: 'There are real muddles here', she cautions, 'within common-sense, about the relation of thought to life. There is no simple plain-man's usage prepared for us to follow. Anyone who uses *moral* in anything beyond the Daily Mirror sense is no longer a quite plain man anyway' (Midgley, 1972, p. 206). Indeed, Midgley argues, if we are led by common use we will soon find ourselves down dead-ends. Although a classifying use of 'moral' exists – in which we contrast the 'moral' point of view with, say, the 'aesthetic' or 'practical' or 'economic' one – the concept that matters to us is certainly not 'isolationist'. Rather, as Murdoch also insisted, it is one that connects and integrates different areas of life, though its association with what 'belongs to a man's character'.[14] She likewise warns against following the use of 'moral' that is connected to law or social order, and which is linked, conceptually, to behaviourism. This use links morality with outwardly observable action, and so with regulation and punishment. In this use, 'moral' is a dirty word, linked to 'moralizing', and rightly mocked by George Bernard Shaw in *The Doctor's Dilemma*: 'Morality consists in suspecting other people of not being legally married' (Midgley, 1972, p. 208).

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[14] Midgley, (1972, p. 221). Cora Diamond identifies 'the pervasiveness of morality' as a major theme in Murdoch's work. See Diamond (2010).

Midgley proceeds then to her own grammatical investigation. 'The word "moral" and its derivatives are showing signs of strain', she writes. 'Like a small carpet, designed to fit a room which has been enlarged, they are wrenched this way and that to cover the bare spaces' (Midgley, 1972, p. 206). The loss of the idea of a divine law-giver perhaps explains one bare space. But unlike Anscombe (in 'Modern Moral Philosophy'), Midgley does not propose that the word 'moral' should therefore be 'jettisoned' (Anscombe, 1958, p. 1).[15] As she puts it, 'the job it does is an essential job … [I]t is useless changing the word while the [need] remains. If you call rat-catchers "rodent officers" to dispel prejudice, you will soon have to call rodent officers "Pest Control Operatives" and be no further forward' (Midgley, 1972, p. 216). Instead, she develops remarks made by Philippa Foot in 'The Philosopher's Defence of Morality' (Foot, 1952) and proposes: 'that *moral* is simply the superlative of *serious*' (Midgley, 1972, p. 223). What makes something 'serious' is, as Foot herself insisted, its connection to what is important in human life, what matters. This is a use of 'moral' that may be less common in ordinary language than the isolationist or moralizing use, but it is the one that we really need. It is close to *spiritual* and is linked to what is inward and personal, to character rather than custom (Midgley, 1972, p. 216). Hence, anything that affects a person's central purposes deeply is a moral matter. Accordingly, if there is any moral point of view it is not to be thought of in opposition to the aesthetic or political point of view, but rather involves stepping back and integrating these different perspectives – it is, as Foot would argue many years later, the perspective aimed at through practical reason (Foot, 2004). This is typical Midgley. A synthesis is achieved that respects both the autonomy of ethics and the continuity of morality with the rest of human life. She expects her solution to be both familiar and homely. It is the masochism of the ethicist that insists that the more obscure the solution, the better.

At some point in the 1980s, a decade otherwise filled with 'reading and writing books and articles, talking to all sorts of people, going to conferences, visiting friends and sons, going swimming, drawing and painting, cooking meals, gardening, looking after cats, playing Scrabble', Midgley acquired her only police record – for sitting down and so causing obstruction at an anti-nuclear demonstration in Oxfordshire (Midgley, 2005). It is at this time that Midgley's holism took a new turn, reflected in this volume by her 'Dover Beach: Understanding the Pains of Bereavement' (Midgley, 2006). Already in the 1970s, Midgley – like Murdoch – was writing of Post-Enlightenment man's (and in particular the 'hero' of Existentialism and Behaviourism) as alienated from his own nature and from the natural world (Cf. Murdoch, 1970, pp. 7-8, 78). This loss of our place in the world is subjected to a genealogical analysis in many of Midgley's monograph, including *Science as Salvation: A Modern Myth and its Meaning* (1992b), *The Myths We Live By* (1999), *Science and Poetry* (2000) and *The Solitary Self* (2010). Like Sartre and Murdoch, Midgley also registers the affective dimensions that are associated not just with our abandonment (by God), but also with the individualism and alienation that is characteristic of scientism. We are 'bereaved'; we suffer 'trauma', 'shock', 'disappointment'. The explicitly environmental turn in her work, which began in the 1980s, is the constructive counterpart to this despair. Against scientism, her philosophy of science strives to set empirical enquiry in its proper place – as one among the many ways of we have of making sense of our experience and place in the world intelligible (a Kantian aspect of her work that chimes with MacKinnon's later thinking). She

[15] Anscombe, 'Modern Moral Philosophy, p. 1.

celebrates the cosmic 'wonder' of the physicist, the attentive 'biophilia' of the ethologist and the botanist. These experiences, like religious experience, have metaphysical significance – they belong to our apprehension of a reality that transcends us, a whole in which we are part. Like Murdoch, she adopts the dictum 'we need more concepts'.[16] In particular, she regards the climate crisis as a conceptual emergency. Where Murdoch plugs the God-shaped hole in our conceptual scheme with the Good, Midgley reaches for classical imagery with the idea of the earth as Gaia, an interconnected living whole, a biosphere, named after the Greek Goddess of the Earth.

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Midgley is one of a handful of analytic philosophers who are also great stylists – her writing is instantly recognisable – highly fluent and witty, sprinkled with extended quotations from literature, science, poetry and popular culture and replete with Edwardian turns of phrase that give way to arrestingly imaginative metaphors. 'The Game Game', which takes as its epigraph a quote from Bill Shankly, the manager of Liverpool Football Club, is an example of style in full flight. In it we also see something of Midgley's synthetic, and not just analytic, dialectical method. Her philosophy is characterised by an attempt to reveal contradictions (between Beast and Man, Inner and Outer) as preparation for enlarging our vision in a way that allows both to be held, no longer in opposition, but now as part of a wider whole. This necessitates a prismatic approach; she excavates connections between apparently disparate realms of thought and experience (for instance, the denigration of our emotional intelligence is linked, at a subterranean level, to our treatment of other animals as beastly and evil). Her frequent and illustrative use of poetry is best made sense of in this anti-empirical context. Poetry has the capacity to show us deep conceptual connections that otherwise pass unnoticed, as well as the capacity to create new ones.

In perhaps her best-known paper included in this volume, 'Philosophical Plumbing' (1992) she articulates most forcefully her own response to the question as to why philosophy matters. Here analysis and synthesis are brought into metaphoric synchrony as philosophical method. Philosophy is like plumbing.[17] Our concepts, like our sewers, have complex ramifying structures that we usually don't notice. Most of the structures were laid down long ago. Occasionally however blockages and leaks occur. Our thought stagnates or has nowhere to run. This is when the philosopher is needed, when a stench is rising from the floorboards, when our concepts are 'off'. This is when the lawyerly skills of the analyst are required. Concepts, like piping, must be carefully dislodged, cleanly divided, perhaps discarded. But this is also when philosophers need the synthetic and imaginative skills of the poet – to create new concepts and metaphors that will shape new ways for the thought, action and feeling to flow. With this imagery, Midgley aims to replumb our faulty dualistic conception of ourselves as ghosts or machines, replacing it with a working model of ourselves as *animals* who are at home in the biosphere that produced us. This is a conceptual shift that, she says, allows for *Realism* in more than the metaphysical sense of the term. 'It makes possible a saner, more rational and more usable view of our own situation' (Midgley, 1992a, p. 216). But Midgley cautions, we cannot make the shift alone; we must make it in collaboration with, and through conversation with,

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[16] Iris Murdoch, 'Against Dryness', reprinted in Peter Conradi (ed.), *Iris Murdoch: Existentialists and Mystics*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1997, pp. 287-296; on p. 293.

[17] Philippa Foot also endorsed the comparison between philosophy and plumbing. See Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman (2022, pp. 262-63).

others. 'The mantra on Dover Beach is never "Cogito ergo sum", always "Cogitamus ergo sumus". If there is any salvation we will have to find it together' (Midgley, 2006, p. 228).

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Midgley loved *Philosophy*, describing it in her memoir as 'a hospitable journal which has always liked to print things that are of wider interest (Midgley, 2005, p. 203). She wrote in to defend its editorial decision, in 1979, to publish an 'all female' volume – the decision attracted complaints from men and also from some of the women whose work was included (Amélie Rorty and Kathleen Wilkes among them; Midgley, 1979; Rorty, 1979; Wilkes, 1979). Midgley suggested that the move be seen as an attempt to break '[t]he habit of viewing men's ideas as normal and central, and women's as an occasional optional variation', pointing out that such a habit is natural for '[p]eople who have been taught almost exclusively by women when they were small children, and are then taught almost exclusively by men at universities' (Midgley, 1979, p. 553). *Philosophy* suited her as an 'eccentric' philosopher[18] who never stopped in her mission to convince us philosophers of the 'need to explain what we are doing and – if we believe in it – why other people ought to believe in it too' (Midgley, 1988, p. 2).

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[18] For an overview of Midgley's wonderfully unorthodox and expansive philosophy, see McElwain (2019).

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