

PhD Program in Philosophy  
North Western Italian Philosophy Consortium

Scientific and Didactic Relation

*Name* Leonardo Flamini

*University* Pavia

*Name of Tutor* Tommaso Piazza

*Cycle* XXXVI

*Suggested name of the Supervisor (IF different from the tutor)(for 1<sup>st</sup> year students)*

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*(A) Didactics*

1) List of institutional or curricular courses

- Argumentation
- Methods of Philosophy
- Academic Skills
- Epistemology Work in Progress
- Logic
- Classics in Analytic Philosophy
- June Seminar

2) List of working papers written in those occasions

- a)* What are Inquirers? Toward an Analytic Theory
- b)* Russellian Inquirers. On Wondering about What One is Certain

3) list of other courses you have followed

- Seminar Philosophy of Mind/Epistemology
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*(B) Research and diffusion*

1) List of seminars and conferences you have participated to

- c)* La Virtù tra Paideia, Politeia ed Episteme: Una Questione di Lungo Periodo (Pavia)
- d)* Misinformation and Intentional Deception: A Novel Account of Fake News (FINO)
- e)* Contemporary Issues Across Ethics and Epistemology (FINO-Pavia)
- f)* The Value of Irrationality (Zurigo)
- g)* Salzburg Conference for Young Analytic Philosophy 2021 (Salisburgo)
- h)* 14th Conference of the Italian Society for Analytic Philosophy (Noto)

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- 2) List of Talks (in some of the above-mentioned conferences)
    - Gricean Zetetic Norms. On Being a Good Inquirer (*e*)
    - What are Inquirers? Toward an Analytic Theory (*g-h*)
    - Commentary to M. McCormick's Paper "Engaging with 'fringe' beliefs: why, when and how" (*f*)
  - 3) List of published or submitted papers  
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*(C) Project of the dissertation*

1) Update of the planning of your research program

In the first year of my doctoral studies, I focused my research on understanding the nature of the inquiring subjects and on what being a good inquirer means. I worked on the idea that inquirers can be defined by a particular mental state that, following Friedman, I called "inquiring state of mind". When one is in such a state, one asks oneself a question and seeks its answer. This is in accordance with our intuitive conception of inquirers as question-asking and answer-seeking beings. I claimed that the inquiring state of mind comes in degrees. Namely, there are many levels of this state, from the highest to the lowest. The following relation represents this feature: The more one is in an inquiring state of mind, the more one asks oneself a given question, the more one seeks its answer. I concluded that there are different kinds of inquirers: Some inquire more and are more active than others who inquire less and are more passive (see my paper *a*). Moreover, I claimed that being a good inquirer has to do with how one is able to manage the information relevant to answer a given question. By exploiting an analogy between communication as described by Grice and inquiry, I formulated four inquiry norms aimed at explaining how to manage information well within an inquiry and four virtues that individuate the good inquirer. I argued that these virtues are different from the epistemic virtues we can find in the literature (see my talk *e*). However, at this stage of the research, I tried to remain neutral about the epistemological import of the theory of inquirers I am developing.

The next step in the research is to define inquirers and their characteristic state of mind from an epistemic perspective. I want to explore the idea that the different levels of the inquiring state of mind determine which doxastic or epistemic state one should achieve to satisfy them: The (justified true) belief of the answer, its knowledge, understanding, or even its certainty. Namely, the inquiring states of mind aim at different doxastic/epistemic standings depending on their strength. The idea is that the more one is inquiring into a given question, the higher will be the doxastic/epistemic standing that one is required to achieve. This view has an impact on the theory of inquiry. If we take inquiry as the characteristic inquirers' activity, there will be different kinds of inquiries

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aiming at different kinds of doxastic/epistemic attitudes. This implies a kind of pluralism about the aim of inquiry that contrasts with the view that inquiry constitutively aims at knowledge (see Kelp). Namely, we gain a specific view on the nature of inquiry: it is an activity that aims at different doxastic/epistemic standings depending on the inquirer's inquiring mental state and its strength. Finally, it impacts on how we should conceive the normativity of inquiry. Contra those who maintain that one should not inquire if one already possesses the knowledge of the right answer (see Friedman), the previous pluralistic conception of inquiry offers a more complex view. What one should do depends upon the level of the inquiring state of mind one is into. For example, it could be the case that I already know the answer to a given question. However, I could be in a very high-level inquiring state of mind that requires me not only the knowledge of the answer but also its certitude. In this case, at least from my perspective, I should inquire, even if I already know the answer. Nonetheless, it could be the case that from a third-person perspective, my inquiring activity is useless given my present state of knowledge. This possible contrast seems to suggest that the normativity of inquiry might be approached by a first-person or third-person perspective. Some interesting questions about the normativity of inquiry arise naturally: How to relate the two approaches? Why are they sometimes in tension? Is one more fundamental than the other? Is the third-person perspective socially dependent?

In a nutshell, the overall goal of my future research is to challenge the mainstream idea that you (should) aspire to knowledge if you are an inquirer and the mainstream model of inquiry as a passage from a state of ignorance to a state of knowledge. Inquirers can aim to form mere beliefs about a given question or achieve knowledge, understanding, or even certainty. Moreover, (successful) inquiry can be a passage from different doxastic/epistemic standings to higher ones: A passage from mere beliefs to justified beliefs, a passage from knowledge to certainty, or even a passage from certainty to a deeper understanding of the answer one is already certain of (see my paper *b*).