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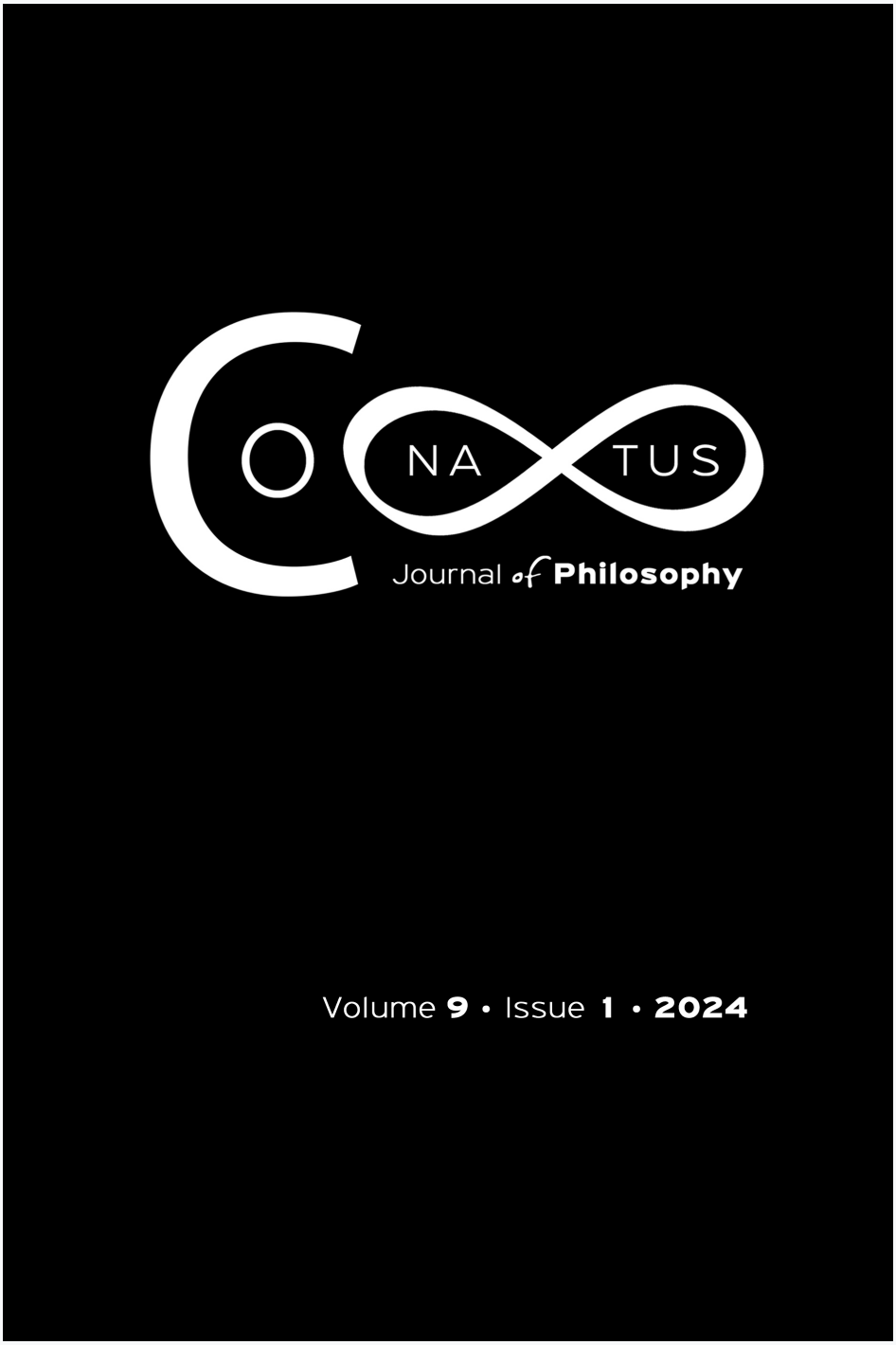

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Understanding the Concept of Being in general: From Being and Time back to Young Heidegger

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Abstract

This paper exhibits a way of understanding Heidegger's concept of being in general [Sein überhaupt] – the central aim of Being and Time's questioning – by getting insight into his early years. I argue that the term "being" [Sein] as Heidegger understands it in the early 1920s describes the meaningful relation between humans and the things of their surrounding world which is given to us as a fact. I maintain that Sein überhaupt refers to this fact, i.e., the fact that every particular being is always with a certain meaning for us. I come to this conclusion by exploring (1) Heidegger's early analysis of Umwelterlebnis, (2) his early description of medieval transcendentia, (3) his critique of formalization and the introduction of formal indication. Lastly, (4) I observe the way Heidegger introduces the concepts of Sein and Sein überhaupt pointing to the simple fact of beings' being in meaningful relation to us.

Keywords: *Heidegger; being in general; Freiburg courses; facticity; formal indication; that-character*

I. Introduction

A major problem in studying Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (henceforth SZ)[1] is related to the difficulty in understanding the treatise's central concept, that of *being in general* [Sein überhaupt]. This has to do mainly with the fact that SZ fails to fulfill its announced purpose, that is to conclude to an answer over the meaning of being in general. However, for us today it is no less than absurd to believe that Heidegger did not have during the writing of the treatise any specific orientation – if not a specific answer – regarding his central question.[2] The goal of this paper is to gain a better understanding of SZ's central concept, the concept of being in general, by going back to Heidegger's first years – to his *Habilitationsschrift* and his early Freiburg courses.[3]

This study moves in the same direction with works published in recent years which explore the *big picture* of Heidegger's thought without avoiding to examine the *Sache* of his philosophy, namely *being* [Sein] and the way Heidegger understands it.[4] The motivation behind this effort has

[1] I make references to the German pagination of Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 19. Auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2006), hereafter cited as SZ, followed by the pagination of Joan Stambaugh's English translation: Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996). In general, I follow Stambaugh's translating suggestions unless it is otherwise indicated. In two or three points I have chosen Macquarrie's and Robinson's suggestions, but I keep referring to the above edition's pagination. Following Stambaugh, I write *being* [Sein] with a small "b," but I do not use the hyphen for the term "Dasein" to remain closer to the original text.

[2] I argue, straight from the beginning, that Heidegger should *necessarily* have a preliminary idea about the meaning of being in order for him to formulate the *Seinsfrage*. For two reasons. One, because: "As a seeking, questioning needs prior guidance from what it seeks." In the case of *Seinsfrage*, Heidegger states it explicitly: "The meaning of being must therefore already be available to us in a certain way." See SZ, S.5, p. 4. Two, Heidegger points out that we need a "preliminary look at being" not only in questioning about *Sein* but also in each case of understanding a being [Seiendes]. So, it is necessary something like a "guiding look at being [*Sein*]" for the understanding of *Dasein* in its being – something that is required in SZ in order for the *Seinsfrage* to be appropriately formulated. See SZ, S.8, p. 6.

[3] There is a first period of very important scholarly works about *Seinsfrage* which focus mainly on early Heidegger and the period of preparation of SZ. See, for example, Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's "*Being and Time*"* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1993), esp. 421-451; John van Buren, *The Young Heidegger – Rumor of the Hidden King* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), esp. 237-294; Herman Philipse, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being: A Critical Interpretation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), esp. 15-66; Steven Galt Crowell, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning: Paths Toward Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001), esp. 115-128 and 203-221.

[4] There is also a second, more recent, period of studies that evaluate Heidegger's overall thought. See Thomas Sheehan, "What, after all, was Heidegger about?" *Continental Philosophy Review* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 249-274; Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), esp. xi-28 and 111-185;

to do, firstly, with a need to reread Heidegger from scratch and, secondly, with a feeling that many studies on Heidegger's thought consider the concept of being as self-evident, taking its meaning for granted without clarifying it. However, isn't this self-evidence what we are supposed to question by studying Heidegger?

In what follows I argue that the concept of being in general refers to the *fact that* it *is*, *that* everything *is* and always *is* with a certain meaning for us. I come to this conclusion by analyzing Heidegger's notion of facticity and his fundamental methodological contribution, namely, formal indication.

I begin in section (2) by showing that the question about the meaning of being in general must necessarily be posed in what Heidegger calls *originary field* – a particular logical field circumscribed by the meaningful relation which shows itself as a fact, that is circumscribed by a sort of facticity of meaning. In section (3) I attempt to understand *Sein* with the help of formal-*transcendental* concepts of Scholastic philosophy. After examining in section (4) why formality is inappropriate, according to Heidegger, for a philosophy that needs to turn its gaze to the originary field of facticity, I see how he introduces formal indication. The main features that differentiate formal indications from purely formal concepts lead us to the concept of being – and its meaning – which works as the formal part of formally indicative concepts that aim at understanding *beings* [Seiende] just as they *are*, i.e., factically. In section (5) I find the interpretation of being as *fact* – as the fact of the meaningful relation – confirmed in two points of Heidegger's Freiburg courses and I stress that the concept of being in general is later introduced by pointing to the same direction. Being's strange *universality*, then, appears to refer to this *fact* itself, which is always singularizable in the meaning of every particular *being* [Seiendes] and its corresponding understanding performed by us.

II. The question and the field – facticity and necessity

The first step on the path to understanding being in general is to get an insight into the field where the question about the meaning of being is posed. I stress that this field works as a necessary starting point for any theoretical (or hermeneutic) consideration – including the *Seinsfrage* – and that its fundamental trait is the *facticity of meaning*.

Babette Babich, "The 'New' Heidegger," in *Heidegger in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Tziovannis Georgakis and Paul Ennis, (Frankfurt am Main: Springer, 2015), 167-187; Lee Braver, ed., *Division III of Heidegger's* Being and Time*: The Unanswered Question of Being* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2015), esp. 57-82. And an excellent connection between the above two periods that we find in Steven Crowell and Jeff Malpas, eds., *Transcendental Heidegger* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

Heidegger at the beginning of SZ poses the question about the meaning of being in general as a sort of "laying bare and exhibiting the ground" [aufweisende Grund-Freilegung], juxtaposing it to a "grounding by deduction" [ableitende Begründung] which belongs to an "investigation of principles."[5] To better understand the particular features of this questioning, let us go back to his course of 1919 – the so-called *Kriegsnotsemester* (hereafter KNS) course – where Heidegger juxtaposed for the very first time the above two ways of investigation.[6] On the one side, then, it was the Neo-Kantian, axiomatic view of philosophy, according to which philosophy was the science of origins of knowledge – of axioms – the so-called *originary science* [Urwissenschaft].[7] On the other side, it was Heidegger's view of philosophy as *Urwissenschaft* which – as he accurately formulated in his course of WS 1919/20 – "can start [ausgehen] from any point in life and begin [ansetzen] there with the method of origin-understanding."[8] This origin, however, should not be thought of as "an ultimate and simple principle, an axiom from which everything should be derived." Properly understood, the origin – which is here considered by Heidegger precisely as a *starting point* – can be something completely different from the axioms, albeit "nothing mystical, mythical."[9] How are we to understand this notion?

In the KNS-course, Heidegger gives us a rather rich explanation of the way that the distinction between the above two philosophical views is to be drawn. Through this, he succeeds a radical reinterpretation of the concept of origin and ground, such that a new, particular, and more fundamental field of investigation is discovered, the field of the *originary* ground, the field of *Ur-sprung*. Two things can be said about this field. First, as *originary* ground it is the *necessary* point of departure for any theoretical attempt. And second, as a field of investi-

[5] SZ, S.8, p. 6.

[6] I refer here to Martin Heidegger, *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie; Gesamtausgabe Band 56/57*, ed. Bern Heimbüchel (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1987); it was translated by Ted Sadler as *Towards the Definition of Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2000). Hereafter – other than their first appearance – I will be referring to Heidegger's Gesamtausgabe volumes by "GA." followed by the volume number and pagination. It will be accompanied – if not otherwise indicated – by a reference to the English edition's pagination.

[7] GA.56/57, S.31, p. 26. I prefer the term "originary science" to "primordial science" that appears in the English edition.

[8] Martin Heidegger, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie (WS 1919/20); Gesamtausgabe Band 58*, ed. Hans-Helmuth Gander (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1992), S.239. All translations of this volume are mine. This part of the course is from Oskar Becker's transcript.

[9] GA.58, S.26.

gation it does not have itself a theoretical character but a *factical* one. Let us start from the second.[10]

Heidegger's argument begins with an important distinction between two kinds of lived experiences – i.e., the theoretical *Erlebnis* and the *Umwelterlebnis*, the lived experience of the surrounding world.[11] By analyzing in a phenomenological way the two lived experiences, he manages to draw a distinction between two separate fields of investigation.[12] In the first kind of *Erlebnis* – the one that has to do with theoretical questions like: "Is there something?" [Gibt es etwas?] – Heidegger discovers a certain subjective act, the act of *Setzen*, of positing. When I ask such questions, he says, "I comport myself by positing something, indeed *anything whatsoever* [etwas überhaupt], before me as questionable."[13]

To this kind of questioning comportment, Heidegger juxtaposes one that has to do with the lived experience of the surrounding world, the *Umwelterlebnis* – a sort of ordinary experience that we can have in relation to our surrounding world and the things we encounter in it. Analyzing it phenomenologically, he discovers something very important that goes against the all-encompassing process of theoretization. When I move in my surrounding world – Heidegger appears to say –, I come across specific things like a chair, a table, or a bed; things that I can use.[14] In my surroundings, I see specific, colored things in a certain practical relation to me and not something like colored surfaces cut at right angles. I perceive specific, meaningful things as wholes and not some parts that belong to my psychic process, or something like a multitude of sense *data*.[15]

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[10] Undoubtedly the most important contribution to the analysis of the KNS-course has been made through the years by Theodore Kisiel. See above all Theodore Kisiel, "Kriegsnotsemester 1919: Heidegger's Hermeneutic Breakthrough," in *The Question of Hermeneutics*, ed. Timothy Stapleton, 155-208 (Dordrecht: Springer, 1994). For an equally excellent analysis see also Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, *Hermeneutics and Reflection: Heidegger and Husserl on the Concept of Phenomenology* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2013), esp. 16-63. I choose to stress here the consequences of a necessary point of departure.

[11] I choose to translate the German term "*Umwelterlebnis*" as "lived experience of the surrounding world" instead of the term "environmental experience" that appears in the English edition.

[12] As it will be clear soon, the two separate fields of investigation correspond to two different logical fields, the field of posits and the field of facticity.

[13] GA.56/57, S.66, p. 53. The emphasis here is mine. I prefer the term "positing" for "setzend" rather than "setting."

[14] In GA.56/57, S.70-71, pp. 56-57, Heidegger describes the lived experience of someone who enters the lecture-room and sees the lectern.

[15] GA.56/57, S.85, pp. 66-67.

Through Heidegger's analysis of the *Umwelterlebnis*, is revealed something extremely important. It is revealed that what is primary is the *meaningful – das Bedeutsame –*, namely, things with a certain meaning for us. "The meaningful," says Heidegger, "is the primary [das Primäre], it is given to me immediately, without any detour of thought [gedanklicher Umweg] through something as a thing apprehension [Sacherfassen]."[16] In other words, things in our surrounding world do not appear to us as meaningful after a theoretical explanation or description. On the contrary, things have *always already* a concrete significance, a certain meaning within our world. "Living in a surrounding world," Heidegger says in a rather emblematic phrase, "it signifies to me everywhere and always, everything is mundane, 'it worlds' [es weltet]."[17]

We come across a revolutionary point here. *All* of us *always* live in a world that surrounds us. In this world, things always have a certain meaning for us, they appear to us together with their meaning.[18] The chair in my room as the one that I can sit on, the table as the place where I can sit and write. This is something, however, that does not seem to have a theoretical character at all. Rather, if we think about it, it looks like an undeniable *fact*; a fact from which we find ourselves obliged to begin our theoretical considerations.[19] We may say that the meaning we encounter in our surrounding world is not something theoretical, but something factical – *faktisch*. We have a sort of *meaningful relation* with the world and the things that surround us, which is given to us as an undeniable fact. In our *Umwelt* there is a kind of *facticity of meaning*.

Let us come now to the first point from above, that of necessity. Heidegger discovers in the lived experience of theoretical attitude the element of "deprivation of life" [Ent-lebung]. As he observes, in the *Umwelterlebnis* there is always an "I" that takes part in. The table is too high for me to write, the room is too dark for me to read, etc.[20] On the

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[16] GA.56/57, S.73, p. 58. I choose to translate "gedanklicher Umweg" as "detour of thought" instead of "mental detour."

[17] GA.56/57, S.73, p. 58.

[18] Heidegger, to better explain the meaning of this "always," describes the hypothetical example of a foreigner from Senegal. See GA.56/57, S.71-72, pp. 57-58. This "always" of the *fact* of meaning is strongly connected with the 'always already' of SZ, the so-called "perfect a-priori." See SZ, S.85, p. 79.

[19] It does not help us to understand Heidegger's project if we regard this fact as a sort of primacy of practice instead of theory. I argue that we should rather stay to the same *fact*. In the lecture course of WS 1919/20 Heidegger states it clearly: "Ausgangspunkt der Philosophie: das faktische Leben als Faktum." See GA.58, S.162.

[20] GA.56/57, S.69, p. 56. This is why Heidegger calls the immediate experience of the surround-

contrary, in the experience of the theoretical question, "Is there something?" there is a certain absence of the "I."[21] What we *set* as questionable, we set it as something that does not affect us immediately. Heidegger describes this experience as something that begins and ends, like a "process" that passes by before us, like a *Vor-gang*.[22]

But there is a very specific – let us provisionally say – temporal trick here. This deprivation that Heidegger describes is possible only because it necessarily *presupposes* the immediate experience of the surrounding world.[23] As he comments regarding this *priority*: "the experience of the surrounding world is, from the point of view of epistemology and without further examination, *itself a presupposition* [Voraussetzung]."[24]

The notion of presupposition is central here and Heidegger seeks to broaden its meaning. He underlines that when we generally speak of "presupposition," this "pre-" does not have the sense of a spatial or temporal priority, but rather, it "has something to do with ordering, a 'pre-' within an order of positions [Stellen], laws and posits [Setzungen]."[25] This "pre-" refers to a relation of logical ordering, to "a relation of grounding and logical ground-laying: *if* this is valid, *so is that*."[26]

We find ourselves at a key point now. If, on the one hand, living in the surrounding world is a logical *presupposition* for every moment of theorizing, on the other hand, it is clear that in the same lived experience of the surrounding world there is "no *theoretical positing* at all." But if there is no positing, we cannot properly speak about a presupposition. As Heidegger formulates it: "presupposition and presuppositionlessness [Voraussetzungslosigkeit] have any meaning only in the theoretical."[27]

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ing world as an "event of appropriation" [Er-eignis], as something "meaningful" [Bedeutungshaftes], as something "not thing-like" [nicht sach-artig]. See also GA.56/57, S.75, p. 60 and S.78, p. 62. The concept of *Ereignis*, as it appears here, is the beginning of a line that connects – as very plausibly has shown van Buren in van Buren, *The Young Heidegger*, 270-294 – early Heidegger's philosophical observations with his later thought. I believe that the point I make here could play the role of the central column for such bridging.

[21] GA.56/57, S.68, p. 55.

[22] Ibid.

[23] I use the verb "presuppose" in a provisional way here. Heidegger below criticizes the same notion of "presupposition" of being overall epistemological and belonging to the theoretical sphere.

[24] GA.56/57, S.93, p. 72.

[25] Ibid.

[26] GA.56/57, S.93, p. 73. I prefer here the term "grounding" for "Begründung" rather than "founding." The text continues: "Wenn das gilt, *gilt* jenes. Statt dieser hypothetischen Grundlegung ist auch eine *kategorische* möglich: ein '*so ist es*.'" This is the reason why I make reference to different *logical* fields. See also below notes 28-29.

[27] GA.56/57, S.94, p. 73.

We stumble upon something important. The originarity [Ursprünglichkeit] of the *Umwelterlebnis* has to do with a certain *priority* over the theoretical attitude. It is a sort of *pure* logical priority. This originarity, in a way, erases the term "presupposition," as it exceeds the sphere of the theoretical where the latter belongs to. This exceeding has also a purely logical character, in the sense that here we are talking about a quite different logical field or "sphere" [Sphäre].[28] It seems that the *Umwelterlebnis* belongs to a *logical* sphere that has certain features which differ from the theoretical sphere, the "sphere of posits."[29] And this is the reason why Heidegger distinguishes between two different kinds of exhibiting the ground: a logico-deductive "hypothetical" ground-laying of the type "*if* this is valid, *so is that*," and another, factical or "categorical" one, which has to do with "a '*so it is*' [so ist es]."[30] These two ways of exhibiting the ground correspond to the two different types of investigation that we saw Heidegger referring to in the first pages of SZ.[31]

Now, we can put everything together. We find in our lived experience of the surrounding world a certain *facticity of meaning* since we encounter the surrounding world and the things around us as having *always already* a certain meaning. Their meaning is given to us as a fact. And this has also a certain necessity. There is no posit out of nothing, a *creatio ex nihilo* of the meanings. On the contrary, there is a certain *facticity of meaning* in our living experience, and this is from where we are obliged to start in any theoretical or hermeneutic attempt, including the *Seinsfrage*.[32] For our interpretation, this undeniable *fact*, this "so it is" of the surrounding world, circumscribes the special logical field where the *Umwelterlebnis* belongs to, the one that Heidegger in the lecture course of WS 1919/20 called for the first time "factical life" [faktisches Leben].[33] As he mentioned there: "I live always factically *caught up in meaning*."[34]

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[28] In GA.56/57, S.89, p. 69. Heidegger makes reference here to an "atheoretische Sphäre." Elsewhere he characterized this field as "Ursphäre." See GA.56/57, S.60-61, p. 47.

[29] GA.56/57, S.94, p. 73. "Nur wenn ich mich überhaupt in der Sphäre von Setzungen bewege, hat die Rede von Voraussetzungen einen möglichen Sinn."

[30] See above note 26.

[31] SZ, S.8, p. 6.

[32] It is not by chance that the whole project of SZ begins from the *fact* of *Seinverstandnis*. See SZ, S.15, p. 12, "Die Seinsfrage ist dann aber nichts anderes als die Radikalisierung [...] des vorontologischen Seinsverständnisses." And SZ, S.5, p. 4, "*Dieses durchschnittliche und vage Seinsverständnis ist ein Faktum*."

[33] See GA.58, S.41-64, Division I, Chapter 2. Heidegger introduced his particular understanding of – the, till then, neo-Kantian term – "*Faktizität*" in SS 1920. See also below notes 77 and 92.

[34] GA.58, S.104. "Ich lebe faktisch immer *bedeutsamkeitsgefangen*."

But if we are obliged to start any theoretical or hermeneutic attempt from this originary field of facticity, then *being* [Sein] as concept must be somehow related to this field. In order to understand the special features of this relation let us turn to medieval transcendental concepts to see how they connect with this originary field.

III. Understanding *being* as *transcendens*

Heidegger in SZ characterizes *being* [Sein] as the "*transcendens schlechthin*,"[35] giving us a clue to look in the direction of medieval transcendental concepts, the so-called *transcendentia*,[36] to find an answer about being's peculiar *universality*. These concepts – namely *ens*, *unum*, and *verum* – show a completely formal character; they are the most formal predicates of beings. Thus, in a way, they pertain [betreffen] to every being as far as its form is concerned. But to pertain to every being is also one of the basic requirements for *being* [Sein], according to SZ's introduction.[37] Let us briefly see how these formal concepts connect with the field of facticity and how could *being* [Sein] be related to them.

According to Heidegger's phenomenological description, these concepts can be thought of as having emerged from our meaningful relation to the things of the surrounding world [Umwelt], from what he would later describe as the originary field of facticity. In what follows, I summarize his description aiming to gain a phenomenological insight into their formation as concepts.

Everything that is around us, precisely as something that is outside –let us say– of our body, is "Something" [Etwas] that stands "opposite us" [gegenüber], is an "object" [Gegenstand]. Everything – no matter what and how it is, if it is big or small, red or blue – is primarily an object. According to Heidegger's interpretation, "every object in general [überhaupt] is [...] an *ens*;" and *ens* refers to every object. *Ens* is the formal concept that corresponds to the above phrase: *Something is an object*.[38] No matter what it is or how it is, the thing that appears *outside* us is an object. It can be said that the formal character of the concept shows a certain indifference against the specific "what" and "how."

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[35] SZ, S.38, pp. 33-34.

[36] Needless to say, "*transcendens"* is the singular form of the term "*transcendentia*."

[37] See SZ, S.38, p. 33. "Das Sein als Grundthema der Philosophie ist keine Gattung eines Seienden, und doch betrifft es jedes Seiende."

[38] Martin Heidegger, *Frühe Schriften (1912–1916): Gesamtausgabe Band 1*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1978), S.214. All translations of this volume are mine.

In this way, before any categorial determination[39] – i.e., at the outset for the phenomenological gaze – the objectual [das Gegenständliche] is given as a Something [ein Etwas]. We find here a completely formal category. The *ens* is a *maxime scibile*, it is the one which is known "primordially" [uranfänglich], and "characterizes the originary element [Urelement] of the objectual, i.e., the objecthood [die Gegenständlichkeit]."[40] *Ens* is not an object; as *Urelement*, it represents the formal character of our relation with the objects, their *being*-object. *Ens* is a completely formal concept that reflects the mere *fact that* there is something that stands there opposite us, a *Gegen-stand*. *Being* [Sein], as the *transcendens schlechtin*, must also in a way have this originary character.

Now, in the same way – i.e., by turning our gaze to what it appears –, we may infer the other two transcendentals. Everything that appears in front of us *is* something, and, as *this* something, it is *a* something.[41] "The something is *a* something," says Heidegger.[42] In other words: "Everything that is, *is* (object), as long as it is *one*."[43] This seems to be a sort of formal conceptual principle that can be phenomenologically attested. Now, because of their formal character, *unum*, as much as *ens*, cannot relate to the "content of the essence of the object." Both concepts refer to the object's form. Everything that is in our surroundings, every object, says Heidegger, is a "what" [*Was*] that stands "in the form of the *unum*."[44]

Also, just as *unum* has to do with an *originary form* [Urform], so too *verum* is conceived as a "relation of form" [Formverhältnis].[45] Heidegger following Scotus affirms: "Every object is *one* object. Every object is a *true* object."[46] We continue to talk here about completely formal concepts that stand in formal relations with the object. They are not something adjoined to the object. They do not *exist* apart and then are added to it. Considering it phenomenologically, these formal

[39] However, Heidegger at another point of the text critically acknowledges that the same notion of "opposite" sets a first, implicit categorial determination that transforms the thing to an "object." He says at GA.1, S. 223, "Schon das, Gegenüber' selbst ist eine bestimmte Hinsicht (ein Respectus), eine Bewandtnis, die es mit dem Gegenstande hat."

[40] GA.1, S.215.

[41] GA.1, S.216.

[42] GA.1, S.217-218.

[43] GA.1, S.221.

[44] GA.1, S.222.

[45] Ibid.

[46] GA.1, S.265.

concepts are given simultaneously, together with the appearance of an object to a subject. According to this, every object that itself appears to us, i.e., to our knowledge or cognition, is a "true" object. To say it in a reversed way: "Insofar as the object *is an object of knowledge* [Erkenntnis], *it can be called true object*."[47]

The medieval concept of *verum*, as Heidegger interprets it, does not refer to something other than the *meaningful relation* that we *always already* have with the things of our surrounding world – the relation that Heidegger would describe some years later in his KNS-course. All the things that we encounter in our world are true things, in the sense that they are always intelligible to us. Things *always* have meaning. We live in meaning. And this is a fact that cannot be denied. Formal concepts describe certain aspects of this *fact*.

Now, it is clear that the idea of formality is the key element for the connection of these transcendental concepts with the field of facticity. To understand how this works, we must turn to the phenomenological theory of concept formation and Heidegger's description of it during the course of WS 1920/21.[48]

If we think it in a phenomenological way, formal concepts emerge through a sort of abstention from determinations of content [gehaltlich]. They have to do more with the immediacy of our *meaningful relation* with the thing. According to Heidegger's description,[49] formalization – unlike generalization – has nothing to do with the "what-content as such" [Wasgehalt überhaupt], but it arises as a process from the "relational sense [Bezugssinn] of the pure attitudinal relation [Einstellungsbezugs] itself."[50] If we take an example of what is called "formal predication" – i.e., a proposition like "the stone is an object" –, the "attitude" there, according to Heidegger, "is not bound to the materiality of things [Sachhaltigkeit] [...], but is free in terms of its material contents."[51] We don't have a determination of an object's "what," of its "what-content," but instead we have a highlighting of our *meaning-*

[47] GA.1, S.266.

[48] I make reference here to Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens; Gesamtausgabe Band 60*, ed. Matthias Jung and Thomas Regehly (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995); it was translated by Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei as *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004).

[49] Heidegger praises Husserl for his contribution to this field of study, by saying that he was the first philosopher who explicitly differentiated "formalization" from "generalization." He refers here to the final chapter of Volume I of *Logical Investigations* and to §13 of *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology*. See GA.60, S.57, p. 39.

[50] GA.60, S.58-59, p. 40.

[51] GA.60, S.58, p. 40.

ful relation with the thing or object. In formalization, it is announced, in a way, the relation with the object; the object is observed "according to the aspect in which it is given."[52]

We are at another key point here. Heidegger describes the fundamental features of formalization by going deeper into the conceptual structure of the meaningful relation itself. He underlines – and this is quite important for our argument – that in the process of formalization we "must see away from the what-content and attend only to *the fact that* [daß] the object is a given [ein gegebener ist]," *that* it is an "attitudinally grasped one."[53] In formalization, we must maintain ourselves in the same *fact that* the object is given to us, we must maintain ourselves in the "that" [das Daß] of our *relation* with it. Heidegger concludes with the following phrase: "The origin of the formal lies thus in the relational sense."[54]

The formal does not have to do so much with the thing itself but with the meaning of the relation – i.e., the *meaningful relation* itself which we come across as fact in the originary field of facticity. But the question remains: Is Heidegger's concept of being in general formal in the same sense that medieval transcendental concepts are? The quick answer is *no*. Being cannot refer to the "something" that appears to the phenomenological gaze, neither as *object* nor as *one* and *true*. It must point somewhere "beyond" [über].[55] As verb, *being* [Sein] should point to the *appearing* itself and its particular features. To get a better understanding of this, let us go to Heidegger's methodological notion of formal indication. We need to go deeper into the conceptual structure of the phenomenon's meaningful appearance to see how the concept of being works there.

IV. The critique of formalization and formal indication

Another reason why Heidegger could not have considered *being* [Sein] as a sort of formal-transcendental concept is that he sharply criticizes formalization as a process of concept formation as early as his course of WS 1920/21. There, Heidegger continues his KNS-argument against theoretization and he argues that formalization does not fit the scope

[52] GA.60, S.61, p. 42.

[53] GA.60, S.58, p. 40. "Ich muß vom Wasgehalt wegsehen und nur darauf sehen, daß der Gegenstand ein gegebener, einstellungsmäßig erfaßter ist." The emphasis here is mine.

[54] GA.60, S.59, p. 40.

[55] SZ, S.38, p. 33. "Seine 'Universalität' ist höher zu suchen. Sein und Seinsstruktur liegen über jedes Seiende und jede mögliche seiende Bestimmtheit eines Seienden hinaus."

of philosophy as originary science, precisely because it is excessively biased towards theoretical stance and, for this reason, cannot gain access to the originary field of facticity.[56]

Heidegger's critique of formalization has its roots in his early critique of *Gegebenheit*. We were saying in the previous section, that in formalization we "see away from the what-content and attend only to *the fact that* [daß] the object is a given."[57] But if we think it a little, to turn our gaze to the same "that" of the object *as given* means that we define something about the "what" of the object. We are saying that the object is a "given." Now, this notion of the thing as "given" had already been criticized by Heidegger in his basic argument of the KNS-course. He said there: "'Given' already signifies an inconspicuous but genuine theoretical reflection inflicted upon the surrounding world."[58] For the immediate originary experience of the *Umwelterlebnis* – see section II. –, to say that things that we come across in our surrounding world are "given" is nothing less than a theoretical characterization, an infiltration of a theoretical element in an originary, "a-theoretical sphere." This critique of *Gegebenheit* is transformed during the course of WS 1920/21 into a critique against the process of formalization itself.

Heidegger remarks that in the process of formalization – just like in the case of generalization – there is a certain "materiality" [Sachhaltigkeit]. When we talk about "formal ontology," he says, we talk about "already something objectually formed out [ein gegenständlich Ausgeformtes]."[59] For him, who seeks to establish a connection between philosophy and the originary field – i.e., the field of *faktisches Leben* –, the use of concepts that are already object-oriented leads to the fatal error of a previous theoretization. As he states, the "accepted formal-ontological grasp of the object is prejudicing,"[60] and it is prejudicing precisely as a theoretical grasp. The so-called formal region is in a broader sense a "material domain" [Sachgebiet].[61] And this is because it emerges as a region through a very specific orientation of our gaze, through thematic-theoretical grasp. In contrast to it, Heidegger points

[56] GA.60, S.55-57, pp. 38-39.

[57] GA.60, S.58, p. 40. The emphasis here is mine.

[58] GA.56/57, S.88-89, p. 69. "Die 'Gegebenheit' ist also sehr wohl schon eine theoretische Form."

[59] GA.60, S.58, p. 40. I use the term "objectually" instead of "materially" that appears in the English edition. See above note 39.

[60] GA.60, S.62, p. 43.

[61] GA.60, S.59, p. 41.

out that the relational sense [Bezugssinn] – which refers to the *meaningful relation* between humans and the things of their world that we come across in the originary field – "is not an order, not a region."[62]

We find ourselves here at the center of the argument.[63] Just like the originary relation was not even a *presupposition* for Heidegger of 1919, the *Bezugssinn* now is not even a region. How can we think of this? As I see it, behind both claims hides the logic of *facticity*. The relational sense does nothing less than describe dimensions of the originary meaningful relation which we come across as a *fact* in our factical living, in our *being*. This is why Heidegger believes that through the formal grasp of the object, the richness and the "diversity" of the relational sense[64] is cut down and limited, the meaningful relation is turned into a theoretical relation.[65]

For the above reasons, Heidegger introduces his view of philosophical concepts as formal indications. These concepts respect the factical character of the meaningful relation, its richness, and diversity. In contrast to formalization where we turn our gaze to the "that" of an object's appearance defining at the same time unthoughtfully something about its "what," in formal indication's *Bezugssinn* we turn our sight to the "that" of the meaningful *relation* itself, without prejudicing the "what" of this relation. Nevertheless, can we think of *being* [Sein] as a formally indicative concept? I believe that we can and, as we will see in the next section (IV), probably we should. But let us see first briefly how formal indications work concretely towards respecting facticity.

According to Heidegger, formal indication "falls outside of the attitudinally theoretical"[66] and is connected with three "directions of sense" – the content-, relational- and enactment-sense [Gehalts-, Bezugs-, Vollzugssinn]. Every phenomenon has to do with "the totali-

[62] GA.60, S.61, p. 42. "Aber der Bezugssinn ist keine Ordnung, keine Region."

[63] For the methodological importance of Heidegger's formal indication see Eric Nelson's and Theodore Kisiel's important contributions in Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski, eds., *Heidegger und die Logik (Elementa 79)* (Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi BV, 2006), 31-64. See also Steven Galt Crowell, *Husserl, Heidegger*, 129-151 and Daniel Dahlstrom, "Heidegger's Method: Philosophical Concepts as Formal Indications," *Review of Metaphysics* 47, no. 4 (1994): 775-795. I am indebted to professor Ramón Rodríguez for helping me to recognize the deep importance of formal indication for Heidegger's hermeneutic project. See the excellent book Ramón Rodríguez, *La Transformación hermenéutica de la Fenomenología: Una interpretación de la obra temprana de Heidegger* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1992), esp. 51-56 and 162-174.

[64] GA.60, S.61-62, p. 42. "Aufgabe der Ausformung der Mannigfaltigkeit des Bezugssinnes."

[65] GA.60, S.63, p. 43. "[...] weil sie [die formale Bestimmung] einen theoretischen Bezugssinn vorschreibt oder wenigstens mit vorschreibt."

[66] GA.60, S.59, p. 41.

ty of sense in these three directions."[67] By dividing the meaning of a phenomenon into these three dimensions, Heidegger manages to keep separate though together the formal part and the singularized one –the "that" of the relation and the "what" of its instantiation in a particular phenomenon's meaning.

Now, if the formal character of formal indication designates "something relational" [etwas Bezugsmäßiges], on the other side, the element of indication works negatively as a "warn."[68] As Heidegger remarks, a phenomenon must be given in such a manner that "its relational sense is held in abeyance" [Schwebe].[69] We have here something like a prior undecidability regarding the phenomenon's relational sense. Heidegger states: "One must prevent oneself from taking it for granted that its relational sense is originarily theoretical."[70] There is a certain difference from the theoretical-scientific spirit. With formal indication, there is "no insertion into a material domain." The *Bezugssinn* remains undecidable and it does not point to a theoretical relation with the things of our world. Its richness and openness are respected. As Heidegger puts it: "What is pre-given is a bond [Bindung] that is indeterminate as to content."[71] Along with this, the enactment of the phenomenon is not previously fully determined. The formal indication is something like a "defense" [Abwehr], a kind of "preliminary securing" so that the enactment-character of the phenomenon "still remains free."[72]

The formal part of formal indication describes something relational, a *Bindung*, and its "sense-structure" [Sinnstruktur] is described by

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[67] GA.60, S.63, p. 43.

[68] Ibid.

[69] GA.60, S.63-64, pp. 43-44. There is an inconsistency in translating the term "Bezugssinn" in the English edition of the course, which I follow as I find it useful. Hereafter, I keep the term "relational sense" for "Bezugssinn."

[70] GA.60, S.64, p. 44.

[71] I turn here to Heidegger's WS 1921/22 course published in Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung; Gesamtausgabe Band 61*, ed. Walter Bröcker and Käte Bröcker-Oltmanns (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1985); it was translated by Richard Rojcewicz as *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation Into Phenomenological Research* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001). The above quote is from GA.61, S.20, p. 17. "Es ist eine gehaltlich unbestimmte, vollzugshaft bestimmte Bindung vorgegeben." Heidegger maintains that the formal part of formal indication, in a way, determines the way of actualization, that it has an initial or "approach-character" [Ansatzcharakter]. See GA.61, S.33, p. 26. "Das leer Gehaltliche in seiner Sinnstruktur ist zugleich das, was die Vollzugsrichtung gibt." And GA.61, S.34, p. 27. "Das Formale ist nicht 'Form' und Anzeige deren Inhalt, sondern 'formal' ist Bestimmungsansatz; Ansatzcharakter!"

[72] GA.60, S.64, p. 44.

Heidegger as an "empty content" [*leeres Gehaltliche*].[73] It is precisely because this formal part describes only a *bond* – a meaningful relation and nothing more – that it can be empty of contents. It describes a relation that is given to us as a *fact* and leaves open its specific contents to be acquired in a singularly performed understanding so as the phenomenon's meaning to be properly and fully grasped. "[T]he more radical is the understanding of what is empty, as formal," Heidegger says, "the richer it becomes, because it leads to the concrete."[74]

In contrast to formalization which unthoughtfully presupposed that it is possible a mere *being-there* (existentia, Vorhandensein)[75] of the object without former characterizations, the formal part of formal indication is always open and always points to singularization through specific "whats" and "hows" at the level of a singularly performed understanding.[76] We might also turn our gaze to a "that," to formal as empty, but this "that" explicitly belongs to the meaningful relation itself – to the *Bindung* – which is given to us as fact. Formally indicative concepts describe dimensions of the *meaningful relation* as *fact*. They describe it in its facticity.[77] We turn our sight to the "that" of this relation, knowing at the same time that there is always a "what" and a "how." *That* the meaningful relation with things *is* in such and such way, leads us to the concept of being in general. We have a *universal* "that" of the fact of meaningful relation – *that* beings [Seiende] always *are* with a certain meaning for us, i.e., *that* being [Sein] *is* –, which is always singularized in specific "whats" and "hows."

V. Understanding being in general through the meaningful relation as *fact*

But, again, is it *being* [Sein] a formally indicative concept? The quick answer is yes. Heidegger explicitly states in his course of WS 1921/22 that *Sein* is "what is indicated formally and emptily [das angezeigte Formalleere], and yet it strictly determines the direction of the understanding."[78]

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[73] GA.61, S.33, p. 26. See above note 71.

[74] GA.61, S.33, p. 26. I alter here the translation.

[75] SZ, S.42, p. 39. "Existentia besagt nach der Überlieferung ontologisch soviel wie *Vorhandensein*."

[76] I am deeply indebted to Professor Georg Xiropaidis for his key observation – among other helpful comments and his general support – about the deep and complex connection between hermeneutic concepts and the concepts of traditional metaphysics.

[77] I imply here a richer concept of facticity that Heidegger seems to use during those years and which unfolds in SZ. See also below note 92. For the background of the concept of facticity see the excellent study, Theodore Kisiel, "Das Entstehen des Begriffsfeldes 'Faktizität' im Frühwerk Heideggers," *Dilthey-Jahrbuch* 4 (1986-1987): 91-120.

[78] GA.61, S.61, p. 46.

Let us attempt to understand this claim by examining how Heidegger introduces in this course the concept of being for the very first time and, what is more, as the main target of philosophical questioning.

Heidegger's main purpose there is to continue in the same line of rejection of theoretical priority over the originary field of facticity. In fact, the concept of *being* [Sein] helps him to refer to this field and, specifically to the meaningful relation itself, without prejudicing theoretically its meaning, that is, respecting at the same time its factical character. Just as Heidegger suggested that one "must prevent oneself from taking it for granted that its relational sense is originarily theoretical,"[79] in the same way, he now comments that philosophy should stop studying beings as objects.[80] The formal determination of beings – the basic mechanism through which traditional philosophy works[81] – is totally blind to the originary field of facticity and transforms all beings, independent of their particular relation to us, into objectual forms.

Now, Heidegger wants to preserve the *universal* character of philosophy and at the same time undo its theoretical bias. He maintained that philosophy is a kind of "knowing comportment" [erkennendes Verhalten],[82] which does not investigate a specific being or "region of being" [Seinsgebiet][83] but beings as beings, "beings, ultimately considered."[84] Philosophy does not study beings as objects but simply as beings – i.e., without prejudicing them. But to study beings as beings, to study them "ultimately," means *not* to study them in relation to another *being* [Seiendes] but regarding their ontological dimension – that is, to study beings just as they *are*, in their *being*. For Heidegger, what philosophy finally asks is "*being* [Sein] or, more determinately, in respect to the way such 'being' [Sein] is graspable: the 'sense *of being*' [Seinssinn]."[85]

Of course, being here is not understood as a universal for all beings, as their "*Allgemeines*," neither as the "highest genus" nor the "highest

[79] GA.60, S.64, p. 44.

[80] GA.61, S.55, p. 42. "Demnach scheint auch über das 'Philosophieren' nichts weiter mehr gegeben werden zu können als: 'erkennendes Verhalten zu ...,' wobei der Gegenstand als Erkenntnisgegenstand als Seiendes angesprochen wird."

[81] GA.60, S.63, p. 43.

[82] GA.61, S.54, p. 41. I prefer here "knowing" for the adjective "erkennend" rather than "cognitive" that appears in the English edition.

[83] GA.61, S.57, p. 43. Heidegger, in GA.61, S.58, p. 44, states that it remains open whether philosophy is "comportment to each and every being, to all 'regions' [Gebieten], or, on the contrary, to no region at all, *as* region." See also GA.60, S.62, p. 43.

[84] GA.61, S.58, p. 44. "[...] das Seiende, letztlich betrachtet, nicht in bezug auf anderes Seiendes, sondern es bei sich selbst und als solches."

[85] Ibid.

region."[86] It is precisely understood as *das angezeigte Formalleere*, as "what is indicated formally and emptily." How can we conceive this?

According to what has been mentioned so far, to indicate "formally and emptily," would mean to point to the mere "that" of the relation as fact and leave open its specific contents – the specific "whats" and "hows" – to be acquired through performative understanding. *Sein*, then, would be nothing else than a completely *formal* term that refers to a *relation* as to its "that," namely, to beings' *being* in meaningful relation to us. Formal here does not have the meaning of formalized but of an open and rich indication towards the meaningful relation which is singularized in each case of understanding a *being* [Seiendes].

Now, if the concept of *being* [Sein] is introduced as a *universal* concept that does not prejudice theoretically the meaningful relation itself – which means that it cannot be considered as a formal concept but as a formally indicative one – and if as a formally indicative concept cannot but point to the meaningful relation itself as fact, then *being* [Sein] refers to this fact. I argue that *being* [Sein] *is* this *fact*. And, in this context, the simple "that" of the fact – emptily considered but always singularizable – gains a priority against the specific "what" and "how."

Heidegger confirms this interpretation in three cases at least. First, when he refers, in the same course of WS 1921/22, to the being of "the having [des Habens] of the comportment." The being of the comportment is important because philosophy is a cognitive comportment "toward beings in terms of being (meaning of being)."[87] Heidegger states there:

> At issue is *being* [Sein], i.e. that it 'is' [daß es 'ist'], the *sense of being* [Seinssein (sic)], that being 'is' [daß Sein 'ist'], i.e. is there as being genuinely and according to its import (in the phenomenon).[88]

Taking a close look at these phrases, we observe that the "sense of being" coincides with the fact "that it 'is,'" with "that being 'is,'" with the *fact that* it is there as *being* [Sein]. Heidegger seems to declare for the very first time that behind every phenomenon's particular meaning it hides the

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[86] Ibid.

[87] GA.61, S.60, p. 46. "*Philosophie ist prinzipiell erkennendes Verhalten zu Seiendem als Sein (Seinssinn)*." I translate "das Haben" as "the having." The English edition reads "the possessing."

[88] GA.61, S.61, p. 46. As the translator of the English version also did, I consider here "Seinssein" to be a typo for "Seinssinn."

meaning of the *fact that* everything *is*, that *there is being* [es gibt Sein]. This is the formal part (*Bezugssinn*) of a formal indication that is singularized in the sense of specific beings (*Gehalt*-) and actualized (*Vollzugssinn*) in our understanding of them. *Being* [Sein], then, will be connected with the simple "that" [daß], with the mere *fact that* – *that* it is.

Another formulation of the above claim we find in the lecture course of SS 1922.[89] There – a few years before SZ –, Heidegger appears to discover explicitly the "fundamental sense of being" [der Grundsinn von Sein] in the direction of its own accessibility, namely, in the "being [Sein] of factical life (facticity)."[90] The concepts of facticity and *being* [Sein] are tied now closely together. In *faktisches Leben*, *being* [Sein] in one way or another becomes manifest, it becomes historically important "for *its* facticity," as Heidegger states.[91] Here again, facticity should not be understood as a simple synonym of human Dasein[92] but as a sort of logical field – see section II. – which is circumscribed by the meaningful relation as fact.

Now, the way that the field of facticity *is* – its giving to us as a fact, its *being* – has, according to Heidegger, "its decisive, fundamental structure in *that*-character [Daß-Charakter]."[93] In other words, as Heidegger states: "The sense of being [Seinssinn] of the factical is a that-being [Daß-Sein]." Heidegger calls our attention to the facticity of factical life, where the "that" dimension of being has, according to this transcript, a certain priority. But this fact is usually kept hidden. In everyday life "the 'what' is pushed before the 'that'. What matters most to it, is what is being lived." It is in a way "crucial" for factical life "that it bars itself from that-character."[94]

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[89] I make reference here to Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretation ausgewählter Abhandlungen des Aristoteles zu Ontologie und Logik; Gesamtausgabe Band 62*, ed. Günther Neumann (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2005). All translations of this volume are mine. The part of the course that I quote below is from Walter Bröcker's – editor of *Gesamtausgabe* Vol. 61 – transcript.

[90] GA.62, S.180. The title of the section is: "Der Grundsinn von Sein als Sein des faktischen Lebens (Faktizität) in der Grundstruktur des Daß-Charakters. Der Vorrang des Daß-Seins vor dem Was-Sein. Der konkreteste Zugang des Daß-Charakters aus seinem spezifischen Nicht, dem Tod."

[91] GA.62, S.180. "Als Grundsinn des Seins ist anzusetzen *das* Sein, auf das es geschichtlich-historisch im faktischen Leben für dessen Faktizität ausdrücklich oder nicht ankommt." The emphasis here is mine. I underline that facticity *has* whatever is given as a *fact*.

[92] There is a deep connection, though, between the concepts of facticity and Dasein. "Da-sein," "being-there," means to find oneself being there as a fact. I intend to develop this connection in a future paper on the centrality of facticity in SZ's project.

[93] Ibid. "Dieses Sein des faktischen Lebens, das wir zusammenfassend bezeichnen als *Faktizität*, hat seine entscheidende Grundstruktur in dem *Daß*-Charakter."

[94] Ibid.

According to this transcript, the *Grundsinn von Sein* is to be found in the being of facticity – of this particular logical field – which has as its basic character the that-character. Heidegger also points in the same direction when he introduces the concept of being in general for the first time.

"Being in general," as a concept and as a question, is introduced during Heidegger's course of WS 1924/25 on Plato's *Sophist*.[95] According to Heidegger's interpretation of Plato's phrases, when I speak (or think) about something, I do it always by thinking of this something *as* something. "Every something *is* as something," Heidegger says. And this means that the meaning of "is" – of *being* [Sein] – accompanies every being [Seiendes], even if this meaning remains indeterminate in the first place.[96] For this reason, the question about the meaning of being in general – and the preparation of a ground to ask this question – becomes "the primary task of any possible ontology."[97]

It is not by chance that the hermeneutic "as" comes into play here. Heidegger connects the concept of being in general with the understanding of every being *as* something, *as* something meaningful. Behind the phrase "every something *is* as something" – which reveals the *universal* character of being, points to Heidegger's concept of being in general, and introduces the question about its meaning – we find the *facticity* of meaning from where our trajectory has started. Every something is *as* something; every something is understood *as* something – and this is a *fact*. Being in general reflects this fact. It reflects the fact *that* everything *is* with a certain meaning, *that* everything *is* meaningful – *that* it *is*.

To close, Heidegger with the term "being in general" seems to suggest a notion of being that moves beyond the various historical formulations of being of beings. In SZ he comments: "being [Sein] is found in that- [Daß-] and how-it-is [Sosein], in reality, presence-at-hand [Vorhandenheit], subsistence [Bestand], validity, existence [Dasein],* in the "there is" [es gibt]."[98] I argue that the meaning of being which *transcends* all the historical formulations of being comes from the di-

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[95] I make reference here to Martin Heidegger, *Platon:* Sophistes*; Gesamtausgabe Band 19*, ed. Ingeborg Schüßler (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1992); it was translated by Richard Rojcewicz as *Plato's* Sophist (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997). In fact, the term "being in general" appears for the first time in the course of WS 1923/24, when Heidegger refers to Descartes' conviction of God's existence.

[96] GA.19, S.418, p. 289. "Ich kann das τί, etwas, nicht entblößt vom Sein überhaupt sagen. Jedes Etwas *ist* als Etwas, wobei der Sinn von Ist und Sein ganz unbestimmt bleibt."

[97] GA.19, S.447-8, p. 309.

[98] SZ, S.7, p. 5. I alter here Stambaugh's translation. In a later marginal note, Heidegger comments here (*): "Still the common concept, and no other."

rection of the facticity of meaning. Facticity circumscribes a logical field that comes to us as a necessary starting point, as an origin [Ursprung], precisely because it is given to us as an undeniable fact. *Sein*, then, will refer to this fact, and its "that" will be a way to grasp it. In SZ we find traces of this in the concept of *Befindlichkeit*,[99] of *Angst*,[100] and of care.[101] Quite interestingly, Heidegger refers there to a "naked" or "pure" "*Daß.*" How this takes place in SZ and what problems can it cause are questions that transcend the scope of the present paper.

VI. Conclusion

This paper exhibited a way of understanding Heidegger's concept of being in general, the central aim of SZ's questioning. I argued that the term *being* [Sein] as Heidegger understands it in the early 1920s describes the meaningful relation between humans and the things of their surrounding world. This meaningful relation – dimensions of which are described through the relational sense [Bezugssinn] of Heidegger's formally indicative concepts – comes to us as a fact. This fact of meaningful relation circumscribes the originary, logical field of facticity. Living factically means *that* I always come across certain meanings, and I never find anything radically without meaning.

Everything around us *is* meaningful and we find ourselves in a way trapped in this meaning. If we keep that in mind, then being in general would not simply refer to this meaning or to its intelligibility but to this as a *fact* behind of which we cannot go. Being in general, then, would point to the *fact that* everything is *always* encountered by us as having a certain meaning.[102] This understanding of the concept of being in general complements properly, I believe, the intelligibility interpretation of being and it could offer a very specific and plausible bridge for passing to later Heidegger's view of being as event – *Sein als Ereignis*. The latter remains open for the future.

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[99] SZ, S.134-135, p. 127. "Und gerade in der gleichgültigsten und harmlosesten Alltäglichkeit kann das Sein des Daseins als nacktes 'Daß es ist und zu sein hat' aufbrechen. Das pure 'daß es ist' zeigt sich, das Woher und Wohin bleiben im Dunkel."

[100] SZ, S.276-277, p. 255. "Der Rufer ist in seinem Wer 'weltlich' durch nichts bestimmbar. Er ist das Dasein in seiner Unheimlichkeit, das ursprüngliche geworfene In-der-Welt-sein als Unzuhause, das nackte 'Daß' im Nichts der Welt."

[101] SZ, S.284, p. 262. "Die Geworfenheit aber liegt nicht hinter ihm als ein tatsächlich vorgefallenes und vom Dasein wieder losgefallenes Ereignis, das mit ihm geschah, sondern das Dasein ist ständig – solange es ist – als Sorge sein 'Daß.'"

[102] It should be emphasized that a better consideration of the meaning of being in general requires a new reading of SZ. See above note 92.

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The Nature of Historical Research and Scientometric Methodology

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Abstract

Historiography regularly encounters a crisis. This is mainly due to methodological reasons. History is not a representation of the past based on some archival materials because, firstly, the past is not available, secondly, the past, and therefore the present and the future, cannot be thought anew, and the historical research will not find new facts. New methods are needed to rethink the idea of the past. Recently, indicators of the development of science are in academic journals. Therefore, their analysis will allow through comparison to highlight the lacks of the historiography's current state and identify the perspectives of their correction.

Keywords: *history; historiography; scientometrics; criterion of science; method; methodology*

I. Introduction

Historical studies have a number of difficulties due to the nature of the subject. From an ontological point of view, it is assumed that history exists as a unique reality. But from the epistemological side, it is obvious that history is not given in experience, and its existence depends on its recognition. These perspectives are certainly mutually conditioned: to recognize history firstly it must exist, but its existence becomes clear only after recognition. The superiority of any of these is rather a matter of tradition (one can talk about the Greek-ontological and German-epistemological traditions) than rational justification, as the corresponding arguments can be put for-

ward in favor of both options. This reminds one of the debates about the notion of *truth,* the purpose of which was to find out whether it was connected with reality, the world, or human consciousness.

II. History beyond subjectivity and objectivity

It has been shown in Hegelian and post-Hegelian philosophy that the world and consciousness are unthinkable separately and the most accurate observation, perhaps, belongs to Schopenhauer. He noticed: "And yet the existence of this whole world remains for ever dependent on that first eye that opened, were it even that of an insect."[1] Similarly, the actual existence of history derives from the consciousness that records it. If there is no evidence for the existence of history, then there is no history itself. In this sense, it is brought sometimes to notice that there was no history, for instance, in Ancient Greece, because there was no awareness of history as an independent existence yet. But on the other hand, the eye is not able to notice, understand the world as a whole. The idea of integrity implies mental work.

It turns out that the look of history discovered by consciousness is conditioned by the possibilities and limits of consciousness itself. Because the existence of history *in general* is at least controversial, we are always dealing with the history formed in *private* consciousness. And in this regard, perhaps, it would be more precisely to entitle the study, for example, not 'The rural history of Rome,' but 'What we know of the rural history of Rome.'[2] Deepen into the observation one step further, we have to ask: Where and how is the discourse about such a history formed? How is it that from the distance of centuries some consciousness begins to think of Roman life as history? What quality does the consciousness acquire that from then on perceives the world historically? If consciousness itself were historical, the world would be perceived historically from the very beginning, and historiography would be appreciated not only in Europe but also in the Ancient World. This means that consciousness is neither historical nor non-historical as such, for history never appears before consciousness in a ready-made form. The existence of history is a voluntary decision *to historicize* reality based on the past given in memory, and look at the world from this point of view. This circumstance gives grounds to assert that "History

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[1] Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (Leipzig: Erster Band, 1859), 35-36.

[2] Paul Veyne, *Writing History: Essay on Epistemology*, trans. Mina Moore-Rinvolucri (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 16.

is a bookish, not an existential, notion,"[3] that is, there is no history as a phenomenon in the inner world, it is the result of mental work. Moreover, 'bookish' here should not be taken literally, because in that case the problem of the conditional 'first man' will arise: who first came up with the idea of history? It is obvious that this question is false. There is no answer to it, because the formation of history is not an instantaneous leap, but the result of consistent and careful mental activity.

Paradoxically, following the emergence of the concept of history, consciousness directs its efforts towards distancing itself from this concept. It behaves not as the originator of the idea but merely as its perceiver. What has been said refers more to the private, individual consciousness, which, knowing about history from the book, does not even notice its controversial nature. Consciousness, ignoring its active participation in every possible way, tries to give an *objective* character to history, and accordingly tries to guide the historian to be *impartial*. At that, this is the phenomenological part of the question, i.e. spontaneously-occurring. According to Ricoeur: "We expect history to have a certain objectivity - the objectivity which is proper to it: this, rather than subjectivity, must be our point of departure"[4] for otherwise historical knowledge needs a special justification. Of course, here we are not talking about objectivity of natural science, since nature, unlike history, still manifests itself somehow and is subject to the perception of experience. However, if history is not objective, that is, if it is not methodologically developed with common thinking in such a way that it can be passed on to others and augmented, then its general necessity must be demonstrated.

Putting aside the fact that all knowledge is formed in the psyche, and therefore necessarily has subjectivity, as well as ignoring the often encountered political orientation in this area, from this point of view it is necessary to emphasize the difference between historical cognition and other types of cognition. Natural sciences filter knowledge out of the subjective element as much as possible by testing the hypotheses or guesses. In history there is no field of experience, and so the question is how to verify the supposed reconstructed history, how will it be confirmed or refuted, what will or will not fit the history presented, and therefore what makes it a science, how will its achievements be measured. Historiography is a source-based discipline, so the main testing ground is historical sources themselves: the relevance of history

[3] Ibid., 72.

[4] Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, trans. Charles A. Kelbley (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1965), 21.

is compared not with the past, but with the sources. Still, there are at least two, so to speak, open questions here. Firstly, in the 60s and 70s of the last century, the methodology of Popper-Lakatosian science had already shown that the facts have a theoretical weight, and no single fact can prove or disprove the hypothesis, because the latter can endlessly justify itself with ad hoc theories. In the same way, a bare source cannot be the standard for history, all the more, if we add a second consideration, that is, historiography has the intention of going beyond the sources. Rather, historiography aims to fill the gaps between sources, which are not events per se, and they cannot be written in the sources. In other words, the historiography or narrative is not traceable to the given realities, and so does not exclude the possibility of another history. Historical material, which constitutes the subject matter of historiography, does not guarantee the objectivity of cognition.

In terms of the historian's mental abilities, things are no better, because historical memory is also unverifiable. The subject of memory does not notice the change in its contents.[5] It is self-referential: when forgetting, the subject also forgets the forgetting itself. And the consciousness doesn't notice that at all. And in the case of mediated or critical historiography, that is, when there is no direct problem with memory, however, there is a need for narration, which implies interpenetration of the past and present periods One of the complications in cognition of history is due to the difficulty or inability of going beyond its own time and context, which is especially known from psychoanalysis:

> Every time anyone describes anything past, even if he be a historian, we have to take into account all that he unintentionally imports into that past period from present and intermediate times, thereby falsifying it.[6]

Such distortions are uncorrectable, as the past, independent of the present, is inaccessible. In this respect, the objective existence and recognition of a common history or History with a capital letter becomes highly disputed. It turns out that history is rather an unavailable transcendental idea, that cannot be written and completed,[7] because historical reality has different layers, which sometimes do not converge.

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[5] Davit Mosinyan, "History and Memory," *Wisdom* 11, no. 2 (2018): 66-70.

[6] Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Joan Riviere (London: Allen & Unwin, 1923), 282.

[7] Veyne, 26.

Depending on the historiographer's viewpoint, this or that layer may emerge. History has a problem of reproducing what happened, which means that it strives not for accuracy, but for truth. From this it is sometimes concluded that there is no historical method, because the task is only to present what happened, in whatever way.[8] However, in this case, an important problem of demarcation of history arises: How to determine the role of history in the knowledge system? What is the relationship between history and art? In the modern world, this is primarily visible from scientific journals and articles published.

Such problems of the methodology of science cannot be solved only on a theoretical level. The socialization of life has also led to the socialization of science, as a result of which science is perceived, first of all, as a social institution. What has been said is gradually more relevant for historiography because it willingly or unwillingly has political connotations. This means that historiographical issues are not only methodological or, more precisely, historiographical methodology is not simply a matter of rational decision. In the 70s and 80s of the last century, a number of methodologists had already shown that the issue of choosing a hypothesis is not satisfied only by rational arguments. Especially in the humanitarian sphere, scientific goals are axiological in nature, therefore "Methodology gets nowhere without axiology."[9] Moreover, values and goals differ not only spatially, but also in terms of time. That is, even if we proceed from the fact that the main goal of science has always been and remains knowledge, we must bear in mind that knowledge can be different: in one case the advantage may be given to theoretical, in another to practical knowledge, in one case it is necessary to solve as many problems as possible, in another to discover new facts, etc. Taking into account the comprehensive picture of historical research, it will be possible to understand the main trends of knowledge and the main challenges methodology face. Scientific journals are the tool that can provide a basis for the formation of a general idea.

In this context, this work is an attempt to discuss whether modern scientometric methodology can show, or at least highlight the place and role of history as a unique scientific direction in the general spectrum of sciences, and to what extent this point of view can coincide with existing ideas. The methodological approach put forward in the framework of this work, which combines traditional methods with

[8] Ibid., 12.

[9] Larry Laudan, "Progress or Rationality? The Prospects for Normative Naturalism," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1987): 29.

scientometric data and methods, is rather an invitation to specialists interested in this field to start a debate-discussion on scientometric methodology in terms of its introduction into the field of traditional methodological approaches to study historiography

Therefore, the most important achievement in this regard will be that in any solution to the above-mentioned debate, one more tool will be added to the methodological arsenal aimed at revealing and documenting the peculiarities of historiography, the use of which in the present-day technological development seems to us very promising.

III. Scientific databaseas the basis of scientometric methodology

There are 27 categories in Scopus that distinguish scientific journals 'Agricultural and Biological Science,' 'Arts and Humanities,' 'Biochemistry,' 'Genetics and Molecular Biology,' 'Business,' 'Management and Accounting,' 'Chemical Engineering,' 'Chemistry,' 'Computer Science,' 'Decision Sciences,' 'Dentistry,' 'Earth and Planetary Sciences,' 'Economics,' 'Econometrics and Finance,' 'Energy,' 'Engineering,' 'Environmental Science,' 'Health Professions,' 'Immunology and Microbiology,' 'Materials Science,' 'Mathematics,' 'Medicine,' 'Multidisciplinary,' 'Neuroscience,' 'Nursing,' 'Pharmacology,' 'Toxicology and Pharmaceutics,' 'Physics and Astronomy,' 'Psychology,' 'Social Sciences,' 'Veterinary.'[10]

In this series, we are interested only in the category 'Arts and Humanities,' since the journal 'Egypt and the Levant' is registered here, through the study and comparison of scientometric indicators of which we will try to understand the distinctive features and characteristics of the journals in the field of History. The category 'Arts and Humanities,' in turn, is divided into 14 subcategories: 'Archeology (arts and humanities),' 'Arts and Humanities (miscellaneous),' 'Classics,' 'Conservation,' 'General Arts and Humanities,' 'History,' 'History and Philosophy of Science,' 'Language and Linguistics,' 'Literature and Literary Theory,' 'Museology,' 'Music,' 'Philosophy,' 'Religious Studies,' 'Visual Arts and Performing Arts.' The periodical 'Egypt and the Levant' is registered in the 'History' subcategory, and in our view, in terms of content, it is quite close to the periodicals registered in the 'Archeology (arts and humanities),' 'Arts and Humanities (miscellaneous),' 'General Arts and Humanities,' 'Visual Arts and Performing Arts' subcategories In this study, there was also an attempt to conduct a comparative line with

[10] This and all subsequent information is taken from https://www.scopus.com/ and is based on the latest updates as of June 2022.

journals registered in the other 9 subcategories of the category 'Arts and Humanities,' however very cursorily, as it requires much wider and deeper research.

IV. Scientometric comparison of journals in the field of History with journals in related fields

One of the scientific innovations of the 20th century was scientometrics. And if in the field of natural science research it was quickly localized and began to work as a methodology, then in the social and humanitarian field, scientometrics as a criterion for the qualitative assessment of scientific works began to face various obstacles.[11] Here one could try to substantiate the differences between qualitative and quantitative assessments, point out their specific manifestations, talk about the impossibility of purely quantitative assessment of social and humanitarian studies, but within this research we intend to focus more on highlighting the special nature of the study of History and to show that the peculiarity of studying History is not confined only to the boundaries of its content features History, with its subjectivity and unattainable transcendence, as a cognitive unit, acquires a special position when applying scientometric methodology.[12]

Let's start by describing an episode. 'Egypt and the Levant' journal ranks 364th among the 1500 Scopus journals registered in the field of History. It is noteworthy that the Sitescore of measurement unit assigned to this journal for 2021 had a 0.6 numeric value, and that was enough for it to take a place in the honorable first quarter. In the context of an extreme comparison, let's say that the journal 'Biochimica et Biophysica Acta – Molecular and Cell Biology of Lipids' of the field of 'Molecular biology' has been placed only in the 2nd quarter among the same field's journals registered in Scopus, taking the 104th position among 335 periodicals. While agreeing that this example is quite extreme, as it deals with journals representing fundamentally different fields, nevertheless we would like to emphasize that in a condensed form it shows an obvious contrast in a certain sense the compressed image of the History as a scientific discipline with natural science knowledge and its gnoseological value presented in a rather fa-

[11] Ashot Gevorgyan, "Scientific Journals as a Standard of Sciencability," *Wisdom* 19, no. 3 (2021): 30-34.

[12] Ashot Gevorgyan, "The Role of Scientometric Indicators in Modern Scientific World," *Wisdom* 8, no. 1 (2017): 6-10.

vorable aspect from the point of view of scientometric methodology.[13] Let's note that the mentioned compressed image does not look at all in favor of History, if we consider it in the context of the logic of scientometric methodology. It is no coincidence that in the Web of Science database the Impact Factor for humanitarian journals, publications and authors, is not calculated at all.

Next, the comparison of periodicals representing History with other journals of the humanitarian sphere is considered (this applies only to comparison with journals registered in above mentioned 'Archeology (arts and humanities),' 'Arts and Humanities (miscellaneous),' 'General Arts and Humanities' and 'Visual Arts and Performing Arts' subcategories. The first field that seems to be close to historical knowledge in terms of its cognitive features is Archaeology, so it is appropriate to consider the comparative picture of journals precisely in these fields. However, at the very first sight, it becomes obvious that the journals registered in the scientific field of Archeology also differ from the journals presenting History in terms of scientometric methodology. The 'Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology,' for which Scopus calculated a CiteScore with a numerical value of 1.1, ranks 85th among 335 archeology journals, and is in the second quarter. This can be explained by the fact that modern archeology, using its numerous methods, partly approaches the field of natural science knowledge, therefore, this circumstance further strengthens our convictions of the value of historiography as a special field.[14]

We capture a much more interesting picture when we consider journals of the subject category including mixed fields of the Humanitarian sphere. Here, for example, the journal 'L'Encephale' is in the second quarter, despite having a CiteScore with a numerical value of 3.2. Such a picture can be even in the subcategories of Natural science field, however, as we see, when humanitarian research journals fall outside the established humanitarian categories, in fact, according to the scientometric methodology, they are getting closer to the field of Natural sciences than, let's say, to History.

It reminds us of the observed pattern in the field of General Arts and Humanities, but here again we have a different result. In particular, 'OBETS' journal, having the same CiteScore with a numerical value of 0.6, was positioned in the second quarter. It's the same with the 'History of Humanities' journal. Only one reservation –'OBETS' is registered

[13] Yeranuhi Manukyan, "Camus' Understanding of the Paradoxically Multidimensional Human Being," *Wisdom* 3, no. 2 (2022): 137-143.

[14] Johan Heilbron and Nico Wilterdink, "Studying Long-Term Processes in Human History," *Historical Social Research* 48, no. 1 (2023): 7-34.

also in the 'Social Humanities' Journal Database, while 'History of Humanities' is located only in the database of the Humanitarian field, and perhaps this can explain the higher status of 'OBETZ' in previous years.

In Scopus, only the 'Visual Arts and Performing Arts' subcategory is close to "History" subcategory in terms of scientometric parameters. But one interesting observation - the vast majority of journals in this field have the term 'history' in their title or are very close in their focus to journals publishing historical content: 'Art History,' 'Acta Historiae Artis Slovenica,' 'International Journal of African Renaissance Studies,' 'Journal of African Cinemas,' etc. And this suggests that the content published in journals of this subcategory if even it is not a historiographical, then it is very close to them, and hence all of the above applies to these journals as well.

Let us take a brief look at the comparison in other subcategories. In particular, in the 2nd quarter in "Classics" subcategory there are even journals that have a CiteScore with a numeric value of only 0.3. Interestingly, the 3rd quarter begins with journals having a CiteScore with a numeric value of 0.2.

Journals in the "Conservation" subcategory are quite few, and perhaps that is why Scopus does not provide its own list for journals of this category, and in the mixed list with other categories we see that a journal having a CiteScore with a numeric value of 0.5 is ranked in the 2nd quarter, and the next journal with a CiteScore with a numeric value of 0.2 is already in the 3rd quarter.

A CiteScore with a numeric value of at least 0.7 was required for journals to rank in the 2nd quarter in 'History and Philosophy of Science' subcategory, whereas a minimum numerical value of 0.4 was sufficient in 'Philosophy' subcategory.

Yet in order to find a place in the 2nd quarter in 'Religious Studies' subcategory, a CiteScore with a numerical value even of 0.3 was enough for the journals.

A CiteScore with a numerical value of 0.5 in the 'Language and Linguistics' subcategory is the minimum threshold that journals must overcome to get into the 2nd quarter, whereas a CiteScore with a numerical value of 0.2 was sufficient in the 'Literature and Literary Theory' subcategory.

In 'Museology' and 'Music' subcategories, journals with a CiteScore of 0.4 have found a place in the 2nd quarter.

V. The special place of journals in the field of historical theory among scientific journals

Continuing the discussion of the issues raised above, we believe that it is time to talk about the scientometric characteristics of journals repre-

senting the field of historical theory. We have identified three journals: *Rethinking History* (ISSN: 1364-2529), *History and Theory* (ISSN: 0018-2656) and *Journal of the Philosophy of History* (ISSN: 1872-2636). All of these journals are leaders in the mentioned fields and are in the first quarter of the SCOPUS database. Even a superficial analysis of the articles published by the three journals and the references made to them shows that the publications of this field, despite sometimes quite a large number of downloads / readings of the articles, have a rather small number of references for a long time (on average 5-10 years). When we consider the most cited articles in the journals mentioned, it is striking that the most cited articles are mostly 15-20 years old. The so-called 'young' articles that fall out of this scheme, but have a large number of references, are articles 5-10 years old. Journals that count the most cited articles for the past years (3-5) show in practice how small the number of references is, even with a sufficient number of downloads / readings. While agreeing with all the statements that it is quite difficult to calculate the citations to the journals in the humanitarian sphere,[15] and primarily because citations here usually begin to appear after 5-10 years, and sometimes even later, we want to emphasize that journals in the field of historical theory, being at the intersection of history and philosophy, seem to be doubly subject to this pattern, and thus need special attention and careful study. We believe that further discussions and research programs on this issue will contribute to the process of highlighting the scientific potential of the field and clarifying methodological approaches.

VI. Conclusion

History has certain characteristics that make it difficult to categorize and measure its achievements. Unlike the natural sciences, a new methodology is necessary here to outline the development and discover new horizons. The scientometric methodology also comes to confirm the point of view, that history, as a discipline, holds a special place and role in the complete palette of scientific research. The study of history and historiography as disciplines from the point of view of the methodologies considered within the framework of this research gives a reason for hope that further, more detailed studies should reveal much more tangible features, that in the context of narrow tasks of the research, did not find a place within the framework of this study. In particular, it is possible to

[15] Mario De Marchi and Edoardo Lorenzetti, "Measuring the Impact of Scholarly Journals in the Humanities Field," *Scientometrics* 106 (2016): 253-261.

observe more thoroughly, for example, all the journals registered in the Scopus "History" subcategory, or at least a significant part of them, in terms of the content of published articles, and understand to what extent the content, thematic focus affects the quantitative transformation of scientometric indicators.

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Social Exclusion of People Who Abstain from Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination for Medical Reasons: A Contemporary Ethical Conflict

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Abstract

The measures of obligatory vaccination against COVID-19 disease in Greece, have failed to cater to people, who for serious medical reasons, were prohibited by their private doctors to be vaccinated. This fact, however, leads to their unwilling social seclusion, since they cannot obtain the vaccination certificate that ensures access to all social activities. They are, therefore, faced with the dilemma of consenting to vaccination, disregarding possible health or even fatal consequences, or social exclusion and isolation. This research study aims to discuss this ethical conflict, between what is considered ethical for society in contrast to restriction of personal will and health. It wishes to rediscover the very essence of the commitment to protecting human rights-health and social well-being. This dilemma will be viewed and examined under the scope of core ethical values and principles met in Hippocrates' oath and the fundamental ethical theory of Utilitarianism. The study will try, drawing from these ethical theories and definitions, to test these questions and conclude on what the indicative ethical choice is. The study wishes to propose suggestions of measures that can be taken to ensure equal operations for all citizens, based on medical ethics and self-disposition principles. It will also propose actions that should be put in the equation, sensitive groups. We feel that a balanced ethical approach that does not accentuate disparities within and among different groups, could ensure health equality, better social resilience, and commitment to effective prospective preparedness.

Keywords: *utilitarianism; human rights; vaccination hesitancy; social exclusion; Aristotle's golden rule*

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I. Introduction

The ethical dimension of scientific research has been discussed by many philosophers and scientists since the ancient years. The roots of medical ethics are found in the oath of Hippocrates (4th century BC). The significance of the bioethical principles of Hippocrates is accepted to this day, as they are often incorporated into the ethical regulations and considerations of modern universities. According to the oath of Hippocrates, the doctors swore that they would transmit to subsequent physicians the medical knowledge and basic ethical rules and principles.[1] Doctors were also committed that they would apply the therapeutic methods to help patients according to their ability and judgment, but never to harm or cause intentional damage to them, and that they would not give a deadly drug to anybody even if one asked for it, nor they will suggest anybody take such a drug.[2] Moreover, a doctor is committed to applying all measures required for the patient, avoiding those "twin traps" of overtreatment and therapeutic nihilism.[3]

Although ethics in research and the application of scientific achievements concern modern societies is controlled through specific committees and regulatory frameworks in universities and other bodies, in some cases the boundaries between what is ethical and what is not are blurred, specifically when an emergency does not allow the conducting extensive experiments that will ensure the effectiveness of a medical method, but it requires a quick decision. This kind of situation often leads to moral conflicts and raises moral dilemmas.

A contemporary ethical dilemma arises from the mandatory vaccination against the COVID-19 disease in Greece. The rapid and widespread pandemic, which intensifies over time, has attracted worldwide scientific interest and, has turned the research efforts to the investigation of methods capable of tackling the virus, with the most important achievement to this day being the discovery of the vaccine. To prevent the spread of coronavirus, governments have implemented a series of mandatory measures, a tactic that is followed in emergencies. The case of COVID-19 had the most basic characteristic of an emergency condition: the need to recognize and manage it in the shortest possible time, with possibly a large percentage of losses until the appropriate way of reaction is found. Clearly, the concept of autonomy in any emergency

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[1] Dimitrios Lipourlis, *Hippocratic Medicine* (Athens: Epikendro, 1983), 79-94 [in Greek].

[2] Ibid.

[3] Jay W. Marks, "Medical Definition of Hippocratic Oath," https://www.medicinenet.com/hippocratic_oath/definition.htm.

situation is a basic principle, but it must always be examined in relation to time. In Greece, several emergency measures have been taken to tackle the pandemic, such as the mandatory vaccination of medical and nursing staff, the restriction of the movement of unvaccinated citizens through the ban on entry to indoor places such as restaurants or cafes, and the imposition of a fine on unvaccinated citizens over 60 years of age. Although the purpose of the implementation of these measures was the protection of the health of Greek citizens, it is observed that there was no provision for a possible exemption from vaccination of certain population groups that are forced to abstain from it for health reasons, resulting in their social exclusion. In this context, several Greek people are faced with an ethical conflict as they must decide whether to get vaccinated, to avoid social exclusion by endangering their health, or whether to abstain from vaccination and at the same time from a significant number of social activities. In other words, they must choose between the consent to which there is a serious risk to their health and the refusal that implies social exclusion or differently they must choose between their ''egocentrism and social tropism.''[4] This moral conflict is encompassed in the context of reflection in which compulsory vaccination is possibly the better choice for society and humanity, as could be suggested by theories of utilitarianism and communitarian ethics, but it significantly reduces the freedom of will according to an issue that directly concerns every single person.

In this paper, we examine highly important aspects of this ethical conflict. In the first section, the theoretical framework on which our research is based is formed through the approach of the basic principles of the Hippocratic Oath, the theory of utilitarianism, communitarian ethics, and Aristotle's *Golden Mean* theory. Throughout the same section, we also approach the issue of human rights in times of emergency what differentiates medicine is the concern and focus on fundamental individual rights. In the third section, we approach the core issues related to vaccination hesitancy during the COVID-19 era, across diverse contexts and try to conclude the case of Greece. Moreover, we aim to deepen and analyze the main reasons Greek people hesitated to vaccinate. Finally, we conclude that the optimal solution can arrive from "moderate utilitarianism" which is suggested as the golden mean, as the moderation between the mandatory (exaggeration) and the optional (lack) character of the vaccination.

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[4] Emmanuel Roberto Goffi, "Back to Eudaimonia as a Social Relation: What Does the Covid Crisis Teach Us about Individualism and Its Limits?" *Conatus - Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. 2 (2022): 105-118.

The purpose of this paper is to address these issues by participating in the open, contemporary, and extremely popular dialogue that often comes from the ethical dilemma of whether the imposition of mandatory vaccination promises the protection of the whole but implies the restriction of the individual free will is preferable, or if the option of vaccination or non-vaccination should be provided to everyone. One of our core purposes is to provide suggestions for measures that can be taken, to ensure equal operations for all citizens, based on medical ethics and self-disposition principles. Finally, the study wishes to conclude the indicative ethical choice, based on the strong belief that a balanced ethical approach that does not accentuate disparities within and among different groups, could ensure health equality, better social resilience, and commitment to effective prospective preparedness.

II. From the Hippocratic Oath to the core modern principles of Bioethics

Medical science is the science that has as its object the restoration of the health of the individual and its preservation. As early as 3000 BC, in the first societies in the Mediterranean region and the Assyrian and Sumerian civilizations, up to the Egyptian civilization (1500 BC), it is understood that the medical function was established over the centuries. The greatest recognition comes in 6000 BC, in a century wherein Ancient Greece we meet Hippocrates, the "Father of Medicine," who consolidated the systematic approach to the patient for the first time.

Hippocrates, in addition to being innovative for the time of the patient's approach by doctor, establishes the ethical rules related to his function. These ethical rules are summarized in the oath of Hippocrates, which is the statutory charter of medical ethics.[5] This is essentially the first text of the principles of ethics of the medical function, which reveals the maximum respect for the patient but also the rules and principles that protect the medical function. Therefore, the Hippocratic Oath is one of the most widely known ethical medical texts, that articulates and ensures the relationships between patient and doctor. Specifically, it delineates the responsibility that needs to govern the doctor in terms of diagnosis and prioritizes the health and safety of each patient. The Hippocratic Oath shields vulnerable groups that

[5] Theodoros K. Stefanopoulos, Stavros Tsitsiridis, Lena Antzouli, and Kritseli Giota, "Hippocratic Oath," *Anthology of Ancient Greek Literature*, https://www.greek-language.gr/digitalResources/ancient_greek/anthology/literature/browse.html?text_id=220 [in Greek].

can be exploited more easily.[6] Until the 19th century, the oath of Hippocrates was the only ethical text that accredited the protection of the patient's rights as well as his indirect protection from any kind of exploitation. The international community recognized the need to establish rules that would limit the treatment of a patient and considered it appropriate to establish provisions and principles.[7]

Over the years and reaching the 20th century when the rapid evolution of technology and the genesis of achievements took place by applying them to every aspect of human life, medical science, like all sectors of human society, was strongly tested. In addition, historical events during the 20th century were the reason for the need to create International Convention to protect human rights. A decisive turning point in the history of Medical Ethics was World War II and the atrocities of Nazi physicians during the war against persecuted populations. The Auschwitz-Birkenau, Mauthausen-Guzen, and Dachau camps were places of martyrdom and violation of every notion of rights for those who did not meet the "standards" of the ideal man worth living in the Third Reich. Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, communists, but also prisoners of war, were the target populations whose extermination had to be achieved by all means, since they were first used as workers or as experimental objects in the hands of Nazi doctors.[8]

Thus in 1947, in light of these heinous crimes of the Nazis who conducted inhumane experiments on the above weaker sensitive defeated parties, the first reference to these principles was made in the Nuremberg Code, which was signed and adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, held in December 1948, accepted articles of the Declaration, human rights are protected in many ways, while as a text it was the basis for texts and conditions of the future.[9] So, for the first time, the idea of "informed patient" consent is introduced, which changed the firm paternalistic models of patient treatment. They were expressed in the same direction as other ethical texts, with emphasis on key commonalities to the freedom and right of patients to self-determination, the protection of their health and dignity, and their right to

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[6] Stavroula Paraskevopoulou, "Human Rights and Mental Illness: The Limits of the Freedom of Persons with Mental Illness." *Ethics. Journal of Philosophy,* no. 12 (2019): 66-67 [in Greek].

[7] William E. Morgan, "Hippocrates on Ethical Practice Management," *Journal of Chiropractic Humanities* 11 (2004): 44-48.

[8] Benno Müller-Hill, *Murderous Science: Elimination by Scientific Selection of Jews, Gypsies, and others in Germany 1933-1945*, trans. George R. Fraser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

[9] Available at https://www.ohchr.org/en/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/illustrated-universal-declaration-human-rights.

take an active part in the therapeutic process.[10] The treatment that can be imposed is only intended to protect them in very special cases. In a similar vein, other ethical texts were proclaimed emphasizing the commonalities of the freedom and right of patients to self-determination, protection of health and dignity, and the patients' rights to take an active part in the therapeutic process.[11] At the same time, in the coming decades, new medical issues came to be added to the traditional ones, while it was realized that the ethical rules that had been in force informally until then were not sufficient to manage the new issues. There was an urgent need to create a new medical ethic, modern in its time, that would offer the right tools to those involved to manage any issue for the benefit of the patient. This new ethics, medical ethics, is part of the ethical philosophy and draws from philosophical theories as many principles as it seeks to equip its theoretical background. A point of convergence of the devotees of each theory is the acceptance of the basic principle of Medical Ethics: all people have the same rights despite any differences in philosophical theories, thanks to their common human nature.

According to these theories and texts, the ethical rules formed in modern medicine are based on four principles: the principle of benefit, justice, and parity which have their roots in antiquity, and the principle of autonomy, which is a new addition.[12] The above can be related to the Aristotelean virtue ethics, which can provide answers to modern moral dilemmas other moral theories fail to meet, such as the ethics of duty and the ethics of consequences.[13] The theory of virtue comes from ancient Greece and shows Socrates' way of thinking, Plato, and especially Aristotle.[14] According to Pellegrino, Virtue Ethics prioritizes the patient's interest over the interest of the Doctor. It is a theoretical model of the application of ethical rules in individual cases that aims to act as a guide. This theory emphasizes the characteristics a person must have to be called virtuous and make the right decisions afterward. That means that we are interested in exploring those characteristics that

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[10] Evelyne Shuster, "The Nuremberg Code: Hippocratic Ethics and Human Rights," *The Lancet* 351, no. 9107 (1998): 974-977.

[11] Nikos Bilanakis, *Psychiatric Treatment and Human Rights in Greece* (Athens: Odysseas, 2004), 12-34 [in Greek].

[12] Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 57-112.

[13] Greg Pence, "Virtue Theory," in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer, 249-258 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

[14] Ibid.

health professionals must take into consideration to lead to ethical acts regardless of what those acts are.[15]

So, the four principles have their basis in earlier normative theories, specifically, in the Hippocratic theory of non-maleficence, the principles of justice and equality have their roots in Aristotelian ethics which promotes the concepts of equality and equality, showing the necessity of the existence of a rule of law as a main concern the protection of all citizens and at the same time the fulfillment of obligations and the defense of their rights. Finally, the principle of autonomy derives from the Kantian theory which commands that man should be considered the end and not the means.[16]

In their book "The Principles of Biomedical Ethics," Beauchamp and Childress consider that Aristoteles' virtue theory supports their approach since every major virtue (e.g. wisdom, courage, justice, temperance, etc.) corresponds to one of the fundamental principles they propose.[17] So, they succeeded in creating a Code of Medical Ethics, on which medical officers rely in the performance of their duties summarizing the four principles of ethics in health care and research: autonomy, principle of non-harm, benevolence, and justice. Since then, every medical procedure must be guided by these basic principles, as this is the only way to ensure the protection of the rights of the patient – subject to any arbitrariness.[18]

On this basis, it is obvious that Beauchamp and Childress have considered the main problems that arise in cases such as compulsory vaccination, which is the case in point in this article. These problems are the initial consent of the patient after adequate information is provided.[19] It is worth remembering here the propaganda that took place around the vaccination on social media, the versatility and changes in State decisions that had to be formed during the crisis, and the medical uncertainty. Vaccination has sparked ethnic divisions, a situation that would in no way help vulnerable social groups such as allergy sufferers, patients with underlying diseases, pregnant women, and children, to decide whether to take a risk by getting a controversial vaccine. Another important problem that arose was the ratio of risk to the benefit of the patient as well as whether the mandatory obligation of vaccination

[15] Ibid.

[16] Edmund D. Pelegrino et al., "Relevance and Utility of Courses in Medical Ethics: A Survey of Physicians' Perceptions," *JAMA* 253, no 1 (1985): 49-53.

[17] Beauchamp and Childress, 57-112.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

should be universal without exceptions or even groups of doctors who in practice and prudently would advise vulnerable and sensitive groups on what to decide.[20]

Childress and Beauchamp's four basic principles should be a set of ethical considerations on which rules can be applied to act as guides in any clinical practice. They, therefore, function as an informal code of conduct and guide researchers and physicians in difficult situations, although apparently in the case of vaccination, they seemed inadequate.[21] At this point, the challenges identified by us to the four basic bioethical principles, as they were observed in the current health treaty, must be highlighted. Regarding the principle of benefit, the achievement of collective benefit over individual benefit was attempted as a priority. This decision can be described as partially justified in an emergency health condition, but it is understood that its application in practice also created justifiable concerns. The principles of fairness and equity will be considered collectively. In the first vaccination phase, a universal vaccination was proposed with priority given to vulnerable population groups. The nature of the health emergency combined with the lack of an already existing preparation to deal with the virus (vaccine) did not allow simultaneous, vertical vaccination of the entire population, so the principle of probity and parity was challenged in the field. Of course, if such a thing were to happen, it seems certain that there would again be a question of questioning the principle of autonomy, since a decision to vertically inoculate the entire population would deprive individuals of the right of free choice themselves. This, after all, is the issue that concerns our article, especially regarding the social exclusion of people who were not vaccinated following medical instructions.

Perhaps because for Beauchamp and Childress these four principles function not as empirical rules or absolute precepts but as *prima facie* which makes them binding unless they conflict with obligations arising from other moral principles, in our case theory of Kant and utilitarianism.[22] The model of the theory of basic principles approaches moral problems deductively, that is, it starts from the general theoretical principle, and then a specialized answer is produced, that is, from an abstract framework, the theory is transferred to specific cases.[23]

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Corrado Viafora, "Toward a Methodology for the Ethical Analysis of Clinical Practice," *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy* 2, no. 3 (1999): 283-297.

[22] Beauchamp and Childress, 57-112.

[23] Mark G. Kuczewski, "Ethics in Long-term Care: Are the Principles Different?" *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 20 (1990): 15-29.

This way, in our case study, even if the patient will not feel insecure, will be sure of the intentions of those in charge, and will trust them if he has ruled out the possibility of medical negligence, exploitation, or manipulation, it is uncertain whether there would be any room for autonomy, because of the strict measures of government. The most important moral of the doctor's priority is the good of the patient. In any case, we recognize the individual's right to free choice regarding medical recommendations in matters that concern him, regardless of the medical practitioner's ethical obligation. As an argument, we can mention the possibility of seeking a second opinion on the medical issues that concern the person.

In modern society, where human rights are undisputable for all individuals,[24] deprivation of personal liberty is a moral problem, which is contrary to the fundamental right of autonomy and self-disposition. Moreover, the contingency of a pandemic in advance sets new, pressing time limits in the planning of its management, in the time, and in the way of the implementation of the business plans, in the field. The lack of time to ensure any conditions aimed at protecting the rights of individuals in the event of a pandemic is often treated as a luxury by the decision-makers. Such policies that do not consider exceptions for health reasons to mandatory measures of public health are ethically unacceptable since it leads to the instrumentalization of individuals. In addition, utilitarianism combined with the community's management perspective of a pandemic, to ensure the health of as much of the population as possible, sets priorities different from those in a normal period. It is typically stated that in the case of 19 patients treated with covid-19, the condition of their informed consent for the way of their treatment ceases to be considered a priority for the medical officer, due to the rapid deterioration of the clinical picture of the patient. Many times, it is impossible in the minimum time left to keep the patient alive, to inform in detail his relatives to choose his mechanical support or not.[25] Therefore, in this case, the basic principle of auton-

[24] Myrto Dragona-Monachou, "Ethics and Bioethics," *Science and Society* 8 (2015): 1-26 [in Greek].

[25] During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the statements of the medical staff in reference to hospitals around the world were typical, where they mentioned the difficulty in managing not only the disease but also the accompanying conditions that it caused. Because of the isolation of patients to ensure the lack of spread of the virus and the quarantine imposed on the entire population, doctors ultimately became the patients' relatives and were burdened with the burden of choice for the patients they were responsible for. In many cases, the doctors were the ones who decided for their patients, when they could not choose for themselves, and their relatives did not have the time to be informed in detail and to consent.

omy acquires new dimensions in the applied form of Medical Ethics. The same can be said for the case of vaccines to manage the spread of COVID-19, from the generalization of this image. The point we want to make is that every healthy person, in every society, could be characterized as a potential patient of COVID-19, and time, in that case, is not an ally especially when emergency management involves a potentially deadly and dangerous virus that spread of which you need to stop early. For this reason, every government in the developed world has decided to vaccinate its entire adult population, except for certain categories of citizens facing health issues to protect against the effects of a virus infection, especially during the first wave of its spread. In this endeavor, the criteria were utilitarian and communal. In other words, they were subject to utilitarian and community medical ethics, seeking the greatest possible benefit for the maximum possible number of individuals. In this view, there is a percentage of people who for various reasons, mainly health, despite the suggestions, cannot fall into the category of vaccinated due to health recommendations.

In this context, it becomes obvious that the pandemic forced vulnerable groups to be vaccinated against the will on the altar of public health, to avoid social exclusion. These vulnerable groups were made up of people who had to decide and choose between social exclusion and their health. Appropriate information regarding their special needs was non-existent and in other cases controversial and resulted in panic as people were called upon to risk their well-being to ensure the common good. Thus, these individuals found themselves in the difficult position of trying to coexist in a society with restrictive conditions against them for something that was not their responsibility, at least until the medical verdict on the safety of vaccines was issued by the medical community. The psyche of these people and their relatives was tested during a period of intense stress, for each person, with the onset of a pandemic. It is therefore a fact that any attempt to "psychologically force" citizens in this direction can only oppress the individual and deprive him of his sense of freedom and autonomy, despite any utilitarian motives, for the same or for the community in which he lives. Undoubtedly such a policy is a major bioethical issue as these individuals found themselves in the difficult position of trying to coexist in a society with restrictive conditions against them for something that was essentially not their responsibility, at least until the medical verdict on it vaccine safety from the medical community. They were excluded from activities that took place mainly indoors, and it was recommended that they be examined several times a week at their own expense,

to remove these restrictions and allow them to participate in these activities.

The shift of responsibility from the doctor to the "potential patient" from COVID-19, with legally secured and informed consent, has turned the "patient" from a passive recipient of treatment to a key therapeutic decision-maker. This institution, though of a purely protective character, not only raises moral issues since involves forced treatment against his will, the risk to his health, and stigmatization with consequences for his subsequent life, but also several legal, economic, and social consequences, such as cessation of his professional activity, fines, and deprivation of his freedom of movement.

However, the moral justification of the above acts was based on the theory of utilitarianism and Kantian ethics. According to the theory of utilitarianism, a person is moral to be temporarily deprived of his liberty and to receive compulsory treatment because this ensures his health, his life, and his physical safety integrity, but also the security and well-being of society as a whole.[26] Moreover, Utilitarianism is ''radically impartial and egalitarian as it treats every person equally by considering their well-being equal to anyone else's.''[27] In Kantian ethics, everything that is allowed to be applied must be able to be universal. For Kant, however, what matters is not the result – in our case the damage to the health of a healthy patient through vaccination – but the fulfillment of the moral duty. That is why the rules sought by the ethics of duty are rigid, coercive, and without exceptions.

It seems, therefore, that both the ethics of duty and the ethics of consequences face serious problems in their application in cases such as that of compulsory vaccination. So, there are practical dilemmas that arise in the field of health. As a result, we must turn to alternative ethical theories to seek answers but also identify the "right decisions," as well as a moral way of thinking and dealing with modern dilemmas that arise in the field of health[28], accepting that ''often answers to ethical questions are not black and white but may depend on the particular circumstances.''[29] Turning to the most modern moral theories does not

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[26] Theodosios Pelegrinis, *Medical Ethics* (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2009), 34-56 [in Greek].

[27] Julian Savulescu and Evangelos D. Protopapadakis, "'Ethical Minefields' and the Voice of Common Sense: A Discussion with Julian Savulescu," *Conatus - Journal of Philosophy* 4, no. 1 (2019): 125-133.

[28] Ioannis Poulis and Eugenia Vlachou, *Bioethics: Ethics and Law in Health Sciences* (Athens: Konstandaras, 2016), 90-110 [in Greek].

[29] Roberto Andorno and George Boutlas, "Global Bioethics in the Post-Coronavirus Era: A Discussion with Roberto Andorno," *Conatus - Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. 1 (2022): 185-200.

mean a definite departure from the classical but on the contrary more effective use of classical concepts.[30]

Consequently, we are, in the first place, called to go back to our roots and redefine concepts such as what is virtue. Apart from this, the basic principles of Medical Ethics should be a priority for those involved in managing issues of a medical nature, whether they occur during periods of regularity or periods of emergency. Furthermore, those responsible for the design of health protocols are called upon to try to maintain a balance in their methodological tools from existing ethical theories, with priority given to the protection of all human rights in times of emergency health conditions. And here the irrationality of human nature becomes evident, since often not only is the cooperation of moral and social law difficult but even fundamental human rights such as that of autonomy are circumvented. A compulsory vaccination violates this fundamental right. So, in corresponding emergency scenarios, there should be state care to ensure not only life but also the protection of human rights.

Finally, what we ought to be dealing with as ethical philosophers is whether an ethical theory can ultimately violate the guaranteed rights of a human being. In addition, we must propose a more meticulous approach, a "relativistic or moderate utilitarianism" which will be used in similar cases so that there is balance, justice, and equity. After all, do the general ethical principles represent the basis for the formulation, critique, and interpretation of specific rules, thus solving difficult or new problems that the rules cannot solve?

To clarify the moral conflict under study, we strongly believe that except from examining the core bioethical theories that compile the moral context into which the conflict falls, it is important to identify, examine, deepen, and analyze important factors involved in it throughout a specific case study. On this basis, we chose the case of Greece and analyzed important aspects of this conflict focusing on the core issues related to vaccination hesitancy during the COVID-19 era. In this manner, we highlight other important reasons for treating the vaccine with suspicion and not only the reasons concerning people who for health reasons hesitate to be vaccinated. In this way, the general context into which the dilemma under consideration is presented is highlighted. The description of this context contributes to a better understanding of the dilemma itself, presenting other reasons that discourage a person who belongs to a special category

[30] Ibid.

from being vaccinated, arising from empirical data, from practice, and enhancing our approach to the subject. Moreover, through the next chapter, we highlight that the hasty actions of the government and the absence of extensive information about vaccination led to many ethical dilemmas, uncertainty, and vaccination hesitancy from individuals who either fall into special categories or do not. Thus, we further elucidate the reasons why individuals hesitate to vaccinate, shedding more light on important aspects of the dilemma under consideration.

III. Vaccination hesitancy: The case of Greece

The purpose of this chapter is to systematically review the issues related to vaccination hesitancy during the COVID-19 era, across diverse contexts and try to conclude the case of Greece. We aim to deepen and analyze the reasons Greek people hesitated to vaccinate. A review of formal, as well as grey literature, was conducted to set light on issues of public trust, the role of social media, and hesitancy concerning the COVID-19 vaccine. For this chapter, we examined the literature of previous years, related not only to COVID-19. We drew from evaluation studies based mainly in the USA that focused also on vaccination hesitancy of influenza, HPV, and childhood vaccines. Our research method was searched in electronic databases by typing the keywords "vaccine hesitancy," and "vaccination hesitancy and the web." We focused our research not only on medical academic papers but also on grey literature since we feel that a large proportion of people also accessed such literature and were influenced by such documents.

Vaccination hesitancy is a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon that dates to the first vaccinations performed by Dr. Zabdiel Boylston (1721) and Edward Jenner (1796-1798). Its complexity comes from its nature since it is context-dependent and vaccine-specific.[31] Jarrett et al.[32] define vaccination hesitancy as a "dynamic and challenging period around accepting a vaccination." In a similar vein WHO (World Health Organization) defined vaccine hesitancy during the COVID-19 period as a behavior, affected by several factors in conjunction with issues of confidence (do not trust vaccine or provider), complacency (do not perceive a need for a vaccine, do not value the vaccine), and

[31] Shuster, 974-977.

[32] Caitlin Jarrett et al., "Strategies for Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy – A Systematic Review," *Vaccine* 33, no. 34 (2015): 4180-4190.

convenience (access). Based on the literature,[33] vaccine-hesitant individuals are a heterogeneous group who hold varying levels of uncertainty about specific vaccines or vaccination in general. It is also argued by WHO that vaccine-hesitant individuals may accept all vaccines but remain concerned about vaccines, some may refuse or delay some vaccines but are willing to do others; some might reject all vaccines. Here we feel we should point at a gap we found in literature as well as in practices in Greece. People who were advised by their private doctors not to vaccinate, due to other chronic health problems, were not regarded and were not at all given special accommodations. The role of medical staff and doctors concerning their attitude toward vaccination is also highlighted in many studies,[34] and is portrayed as a crucial one for vaccine-hesitant individuals.

The results of our search of the literature and grey literature resulted that a high percentage of studies worldwide show that several factors influenced acceptance or refusal (ethnicity, working status, religiosity, politics, gender, age, education, income, etc.). Additional to those that WHO proposed. The most given reasons to refuse a vaccine were: being against vaccines in general, worries about personal safety considering that a vaccine produced in such a short time is potentially too dangerous, considering the vaccine useless because of the harmless nature of COVID-19, general lack of trust on the governmental decision, doubts about the efficiency of the vaccine, feelings that they are already immunized, feeling that they are experimented on. We feel that although primary research has not been yet done in the Greek context those reasons that international literature concludes on is a valuable starting point for future research in the Greek context.

Another major factor that we feel contributed to vaccination hesitancy worldwide and in Greece in particular is the internet and social media. The pervasive diffusion of the Internet is an undeniable characteristic of our day and age. While Web 1.0 was static, Web 2.0 and its evolution has made people capable of producing as well as consuming

[33] Kendall Pogue et al., "Influences on Attitudes Regarding Potential COVID-19 Vaccination in the United States," *Vaccines* 8, no. 4 (2020): 582; Gul Salali Deniz and Mete Sefa Uysal, "COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy is Associated with Beliefs on the Origin of the Novel Coronavirus in the UK and Turkey," *Psychological Medicine* 52, no. 15 (2020): 3750-3752; Jeremy K. Ward et al., "The French Public's Attitudes to a Future COVID-19 Vaccine: The Politicization of a Public Health Issue," *Social Science & Medicine* 265 (2020): 113-114.

[34] Dewesh Kumar et al., "Vaccine Hesitancy: Understanding Better to Address Better," *Israel Journal of Health Policy Research* 5, no. 1 (2016): 1-8; Robert M. Jacobson et al., "Vaccine Hesitancy," *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* 90, no. 11 (2015): 1562-1568; Roberto Gasparini et al., "The 'Urban Myth' of the Association between Neurological Disorders and Vaccinations," *Journal of Preventive Medicine and Hygiene* 56, no. 1 (2015): 2-5.

information.[35] This blurring of distance and differences between consumer and producer has drastic effects on the medical field too.[36] It has been observed for several years now[37] that patients or patients' families proactively search the Internet for medical information. It has also been noted[38] to question or even surpass doctors and their advice. In this way, it is argued that expertise is redefined and questioned on one hand, whilst patients are put in the center of health procedures and involved in and informed during the steps of health decisions. In terms of COVID-19 vaccination, we feel that the Web acted as a modern Pandora's box. Several studies[39] have shown that several critical pages and websites introducing anti-vaccination information despite being of low quality are highly ranked thus search engines propose them and are often returned. Officials and official information have tried to increase their presence in sites in favor of vaccination however their influence has been proven to lower since other hoaxing sites appeared first, were more visited, had more comment tags, and thus were more read. This in turn resulted in creating communities that expressed doubts and concerns about vaccine safety.[40]

These findings in combination with the aforementioned news finme attitude[41] high levels of conspiracy attitude and dependence on

[35] Anna Kata, "Anti-vaccine Activists, Web 2.0, and the Postmodern Paradigm – An Overview of Tactics and Tropes Used Online by the Anti-vaccination Movement," *Vaccine* 30, no. 25 (2012): 3778-3789; Alma G. Ochoa, *Content Attributes of Vaccine Promotion Websites as Compared to Claims Made by Anti-vaccine Groups* (PhD diss., The University of Texas School of Public Health, 2015), 4-6.

[36] Gabriele Sak et al., "Comparing the Quality of Pro- and Anti-vaccination Online Information: A Content Analysis of Vaccination-related Webpages," *BMC Public Health* 16, no. 38 (2015): 1-12.

[37] Jennifer Keelan et al., "YouTube as a Source of Information on Immunization: A Content Analysis," *JAMA* 298, no. 21 (2007): 2482-2484.

[38] Emily A. Holmes et al., "Multidisciplinary Research Priorities for the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Call for Action for Mental Health Science," *The Lancet Psychiatry* 7, no. 6 (2020): 547-560.

[39] Paul Davies et al., "Antivaccination Activists on the World Wide Web," *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 87, no. 1 (2002): 22-25; Selim Öncel and Müge Alvur, "How Reliable Is the Internet for Caregivers on Their Decision to Vaccinate Their Child against Influenza? Results from Googling in Two Languages," *European Journal of Pediatrics* 172, no. 3 (2013): 401-404; Diego Pineda and Martin G. Myers, "Finding Reliable Information about Vaccines," *Pediatrics* 127, no. 1 (2011): 134-137; Noni E. MacDonald, "Vaccine Hesitancy: Definition, Scope, and Determinants," *Vaccine* 33, no. 34 (2015): 4161-4164.

[40] Daniel Capurro et al., "The Use of Social Networking Sites for Public Health Practice and Research: A Systematic Review," *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 16, no. 3 (2014): 79; Anne S. Moorhead et al., "A New Dimension of Health Care: Systematic Review of the Uses, Benefits, and Limitations of Social Media for Health Communication," *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 15, no. 4 (2013): 85.

[41] Karl Vance et al., "Social Internet Sites as a Source of Public Health Information," *Dermatologic Clinics* 27, no. 2 (2009): 133-136.

social media groups should be examined and taken into consideration since it is noted to strongly attenuate the relationship between vaccination hesitancy and the Web. Previous research[42] on vaccination hesitancy before the COVID-19 vaccine proved that Facebook and Twitter were the favorite platforms for anti-vaxxers and that this trend has expanded to other platforms too.[43] A special category of vaccine-hesitant groups that research pinpoints emerged during the COVID-19 era and is important to address is news avoiders. This term is used to define people that think the news find them. Their anxiety does not allow them to do their research or get informed by the media. They rely on the people they meet or are affected by to inform them and tend to adopt the opinions of their expert peers. These two newly emerged groups (news find and news avoiders) along with social media, platforms, and the media generally were ways different government officials took or should take into consideration in similar cases and find ways to endorse to reach their goals.

An effective strategy research results put forward[44] as the most important way of ensuring vaccination is to present to community members the convincing evidence that the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine or future vaccines in similar health crises, has been rigorously tested, shown to be effective, and is not perceived as being rushed into production. Unfortunately, the vaccine production programs were also unsuccessfully named. For instance, the US vaccination program was called "Operation Warp Speed." This strengthened mistrust of health authorities which as we presented is an important deterrent to vaccination uptake.[45] The final point this part wishes to examine about vaccination hesitancy and the case of Greece is moral or religious convictions and social responsibility. We intentionally left this part last since research has proven that philosophical beliefs and moral convictions regard-

[42] Eve Dubé et al., "Mapping Vaccine Hesitancy – Country-specific Characteristics of a Global Phenomenon," *Vaccine* 32, no. 49 (2014): 6649-6654; Gustavo S. Mesch and Kent P. Schwirian, "Social and Political Determinants of Vaccine Hesitancy: Lessons Learned from the H1N1 Pandemic of 2009-2010," *American Journal of Infection Control* 43, no. 11 (2015): 1161-1165; Sarah Lane et al., "Vaccine Hesitancy around the Globe: Analysis of Three Years of WHO/UNICEF Joint Reporting Form Data 2015-2017," *Vaccine* 36, no. 26 (2018): 3861-3867.

[43] Beth L. Hoffman et al., "The Emerging Landscape of Anti-Vaccination Sentiment on Facebook," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 64, no. 2 (2019): 136; David A. Broniatowski et al., "Weaponized Health Communication: Twitter Bots and Russian Trolls Amplify the Vaccine Debate," *American Journal of Public Health* 108, no. 10 (2018): 1378-1384.

[44] Kata, 3778-3789.

[45] Steven Taylor et al., "A Proactive Approach for Managing COVID-19: The Importance of Understanding the Motivational Roots of Vaccination Hesitancy for SARS-CoV-2," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020): 57-59.

ing health and vaccination play a part in receiving a vaccination and we feel that in our case it is worth mentioning and examining in detail. Opposition and hesitancy because vaccination is not congruent with religious considerations and the true seek for a cure has been a long-standing debate in Greece that was inflated in the COVID-19 era. Although the first measure the Greek government impose was social distancing church and religious groups insisted on in-person meetings and praying. Finally, the church adhered to governmental instructions. We mentioned this example at this point aiming at showing how multifaced individual decision-making regarding vaccinations is. It involves emotional, socio-cultural, and political factors as well as cognitive ones.

In concluding this chapter, we strongly suggest further research in Greece to be conducted taking into consideration not only the different reasons people worldwide hesitated to receive vaccination, but also the Web and the different social and religious conceptions but also focusing on the different needs and accommodations different groups have. Policies that fail to take these factors into careful consideration will not yield the aimed results.

IV. The suggested solution: "A moderate utilitarianism" as the golden mean between the mandatory and the optional character of vaccination

The Greek government has implemented a series of mandatory measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus with the most important but also ambiguous the compulsory vaccination against COVID-19. Although this tactic is applied in emergencies and, in this manner, is supported by a significant part of the Greek community, several Greek people are faced with a serious ethical conflict as they must decide whether to get vaccinated, to avoid social exclusion by endangering their health or whether to abstain from vaccination and at the same time from a significant number of social activities. In other words, they must choose between consent to which there is a serious risk to their health and refusal that implies social exclusion.

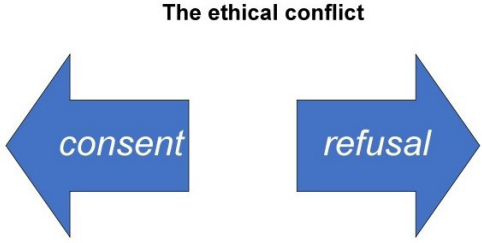

Figure 1: The ethical conflict

In this context, various questions arose, such as: How ethical can be considered an imposition of this kind that significantly reduces the freedom of will according to an issue that directly concerns every single person? What ethical context could provide a solution to this conflict? What measure could the Greek government take so vulnerable people are not called upon to face the above-mentioned moral dilemma? To answer these questions, we will study the ethical conflict firstly in the context of the principles of the Hippocratic oath and secondly in the context of the theory of Utilitarianism to check whether one of these two ethical frameworks can provide us with a satisfactory solution to this conflict and conclude on what the indicative ethical choice is.

According to the Oath of Hippocrates, doctors should apply the treatments to help but never harm patients. Moreover, doctors should not give a deadly drug to anybody even if he asks for it, nor they will suggest anybody take such a drug.[46] On this basis, if a person has a health problem, such as a serious allergy or a serious autoimmune disease (e.g. pemphigus), and the vaccination, according to his doctor, seems a risky choice that can harm or cause intentional damage to him, the indicative choice for this person according to the Hippocratic Oath is to avoid the vaccination against COVID-19 (figure 2). This choice can prioritize and protect the health of this person but, at the same time, the strict measures implemented by the Greek government condemn him to unwanted isolation and exclusion from a wide range of activities. For example, one strict measure that applied in Greece was the mandatory vaccination of all the medical and nursing staff. If somebody did not confront this measure he will be removed from his job and forced to do secretarial duties. Moreover, every unvaccinated person had to do two rapid tests a week and bear the cost, to be allowed to enter his workplace. Another rigorous measure implemented by the Greek government was the compulsory vaccination of all citizens aged 60 and over. Non-discipline in this measure, in addition to their social exclusion, also resulted in the payment of a fine of one hundred euros per month. Finally, unvaccinated citizens were forbidden to enter shops, cafes, and restaurants.[47] It is obvious that if a person avoided the vaccination for health reasons, he had to accept his social exclusion and, in some cases, economic penalties. Although the purpose of the implementation of these measures was the protection

[46] Lipourlis, 79-94.

[47] Government Gazette, "Emergency Measures for the Protection of Public Health from the Risk of further Spread of the Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 throughout the Territory for the Period from Thursday, March 4, 2021," Δ1α/Γ.Π.οικ. 18877/2021 – ΦΕΚ Β΄ 1194/27.03.2021.

of the health of Greek citizens, it is observed that there was no provision for a possible exemption from vaccination of certain population groups that are forced to abstain from it for health reasons, resulting in their social exclusion. Thus, the moral principles of the Hippocratic Oath do not seem to help the individual to face this moral conflict, thus, they do not provide a solution to this specific problem.

On the other hand, utilitarianism prioritizes the benefit of the community. In this context, all citizens with no exceptions should be vaccinated to achieve "herd immunity." On this basis, the acceptance of the theory of utilitarianism that seeks the greatest possible benefit for the maximum possible number of individuals leads to the compulsion of vulnerable groups to be vaccinated against the will on the altar of public health. On this basis, the vulnerable people would avoid social exclusion, but they will face serious health risks (figure 2). In this context, several questions arose concerning how ethical could be considered such a tactic, as it significantly reduces the freedom of will according to an issue that directly concerns every single person but also encroaches on the principles of autonomy and non-harm. Thus, neither the Oath of Hippocrates nor the theory of Utilitarianism seems to provide a favorable, ideal, or satisfactory solution for a person facing this dilemma, a fact that highlights the existence of significant gaps in the research of this issue and the need to implement specific measures considering these groups of people by the Greek government.

Figure 2: The indicative choice according to the Hippocratic Oath and Utilitarianism.

As these two theories cannot provide a solution to the conflict between social exclusion and health risks that vulnerable groups in Greece faced, a core question arose: Is there an indicative ethical choice?

Our approach's starting point is a basic principle of the modern version of the Hippocratic Oath according to which a doctor is committed to applying all measures which are required for the benefit of the

patient, avoiding those "twin traps" of overtreatment and therapeutic nihilism.[48] We can trace a similarity between this modern Hippocratic principle and Aristotle's *Golden Mean* theory. Specifically, the concept of "twin traps," which are overtreatment and therapeutic nihilism, reminds the two "extremes" in Aristotle's theory, that is *excess* and *deficiency*. According to Aristotle, virtue is the midpoint between two extremes which he also called *vices*, and, in our case, corresponds to the twin traps of optional and mandatory vaccination without exceptions.[49] Thus, Aristotle 2.500 years ago suggested this basic principle of the golden mean, the moderation or striving for a balance between extremes, *deficiency,* and *excess*.[50] As we can observe in Figures 3 and 4 the optional vaccination could be considered as the one extreme (deficiency), and the mandatory vaccination as the other vice (excess).

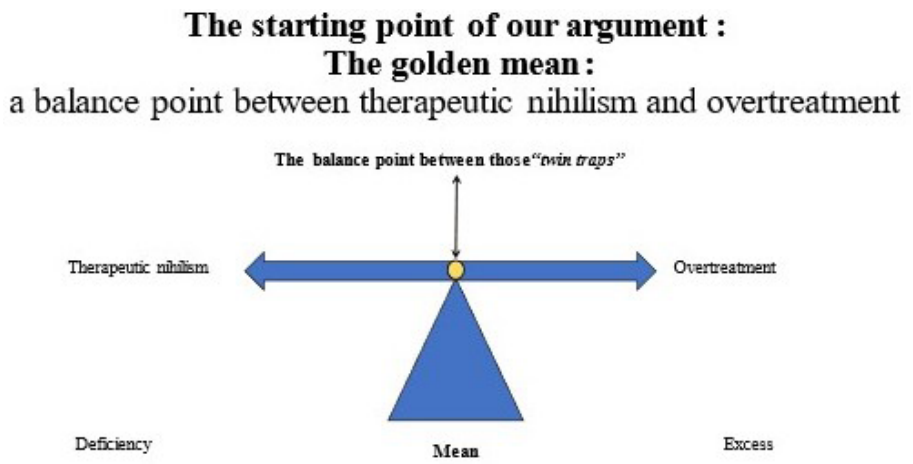

Figure 3: A balance point between therapeutic nihilism and overtreatment.

[48] Marks.

[49] Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics II, trans. Dimitrios Lipourlis (Thessaloniki: Zitros, 2006), 1106b 27-1107a 8; Richard Kraut, "Aristotle's Ethics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2022 edition), eds. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/aristotle-ethics/; Marks; John Rivera, "Finding Aristotle's Golden Mean: Social Justice and Academic Excellence," *The Journal of Education* 186, no. (2005): 79-85; Yuetong Zhou, "Aristotle's Golden Mean: Vague and Inapplicable?" in *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Language, Art and Cultural Exchange*, eds. H. Ma, N. W. Lam, M. Ganapathy, and K. Tarigan, 1-5 (Amsterdam and Paris: Atlantis Press, 2021): 1.

[50] Aristotle, 1106b 27-1107a 8; Kraut; Marks; Rivera.

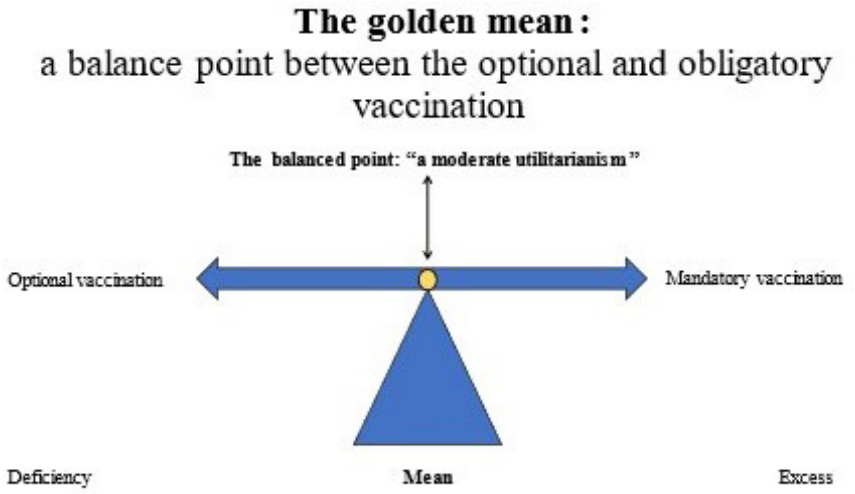

Figure 4: A balance point between the optional and obligatory vaccination against COVID-19: a moderate Utilitarianism.

Therefore, an attempt to break this contemporary deadlock arises from Aristotle's Golden Mean theory. Specifically, we conclude that the optimal solution and simultaneously the indicative ethical choice can emerge from "a moderate utilitarianism" which is suggested as the golden mean, as the moderation between the mandatory (exaggeration) and the optional character of the vaccination (lack). This kind of balanced ethical approach that does not accentuate disparities within and among different groups could ensure health equality, better social resilience, and commitment to effective prospective preparedness, which can also be used in similar cases so that there is balance, justice, and equity.

But how could "moderate utilitarianism" contribute to breaking this deadlock? Moderate utilitarianism should be the basis for the government to formulate and apply specific measures against the pandemic, even if there is no time to waste. Specifically, in the case under investigation, the Greek government could encourage vaccination and possibly make it mandatory for the healthy population, considering, at the same time, significant groups of the population that necessarily abstain from vaccination. Competent services of the Ministry of Health of Greece could clearly define specific categories of the population that, after medical tests proving the existing health risk, can receive a certificate of exemption from vaccination. In this manner, this measure not only will ensure safeguards and equal operations for all citizens, based on medical ethics and self-disposition principles but also could contribute to the release of these vulnerable groups from this moral conflict they encountered.

V. Conclusions

Medical Ethics and its rules coexist in human society and are shaped by those in force in it. Any social change has an impact on how Medical Ethics is perceived and ultimately applied. A typical and most recent example of this is the COVID-19 pandemic, which plagues the planet from the end of 2020 until today. Naturally, a dynamic condition, as considered by definition a pandemic, has the potential to change the way of thinking of any society, the political and strategic planning that deals with its management, and those branches that are involved with it, especially the field of Medicine.

Principles that until then were considered inviolable in Medicine, such as the basic principles of Medical Ethics mentioned above, are returning as topics of discussion on a new basis. The contingency of a pandemic in advance sets new, pressing time limits in the planning of its management, in the time, and in the way of the implementation of the business plans, in the field.

For this reason, we express the belief that the pandemic of COVID-19 despite its tough face and what it has caused worldwide and continues to cause as it has not yet been eradicated, is a unique opportunity for the medical world; a unique opportunity to modernize health protocols in the light of the basic principles of Medical Ethics and philosophical ethical theories concerning the individual and the protection of his rights, not exclusively as a unit but as a member of human society. The starting point for our discussion is that such a disadvantage has been amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic, in a pattern that is particularly pronounced among sensitive minoritized groups. When social processes put large groups of persons under systematic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their capacities, at the same time that these processes enable others to dominate or to have a wide range of opportunities for developing and exercising capacities available to them. Structural injustice is a kind of moral wrong distinct from the wrongful action of an individual agent or the repressive policies of a state. Too often we tend to see the health inequalities ingrained in our societies as a failure of the system. To recognize the demands of equality, we have to see that in many ways, the structures are working exactly in the ways they are meant to or to develop ones that cater to all needs. The effects of COVID-19 and the exacerbation of inequalities in health provisions are not in fact outliers. We feel that the system operated just as it was built to.

COVID-19 has once again laid bare the inequalities embedded in the very structures of our societies, in our healthcare and public health systems, social policies, and institutions. Understanding and resolving such inequalities requires a recognition of their structural nature. We

have explored one such aspect of inequality. A renewed call to attend to health inequalities is to be recognized not as an aberration but as a conventional feature of our current social order, one that is based on moderation, that we will be able to address what remains of the deepest forms of health and social equality.

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Can Narratoscepticism Be a Valid Alternative? A Critique of Strawson's Episodicity Argument

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Abstract

This paper argues against Galen Strawson's criticism of the narrativist identity thesis. Strawson points out that the narrativist thesis fails to portray those with an episodic perception of themselves. I claim that episodicity is rather problematic and that we should question the validity of this notion. The first step in this goal is to decipher Strawson's basis of the self which is an amalgam between the cultural and social and is perceived differently by different people. Afterwards, I will try to use the claims derived from Strawson's basis and apply the critique of his method. I pose a question about the relationship between episodic and diachronic and, ultimately, argue that both culturally and biologically, assuming the diachronic aspect of the self is necessary, apart from the very small number of cases. In this sense, the main conclusion is that Strawson's thesis is limiting but does not pose a valid alternative to the narrativist identity thesis.

Keywords: *the self; narrativity thesis; episodicity; diachronicity; Galen Strawson*

I. Introduction

The goal of this paper is to argue against the account of narratoscepticism, usually associated with Galen Strawson. In the following argument, we will discuss the episodic/diachronic differences and limit Strawson's claim. To successfully do that, the narrativist account should be given a general outlook in order for his

criticism to have a target. In this regard, this paper will have the following structure: i. portray the narrativist outlook, ii. provide the necessary parts of Strawson's argument against the narrativist account, and iii. limit the criticism by arguing against the scope of episodicity.

Let us, therefore, begin by considering the narrativist account of *the self*. What might benefit this paper in this exploration is the fact that the notion of narrativity has been at the center of philosophical investigation for decades now. As Anthony Rudd puts it:

> Over the last two or three decades, various philosophers, including MacIntyre, Taylor, and Ricoeur (as well as psychologists, sociologists, theologians, and others) have argued that the notion of narrative has a central role to play in our thinking about personal identity and about ethics.[1]

Now, what is this narrative and what is its nature? Various philosophers take various accounts of the narrative. The mere portrayal of the narrativist thesis is a big challenge. At the same time, portraying the notion of the narrative is not the main goal of this paper and it would be very useful to use the already established categorization of types of narrative projects. One of these categorizations is offered by Marya Schechtman, a philosopher who has argued for the psychological narrativity thesis since the mid-1990s.

The psychological narrativity thesis has been developed as an alternative to the psychological continuity theory. Instead of thinking about *the self* as an aggregate of the different time slices, the psychological narrativity thesis takes *the self* to be in the form of unity.[2] This unity is exhibited in the form of a narrative. Therefore, when we are asked who we are we give a narrative answer. For example, if a person X is asked who they are, they can answer, "I am a philosopher, a child of person Y, a parent to person Z, I have been educated in the X institution, my interests include X1, Y1, Z1..." Insofar as we answer in the following form, we are narrating our own lives. This is, of course, a general insight, and many philosophers have given their account of narrativity. On one hand, we have narrative hermeneuticists, such as Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, and Paul Ricoeur, who regard *the selves* as essentially narrative. Without perceiving ourselves as narra-

[1] Anthony Rudd, "Kierkegaard, MacIntyre and Narrative Unity-Reply to Lippitt," *Inquiry* 50, no. 5 (2007): 541.

[2] Marya Schechtman, *Staying Alive: Personal Identity, Practical Concerns, and the Unity of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 100.

tive beings, we cannot make sense of the world around us or ourselves. Schechtman places one narrativist view in contrast to the narrative hermeneutics. This view is often attributed to Daniel Dennett.[3] Dennett's view entails that *the self* does not exist, rather it is just an assumption that we use to portray ourselves by narration.[4] Other views, according to Schechtman, are placed in between these two, along with her own.[5] However, the line of thought that all of these views share is the fact that we constitute ourselves within a narrative framework, we have the unity of experiences/beliefs and a diachronic continuity.

II. Setting up the groundwork: Ethical and psychological thesis

The primary step we need to take is to create a bridge between narrativism and Strawson's critique. In this sense, we would portray narrativism through two different claims – psychological claim and ethical claim. Although it is true that, in the theories that the narrativists propose, the psychological thesis is subsumed under the case for the ethical thesis, in this subchapter we will describe the main points of these claims and establish a correlation among the main points that the narrativists share. The concepts we will need for this endeavor are the following – social hermeneutics, intelligibility, ethical action, and self-constitution.

Let us start with social hermeneutics. We are all born in a specific context, in a specific community, in a specific position, in a specific tradition. What we are, namely the constitution of our beliefs, ideas, goals, and ethical strivings is dependent on this very basis. Jens Brockmeier and Hanna Merentoja, both of them being narrative hermeneuticists, argue that "in a nutshell, the basic claim of all modern hermeneutics is that human understanding is mediated. It is mediated through sociocultural circumstances, history, and signs – particularly, language."[6]

In short, a view of narrative hermeneutics states that the narratives are necessarily politically and socially induced and that, as a conse-

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[3] Marya Schechtman, "The Narrative Self," in *The Oxford Handbook of Self*, ed. Shaun Gallagher, 394-415 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 396.

[4] Daniel Dennett, "The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity," in *Self and Consciousness: Multiple Perspectives*, eds. Frank S. Kessel, Pamela M. Cole, and Dale L. Johnson, 105-115 (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1992), 105.

[5] Schechtman, "The Narrative Self," 398.

[6] Jens Brockmeier and Hanna Merentoja, "Understanding Narrative Hermeneutics," *StoryWorlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies* 6, no. 2 (2014): 4.

quence, individuals find themselves deciphering meaning within that world.[7] It is a contextual thesis that tends to emphasize the experience, both passive and active.

The second notion is the notion of intelligibility, coined by Alasdair MacIntyre. Intelligibility, according to MacIntyre's theory, is the basis of human action and responsibility.[8] To understand an action as intelligible, we must contextualize that action within the whole state of things regarding a tradition. We can look at intelligibility as one framework of reason-giving which is unified with the distinct conception of the human striving within one context. That is to say, one action presupposes the whole infrastructure of motives, beliefs, and events that are a part of a given social situation. Intelligibility explains the unification of practices. Namely, our actions are guided by being connected to the context which is shaped by the practices and human/political relations.

Ethical action is at the heart of the narrativity thesis. This is probably best exhibited in the theoretical strivings of Paul Ricoeur. Ricoeur is constructing the theory of the narrative *self* so that he can explain the basic notion of ethical action based on deliberation. That is to say, to answer the question "What I should do?" we need to answer the questions "What am I?" and "Who am I?" first.[9] In this regard, ethical action is somewhere between the notions of social hermeneutics, intelligibility, and self-constitution.

Finally, the narrative self-constitution is the unificatory principle based on which we constitute our idea of *the self* in terms of the history of our experiences within a specific framework. By asking the questions "Who am I?" and "What am I?" we refer to the story about our place in the world, in comparison with other beings in the world, and the history of our correspondence with the world. We constitute ourselves as narrative beings when we refer to things such as these.

Now, what is the ethical narrativity thesis (ENT) and what is the psychological narrativity thesis (PNT)? In short, ENT stresses the importance of following the narrative in our ethical actions. For something to be considered 'good,' it must be intelligible through the idea of goodness that is contextually based on the context in which we find ourselves. On the other hand, PNT argues that our constitution

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[7] Hanna Merentoja, *The Ethics of Storytelling: Narrative Hermeneutics, History and the Possible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 50.

[8] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 208.

[9] Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 122.

of *the self* is purely narrativist and that to understand ourselves we construct stories that we derive from the world that we are getting to know through the process of hermeneutics and our relation to it. In this sense, PNT is diachronic since it is all-encompassing and renders our whole lives relevant (past-present-future) in the process of self-constitution.

III. Strawson's narratoscepticism: A portrayal and a critique

Now that we have determined the discussion of the narrative *self* that this paper is considering, it is important to present an answer to the most famous contemporary challenge to this view posed by Galen Strawson. This needs to be addressed because of the length of Strawson's perspective and the impact it had on the contemporary academic field. When dealing with the narrativist theory, one simply cannot leave Strawson's challenge unanswered. The first step is, therefore, for us to get familiar with his argument, which has changed over the years during his discussion with Marya Schechtman. Having in mind the importance of the debate between narratosceptics and narrativists, one needs to portray Strawson's position which goes by the name of narratoscepticism.

Firstly, it should be noted that Strawson's view has been formulated in order to attack the two views of narrative theory previously mentioned, namely the psychological narrativity thesis (PNT) and the ethical narrativity thesis (ENT).[10] We shall, primarily, consider Strawson's attack on the psychological narrativity thesis. The philosophers whom Strawson directly mentions as endorsing the narrativist thesis are MacIntyre, Taylor, Ricoeur, and Schechtman.[11] The critique stands on the grounds of differentiating between diachronic and episodic notions of *the self*. By the diachronic notions of *the self*, Strawson means that "one naturally figures oneself, considered as a self, as something that was there in the (further) past and will be there in the (further) future."[12]

Whereas by the episodic notions, he means that "one does not figure oneself, considered as a self, as something that was there in the (further) past and will be there in the (further) future."[13]

Considering these definitions, in light of our earlier portrayal of the narrative *self*, one might notice that Strawson's argument attacks

[10] Galen Strawson, "Against Narrativity," *Ratio* 17, no. 4 (2004): 429.

[11] Ibid., 434-437.

[12] Ibid., 430.

[13] Ibid.

the continuation theory. Connecting it back to the preceding discussion on Ricoeur's theory, this would mean problematizing uninterrupted continuity and permanence in time. But let us expand on this later. For now, the focus is on presenting Strawson's position.

Now, Strawson introduces the notions of the narrative and non-narrative which are correlated to the episodic and diachronic notions of *the self*. According to Strawson, diachronic are usually narrative, while episodics are usually non-narrative.[14] However, albeit usual, this is not always the case. There are four models of *the self*, or, as Strawson would call them, four temporal temperaments based on the combination of the categories offered. The combinations also determine the truth values of the PNT and ENT in their relation.[15]

> i. PNT and ENT are true. If both PNT and ENT are true, then we are deeply narrative in our deliberation. Concurrently, the right ethical act or a just political decision is based on its intelligibility within a specific narrative structure.
> ii. PNT is true, ENT is false. This truth value relation means that we are narrative in our thinking, but that has nothing to do with our morality. Even if we think in narrative terms, it is by no means good (or bad, for that matter) to act within this narrative structure. Strawson's examples for this idea are the Stoics and Sartre's character Antoine Roquentin, the protagonist of *La Nausea*.
> iii. PNT is false, ENT is true. In this instance, we are not narrative in our thinking, however, we *should* be. The narrative in this instance becomes an ideal that we need to strive for because it guides our ethical actions. The model view upon which this value relation is based is Plutarchian moralism.[16]
> iv. Both PNT and ENT are false. This position encompasses the view which Strawson endorses. If it is true, then not all people think in narrativist terms, and we do not need a narrative in order to live a good life.

Considering the first three combinations, Strawson is arguing for a fourth combination which necessarily means rejecting the first one. My

[14] Ibid.

[15] Galen Strawson, "Narrativity and Non-Narrativity," *WIREs Cognitive Science* 1, no. 6 (2010): 775.

[16] Plutarch is the philosopher who developed a notion of the narrative technique, a way in which we train our ethical assessment using first-person references, apostrophes, utterances, comments, references, etc. See Chrysanthos S. Chrysanthou, *Plutarch's* Parallel Lives – *Narrative Technique and Moral Judgment* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2018).

reading of Strawson emphasizes less the episodic *self*/ethics and more an attack on the position which states that the PNT is an objective mental state of every healthy individual and that ENT is necessary for us to live moral lives. The episodic part of Strawson's theory is a byproduct of his rejection of both PNT and ENT. This is not to say that some people are not narrative in their thinking, on the contrary, Strawson admits that many of us are, indeed, deeply narrative. But what it is important to stress is the fact that some of us are not. We gain the intuition for this once we start reading the way he writes about this subject. He addresses both narrative individuals and episodic individuals on the basis of the thought process, pointing to the fact that we are all biologically different. In his book, *The Subject of Experience*, Strawson states that:

> To be Narrative, as I will use the term, is to have a certain psychological characteristic. It is in the first instance a natural disposition, even if it's open to cultivation. Narrativity, or the lack of it, is a natural dimension of human psychological difference, whatever the possible effects of training or cultural influence.[17]

This fact is deeply rooted in Strawson's metaphysics of *the self*.[18] There is a differentiation in what *we* are and what *I* am. We are all human beings, and that is true for all of us, however, the *I*, or *the self*, is something that deals with the inner subject of experience.[19] Two things are derivable from this:

> i. *The self* is both biological and cultural.
> ii. Different people have different ways of experiencing *the self*, or better yet, the subject of their experience.

The first claim opens the door for discussing the premises upon which Strawson builds his theory while the second claim is probably the key claim Strawson uses to attack narrativity. Strawson is pretty much clear on this fact, noting that "the key claim is that human beings differ."[20] He takes into consideration that we have Daniel Dennett as one of the bearers of narrativity and Bob Dylan as the one of the bearers

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[17] Galen Strawson, *The Subject of Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 106.

[18] Whenever the concept of the *I* arises in Strawson's writing, I will use the concept of *the self* to have a coherent argumentative process since there is no clear difference between the *I* and *the self*.

[19] Strawson, *The Subject*, 75.

[20] Ibid., 109.

of episodicity. There is a whole discussion that concerns both claims unfolding later, after outlining Strawson's theoretical approach.

The important thing is for us to understand in which way Strawson defends this distinction. When we provide a theoretical outline, there is always a need for examples, and the examples that Strawson uses stem from dead writers[21] (e.g., Henry James, Samuel Hanagid, etc.) and himself. His arguments for episodicity come from his perspective and the angle acquired by his reading of the aforementioned authors. The consequence of these examples is that some of us cannot comprehend what it is to be episodic apart from imagining this type of psychological configuration based on our experience. Strawson stresses this for himself when he reads the narrativist authors; they are, as he states, completely alien to him.[22] What is meant to be shown by stressing Strawson's examples is this: if there is a subject X who perceives themselves as episodic, given the premise that most of us are narrative, is it relevant to their view for utmost consideration? At best, Strawson's view could be used to limit the scope of the narrativity thesis, but could it impact it in such a way as to make it obsolete? If we, for example, state that to lead a normal ethical life, one should have a specific set of characteristics one needs to fulfill. One could pose a question regarding the role of the psychopaths when reflecting on general ethics. Studies show that less than 1% of the world population are psychopaths.[23] Do they consider morality in the same way as non-psychopaths? The answer is, I believe, a clear no. Research suggests that psychopaths do not conform neither to the requirements set up by conceptual rationalism that is a part of moral philosophy, nor empirical rationalism that is a part of every-day life.[24] And it is important to emphasize that the moral understanding that originates from these requests is necessary for moral agency.[25] Should we reconfigure our view of ethics just so we could accommodate the people with psychopathic conditions? This is an important question and its answer has interesting implications. If the answer is 'yes,' one would have to broaden up their ethical theory in a way in which the moral requirements for an ethical act are

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 110.

[23] Robert D. Hare, "Predators: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths Among Us," *Psychology Today* 27, no. 1 (1994): 54-61.

[24] Shaun Nichols, "How Psychopaths Threaten Moral Rationalism: Is it Irrational to Be Amoral?" *The Monist* 85, no. 2 (2002): 286.

[25] Gerrard Elfstrom, "The Theft: An Analysis of Moral Agency," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 5, no. 1 (2020): 28.

so general, that they would be detached from the moral richness that our moral lives entail. If the answer is 'no,' one would have to carry on talking about ethics without considering the ones that have the condition which does not enable them to fulfill the requirements of a reasonable ethical agent.

This consequence of a 'yes' is that we should reshape the theory of *the self* for it to encompass the episodics. This is what Strawson is after and the question which I would like to pose is this: is it justified? Strawson notices the consensus within the academic sphere that the narrative notion of *the self* is currently the most powerful account.[26] I would argue that it is rightfully so, noting the power it has brought to the spheres of philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience with regard to the way they were mentioned beforehand. Although challenging this account is a necessary move, I would argue that Strawson needs to be much more convincing in his hypothesis, on the basis of the evidence he provides for his claim, beyond the subjective experience of himself and several others. James Battersby notices the same problem with Strawson's position, namely, he states that upon numerous readings of Strawson's position, we begin to see that his position is not at all clear and not precisely defined.[27] The claims that Strawson makes, according to Battersby, are mostly supported by counterarguments against narrativity, rather than by arguments in favor of episodicity, and he never really shows the direct alternative to the relation between the narrativity and *the self*. To make matters even more complicated concerning the notion of episodicity, Strawson is not at all clear whether episodics can differ in their perception of their *self*. Paul John Eakin correctly notes that even if there is such a phenomenon as episodicity, Strawson assumes that all of the episodics share the same description as the example that he gives, which is himself.[28]

We can also provide further criticism of Strawson's claim in this instance. The critique focuses on the premise that *the self* is both biologically and culturally dependent. When talking about the biological condition of *the self*, we are talking about whether someone is born as naturally narrativist or episodic. If *the self* is both biologically *and* culturally dependent, one would be able to change one's natural disposition of perceiving oneself through social means. Consider that we have a person X and a person Y. X is deeply narrative while Y is deeply

[26] Strawson, *The Subject*, 107.

[27] James L. Battersby, "Narrativity, Self and Self-Representation," *Narrative* 14, no. 1 (2006): 28.

[28] Paul John Eakin, "Narrative Identity and Narrative Imperialism: A Response to Galen Strawson and James Phelan," *Narrative* 14, no. 2. (2006): 184.

episodic by nature. How could we change X to be episodic and Y to be narrativist? Taking into consideration the assumption that there is such a thing as a social narrative, we would need to decipher that narrative and, by deciphering that narrative, find ourselves within the social context. Our actions need to be intelligible within that context; we learn the norms and the rules which govern the morality of our actions. If our actions need to be intelligible within this context, we must find ourselves as actors within that context. That necessarily entails the narrative constitution of *the self*. While it is true that some authors consider that intrinsic to our constitution of *the self* is not the social context, but rather our interaction with the framework within that narrative,[29] this premise still stands. In this case, the social narrative is also an amalgam of interactions bound by the constraints of a specific community in a specific tradition that holds certain values and beliefs. The episodic *self*, in order to be an agent whose actions are intelligible, needs to constitute him/herself as a narrative agent to be able to answer the various requests that the social context imposes on his/her moral life. Hence, the subject Y can become a narrativist to orient themselves within the social world which is contextual. As Blagojevi argues, the narrativist account (Schechtman's account) is much more heterogeneous and can answer various conflicts that can arise within *the self* and the context, whereas Strawson's view is quite impersonal.[30]

This raises another question, namely in which instance could a subject X become episodic? I propose that there are two instances in which someone can become episodic and argue against one of them. The first instance concerns traumatic experiences. Past trauma might influence us to disregard going back to the past and may have a direct influence on our future. To sustain a traumatic experience may lead an individual to a world that has no meaning, possibility, or progress for a goal-directed activity.[31] In this instance, narrating one's own life becomes harmful and we begin to experience ourselves as episodic.

Secondly, the case of ideology arises. The fact that Strawson's person is modeled under the notion of episodicity is criticized as be-

[29] David Menčik, "Identity Theft: A Thought Experiment on the Fragility of Identity," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 5, no. 1 (2020): 81.

[30] Bojan Blagojević, "The Narratosceptic's Argument – The Schechtman-Strawson Debate Revisited," in *Od narativa do narativnosti*, eds. Snežana Milosavljević Milić, Jelena V. Jovanović, and Mirjana Bojanić Ćirković, 195-204 (Niš: Filozofski Fakultet Univerziteta, 2018), 203.

[31] Matthew Ratcliffe, Mark Ruddell, and Benedict Smith, "What is a 'Sense of Foreshortened Future?' A Phenomenological Study of Trauma, Trust, and Time," *Frontiers in Psychology* 5 (2014): 7.

ing a perfect fit for the neoliberal capitalistic society.[32] If a person is detached from the past and the future and if only the present matters, the consumerist way of life seems like the perfect fit for that kind of individual. Therefore, the episodic *self* is ideological rather than phenomenological.[33] Tracing back to our main issue, we can claim that person X can become episodic by being influenced by the neoliberal consumerist ideology. This would be a second instance in which the narrativist can become episodic.

In this instance, I would like to provide a twofold criticism. Firstly, I would like to address the second way in which a narrativist can become episodic. To be able to hold an ideology is to take a political stance. According to Michael Freeden, ideology is constituted and formed by the distinctive clusters of political concepts.[34] Based on the premise of the narrativity thesis, we derive the meaning of these concepts from a contextual way of life and political ideology is shaped within one social narrative. This is also argued by Raul Lejano and Shondel Nero who find that ideologies are formed from social narratives.[35] To be able to understand a social narrative is to be able to think within the notions that it offers and to act in an intelligible way. The neoliberal capitalist ideology is still an ideology to be held by an individual and, therefore, the individual becomes a bearer of the narrative, which, by extension, makes the individual a narrativist. However, if an individual does not hold an ideology and merely goes through, what Mark Fisher would call "depressive hedonia,"[36] a state in which someone consumes the products to feel pleasure without feeling pleasure, then this individual can still be episodic. But that begs the question, if episodicity can be either a post-traumatic psychological condition or, rather an apolitical passivity, is it truly reasonable to consider it? Reminiscing on the example of psychopaths and ethics, the answer to this question would be a *no*.

The discussion that has been explored led us to, firstly, deduce that PNT still has the upper hand in terms of being the more reasonable position to hold. Even if Strawson has pointed out some weaknesses with

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[32] Bojan Blagojević, "'We Have No Future:' Teaching Philosophy to Narratosceptic Students," *Godišnjak za Pedagogiju* 5, no. 2 (2020): 81.

[33] Ibid., 80.

[34] Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 48.

[35] Raul P. Lejano and Shondel J. Nero, *The Power of Narrative: Climate Skepticism and the Deconstruction of Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 23.

[36] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2010), 22.

the PNT, he never provided any valid alternatives. Secondly, we can think of PNT as an arbitrary psychological condition towards which individuals should strive in order to be active participants in society. When stating that a social narrative provides with values and beliefs the individuals being formed within that narrative, we are arguing that the contextual ethical framework is a constituting factor of one society. [37] Babalola Joseph Balogun states that one of the communitarian premises is that the spirit of the community is exhibited in values and goals that the society provides and that they are an integral part of the identity of those who live in that community.[38] Following that, a society has certain moral obligations towards an agent that is a part of it and those obligations are an inherent part of his/her identity. Finally, the aforementioned values, beliefs, and goals render intelligible the actions of the agents participating in the social system of one community. If that is the case, then ENT should also be true. This is, of course, a big leap in the argument, and ENT still needs to be argued for. However, the goal of this paper was to tackle Strawson's critique and present reasons why PNT or, better yet, the narrative theory of *the self* is a more valid position to hold. Consequently, the narrative theory of *the self* is necessary in order to make moral and political deliberations and understand oneself within a social framework, and, throughout this discussion, we have caught glimpses of why that is believed to be the case.

IV. Concluding remarks

The stage is set to conclude this paper which engages in an assessment and critique of Strawson's narratosceptic theory of *the self*. First and foremost, we have provided an overview of Strawson's theoretical basis, in which he argues that episodics do coexist alongside diachronics. Strawson challenges the idea that all individuals are narrative in their self-constitution, proposing instead that certain people perceive themselves as episodic subjects detached from continuous narratives. Nevertheless, this paper questions Strawson's narratosceptic theory by presenting certain challenges to it. One important critique focuses on Strawson's lack of empirical evidence as far as the notion of an episodic *self* is concerned. His focus is primarily on his own experiences and the experiences of literary characters and writers/artists who are no

[37] Social narrativity thesis, ultimately, is generally taken to be a notion derived from the frameworks of the most important communitarian philosophers such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor.

[38] Babalola Joseph Balogun, "How Not to Understand Community: A Critical Engagement with R. Bellah," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2023): 67.

longer alive. This raises the question of the generalizability of his conclusions to a wider range of people. Secondly, this paper also argues that episodicity can be a result of traumatic experiences or ideological factors. The argument that this paper establishes is based on Strawson's premises in his metaphysics of *the self*. If his premises are correct, then it is important to examine whether *the self* can shift from being diachronic to episodic and vice-versa. After tackling the multiple ways in which a diachronic *self* can become episodic, we ascertain that the result is rather vague. On the one hand, even if a person who has a diachronic constitution of *the self* can become episodic, those examples, as stated, are an effect of trauma. On the other hand, the second way in which a *self* can shift from being diachronic to being episodic could be a result of an ideological framework in which a person finds him/herself. After considering the multiple ways in which a diachronic *self* can become episodic, we can infer that episodicity is likely a result of a traumatic past and, thus, it is not viable to change the dominant theory of *the self* in order to accommodate episodicity. This paper concludes that, at most, Strawson's theory only limits PNT (psychological narrativity thesis) and does not provide a well-established alternative.

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The Problems of Human Embryos Genome Editing from the Position of Islam Denominations

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Abstract

Biomedical technology is one of the most relevant and rapidly developing branches of science. In response to the major problems of bioethics and bio-law, bioethical dilemmas emerge in society, which constrain the abuse of new technologies. Medical discoveries, on the one hand, can greatly facilitate the life of humankind, but, on the other hand, the problem of interference in human nature actualizes the most fundamental questions concerning its ontology, the boundaries of permissible transformations, the responsibility of a scientist and a specialist, applying the latest technologies, for remote and unpredictable consequences, due to the integrity and interconnectedness of various aspects of human nature. This paper presents the experience of generalizing the attitude of the main Islamic confessions and different approaches in the legislation of Islamic countries to the problem of editing the human embryo genome. Based on a review of scientific and religious literature, it is concluded that, although the Islamic world is increasingly using Western models of behavior, in matters of the permissibility of editing the human embryo genome from the point of view of Islamic bioethics, it is necessary to rely on the principles of Sharia and multidisciplinary knowledge.

Keywords: *biomedicine; bioethics; human; embryo; genetic manipulation; Islam*

I. Introduction

The development of medical biotechnology in developed countries sets a new vector for solving medical problems in the 21st century, but, at the same time, generates acute ethical problems for the scientific community and for humanity as a whole. Each social group sees and explains new technologies in its own way, giving rise to new bioethical questions.

It should be noted that the problem of ambivalence and bioethical dilemmas of scientific acts and results in relation to hereditary genetic modifications was raised by Zeljko Kaludjerovic in his paper entitled "Bioethics and Hereditary Genetic Modifications" (without any reference to the context of a specific religious tradition). The authors agree with the opinion of Zeljko Kaludjerovic that the issue of responsibility of the scientist is of crucial importance: will there be any scientific results that their application will lead towards progress and achievement of the highest human values, or will they generate catastrophic consequences?[1]

Gene editing problems are controversial from a religious point of view. The aim of this work is to study and compare the attitude of the heterogeneous Muslim world to the problem of editing the genes of the human embryo. For the study, the following tasks were defined:

- Identify the key bioethical issues regarding editing the genome of human embryos formulated by Islamic scientists at this stage.
- Analyze the legal framework, and religious and ethical grounds for solving problems in Islamic bioethics.
- Determine the main stages of the institutionalization of research on editing the human genome in the Islamic world.
- Identify the main positions of Islamic researchers on key bioethical issues regarding editing the genome of human embryos.

This is a continuation of the study of the attitude of various faiths to bioethical problems caused by human embryos genome editing. The first stage of the study was to consider the attitude towards problems of human embryos genome editing from the position of Christian denominations.[2]

Islam is the second-largest religion after Christianity, and its principles regulate all spheres of social relations. Currently, the followers of Islam make up about 30% of the world's population, and according

[1] Zeljko Kaludjerovic, "Bioethics and Hereditary Genetic Modifications," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (2019): 31-32. For an equally secular framework of responsibility with regard to bioethics, see Hans Jonas' views as presented and discussed in Dejan Donev and Denko Skalovski, "Responsibility in the Time of Crisis," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2023): 87-109.

[2] E. E. Gribkov and T. P. Minchenko, "The Problems of Human Embryos Genome Editing from the Position of Christian Denominations," *CPT2020 Computing for Physics and Technology* (2020): 184-189. Also, see Crosby's views as discussed in Evangelos D. Protopapadakis, *Creating Unique Copies: Human Reproductive Cloning, Uniqueness and Dignity* (Logos Verlag: Berlin, 2023), 77ff.

to forecasts, the number of Muslims by 2050 will not only increase significantly but will also reach numerical parity with the population professing Christianity.[3]

The assessment of modern biomedical technologies from the standpoint of the Muslim worldview differs on the one hand, because of the moral depth due to the spiritual experience of thousands of years in relation to the highest divine principle, and, on the other hand, because of the specific cultural development of countries where different currents of Islam developed.

Human germline gene editing (hGGE) poses many questions for the Muslim community. Ismail Lala highlights the most pressing ones: Is there sufficient evidence that hGGE is better than existing technologies? Is lack of consent an insurmountable obstacle? What is the moral status of the embryo? What impact will hGGE have on social inequality? Can the use of hGGE be banned to prevent its inevitable use in eugenic programming?[4]

Drawing on traditional sources of Islamic jurisprudence in his reasoning, the scientist concludes that, with the exception of very few cases, which should be individual and specific, hGGE does not correspond to the principles of Islam. However, there are other points of view.

A significant intensification of research on the interaction of genomics and Islamic ethics both by Muslim religious scholars and biomedical scientists has been observed since the early 1990s when the international project "Human Genome" was announced. The Muslim Gulf countries have a high incidence of genetic diseases, and the cost of treatment for these is largely covered by governments. To reduce these costs, significant funds are being used for research that can reduce genetic diseases.

At the same time, there is a significant difference between the scientific communities studying bioethical problems in the West and the Muslim world. If in the secular bioethical discourse, which dominates the bioethics of Western countries, discussions on bioethics are mainly conducted by specialists in the field of specific disciplines, then Islamic bioethical discourse is formed by a class of Muslim religious scholars (ulema) who are specialists in the field of Islamic religious sciences.

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[3] "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050: Why Muslims Are Rising Fastest and the Unaffiliated Are Shrinking as a Share of the World's Population," Pew Research Centre, last modified April 2, 2015, https://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/.

[4] Ismail Lala, "Germ-Inating Solutions or Gene-Rating Problems: An Islamic Perspective on Human Germline Gene Editing," *Journal of Religion and Health* 59 (2020): 1855.

In this work, we primarily restrict ourselves to considering the Sunni tradition, in which four main religious and legal schools have been preserved at present – the Hanbali, Maliki, Hanafi and Shafii madhhabs. In addition to these, we will consider the religious and legal regulation of bioethical issues in the Shiite tradition of Iran, which one of the authors of this paper researched.

II. Common ethical and legal grounds for problem-solving in Islamic bioethics

The ethical principles followed by Sunni Islamic scholars are based on two main Islamic scriptures, namely the Quran and the Sunnah (sayings, deeds and endorsements attributed to Muhammad).

Due to the complexity and multidimensionality of bioethical issues, Muslim religious scholars (most of whom are not specialists in biomedical sciences and publish materials mainly in Arabic), seek the help of biomedical scientists to understand biomedical aspects of issues and gain access to literature published in non-Arabic languages, especially English. This interdisciplinary collaboration between Muslim religious scholars and biomedical scientists is known in the field of Islamic bioethics as a mechanism for collective thinking (al-ijtihad al-jamai).[5]

The uniqueness of the Islamic world lies both in the multitude of followers all over the world, and in the fact that there is a "universal" concept of Sharia, the code of commandments that form religious conscience and morality and determine all aspects of a Muslim's life. When talking about medical ethics, it uses the term "ةيبطلا قلاخألا" (Medical ethics). This concept is based on the verses (ayah) of the holy book of Muslims – the Quran.[6] However, due to the specific features of this religion, reading and interpretation are not tied to a religious school, such as patristic and scholasticism in Christianity. Accordingly, in the absence of absolute authority in the interpretations of scripture, various interpretations arise, leading to a very different understanding of the essence of the human soul, embryo, and life.

The discussion about the possibility of editing human embryos is one of the most acute problems in the world, concerning both the

[5] Mohammed Ghaly, "Islamic Ethics and Genomics: Mapping the Collective Deliberations of Muslim Religious Scholars and Biomedical Scientists," in *Islamic Ethics and the Genome Question*, ed. Mohammed Ghaly, 47-79 (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2019), 47-49; Aznan Hasan, "An Introduction to Collective Ijtihad (Ijtihad Jama'i): Concept and Applications," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 20, no. 2 (2003): 26-49.

[6] Quran, "Surah."

essence of human life and the legal status of a person.[7] The Islamic religious view plays an important role in solving this bioethical problem.

A feature of the religious and legal regulation of bioethical problems in the Islamic tradition as a whole is that the norms of international law in this area are implemented in close connection with the Shariah. To a greater extent, this concerns the realization of personal human rights in the field of health care.

From these positions, the main principle of the study of ethical problems associated with the use of technologies for editing the germline of a person is that it should be carried out taking into account the goals of Islamic law (Maqasid al-Shari'a) and basic legal principles (Qawaid Fighiyyah).

The goals of *Maqasid al-Shari'a* are about maintaining order, preventing harm, establishing equality among people, achieving benefits, and effectiveness of the law and compliance with that, and creating conditions for people to become influential, respected, and confident. From an Islamic perspective, the therapeutic use of germline editing technologies may be acceptable if safety and efficacy issues are addressed and the principles of Maqasid al-Shari'a are followed.[8]

One of the key issues for jurists and theologians of Islamic countries is the admissibility of genetic research on humans, as well as animals and plants. Since genetic research is a multifaceted issue that affects theological, legal, and moral standards, in order to get answers to questions on adapting innovations that are not regulated by the classical foundations of Islamic law, and to comply with the provisions of the Quran, they apply to well-known theological centers of Islamic jurisprudence.

They are engaged in the interpretation and search for rational solutions, on the basis of which a key conclusion about the admissibility of the "introduction" of innovations and their degree of admissibility from the point of view of Islamic dogma and law, and their further implementation in practice is made. Such centers, for example, the International Academy of Islamic Fiqh (Jurisprudence) in Saudi Arabia, Al-Azhar University in Egypt, and others present fatwas – oral and written judgments of authoritative theologians and jurists, adopted on issues of modern life.

Let's note the different legal approaches to the problem of regulating genetic research considering the legislation of specific Islamic

[7] For a Western, secular view on gene editing and enhancement, in general, see Julian Savulescu and Evangelos D. Protopapadakis, "'Ethical Minefields' and the Voice of Common Sense: A Discussion with Julian Savulescu," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 4, no. 1 (2019): 125-133.

[8] Nimah Alsomali, and Gaiath Hussein, "CRISPR-Cas9 and He Jiankui's Case: an Islamic Bioethics Review Using *Maqasid al-Shari'a* and *Qawaid Fighiyyah*," *Asian Bioethics Review* 13 (2021): 149-165.

states. Primarily, we note that there are no uniform standards for a unifying legislation in the field of genomics, carrying out genetic research, and editing the genome of human embryos in Islamic states. In addition to the Quran and Sunnah, guidelines in the formation of legislation in Islamic countries are the Islamic Code of Medical Ethics and Healthcare, the decisions, and recommendations of the Council of the Islamic Academy of Fiqh and other theological centers.

The legislation of the Arab Republic of Egypt does not contain a specialized act on the legal basis for carrying out genetic studies. However, work is currently underway on the law "On Bioethics." The main executive body of Egypt in the field of conducting clinical research and issuing the basic rules in this area is the Ministry of Health and Population, which, together with the professional community of doctors, initiated the creation of the Egyptian National Committee on Bioethics in 1996. There are about 30 institutional committees in Egypt, which are part of a single network of ethics committees. In 2003, the Regulation "On professional ethics in the field of human medical research" was developed.[9] In December 2020, the Egyptian Parliament published its first clinical research law. According to experts, the Law contains provisions that meet all the requirements of ethical research.[10]

Kuwait is one of the main Islamic states contributing to the development of the concept of a bioethical sphere with a combination of Islamic religious values on medical and interdisciplinary issues, including genetic editing. In 2015, the Genetic Research Law was passed in Kuwait. At the same time, this Law was sanctioned for refusing to provide a DNA sample. However, already in 2016, this act was challenged by lawyers and the Constitutional Court of Kuwait ruled that the law violates the constitutional guarantee of the personal freedom of citizens, respect for the principles of confidentiality and civil human rights.[11]

Another leading custodian of Islamic values is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In 1999, the Kingdom's National Committee on Bio- and

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[9] Ramilya G. Novikova, "Islam and Genetics: Religious, Ethical and Legal Issues," *RUDN Journal of Law* 23, no. 4 (2019): 571.

[10] Amal Matar and Henry J. Silverman, "Ethical Analysis of Egypt's Law Regulating Clinical Research," *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics* 17, no. 4 (2022): 494-503.

[11] Adam Taylor, "Kuwait Plans to Create a Huge DNA Database of Residents and Visitors. Scientists Are Appalled," *The Washington Post*, September 14, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/09/14/kuwait-plans-to-create-a-huge-dna-database-of-resident-and-visitors-scientists-are-appalled/; Olaf Riess, "Presidential Address," The European Society of Human Genetics (ESHG), last modified September, 2016, https://www.eshg.org/fileadmin/eshg/newsletter/ESHG-Newsletter_No29_2016.pdf; Olaf Riess, "Presidential Address," The European Society of Human Genetics (ESHG), last modified May, 2017, https://www.eshg.org/fileadmin/eshg/newsletter/ESHG-Newsletter_No30_May_2017.pdf.

Medical Ethics was established by Royal Decree.[12] The main goal of the Committee is to develop ethical standards and monitor their observance in the field of biological and medical research, taking into account Islamic values and the achievements of world science. In 2010, the Royal decree "Law of Ethics of Research on Living Creatures and its Implementing Regulations" was issued. The Saudi system respects Islamic Sharia in addition to international research ethics guidelines. This decree is a guideline for countries where Islamic values are a priority.[13] In 2013, the Saudi Arabia Human Genome Research Program was officially launched in Riyadh, which is one of the national development programs of the monarchy for the period up to 2030. Its implementation is carried out on the basis of the National Science and Technology Center of Saudi Arabia. The program uses modern methods of genome sequencing, bioinformatics, and validation.[14]

In Qatar, in 2007, a "Policy for Conducting Procedures and Guidelines for Conducting Research" was approved. These rules marked the beginning of genetic research and their ethical and legal support. In 2013, the Qatar Genome Program was announced and is currently at the pilot stage. As part of the implementation of the Qatar Genome Program, the following units were created under the Ministry of Public Health of Qatar: Genetic Research Department, Clinical Department, PR Department.[15]

A different approach is taken in Tunisia. Although according to Art. 38 of the Constitution of Tunisia "health is a fundamental human right,"[16] there is no legal regulation for genetic research. At the same time, since 1964, a program of free premarital genetic consultations has been operating in Tunisia; in 2001, the law "On Reproductive Medicine" was adopted, which states that it is permissible to carry out investigations on an embryo for exclusively medical purposes.[17]

In Bahrain, since 1992, the Bahrain Ministry of Health's National Premarital Counseling Program has been extended to all health cen-

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[12] NCBE Chairman, https://ncbe.kacst.edu.sa.

[13] Ghiath Alahmad, "The Saudi Law of Ethics of Research on Living Creatures and its Implementing Regulations," *Developing World Bioethics* 17, no. 2 (2017): 63-69.

[14] "The Saudi Human Genome Program: Bringing Genetic Testing to Routine Clinical Care," ThermoFisher Scientific, accessed February 7, 2024, https://www.thermofisher.com/ru/ru/home/clinical/precision-medicine/precision-medicine-learning-center/precision-medicine-resource-library/precision-medicine-articles/saudi-human-genome-program.html.

[15] Qatar Genome Programme (QGP), https://www.qatargenome.org.qa/ar.

[16] The Tunisian Constitution of 2014, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Tunisia_2014.

[17] "Loi n° 2001-93 du 7 août 2001 relative a la médecine de la reproduction," *Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne* 7 (2001): 2025-2027.

ters, and in 2004, a law mandating premarital screening and counselling for all persons wishing to marry was passed. The clinical base for the research was the genetic clinic at the Salmaniya Medical Center. In 2015, at the initiative of the Ministry of Health, work on the National Program "Bahrain Genome Project" open to all citizens over 21 years of age began.[18]

In the United Arab Emirates, the Dubai 10X Genome Program is operating.[19] To implement the project, a Council of Experts on Genetics was formed, which cooperates with the Institute of Pathology and Genetics, the Center for Cord Blood Research in Dubai and a number of other governmental organizations. The main executive body in the field of genetic research in Dubai is the Department of Health, as well as the Scientific and Ethical Committee, which acts as the main center for compiling and reviewing biomedical research and has developed recommendations for centers and laboratories that do research in the field of genomics.

An important part of the Dubai 10X21 project is Dubai Genomics, which includes three main implementation phases. Phase I is aimed at creating the necessary infrastructure for genomic medicine and large-scale genome sequencing. Phase II aims to create new artificial intelligence capabilities to comprehensively analyze the genome and accurately predict the risks associated with genetic diseases. Phase III is about collaborating with pharmaceutical companies and scientists to develop the drugs of the future.[20]

As for the regulation of bioethical issues in countries where Shiite Islam is practised, this area is most developed in Iran. In 1999, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education of Iran, together with the Department for the Study of the Humanities and Islamic Sciences in Medicine and Medical Ethics, developed a regulation on the "Code of Rules for the Protection of a Person as an Object of Medical Research." The Ministry of Health and Medical Education of Iran has ordered all universities and biomedical research centers to establish institutional bioethics committees based on a single regulation. Currently, there are 85 research centers engaged in research in the field of biotechnology, molecular and cellular biology, and related fields, which develop proposals for carrying out genetic research in order to develop a unified guideline.[21]

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[18] Bahrain Genome Project, https://www.moh.gov.bh/GenomeProject/Index.

[19] Dubai 10X, https://www.dubai10x.ae/.

[20] Dubai Genomics, https://www.dha.gov.ae/en.

[21] Kambiz Banihashemi, "Iranian Human Genome Project: Overview of a Research Process among Iranian Ethnicities," *Indian Journal of Human Genetics* 15, no. 3 (2009): 88-92.

For comparison, in Iraq, where most of the population professes Shiism, genetic research is not regulated by any act. At the same time, by decision of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Republic of Iraq, the Center for Genetics and Cancer Research was opened.[22]

Today, in the Arab world the search for answers to the problems of biopolitics and the limitation of human rights to their corporeality and genomic privacy has been intensified. The very concept of "biolaw" reflects the legal aspects of life sciences, and contains legal regulations for the fields of ecology, ethology, genetics, genomics, biomedicine, neurophysiology, sociobiology, etc.[23]

In the international legal system, the category of subjective human rights (recognition of biorights) and guarantees of their protection through the constitutional and legal reception of international standards of subjective rights of the individual have started to be separated.[24]

Arab jurisprudence, when considering issues of bioethics, in the absence of a clear indication (nass) regarding the subject in question in the sacred texts, transfers the decision-making to the sphere of ijtihad (leaving it to the discretion of the fuqahas).

In all ethical systems, religious and non-religious, the relationship between ethics and law is a key issue requiring clear definition and doctrinal discussion. However, when it comes to the Arab political and legal tradition, such an additional factor as the Islamic legal regulation (fatwa), which is the basis of rulemaking in the region of traditional Islam, plays a special role. Islamic bioethics refers to the branch of Islamic law and Muslim ethics. Therefore, scientists and practitioners in the field of biomedicine and biological law directly refer to the main sources of Islamic law: the Quran and Sunnah.

For a clearer regulation and clarification of bioethical issues on Sharia in 1981, a Pan-Islamic Conference was convened in Kuwait, at which the "Islamic Code of Medical Ethics" was adopted. In accordance with its provisions,

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[22] Iraqi Center for Genetics and Cancer Research, https://www.uomustansiriyah.edu.iq.

[23] For an in-depth discussion on biopolitics and biolaw, see Roberto Andorno and George Boutlas, "Global Bioethics in the Post-Coronavirus Era: A Discussion with Roberto Andorno," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. 1 (2022): 185-200, especially pages 188ff.

[24] E. N. Trikoz, "Communicative Function of the Emerging Branch of Biological Law. Legal Communication between the State and Society: Domestic and Foreign Experience," in *Legal Communication between State and Society: Domestic and Foreign Experience*, 106-110 (Voronezh, 2020 – in Russian).

> the art of healing is a noble profession, knowledge of medicine, like all our knowledge, comes from God. The study of medicine reveals the divine destiny in its creation and its practice, whereby the divine blessing is transmitted to people and therefore it is an act of reverence and charity. His sun, the breath of His breeze, the coolness of His waters and the generosity of His providence extends to everyone – to good and evil, well-behaved and vicious, friends and enemies, so medical assistance should be provided to everyone in the name of compassion.[25]

Today the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, being the "cradle of Islam," dictates the norms of lawmaking that apply to all countries of the Sunni Arab world.[26] At the same time, in accordance with the resolutions of Majma al-Fiqh al-Islami (International Islamic Academy of Fiqh; IIAF), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) recognizes the legalization of abortion, IVF, genetic testing, but only in special cases when this is an extreme measure to preserve women's health and all other ways of solving the problem have already been tried.[27]

Thus, Islam is conservative regarding changes in the human genome – this can be regarded as interference with the creation of God. Moreover, these changes can lead to unpredictable changes for future generations. Muslim scientists establish their decisions referring to the five foundations of Islamic law, that is, "maqahid al sharia;" the purpose of the law. These are dıīn (religion), nafs (life), nasl (progeny), `aql (intellect) and māl (wealth).[28]

This approach was reflected in UNESCO's 2005 Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, Art. 16 on the protection of future generations where it was stated that "Due consideration should be given to the impact of the life sciences on future generations, including on their genetic characteristics," and in 2015 UNESCO reaffirmed through its advisory group a temporary ban on any genetic modification of the germ line.[29]

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[25] Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences, *Islamic Code of Medical Ethics* (Kuwait: Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences, 1981).

[26] The "Information portal of the spiritual administration of muftis" can be found here: https://al-marsd.com/384906.html.

[27] Asghar Saberi, "Islam and Human Rights," *Vestnik RUDN: International Relations* 3 (2008): 25-32, https://journals.rudn.ru/international-relations/article/view/10441.

[28] Qosay A. E. Al-Balas, Rana Dajani, and Wael K. Al-Delaimy, "The Ethics of Gene Editing from an Islamic Perspective: A Focus on the Recent Gene Editing of the Chinese Twins," *Science and Engineering Ethics* 26 (2020): 1851-1860.

[29] Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, https://www.unesco.org/en/ethics-science-technology/bioethics-and-human-rights.

The religious and legal tradition of Islam in Arab countries is the foundation in the search for answers to the questions posed by biomedicine and the emerging branch of biological law. It extends to decision-making in clinical and research practice.

III. Institutionalization

By the early 1980s, human genome editing research was institutionalized through three major transnational institutions based in the Muslim world. The most active and influential is the Islamic Organization of Medical Sciences (IOMS), established in Kuwait in 1981. In 1983, the IOMS launched the Islam and Modern Medical Problems series, which addressed a long list of bioethical issues, including those related to genomics. Genomics issues highlighted by IOMS are featured in the "Ongoing Discussions" section of various IOMS symposiums and conferences.

Let us single out the conferences where the most significant discussions took place among a wide range of participants: the 1993 Conference on the "Ethical implications of modern research in the field of genetics," the 1998 Symposium with the same name, which developed the basic rules and guidelines under "Genetics, genetic engineering, the human genome and Genetic Therapy: An Islamic Perspective," which are still the most influential in the regulation of genetic research; as well as the Conference "Gene Engineering Between Shariah and Law" of 2002.[30]

In addition to the IOMS, which systematically conducts biomedical research, two other organizations periodically address the problems of bioethics: the Islamic Fiqh Academy (IFA), created in 1977, a member of the World Muslim League and based in Mecca, and the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA), founded in 1981, based in Jeddah, affiliated with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Since the 1990s, there has been a significant increase in interest in the study of genomics in the Islamic ethical tradition. In addition to the large number of publications both by religious scholars and biomedical scientists, a large number of symposia and conferences have been held at which the mechanism of collective and interdisciplinary thinking has been adopted, and the ethical issues raised by genomics have been con-

[30] H. Al Hosani and A. E. Czeizel, "Unique Demographic Situation in the United Arab Emirates," *American Journal of Medical Genetics* 61, no. 1 (1996): 1; Ghazi O. Tadmouri, "Biomedical science journals in the Arab world," *Saudi Medical Journal* 25, no. 10 (2004): 1331-1336; A. S. Daar, and A. B. al Khitamy, "Bioethics for Clinicians: 21. Islamic Bioethics," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 164, no. 1 (2001): 60-63.

sidered. The positions taken both by individual Muslim religious scholars and established institutions were overwhelmingly positive. Joining the genomic revolution was seen by some as not just an ethical option, but even a collective duty that Muslim countries must jointly fulfill.[31] The generally favorable attitude of Muslim religious and biomedical scientists towards genetic research and therapy paved the way for the launch of large-scale genomic projects in Qatar and Saudi Arabia in the end of 2013.

Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates have also launched their own genomic initiatives. The process of developing genomics policies and guidelines in these countries is still in its infancy, and there are no specific provisions on how the editing of the human genome should be regulated. With the development of existing and planned biotechnology projects in the Muslim world, proceeding from the logic of the development of research in the field of bioethics, we can assume that the policies and guidelines will be sufficiently liberal and consistent, especially regarding research and treatment of somatic cells, as well as germ cell research.

IV. Main positions in relation to human embryos genome editing

Most Muslim religious scholars and biomedical scientists view the study of human genes and genomes as part of a commendable human endeavour from time immemorial to explore human nature and to know oneself better and deeper. As part of this genomics research, including genome editing, ethical practice is imperative.

The main regulators to curb abuse in the field of genome editing are two basic precautionary principles. The first principle is respect for human dignity. Accordingly, research is considered unethical when it could undermine people's dignity (for example, by exposing them to risks and unsafe experiments or to the conduct of research without informed consent).

The second principle emphasizes that all scientific research, including genomics, must comply with religious regulations and the general religious and ethical system of Islam, namely the Sharia. Research will be considered unethical even if it is safe and does not pose a risk to the physical structure of a person in the event of a conflict with Sharia values. One of the most important issues that Muslim religious scholars emphasize in this context is respect for the institution of marriage as this is the only channel through which a family can be established.

[31] Ghaly, "Islamic Ethics and Genomics," 47-49.

Therefore, no children can be reproduced without a valid marital relationship between the intended biological parents.

Generally speaking, ethical judgment is based on answering two general questions: what type of cells will be edited and what is the purpose of the editing?[32] As Hacker put it at the International Summit on Human Gene Editing: "The goal of society is to promote a better life for all and to ensure that everyone can live with dignity and freedom." "Could this be achieved by germline gene editing? My point of view is no."[33]

The negative answer was based not only on the risks associated with the use of new technologies, but on the ethical implications of editing human germ lines. According to Hacker, researchers and future parents are obliged to respect the morally significant status of the human embryo, its freedom and autonomy. But she did not believe that this commitment was being fulfilled, because "editing the genes of the germ line [...] makes the embryo morally neutral or downgrades its status to property or commodity."[34]

Researchers looking at the ethical issues of genome editing around the world usually distinguish between somatic and germ cell editing. Somatic mutations occur in a single body cell and cannot be inherited. Germline mutations occur in gametes and can be passed onto offspring (every cell in the entire organism will be affected). Islamic ethics also support this distinction.

In the case of editing somatic cells, the edited cells will only affect the person who has these cells, and thus the scope of possible benefits or harms will be limited. Once patients' consent is obtained, potential benefits and harms are carefully evaluated, and confidentiality is not compromised, this type of genome editing will not pose major ethical concerns, especially when used for research or therapeutic purposes. From an Islamic point of view, people do not "own" their bodies, because the real "Master" is God who created these bodies. However, God commissioned people to "manage" or take care of their bodies. Thus, humans can still make decisions about their bodies as God's confidants, provided they do not violate the Owner's instructions by exposing their bodies to unnecessary or unjustified risks.

However, some religious scholars believe that new methods, the effectiveness and safety of which are still not widely accepted, including

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[32] Lala, 1855-1869.

[33] Steven Olson, ed., *International Summit on Human Gene Editing: A Global Discussion* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2016), https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK343651/.

[34] Ibid., 3.

genome editing, should be used in the clinical setting only when necessary, when other treatments cannot work.[35] With regard to editing the genome of the embryo, it causes more ethical problems among Muslim religious scholars. The main point of these scientists is that there is no principled opposition to germline cell editing, but most of them tend to adopt a temporary precautionary stance, something close to a moratorium, when it comes to using this technology to treat people.

Germline genome editing should be discontinued due to safety and efficiency concerns. Unlike somatic cell editing, germ cell editing will affect not only the person who has these cells, but also his or her offspring. According to Muslim scientists, the wider range of possible effects and their long-term nature require more careful procedures. However, it is allowed to use this technology for research purposes or for testing on animals.

Other possible issues that are central to the Western secular ethical debate on germline genome editing are not issues for Muslim religious scholars. The first of these problems is the inability to obtain the consent of future generations when editing the embryo's genome. Muslim scholars believe that parental consent should be sufficient. The second problem is the moral status of the edited embryos that will be the subject of research. The main position of Muslim scientists is based on the fact that before the implantation of embryos into the uterus, they do not have the moral status of a person. This is why scientists see no problem in using pre-implanted embryos to conduct research to gain useful knowledge.

At the same time, the concern of Muslim religious scholars is gene therapy, when a reproductive cell is transferred from one person to another. Because these cells carry a unique genetic structure, most Islamic scholars prohibit their transfer, especially between unmarried couples, because this method violates lineages.[36] According to the ethics of Islam, the conception of children should only occur between married couples who biologically contribute to the genetic makeup of their future children.[37]

With regard to the purposes of genome editing, there are different attitudes towards editing for the purpose of research and editing for

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[35] Mohammed Ghaly, ed., *Islamic Ethics and the Genome Question: Volume 1* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2019), 340.

[36] International Society for Stem Cell Research, "The ISSCR Statement on Human Germline Modification," EurekAlert, last modified March, 20, 2015, https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/610552.

[37] Lala, 1855-1869.

the purpose of treatment. Most Muslim religious scholars favor genome editing for research purposes. Such scientific endeavors will be seen as a worthy response to Islam's call to seek useful knowledge that Allah ultimately makes available to those who work hard to obtain it. This is reinforced by references to verses in the Quran such as "Say: Travel the earth and see how He created creation. Then God will create the next life. Undoubtedly, God has authority over everything"[38] or "Our Lord is the One who gave everything its proper form and nature, and then directed it correctly."[39]

With regard to genome editing in clinical applications, it will be assessed in terms of the principles of medical treatment (tadavi). In principle, treatment is permitted from an Islamic point of view. Islamic religious scholars rely on prophetic traditions, that for example suggest: "O servants of God! Seek a cure, because God never sent a disease without giving it a cure."[40] At the same time, in order to exclude abuse, additional precautions are added, especially two points: protection of human dignity and observance of Sharia law. For example, it is considered unethical to use genome editing for risky clinical purposes or to treat infertile couples with genetic contributions from a third party.

Regarding another goal of genome editing – improving the abilities of genetically healthy people who do not suffer from failures or shortcomings among Muslim religious scholars, two main positions can be distinguished. The followers of the first position approve of genetic editing to increase such human abilities as height, strength, speed or intelligence, since they perceive a person as something developing and improving, and not as stable and fixed. They argue that it was Allah who gave people access to this new knowledge. When people put this God-given knowledge into practice responsibly and ethically, it should be seen as a good thing in the eyes of Islam. Proponents of the second position, considering man to be created perfect, argue that God created people in the best possible form and there is no need to change his nature. As the Quran says: "Of course, We created man according to the best model."[41]

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[38] Quran, 29: 20.

[39] Ibid., 20: 50.

[40] The Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad.

[41] Quran, 95: 4. According to this second outlook, as Balogun claims, "[...] Islam will explain the social ills currently experienced in the world as a result of the deviation of members of their communities from the standards laid down by God." Babalola Joseph Balogun, "How not to Understand Community: A Critical Engagement with R. Bellah," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2023): 63.

In general, according to the researchers of the three main Muslim transnational institutions: IOMS, IFA and IIFA – human nature is something fixed and already perfect, genome editing should be limited to the field of treating diseases and restoring the patient's normal health. The improvement of the genome for the purpose of improvement would be a violation of the human duty to preserve the original perfection with which people were created, this is ordained by Allah. Accordingly, this will not be a scientific study, but "falsification," a violation of the Creator's intention.

V. Conclusions

Thus, the key problems of human embryos genome editing in the Islamic world are related to determining the moral status of the embryo, the adequacy of the use of editing methods, and the limits of applicability and admissibility of this editing. Also relevant are the problems of social and spiritual consequences of genetic experiments, not all of which can currently be foreseen.

Currently, in matters of genomics and genetic research in the legislation of Islamic countries there are different approaches in the discussions of religious scholars, doctors, and lawyers. Taking into account the religious orientation of states, considerable attention in these countries is paid to the ethical regulators of Islam in relation to bioengineering (humans, animals, plants, i.e. all living things), on the basis of which legal norms are formed.

In some countries of the Arab East, comprehensive laws in the field of genetics have already been put into force or are under development. In some states, attention is paid to genomics in the legal acts of executive authorities, and in some other, local acts of leading medical centers have been developed. Also, a number of eastern countries stand out, in the legislation of which some aspects of the legal regulation of genetic research act as legislative novelties in the field of health care. In the most economically prosperous Middle Eastern states, issues of genetics are one of the priority tasks of the state. In particular, national strategic development programs are already in place, taking into account the use of modern methods of genome sequencing, bioinformatics and validation methods. Almost all countries in the Middle East region have ratified international instruments in the field of genetic research and on issues related to the conduct of such. In addition, Islamic states, within the framework of a unified religious approach to the events taking place in the field of achievements in science and technology, have developed an independent concept of regulating bioengi-

neering, taking into account the attitudes of the fundamental sources of Islamic law.[42]

Since the 1980s, in several Islamic countries, the process of institutionalization of research on editing the human genome has begun, largely due to the activities of three large transnational organizations – IOMS, IFA and IIFA.

In the 1990s, institutionalization reached a new level – as a result of a significant intensification of research on ethical issues raised by genomics, while as a result of discussions at conferences and symposiums, a mechanism for collective and interdisciplinary thinking is adopted regarding key bioethical issues. In many ways, these processes were influenced by the international project "Human Genome" – a global scientific project, the main goal of which was to create the first sequence of the human genome.[43] And finally, since 2013, large-scale genomic projects have been launched in Islamic countries, starting with Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

In general, the modern Islamic world is increasingly introducing western models of behaviour into its traditional way of life through the legitimate recognition of certain aspects of bioethics and bioengineering that were previously strictly prohibited, regardless of the circumstances and according to Islamic traditionalism.

From an Islamic point of view, methods for editing a person's germ line are not prohibited as it can be applied to protect human life and health. However, it's not just the technology, but how it can be used. A common problem is the lack of scientific justification and evidence supporting the safety and effectiveness of technologies.[44] To make moral decisions regarding the use of technology for editing the human germline, based on Islamic law, the following basic principles can be distinguished:

- Decisions from an Islamic point of view are based on the use of Maqasid al-Shari'a and Qawaid Fighiyyah which are perceived as sources of ethical guidance for evaluating new technologies from the point of view of Islamic bioethics.
- The use of new biotechnology in the Muslim world requires multi-

[42] Novikova, 565.

[43] Subcommittee on Human Genome, *Report on the Human Genome Initiative for the Office of Health and Environmental Research* (Washington, DC: the Health and Environmental Research Advisory Committee (HERAC), 1978), https://web.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human_Genome/project/herac2.shtml.

[44] Alsomali, and Hussein, 149-165.

disciplinary expertise, including geneticists, Sharia law specialists, bioethics specialists and sociologists. They will need to work together to draw appropriate ethical, religious, and legal conclusions.
- New technologies may be allowed for therapeutic applications, including germline editing, as needed, after safety and efficacy concerns have been resolved.

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Nietzsche's Intellectual Integrity and Metaphysical Comfort

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Abstract

This paper examines Nietzsche's intellectual integrity, with a view to showing that despite his attempt to overcome metaphysics, using this concept, Nietzsche remains within the comfort of metaphysics. Intellectual integrity represents Nietzsche's unique style of questioning and his critical method of analysing Western metaphysical foundations. It is a flexible and dialectic principle, which approaches the question of 'being' as a dynamic process of endless interpretations and becoming, instead of as a fixed essence or a metaphysical absolute. Attempts are made, in the paper, to examine the dynamics of Nietzsche's intellectual integrity, as well as its intimate link with other key concepts in his philosophy. To achieve its goal, the paper adopts the method of historical hermeneutics and textual analysis.

Keywords: *intellectual integrity; becoming; being; metaphysics; endless interpretations; radical questioning*

I. Introduction

The idea of intellectual integrity is not a novel concept, in the history of thought. Notwithstanding that this idea is ascribed to Nietzsche, it can be traced back to the skeptics, who critically challenged and questioned the foundations of human beliefs, knowledge, morality, religion etc. Nietzsche, himself, admitted this

when he asserts that "except a few skeptics, the decent type, in the history of philosophy, the rest do not know the first requirements of intellectual integrity."[1] Nietzsche's intellectual integrity harbors the same vibrancy and dynamism of the skeptics' critical attitude. It designates his unique style of questioning and his critical method of analysing Western metaphysical foundations. It is a flexible and dialectic principle, which approaches the question of being as a dynamic process of endless interpretations: a critical and non-dogmatic method, which does not accept any principles, without challenging them. It represents the ability to challenge and the courage to critically question the basic foundations of beliefs and assumptions, which are uncritically and dogmatically accepted as true, absolute, highest, objective, unconditional and unquestionable.

Intellectual integrity (*Redlichkeit*)[2] has variously been interpreted as order, lawfulness, courage, etc. However, the contemporary understanding of *Redlichkeit* translates it as honesty, integrity, sincerity and candor.[3] Furthermore, within the philosophical context of the 18th century, "intellectual integrity represents *truthfulness in explanations as promises.*"[4] This calls attention to the vibrancy and dynamism of Nietzsche's intellectual integrity. It shows it as a process and as that which constantly strives for elevation.

In the later stages of its materialization, intellectual integrity is referred to as the "aesthetic integrity," which is the art of the artist and the basic force behind man's affirmation of endless interpretations.[5] In Nietzsche's estimation, "the world becomes infinite, to the extent that there are infinite interpretations."[6] The implication of this thought is the experience of "being" as interpretation – an interpretation with endless flux and possibilities. This means that, for Nietzsche, a static being is inconceivable. Rather, "being," for him, is an illusion, which is

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[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Home and the Antichrist*, trans. Thomas Wayne (New York: Algora Publishing, 2004), 111; § 12. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and Reginald J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 223; § 414.

[2] Nietzsche uses *Redlichkeit* (which is a German word for integrity or honesty) interchangeably with intellectual integrity. For further discussion on *Redlichkeit,* see Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: A Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 155-156; § 227.

[3] Wilhelm Stefan Wurzer, "Nietzsche's Dialectic of Intellectual Integrity: A Propaedeutic Study," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 13, no. 2 (1975): 237.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 242.

[6] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 239-240; § 374.

a creation of becoming.[7] Thus, the characteristics of fixity, permanency and unchangeability are denied to being. This is a critique on being: a critique on metaphysics. It represents an attempt by Nietzsche to overcome metaphysics. However, this constitutes a problem for Nietzsche: given that metaphysics is an embodiment of some absolutes, how actually possible is it for Nietzsche to overcome metaphysics, using this critical method of intellectual integrity? Was Nietzsche, in his attempt to overcome metaphysics, not himself, imposing another metaphysics, especially going by his doctrine of the will to power, which constitutes the basic principle (essence) of life and his idea of the superman, which designates the essence of humanity? Are the two ideas of basic principles and essence not appeals to something fixed and constant about being, which is an appeal to metaphysics? This paper, therefore, argues that despite Nietzsche's attempt to overcome metaphysics, using his concept of intellectual integrity, Nietzsche still remains within the unbroken line of the metaphysical tradition.

Previous studies have focused on the deconstructive, hermeneutic, epistemic and moral implications of Nietzsche's intellectual integrity. However, none has paid attention to the metaphysical implications of this concept. This work, therefore, is an attempt in such a direction. To accomplish its purpose, the paper is divided into three sections. Section one delves into the concept of intellectual integrity and its philosophic-historical development, while section two articulates the intimate link between intellectual integrity and other key concepts in Nietzsche's philosophy. Section three attempts a critique of Nietzsche's intellectual integrity and embodies the conclusion.

II. Nietzsche's concept of intellectual integrity and its philosophic-historical development

Around 1880, Nietzsche had plans to write a "History of Integrity," in which he was to concentrate on the "Passion of Integrity."[8] This was, because, Nietzsche thought that intellectual integrity, which is translated in German as *Redlichkeit,* had been totally absent from the history of philosophy.[9] This is why he posited that "except a few skep-

[7] Cf. Anthony Chimankpam Ojimba, "Ubuntu's Ontological Account in African Philosophy and Its Cross-Tradition Engagement on the Issue of Being Versus Becoming," *Comparative Philosophy: An International Journal of Constructive Engagement of Distinct Approaches towards World Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (2023): 98-115.

[8] Wurzer, 237.

[9] Ibid., 236.

tics, the rest of the philosophers, in the history of philosophy, do not know the requirements of intellectual integrity."[10] He maintains that Western philosophy, which is understood here as Western Metaphysics, has always missed this method of intellectual integrity. He was of the view that "philosophers have not only failed to accomplish an elaborate critical analysis of Western metaphysical foundations, but, also, evaded the herculean task of questioning the very value of culture's essence, traditionally known as morality."[11] Nietzsche, therefore, resolved to overcome this lack by means of a "new enlightenment," which he describes as "the philosophic movement of *Redlichkeit*"[12] – intellectual integrity – which, in his estimation, begins with the death of metaphysics.

Intellectual integrity, as already hinted above, describes Nietzsche's unique style of questioning. It represents his critical method of analyzing the Western metaphysical foundations. It is a flexible, dialectical, critical and non-dogmatic method, which does not accept any principles without challenging them. It designates a radical attitude of questioning the basic foundations of our beliefs and assumptions, which are uncritically and dogmatically accepted. It rejects any absolute principle and subjects every belief to radical scrutiny. It is deeply rooted in intellectual transparency and honesty, which throws open the foundations and roots of beliefs through radical questioning. It incorporates the culture of openness, criticality, radicality, courage, honesty and flexibility.[13]

Nietzsche's intellectual integrity is a dialectical and dynamic principle that dislodges the categories of unity, identity, fixity and constancy, which characterize the traditional metaphysical system of philosophizing, while replacing them with the notion of endless becoming. For Nietzsche, the traditional or classical metaphysical system or style of philosophizing was characterized by an uncritical and dogmatic acceptance of ideas and ideals, without radically questioning them. In his estimation, this uncritical, dogmatic and absolute acceptance of ideals, without questioning, is succinctly captured in the traditional Platonic speculative world of forms, which recognizes the forms as something absolute, unchanging, unquestionable and constant. This also reminds one of the Kantian postulations of the noumenal world or the world

[10] Nietzsche, *Ecce Home*, 111; § 12. Cf. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 223; § 414.

[11] Wurzer, 236.

[12] Ibid., 236.

[13] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 205.

of things-in-themselves, which describes the speculative metaphysical world. Nietzsche does not accept the ideas of constancy, fixity and absolutism with reference to the fundamental principle of being; rather, he favours the idea of becoming or motion. This is why he maintains that the highest intent of his philosophy is to impress the character being upon becoming.[14] This simply means, for him, that the ultimate intention of his philosophic enterprise, which is propelled by intellectual integrity – his style of philosophizing – is to stripe being of its features of constancy and fixity, while replacing them with the notion of endless becoming. This is why he describes reality or being as a process and as deeply rooted in endless flux. This also informs the reason why he traces his intellectual ancestry to the Heraclitean philosophy of becoming. He finds, in Heraclitus, a kindred spirit, because Heraclitus exhibits the tragic wisdom and critical attitude that Nietzsche finds lacking in the history of philosophy. This tragic wisdom, open-mindedness and critical questioning is the decisive move towards a Dionysian philosophy, which affirms "passing-away and annihilating the yea-saying to contrariety and struggle, as well as becoming, with a radical repudiation of the very concept of 'Being.'"[15] He is very critical of metaphysical absolutes or metaphysical traditions of fixity, essence and substance as instantiated in Plato's absolute philosophic world of forms, as already hinted above. This informed why he considers his philosophy as a counter movement to Platonism, which signifies for him a movement in opposition to Western metaphysics that recognizes the categories of fixity and unity as the elemental principle of being.[16] This counter movement against absolute metaphysical system of philosophizing is symbolized in his philosophic movement of intellectual integrity, which for him begins with the death of God:[17] the collapse of the absolute metaphysical tradition or the metaphysics of substance.

Nietzsche regards traditional morality, which he describes as the Platonic Christian morality, as a slave morality.[18] In his estimation, this morality was always afraid of accepting challenges and contradictions. Invariably, it favours the notions of permanency, fixity and constancy with regards to being. In Nietzsche's view, the Platonic-Christian mo-

[14] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 330; § 617.

[15] Allan D. Shrift, *Nietzsche, and the Question of Interpretation: Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 64.

[16] Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 61.

[17] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 120; § 125.

[18] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 205; § 260.

rality and system of philosophizing cultivated a method of truthfulness – the idea of what is good is true – which suppressed other thought systems, especially, that of the free spirits. This tradition favours identity, instead of difference, constancy, instead of change, and monism, instead of pluralism as constitutive of the basic principle of being. Admittedly, this explains why Nietzsche pitches his intellectual integrity as an attack on Platonism, which he describes ultimately as Western metaphysics.[19]

As already hinted above, Nietzsche detests the metaphysical tradition of essence, unity, constancy and fixity. He considers the Platonic-Christian philosophy as a metaphysical interpretation of reality, which he views as erroneous and deceptive. Plato posits the ideal world as constituting the perfect representation of reality, while casting aspersions on the natural world as a world of imitation and imperfect reflection of the ideal world. Similarly, Christianity toed the same line of thoughts by appropriating the Platonic interpretation of reality to suit the Christian worldview. At this juncture, Plato's ideal world becomes the Christian heavenly world, while his chief form – the form of Good – becomes God, which is like the sun that illumines the earth or the natural world. Nietzsche's intellectual integrity is critical of this method of interpreting reality as Nietzsche regards such ideals and worlds as metaphysical fictions utilized by Christianity to keep man under its control and perpetual dominance. This is why he urges us, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* to remain faithful to the natural world and do not listen to those who speak to us about any terrestrial of supernatural world.[20] In Nietzsche's estimation, this erroneous and deceptive interpretation of reality, engineered by Platonism and, by extension, Christianity, propelled him to embark on his philosophic movement of *Redlichkeit* – intellectual integrity – which, in his view, begins with the collapse of metaphysics (the death of God), which ultimately presupposes, for him, the crumbling of Platonism. Thus, Nietzsche developed his idea of intellectual integrity as a direct attack and dethronement of the classical or Platonic-Christian metaphysical tradition.

Intellectual integrity affirms the death of the metaphysical absolute, which characterizes the traditional philosophical thought systems. For Nietzsche, it represents a breakage and freedom from the absolute metaphysical tradition, which formed the basis of traditional philosophizing. This is why he was of the view that "the substance of philoso-

[19] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 61.

[20] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, eds. Adrian Del Caro and Roberts B. Pippin, trans. Adrian Del Caro (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6.

phy and the philosophical intentions of man is no longer the traditional mode of philosophizing, but intellectual integrity, which begins with the death of God – the death of metaphysics."[21] In Nietzsche's estimation, intellectual integrity does not disappear with the collapse of traditional mode of philosophizing, but constantly wills to overcome and strives for elevation. It does not posit itself as an absolute principle, but as a dynamic principle, which consists in endless interpretations. It incorporates a dialectic force and presents "being" as an expressive and interpretive phenomenon. Apart from its vibrancy and dynamism, Nietzsche's intellectual integrity has strong connections with other key concepts in his philosophy, which I will now delve into.

III. Nietzsche's intellectual integrity and its intimate link with other key concepts in his philosophy

This section concentrates on Nietzsche's intellectual integrity and its intimate connection with other key ideas in his philosophy, such as the will to power, perspectivism and interpretation, the death of God and nihilism, eternal return and becoming as well as his notion of art. First of all, I will start by exploring the intimate link between Nietzsche's intellectual integrity and his idea of the will to power.

a. Intellectual integrity and the will to power

There is a strong link between Nietzsche's intellectual integrity and his notion of the will to power. For Nietzsche, the will to power is the condition or the basis for the will to truth, which is integrity. This becomes clear, in Nietzsche's statement, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* as he wrote: "even you, the seeker of knowledge, are only a path and footstep of my will; indeed, my will to power follows also on the heels of your will to truth!"[22] This means that without the will to power, there is no integrity (truth) for Nietzsche.

Nietzsche views the will to power as "the essence of life."[23] In his estimation, "man's will to power comprises of many wills to power, with each of them in continuous competition and constant interplay among themselves."[24] This shows the will to power as a dynamic principle. Similarly, it indicates that the goal is always the "elevation of one

[21] Wurzer, 236.

[22] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 90.

[23] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 148; § 254.

[24] Wurzer, 240.

above the other, which involves an assiduous play of overcoming."[25] Thus, "each strives for *more* power, not because it lacks power, but because *power* desires more power."[26] Nietzsche views this power from the perspective of aesthetics and dialectics. Admittedly, this aesthetic and dialectic force of the will to power further establishes the link between Nietzsche's intellectual integrity and his notion of the will to power. Nietzsche posits that intellectual integrity is the "aesthetic integrity," which is the basic force behind man's affirmation of being as endless interpretations. This presupposes being not as a metaphysical absolute, but as a dynamic interpretation, made up of endless interpretations. Similarly, the will to power, also a dynamic principle, involves itself in an assiduous play of overcoming. It is deeply rooted in the notion of becoming and affirms being as endless interpretations. Thus, intellectual integrity, with the help of the dynamic will to power, affirms the death of the metaphysical absolute. It challenges the notions of fixity, permanency and constancy, which characterize the classical notion of being. It affirms the dethronement of the Platonic-Christian metaphysical interpretation of reality. Apart from its intimate connection with the will to power, Nietzsche's intellectual integrity is also linked to his idea of perspectivism and interpretation in affirming the death of metaphysics: the death of the absolute and monistic principle through the affirmation of being as endless interpretations and perspectives.

b. On perspectivism, interpretation and integrity

Nietzsche's perspectivism, like his concept of integrity, represents a further critique on metaphysics. It is an affirmation of the death of the metaphysical absolute. In other words, it uproots the idea of ontological monism and affirms the enthronement of ontological pluralism. It discountenances the metaphysical view that subjectivity is capable of dominating the whole idea of being given the multidimensionality and divergent character of reality.[27] Furthermore, it advocates for the collapse of the metaphysical presence, identity, fixity, unity, the unconditioned, the highest values and the absolutes, as Nietzsche puts

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid. Cf. Anthony Chimankpam Ojimba, Obiora Anichebe and Anthony U. Ezebuiro, "Friedrich Nietzsche on Metaphysical Errors and the 'Will to Power," *Uche Journal of Philosophy* 15, no. 1 (2015): 27-47.

[27] Anthony Chimankpam Ojimba and Obiora Anichebe, "Asouzu's Complementarism and Nietzsche's Perspectivism: Implications for Cross-Cultural Philosophizing," *Global Journal of Cultural Studies* 1, no. 1 (2022): 10-20.

it: "it seems to me important that one should get rid of all, the unity, some force, something unconditioned; otherwise one will never cease regarding it as the highest court of appeal and baptizing it 'God.'"[28] In this connection, Nietzsche's perspectivism is an attack on the classical metaphysical notions of unity and essence with regards to the basic principle of being.

Nietzsche's perspectivism overlaps with his concept of interpretation. "By introducing the notion of interpretation, Nietzsche imposes the definition of Being as 'text.'"[29] Being is similar to a text that requires our interpretation and without this interpretation, the world, for Nietzsche, is meaningless: "the essential character of the world manifests infinite interpretations or perspectives, otherwise, it is meaningless."[30] This interpretive and perspectival character of being or reality represents being not as a fixed essence or a metaphysical absolute, but as deeply rooted in endless possibilities, perspectives and interpretations. To this extent, one can contend that "while the idea of perspectivism tends to emphasize the plurality of ways by which being is disclosed, the idea of interpretation accentuates its equivocal character."[31] This equivocal character of being, as Nietzsche presents it, shows being as having multiplicity of meanings and interpretations and not just one meaning or one interpretation. This informed why he maintains that existence without interpretation is nonsense, and that the world is infinite, to the extent that it is made up of infinite interpretations:

> How far the perspectival character of existence extends, or indeed whether it has any other character; whether an existence without interpretation.... doesn't become 'non-sense;' whether, on the other hand, all existence isn't essentially an interpreting *existence* – that cannot, as would be fair, be decided even by the most industrious and extremely conscientious analysis and self-examination of the intellect; for in the course of this analysis, the human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself under its perspectival forms, and *solely* in these... But I think that, today, we are, at least, far from the ridiculous immodesty of decreeing from our angle that perspec-

[28] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 181.

[29] See Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (London: Harvard University Press, 1985), 3.

[30] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 267.

[31] Jean Granier, "Perspectivism and Interpretation," in *The New Nietzsche*, ed. David B. Allison, 181-196 (London: MIT Press, 1985), 191.

> tives are *permitted* only from this angle. Rather, the world has once again become infinite to us: insofar as we cannot reject the possibility *that it includes infinite interpretations*.[32]

The infinitude of interpretations, as Nietzsche contends, in the above quotation, amounts to the affirmation of the collapse of the metaphysical absolute and the enthronement of being as consisting in endless flux and possibilities. This ultimately means that there is nothing fixed, permanent and/or unchanging about "being." This represents an attack on being – an attack on metaphysics, which is the ultimate intention of Nietzsche's intellectual integrity.

Nietzsche's intellectual integrity is linked to his concept of perspectivism, and interpretation and this link lies in the affirmation of being as endless interpretations and perspectives. Just like perspectivism, intellectual integrity also challenges the metaphysical conviction that subjectivity is capable of dominating the totality of being. It champions ontological pluralism and affirms being as a dynamic process of endless interpretations. Similarly, at the highest stages of its development, intellectual integrity is referred to as aesthetic integrity and the art of the artist, which is the basic force behind man's affirmation of being as "endless interpretations." Furthermore, in Nietzsche's estimation, the world becomes infinite to the extent that there are infinite interpretations and perspectives. The implication of this thought is the experience of being as interpretation or endless perspectives, which is rooted in endless possibilities. It then means that for Nietzsche, a static being is inconceivable. Rather, being is an illusion, which is a creation of becoming and ceaseless interpretations. Thus, Nietzsche's intellectual integrity, just like his concept of perspectivism, dethrones the metaphysical absolute and the notion of ontological monism and institutes the idea of endless interpretations and perspectives. Nietzsche's concept of intellectual integrity is further related to his idea of eternal return, which is also deeply rooted in the notion of becoming, in affirming the death of metaphysics.

c. On the idea of becoming, eternal return, and integrity

Eternal return represents Nietzsche's deep thought, which affirms that all aspects of life return innumerable times in identical fashion.[33] It is not a theory of the world, but a view of the self. For him, eternal

[32] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 239-40.

[33] Matthew C. Chukwuelobe, "Eternal Return and Ilo Uwa-Nietzsche and Igbo African Thought: Implications for Cross-Cultural Philosophizing," *Philosophy Today* 56, no.1 (2012): 39-48.

recurrence expresses the notion of endless becoming and represents existence as dynamic.[34] It is not only "Nietzsche's attempt to replace some principles outside the physical world of flux and the notion of a beyond, but also his essential philosophical goal as an affirmation of the world."[35] In other words, it emphasizes Nietzsche's *amor fati,* which is the love of the world, as it is, contrary to the Platonic metaphysical ideal world that denigrates the natural world.

Particularly, Nietzsche's idea of the eternal return is linked to his effort to replace metaphysics and, by extension, religion.[36] This idea is related to his effort to affirm the death of metaphysics (death of God), using his critical method of intellectual integrity. Certainly, there is a link between Nietzsche's method of intellectual integrity, which is a critical method of questioning the Western metaphysical foundations, and his idea of eternal return, which is also an effort to replace metaphysics. In a sense, eternal return does not appeal to the "otherworldly." Rather, it concerns "this worldliness." This becomes clear when Zarathustra admonishes people to "remain true to the earth and do not believe those who speak of super-terrestrial hopes."[37] In doing so, "eternal return entails the affirmation of life and existence in this world, to the utter exclusion of another world."[38] Simply put, it connected the death of God to the denial of any suprasensory, transcendental or metaphysical reality.

As hinted earlier, Nietzsche's thought of eternal return is deeply rooted in the notion of becoming. This is, because, in Nietzsche's estimation, a static being is inconceivable. Rather, being is dynamic and flexible, which captures the notion of endless flux. This also explains why he is of the view that "to impress the character of becoming upon being, is the highest will to power."[39] This is in line with Nietzsche's critical method of intellectual integrity, which also approaches the question of being as a dynamic process of interpretations, endless flux and becoming, instead of as "the eternally fixed," "the unchangeable ideals" or a metaphysical absolute. So, eternal return, the will to power

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[34] Anthony Chimankpam Ojimba and Ada Agada, "Nietzsche's Idea of Eternal Recurrence and the Notions of Reincarnation in Onyewuenyi and Majeed," *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 9, no. 2 (2020): 38.

[35] Chukwuelobe, 39-48.

[36] Ibid., 40.

[37] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 6.

[38] See Karl Lowith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, trans. J. Harvey Lomax (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 87.

[39] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 330; § 617.

and intellectual integrity share, in common, the elements of becoming and endless interpretations. In this connection, being, for Nietzsche, is an illusion which, itself, is a creation of becoming and interpretations.

The link between Nietzsche's thought of eternal return and his concept of intellectual integrity, as explained above, is tied to the event of the "Death of God,' which is the death of metaphysics that Nietzsche's critical method of intellectual integrity affirms. By affirming being as interpretation and becoming, Nietzsche's intellectual integrity affirms the death of the metaphysical absolute – the death of the metaphysical world – which is equivalent to the denial of the transcendental world that his idea of eternal return affirms. This is why Zarathustra admonishes people to remain faithful to the earth and do not believe those who speak of super-terrestrial hopes: the hope of a world beyond this life. Thus, in doing so, the thought of eternal return entails the affirmation of life and existence, in this world, to the utter exclusion of another world (metaphysical world or the transcendental world). Nietzsche's method of intellectual integrity is an attempt to strongly question and overcome this metaphysical world – a world similar to Plato's world of ideas or the world of forms. This is why Nietzsche sees metaphysics (Western philosophy) ultimately as Platonism, as already hinted above, and why he considers his own philosophy as a counter movement to metaphysics, which means for him, a movement in opposition to Platonism.[40] Furthermore, as has been hinted above, Nietzsche's concept of intellectual integrity is also tied to the event of the death of God and, subsequently, his idea of nihilism, in the affirmation of the death of metaphysics.

d. On the death of God, nihilism, and integrity

Nietzsche's pronouncement concerning the death of God means the death of metaphysics.[41] "God," in Nietzsche's thinking, represents "the suprasensory world in general."[42] God is the name for the realm of ideas and ideals. Thus, the pronouncement: "God is dead," means that the suprasensory or the metaphysical world is without effective power. This means that "it bestows no life."[43] Metaphysics (that is, for Nietzsche, Western philosophy), is understood, ultimately, as Platonism. Nietzsche views his philosophy as a countermovement to metaphys-

[40] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 61.

[41] Ibid., 61.

[42] Ibid., 61.

[43] Ibid., 61.

ics, and this represents, for him, a movement against Platonism. Thus, by pronouncing the death of God, Nietzsche affirms the death of the metaphysical absolute, which characterizes the Platonic-Christian interpretation of reality. This interpretation of reality favours the idea of the metaphysical presence, identity, fixity and permanency. It favours the world of being. Therefore, Nietzsche's pronouncement of the death of God dethrones this Platonic-Christian or metaphysical interpretation of reality from its pre-eminent position assigned to it in the world of being. Similarly, Nietzsche's intellectual integrity, by affirming being as endless interpretations, becoming and possibilities, affirms the death of metaphysics – the death of God or the realm of ideas and ideals – which forms the basis of the Platonic-Christian interpretation of the world. Intellectual integrity, as a flexible and dynamic principle, approaches being as expressive and interpretive phenomenon. This means that being is no longer a metaphysical absolute, but consists in a dynamic process of endless interpretations, endless flux and becoming.[44] In the same vein, intellectual integrity denies being of any permanent and fixed features. Instead, it represents being as becoming and endless possibilities. To this end, it affirms the death of being – the collapse of the metaphysics of substance – which Nietzsche's pronouncement of the death of God declares. The idea of the death of God leads to what Nietzsche captions nihilism.

Heidegger defines nihilism as "a historical movement, and not just any view or doctrine advocated by someone or other."[45] Similarly, Nietzsche defines it as "the devaluing of the highest values."[46] He understands it as an ongoing historical event. He interprets that event as the devaluing of the highest values up to now. "God – the metaphysical world or the suprasensory world – as the world that truly is and determines all ideals and ideas, the purposes and grounds that determine and support everything that is and human life in particular – all these are represented as meaning the highest values."[47] Therefore, Nietzsche's understanding of nihilism, as the devaluing of the highest values, is an affirmation of the collapse of these highest values – the realm of the ideas and ideals. This realm of the highest values has been designated by the Platonic-Christian or metaphysical interpretation of the reality as the true world. In contrast to it, the sensory world, which

[44] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 330; § 617.

[45] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 62.

[46] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 9; § 2.

[47] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 62.

is the physical world, has been conceived by this interpretation as the unreal world. Nietzsche's understanding of nihilism, as the devaluation of these highest values – the realm of ideas and ideals – represents an attack on the world of being: the world of the highest values or absolute principles. Ultimately, this is an attack on metaphysics. Similarly, Nietzsche's intellectual integrity affirms the death of these highest values by showing them not as constituting the first condition of existence – as originating from a supernatural source – but as creations and interpretations of the human mind. It deposes them from the fictitious world of being, where the Platonic-Christian interpretation of the world has located them. This is an attack on the world of being: an attack on metaphysics. Also, Nietzsche's intellectual integrity is intimately linked to his notion of art and this link is viewed from the perspective of creativity and affirmation of being as endless interpretations.

e. On integrity and art

Nietzsche's idea of intellectual integrity is closely linked to his notion of art. This link is viewed from the point of view of creativity and affirmation of existence or being as endless interpretations.[48] In fact, Nietzsche's whole philosophy could be construed as artistic. Similarly, in the later stages of its materialization, as earlier hinted, intellectual integrity is referred to as "the aesthetic integrity," which is interpreted as the art of the artist and the basic force behind man's affirmation of being as endless interpretations.[49] This informed why he is of the view that "it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence is justified"[50] and that "art is essentially affirmation, blessing (and) deification of existence."[51] For him, it is the noble man or the artist (superman), who represents the highest principle of humanity that creates (interprets) and this creation (interpretation) is made possible through art. Thus, in Nietzsche's thinking, "the noble man creates his own value"[52] and this is brought about through the instrumentality of art. This means that the noble man or the superman adopts a value-creating relation to existence or being and not positing being as something fixed, permanent, constant, unchanging, or a metaphysical absolute. The noble man initi-

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[48] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 239-240; § 374.

[49] Wurzer, 242.

[50] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, eds. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 33; § 5.

[51] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power,* 434; § 821.

[52] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 205; § 260.

ates this value-creating relation to existence or being through art. This is why, for Nietzsche, *to be* and *to create* (interpret) are one and the same. This creativity and interpretation depict the artistic force of integrity. Thus, intellectual integrity reveals being as deeply rooted in art (artistic creativity) and a dynamic process of endless interpretations. This is why Nietzsche is of the view that "we possess art less we perish of the truth."[53] He lays emphasis, here, on the artistic creativity of truth, which is truth as consisting in endless process of interpretations as against objectivity of truth, which is truth as eternally fixed and absolute ideal. Intellectual integrity, therefore, is a dialectic principle, which is rooted in art and which makes possible man's affirmation of being as endless interpretations. This is because, Nietzsche sees interpretation as a creative and artistic activity.

Furthermore, integrity, for Nietzsche, is grounded in art. In fact, he conceives *integrity* as *art* and this becomes clear in his assertion that "there is something in the nature of morality which is contrary to *integrity* because "*integrity is art.*"[54] This also informed why he sees religion and morality as decedent forms of man and art as the countermovement.[55] He goes further to maintain that "the criterion of truth, the substance of philosophy and the philosophical intention of man, is no longer morality, per se, but, the *art of intellectual integrity.*"[56] This, for him, begins with the death of metaphysics (death of God) and ends with *amor fati,* which is the love of one's fate or world (affirmation of life whether pleasurable or painful). The usage of *art,* in conjunction with *integrity,* as Wurzer puts it: "art of intellectual integrity" indicates the interconnectedness between art and integrity, in Nietzsche's philosophy. Furthermore, in Nietzsche's view, as intellectual integrity re-evaluates without end and affirms the death of metaphysics (death of God or collapse of the suprasensory world), and thereby making nihilism (idea of nothingness or the devaluation of the highest values) possible, art comes to the rescue, enabling us to create (interpret), to overcome this passive nihilism, as a result of the death of metaphysics (collapse of the suprasensory world), which is ushered in by the dynamic power of intellectual integrity (*Redlichkeit*). Nietzsche is, therefore, laying emphasis on the creative power of art and this connects his idea of integrity. Having analyzed Nietzsche's idea of intellectual integrity

[53] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 435; § 822.

[54] Wurzer, 238.

[55] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 419; § 794.

[56] Wurzer, 238.

and examined its intimate connection with other key concepts in his philosophy, I will, at this juncture, proceed to evaluating this concept in line with whether Nietzsche succeeded in overcoming the traditional or classical metaphysical tradition using this concept, as he claimed, or whether he ended up affirming this metaphysical tradition.

IV. Nietzsche's intellectual integrity and the metaphysical tradition

Recall that intellectual integrity represents Nietzsche's unique style of questioning. It designates his critical method of analysing Western metaphysical foundations. It is a flexible and dialectic principle, which approaches the question of being as a dynamic process of endless interpretations, instead of as "the eternally fixed" "the unchangeable ideals" or a metaphysical absolute. The implication of this thought, therefore, is the experience of 'being' as interpretation. This means that being is no longer a metaphysical absolute, but consists in a dynamic process of interpretation, endless flux, and becoming. This ultimately means that there is nothing fixed, permanent and/or unchanging about being. This is an attack on being: an attack on metaphysics. It is an attempt by Nietzsche to overcome metaphysics. This also informed his declaration of the death of God, which means, for him, the death of metaphysics. But, a critical look at this reveals that Nietzsche's attempt to overcome metaphysics, using this critical method of intellectual integrity, was an attempt in futility. This is, because, to get rid of metaphysics is impossible. To be precise, any attempt to overcome metaphysics will be, in itself, an imposition of another metaphysics.

To further buttress the above view, it will be apposite to make reference to the logical positivist attacks and rejection of metaphysics, which they, ultimately, embraced from the back door. For them, statements of metaphysics are nonsensical as a result of their not being amenable to empirical verification. As a result of this, they became distrustful of all metaphysical speculations and postulations and, instead, posited that metaphysics should be eliminated from the confines of philosophy and knowledge, in general. However, not minding that "the logical positivists' attacks on metaphysics were capable of damping a beginner's appetite for metaphysical speculation, metaphysics still soldiers on a viable body of knowledge."[57] To further illustrate, the verifiability principle, which the logical positivist embraced as their standard principle of measuring the meaningfulness of any proposition, is not, itself, verifiable. That is to say that it is an ideal concept and, as such,

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[57] Aja Egbeke, *Metaphysics: An Introduction* (Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press, 2016), 212.

another metaphysics. Consequently, Nietzsche's attempt to overcome metaphysics, using his concept of intellectual integrity, is an attempt in futility. This is, because, "any attack on metaphysics has the metaphysical result of calling forth an examination of the first principles of that view, itself. Consequently, the attacker is challenged to produce a different metaphysics, that is, a set of philosophical principles – an alternative to the one under attack."[58] This is exactly the case with Nietzsche, as his attempt to overcome metaphysics ended up introducing another metaphysics as instantiated in his notion of the will to power, which he describes as the essence of life and the basic principle of reality.[59]

Nietzsche, as Heidegger posited, can be described as a metaphysical thinker, given his idea of asking the same basic question that has guided every metaphysical thinking from the inception of time. This question is the question of what constitutes being. Nietzsche's response to this question, as Heidegger hinted, is the "will to power," by which he names what constitutes the basic character (essence) of all beings. Similarly, Stephan Körner shows that every philosophical trend has its own metaphysics. [60] In his estimation, this is the philosopher's ultimate presuppositions or that which constitutes the driving force in his philosophy: the perspective from which he addresses his metaphysical thought.[61] To illustrate, "Kant's categorial framework is epistemology; Aristotle's is ontology; while Collingwood's is history."[62] This shows that every person has his own metaphysics (his own categorial framework). Nietzsche is not an exception. The "will to power," which he identifies as the principle of life and that which constitutes the basic character of all things proves this. Thus, as a critic of metaphysics, Nietzsche has his own metaphysics – which his critical method of intellectual integrity attempts to overcome – going by this notion of categorial framework. To be more precise, in an attempt to overcome metaphysics, Nietzsche ended up positing another metaphysics in the form of the "will to power," which he defines as that which constitutes the essence or the basic principle of all things and his notion of the

[58] Ibid., 212.

[59] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 550; § 1067, 148; § 254. Cf. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 48; § 36.

[60] See Stephan Körner, *Categorial Frameworks* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), 10.

[61] Stephan Körner, *Metaphysics: Its Structure and Function* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 17.

[62] See Stephan Körner, *The Fundamental Questions of Philosophy: One Philosopher's Answer* (New Jersey: The Harvester Press, 1969), 178-180.

Übermensch or superman, which designates the essence of humanity. The two ideas of "basic principle" and "essence" represent appeals to something enduring, fixed and permanent, which are appeals to metaphysics.

Nietzsche's idea of the "Primordially One," as articulated in his book, *The Birth of Tragedy,* further designates his re-enthronement rather than dethronement of metaphysics. The "Primordially One," in Nietzsche's estimation, represents the non-individuated reality behind all appearances.[63] Nietzsche views this "Primordially One" as a kind of artist; a child playing in the sand on the beach, wantonly and haphazardly creating individuated shapes and forms (the world) and then destroying them, taking equal pleasure in both parts of the process – in both the creation and the destruction.[64] In a sense, this child, who in a metaphysical play, creates and destroys the world, is the underlying reality: the underlying principle of everything. This is, because, according to Nietzsche, "we are not 'identical' with the child, but are only one of the unsubstantial shapes with which it plays."[65] The idea of an "underlying principle" is an appeal to the characteristics of fixity, permanency, un-changeability and constancy, which are the features of being – the characteristics of metaphysics.

The two basic concepts in Nietzsche's philosophy – the will to power and the eternal return or recurrence – describe whatever is, in its real being, in accordance with the principles of *essence and existence,* in terms that has continually guided metaphysical thinking, since antiquity. In other words, the relation that exists between the will to power and the idea of eternal recurrence, in Nietzsche's philosophy, throws him back to the ancient metaphysical traditional relations of essence and existence. This implies that the will to power which, according to Nietzsche, represents the essence of being, exists in the form of eternal recurrence. This ties Nietzsche to the ancient metaphysical relations of essence and existence.

Nietzsche can be placed within the tradition of modern metaphysical thinking in view of his characterization of the will to power as the "Being of beings:" a thinking which expresses the essential character of the Being of beings, generally as "will." This can be found in Shelling's characterization of willing as "Primal Being" and his attribution of same of all the essential features of metaphysics, like uncondition-

[63] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, xxiv.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., xxiv-xxv.

ality, independency of time and self-affirmation.[66] Shelling's expression is similar to that of Leibniz, who defined the Being of beings as the "unity of perception (representation) and *appetitus* (striving);"[67] and what Schopenhauer had in mind when he entitled his major work *The World as Will and Representation*. Nietzsche follows the same line of thought, when he describes the primal Being of beings as the "will to power." Therefore, Nietzsche is still trapped within the metaphysical tradition of being, which his critical method of intellectual integrity strongly questions.

In spite of the above observations, there are thinkers, who have defended Nietzsche's philosophic project of overcoming metaphysics, as a result of the deconstructive power and the playful nature of his philosophic enterprise. One of such thinkers is Alan Schrift, who posits that Heidegger, for instance, misinterpreted Nietzsche's philosophical project by maintaining that "Nietzsche is always and only thinking metaphysically."[68] By interpreting Nietzsche this way, Schrift maintains that "Heidegger neglects to attend to the fundamental theme in Nietzsche's philosophy: the theme of play."[69] For Schrift, "play" operates in Nietzsche's philosophy both as a stylistic device and as a philosophical concept. He then concludes that had Heidegger understood this point in Nietzsche, his interpretation of him would have been different. Heidegger's student, Eugen Fink, follows this same line of thought. Fink contends that "Heraclitus represents the *originary* root of Nietzsche's philosophy."[70] In his estimation, "in Heraclitus' conception of play, Nietzsche finds his deepest intuition of the reality of the world, as grandiose cosmic metaphor."[71] He is of the view that "rather than being a culmination of metaphysics, Nietzsche's thinking operates at the boundary of metaphysics, sometimes, imprisoned within, and, sometimes, liberated from metaphysics."[72] For him, "insofar as Nietzsche's thinking arises in response to the metaphysical tradition, valuing, as it does, becoming and appearance, as alternatives to Being and Truth, Nietzsche remains imprisoned within metaphysics. But, when "Nietzsche's thinking" according

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[66] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 34.

[67] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power*, 35.

[68] Shrift, 63.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

to him, "arises out of his Heraclitean insight into the cosmic play of the world, beyond all valuation, precisely because all values emerge within this, his thinking liberates itself from the metaphysical tradition."[73] Fink, thus, concludes that "where Nietzsche grasps being and becoming, as *Spiel* (play), he no longer stands in the confinement of metaphysics."[74] However, despite the above defense, offered in favour of Nietzsche's project of overthrowing metaphysics, one can conclude, based on the initial observations, above, that Nietzsche still remains within the comfort of the metaphysical tradition. Thus, Nietzsche's intellectual integrity fails to accomplish its purpose. This, notwithstanding, the vibrancy and dialectic force of intellectual integrity can ignite critical rationality, questioning attitude and epistemic transparency in the contemporary world.

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

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Kant's Thought Formation and the Role of the Mind: A Groundwork for Development

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Abstract

This paper argues that no form of meaningful development can be discussed without an incursion into the realm of consciousness, from which ideas emanate. This paper demonstrates that human civilization is driven by notions such as ideas, imaginations, concepts, plans, and projects which are germane to social development. An examination of Kant's theory of concept formation reveals that though objects are given to us by means of sensibility, it is through the understanding that concepts arise. The mind therefore becomes the 'breeding' ground from which our ideas are generated and organized. In Kant's analysis of the faculty of understanding, he noted that there are a priori pure intuitions and sets of categories such as Quality, Relation, Modality that organize particular sensations into unified objects of experience. This capacity of the mind enables it to produce or generate ideas within its own operations. Ideas generated are used to recreate our world. This paper provides a conceptual framework to explicate the foundation of development. Using the method of analysis, this essay concludes that the basis of development – social, economic, and cultural – is hinged on the nature and role of the mind.

Keywords: *Kant; development; civilization; mind; thought-formation; a priori*

I. Introduction

This essay comprises two dimensions. The first dimension is a close and meticulous analysis of Kant's theory of thought formation, which takes the mind as containing some *a priori* no-

tions and having the capacity to structure and organize the phenomenal world by imposing these *a priori* concepts on it, thus, providing a distinct systematic basis for seeing the mind as an active entity. Prior to Kant, a study of Brentano's bucket theory and Hume's empiricism reveals that the mind was understood as a passive element or object with little or no role in the epistemic grasp of reality in the corporeal-existential world. The function of the mind was simply understood as a receptor of sense data. Here the existential world which constitutes things-in-the-world imposes its nature on the mind. This means that the mind has no innate capacity or ability to perform or function, such as assigning pattern and order in the cosmic universe. Consequently, it can be assumed that any form of development which results from this process lacks a distinct framework from which the idea arose.

In what follows, the world, preceding Kant's revolution (reconciliation of sensibility and understanding), with all the forms of advancement and progress could be viewed as a product of blind "Will" or 'universal cosmic reason,' with no clear framework from which the thought of innovations and inventions emanate from. That is, it could be taken that all forms of development witnessed by the world thus far were caused by the intervention of a necessary element and universal determinate principle or intelligence, with little or no succinct basis for explaining the profundity of human thoughts and particularly the origin of these thoughts. On the contrary, the human intellect has a tremendous role to play in the sundry forms of development that have struck the human sphere of existence. Kant's theory of concept formation has explicitly buttressed this point. Also, history and the evolution of societies hold this true.

The second dimension is the conceptualization of the term development. Some scholars conceive development as the handiwork of the 'Universal Mind.' Some see development as a clash of opposites – thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis. Scientists, especially humanists, see development as the human's endeavor or exertion. Be that as it may, it can be taken as a fact that development is not a concrete phenomenon but an idea or concept in the mind that is transformed into material or concrete form for the utilization or benefit of mankind. Humans have witnessed diverse forms of development since the history of the world. Development can be seen as the human's conscious effort to create and recreate his environment so as to become more and more discernable and habitable. It is the focus on this consciousness as an idea or abstract concept that brings to limelight the indispensability of mental cognition. Apart from this consciousness, development is also seen as an improvement on what already exists. This, according to Kant, is

possible because of the transcendental ability of the mind to organize, unite, order, and re-order objects or things in the existential world. Every tangible development first started as an idea in the human mind.

Now, the influx of ideas, concepts, plans, and projects from the realm of mental cognition or human faculty of understanding dates back to the beginning of human civilization. These ideas, concepts, plans, and projects in the various circles of intellectual disciplines have shown enough or more than enough evidence to explain and underscore the source of development, civilization, innovation, creativity, and technological advancement since the emergence of *Homo sapiens* on the planet earth.

The human beings (as a species) are endowed with natural rationalistic and metaphysical components which provide the basis for the comprehension of the history of human civilization, beginning from the Stone Age to the contemporary age of science, technology, and artificial intelligence. Man, as an ontological being, is capable of using his intellect or mind independently of sense experience in creative enterprise and innovation, which significantly bring about development. Thus, the metaphysical operation and potentiality of the human mind is undeniable. This is because of the astonishing breakthroughs and progress made in the sundry fields of research by innovative thinkers as seen for example, in physics (e.g., Isaac Newton's invention of reflecting telescope, theory of light and color, discovery of calculus, developed laws of motion, devised law of universal gravitation, advanced early modern chemistry; Albert Einstein's quantum theory of light, special theory of relativity, Avogadro's number, photoelectric effect, wave-particle duality etc., and Michael Faraday's discoveries of electromagnetic induction and the laws of electrolysis, etc.), medicine, sciences, social sciences, engineering, technology, arts, artificial intelligence, etc. These breakthroughs are all products of pure and pensive cognition.

The aim of this essay is to demonstrate the reality and basis of development, using Kant's conception and analysis of the human mind (especially societal advancement as a product or outcome of mental operation or consciousness). This is because "Kant is interested in moral progress, and this again as it is applied to the human race as a whole, to the human race in its social capacity, organized in societies."[1] In other words, this essay seeks to argue that development is not a creation *ex-nihilo* but a possibility that originates or springs from the mind of human.

[1] Christos Grigoriou, "'Enthusiasm' in Burke's and Kant's Response to the French Revolution," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. 1 (2022): 61-77.

II. Kant's conception and analysis of the human mind

Kant's critical philosophy which culminated in the investigation into the possibility of knowledge (Kant's synthetic *a priori*) was instigated by Hume's radical denouncement of any form of rational and scientific knowledge. In other words, Kant asserted that he was woken up from his "dogmatic slumber" by Hume's skepticism on the possibility of indubitable foundation of scientific and metaphysical knowledge. This argument is well captured by S. E. Stumpf thus:

> "I openly confess," he said, "that the suggestion of David Hume was the very thing which many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy quite a new direction." But Kant said, "I was far from following (Hume) in the conclusions at which he arrived." Kant rejected Hume's final skepticism.[2]

With a view to establishing a firm conclusion on the apparent ambivalence between the theories above, Kant thought it necessary to embark on the analysis of the human mind. First, he had to meticulously study the meaning, interpretation, and function which his predecessors assigned to the operations of the mind, particularly the rationalist and the empiricist philosophers, before making his submissions. In both views, he discovered that his predecessors, particularly the empiricists, treated the mind as a passive element incapable of affecting the natural world, serving merely as a receptor of sense impressions.

Kant was not impressed by this interpretation and function that was assigned to the nature of the mind because it excludes the possibility of "synthetic *a priori*" knowledge. He thus moved beyond this flaccid and passive conception of the mind to the real operations of the human mind for which he provided a commendable analysis in the form of a revolution. Before we start to analyze Kant's revolutionary theory of the mind, it is pertinent to ask if there is any relationship between the mind and nature itself. To answer this question, we will turn to Kant's Copernican revolution. Meanwhile, the mind, in Kant's analysis, cannot cognize or come to the knowledge of realities in the noumena world which he called "thing in itself; or 'intelligible object.'"[3]

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[2] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Elements of Philosophy: An Introduction* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 298.

[3] Graham Bird, *Kant's Theory of Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), 19.

Some thinkers before Kant held the mind to be passive. The relationship between the mind and nature was misconstrued. Jacob Needleman appropriately captured it this way:

> Until now, Kant says, man has completely misunderstood this relationship, until now he was believed that true knowledge, true ideas, involved a sort of mental mirroring of the order of nature – the mind forming concepts that accurately reflect external reality. At the deepest level Kant says this cannot be true. On the contrary, the opposite is true. The order of nature conforms to the structure of the mind [...] reason itself.[4]

The mind was viewed as an inactive principle, but Kant has stated categorically that reason (mind) is the active principle, and that nature is the passive principle. He did in philosophy exactly what Copernicus did in the sciences. Just as Copernicus had shown that the motions of the heavens are determined by the motion of the earth, so Kant demonstrated that the laws of nature are put into nature by the mind, rather than being simply discovered as independent of the mind.[5] Given Kant's analysis of *phenomena* and *noumena*, Kant seems to have created a dual world. Hence, Bochenski argues that "so reality is split into two worlds, the one empirical and phenomenal which is invariably subject to the laws of mechanics, and the other a world of things-in-themselves, of "noumena" to which reason cannot attain."[6]

By relating this perspective of the motions of the heavens vis-à-vis the earth to epistemology, Kant asserted that the only way we can be sure of certainty about the basic laws of nature, such as the law of causation, is to set aside our erroneous knowledge, "that it is things that impress their nature on the mind." Whereas the right position is that it is actually the mind that impresses its form/nature on things. This view is clearly articulated thus:

> "Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects" writes Kant in his preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the single most influential work of

[4] Jacob Needleman, *The Heart of Philosophy* (London and Melbourne: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 172-173.

[5] Ibid., 173.

[6] I. M. Bochenski, *Contemporary European Philosophy*, trans. Donald Nicholl and Karl Aschenbrenner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 5.

> modern philosophy. But Kant goes on; this assumption must be set aside as regards our knowledge of the fundamental order of nature. If knowledge must always conform to objects, we could never have absolute certainty about the basic laws of nature, such as the law of causation. We do have such certainty-a universe that does not obey such laws is simply inconceivable-even though we have no direct, sensory experience of these laws.[7]

Kant, in his assessment of the nature of the human mind, pointed out that the mind is naturally configured or structured to exert influence on objects. He came to this conclusion because it was feasible to acquire *a priori* knowledge of objects and also to reassess the hierarchical relationship between the mind and nature, as seen in Nicholas Copernicus' revolution in astronomy, as Kant himself affirms in the *Critique* that:

> We must therefore make trail whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge. This would agree better with what is desired, namely, that it should be possible to have knowledge of objects *a priori*, determining something in regard to them prior to their being given. We should then be proceeding precisely on the lines of Copernicus' primary hypothesis. Failing of satisfactory progress in explaining the movements of the heavenly bodies on the supposition that they all revolved around the spectator, he tried whether he must not have better success if he made the spectator to revolve and the starts to remain at rest.[8]

Therefore, according to Kant, the nature of the mind is such that it possesses its own form, to which objects in the empirical or experiential world must conform inevitably. We shall now turn to the next phase of Kant's conception of the human mind.

III. Constitution of the mind and ontology

The constitution, the nature of the human mind as well as the possibility of the mind to conceive and grasp knowledge *a priori* were of concern

[7] Needleman, 173.

[8] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1953), 3:12-13.

to Kant. The mind's capacity to comprehend and conceptualize objects in the external world is not a topic of much debate. However, the organization of these ideas in the mind and their replication in concrete form to establish order in our environment is crucial. It presupposes that events and activities in the external world are the creation and product of the mind. In other words, the mind becomes the springboard from which all activities in the external world take their root. Before looking at the constitution of the mind, what precisely is the meaning of ontology? It is necessary to clarify and conceptualize this term.

The term "ontology" was coined by scholastic writers in the 17th century. Rudolf Goclenius, who mentioned the word in 1636, may have been the first user but the term was such a national Latin coinage and began to appear so frequently that disputes about priority are pointless.[9] Many writers such as Abraham Calovisu used it interchangeably with *metaphysica* while others used it as the name of a subdivision of metaphysics, the other subdivisions being cosmology and psychology. "Thus, ontologia as a philosophical term of art was already in existence when it was finally canonized by Christian Wolf (1679-1754) and Alexander Gottieb Baumgarten (1714-1762)."[10]

In the series of lectures given from 1765 to 1766, Kant treated ontology as a subdivision of metaphysics that included rational psychology but distinguished it from empirical psychology, cosmology, and what he called the "Science of God and the world." He refers to it as the more general properties of things and also as the difference between spiritual and material beings.[11] He eventually resolved the matter after he came up with the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Michael Gelven offered a concise and impressive interpretation of Kant's perspective on ontology:

> Kant's ontology aims at demonstrating that finite human reason transcends the boundaries of scientific categorizing that occur in physics and mathematics which both depend on the ability of the mind to distinguish between appearance and reality. Kant however was not just concerned with the possibility of mathematics and physics, but with a possibility of science in general is possible due to the possibility of metaphysics itself which is ingrained in man and which

[9] Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vols. 3 and 4 (New York: Macmillan and the Free Press, 1967), 542.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

> depicts the autonomy of human thought to metaphysics and hence, to as well scientificize. It is for this reasons that Kant dubbed his brand of philosophy transcendental idealism. But this transcendental perspective accommodates epistemological inquires and forms the ground of human freedom and responsibility.[12]

For a more lucid view of the term, the definition offered by the Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary will suffice here. It defines ontology as:

> The science that treats of the principles of metaphysics [...] the nature and essence of things: Ontology is a central part of metaphysics. It borders on questions like: Does anything exist necessarily? Is it necessary that something no matter what, should exist? It is concerned with the existence of material objects, minds, persons, universals, numbers and facts and so on.[13]

The mind, which is the focus of this essay, is not an empirical or sensual substance but a metaphysical framework from which our ideas originate and are organized and translated into concrete phenomena. Its functions cannot be precisely experimented on or explained scientifically. Many scholars[14] have corroborated their positions with this, though from another conceptual perspective. It remains the most influential element in Kant's theory of thought formation and transcendental idealism. It is not only the seat of intellectual activities but also the citadel of moral flurry as well as creativity and innovation. It is logical to talk about concept formation (and to some extent, transcendental idealism) as the foundation for holistic development in the context of all these functions attributed to the mind. Brook provided more insights into Kant's conception of the mind thus:

> Three ideas define the basic shape ('cognitive architecture') of Kant's model and one its dominant method. They have all become part of the foundation of cognitive science.

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[12] Michael Gelven, *A Commentary on Heidegger's* Being and Time*: A Section-by-section Interpretation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 5-6. Quoted from C. Okoro's unpublished Doctoral Dissertation "Kant's Ontology," (2001), 144-145.

[13] See Maduabuchi F. Dukor, *Theistic Humanism: Philosophy of Scientific Africanism* (Lagos: Noble Communications Network, 1994), 19.

[14] Anayochukwu Kingsley Ugwu, "An Igbo Understanding of the Human Being: A Philosophical Approach," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. 1 (2022): 135-181.

> 1. The mind is a complex set of abilities (functions). (As Meerbote 1989 and many others have observed, Kant held a functionalist view of the mind almost 200 years before functionalism was officially articulated in the 1960s by Hilary Putnam and others.)
> 2. The functions crucial for mental, knowledge-generating activity are spatio-temporal processing of, and application of concepts to, sensory inputs. Cognition requires concepts as well as percepts.
> 3. These functions are forms of what Kant called synthesis. Synthesis (and the unity in consciousness required for synthesis) are central to cognition.[15]

In order to capture explicitly Kant's conception of the mind, we shall simply delineate this sub-section into two parts: starting from the categories of understanding and ending with the transcendental apperception of the mind. Finally, we will be able to decipher the nature and the workings or operations of the human mind and later on see how this relates to the heart of this essay which partially focuses on idealism/metaphysics as an essential tool for evolving meaningful development in the society.

IV. The categories of understanding

Kant asserted that the human mind possesses a faculty of understanding. This faculty makes it possible for the mind to exert or impose its forms on objects in nature. It is this exertion that makes it possible for things to be cognized. These "forms" are *a priori* pure intuitions like that of space and time. Basically, these sets of categories according to Kant are quality, quantity, relation, and modality. Russell, reflecting on Kant's analysis of them, articulated these points distinctly:

> There are, however, *a priori* intuitions, these are the twelve "categories," which Kant derives from the forms of the syllogism. The twelve categories are divided into four sets of three: (1) of quantity; unity, plurality, totality; (2) of quality; reality, negation, limitation; (3) of relation: substance-and-accident, cause-and-effect, reciprocity; (4) of modality; possibility, existence, necessity. These are sub-

[15] Andrew Brook and Julian Wuerth, "Kant's View of the Mind and Consciousness of Self," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2023 Edition), eds. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2023/entries/kant-mind/.

> jective in the same sense in which space and time are, that is to say, our mental construction is such that they are applicable to whatever we experience.[16]

Kant went further to describe these sets of categories as "original pure concepts of synthesis, which belong to the understanding, for it is by them alone that it can understand something in the manifold of intuition, that is, think an object in it."[17] These sets of categories are intrinsic and innate. Kant refers to them as spectacles or lenses through which the mind visualizes and configures things in nature. Beyond these forms, intellectual knowledge of the empirical cosmos is impossible. To this end, Kant has shown that a wrong application of the categories of human understanding breeds philosophical confusion.[18] In all, the faculty of understanding (mind) is the seat of intellectual cognition, the source of ideas, the podium of concept creation and platform for innovation and pro-activeness.

In order to make a distinction between "category/categories," "intuition," and "ideas," reference must be made to Kant's notion of representation as expressed in his well-known passage in the first *Critique*. "Kant regards an intuition as a conscious, objective representation – this is strictly distinct from sensation, which he regards not as a representation of an object, property, event, etc., but merely as a state of the subject."[19] Kant considered categories as concepts that apply to objects in general, determining their intuition according to one of the logical functions for judgments. He believed that categories are what makes objects in general possible. He called them predicates.[20] Ideas are simply mental creations of the mind. The activities of intuition and by extension categories give birth to ideas. These ideas are however transformed into concrete realities.

V. Transcendental apperception

In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant talked about transcendental deduction of the categories.[21] He elucidated the meaning of transcendental

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[16] Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), 708.

[17] Richard H. Popkin and Avrum Stroll, *Philosophy Made Simple* (New York: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd, 1969), 136.

[18] Jim I. Unah, "The Object of Philosophy is the Logical Clarification of Thoughts – Wittgenstein," *The Nigerian Journal of Philosophy* 16, nos. 1-2 (1997): 25.

[19] Andrew Janiak, "Kant's Views on Space and Time," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2022 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2022/entries/kant-spacetime/.

[20] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* 3: 95-96.

[21] Kant, 85-130A, 117-169B.

apperception. It is this action of the mind that makes it possible to have a unified grasp of the world around us. Apperception is presented by Immanuel Kant as a modeling device, as the subjective means to make selections over that speculative content in order to bring them to systematic unity, and consciousness as a normative state in which a contextually limited representation becomes discernable or conceivable.[22] The mind, according to Kant, is capable of transforming raw data received by our senses into a coherent and organized form. "But this led Kant to say that the unity of our experience must imply a unity of the self, for unless there was a unity between the several operations of the mind, there could be no knowledge of experience."[23] These several operations of the mind include *inter-alia*; sensation, imagination, remembering, memorizing, synthesizing, etc.

Thus, it must be the same self that at once senses an object, remembers its characteristics, and imposes the forms of space and time and the category of cause and effect, on it. All these activities must occur in some single subject; otherwise, knowledge would be impossible. And more so, if one subject had only sensations, another only memory, and so on, sensible manifold could never be unified.[24] Kant called it the "transcendental unity of apperception," what is also referred to as the "self." Furthermore, when ideas are accepted into consciousness, they are said to be admitted into the whole of our consciousness. By this process, ideas are said to be apperceived, and the indication of such apperception is the affixing to the idea of the phrase 'I think.' T. D. Weldon elaborated on this view when he said this of Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories:

> It will be granted that every idea which can conceivably occur to me must be capable of conscious apprehension. It must admit of being accepted into that whole which I call my consciousness. To be thus admitted is to be apperceived, and the sign of such apperception is the prefixing to the idea of the phrase 'I think'. No idea, then, can be entertained by me which is not capable of being apperception. But the whole of the ideas which I entertain constitute together a unity which is my conscious self, and this unity is

[22] Lucas Ribeiro Vollet, "An Interpretation of Kant's Theory on the Representation of Possible Experiences: High Speculative Representation and Fine-Grained Knowledge," *GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis* 5, no. 1 (2022): 74.

[23] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Philosophy: History and Problems* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 309.

[24] Ibid.

> not a mere aggregate, for if it were, I should have a self as variegated and diverse as the ideas of which I am conscious. Rather it must be a synthetic or connected unity, intellectual and not sensuous in character.[25]

The unity of apperception is not precisely something produced by understanding, it is simply the understanding itself. It is also equated to the faculty of knowledge since understanding is the faculty of knowledge. The faculty of knowledge is the pivot of cognition or reflection, thus "to think is to unite ideas by receiving them into synthetic unity of apperception."[26]

VI. What is development?

The term "development" cannot be easily deciphered generically unless it is narrowed down to a specific context. It has been used in myriad senses to connote different meanings. In fact, sundry interpretations, meanings, and definitions have been offered. Some scholars have classified the term as complex and largely elusive. The elusive nature of the term arises from the different ways it has been used in varying circumstances:

> The concept of development is elusive. When a community is developing a piece of land, it thinks of development as using resources in whatever way will be must profitable to it. But when in current usage people talk about the development of a poor country or region, they are thinking mainly about the process by which the living standards of the people who live there are raised, and in most circumstances, this is quite a different notion. It is also much more complex and needs further discussion.[27]

In other words, its meaning (development) is difficult to describe. A rather satisfactory way of knowing the meaning of the word is to look at the context in which it is used. More so, the term can also be used to connote change or movement. In this sense we mean development as a change either to the right or left, or a forward or backward movement,

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[25] Thomas D. Weldon, *Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 150.

[26] Ibid., 151.

[27] Juliet Clifford and Garvin Osmond, *World Development Handbook* (London: Charles Knight and Co., 1971), 16.

which could be horizontal or vertical. However, from the perspective of this essay, we refer to the term as a change from a backward to a forward direction or state or an upward movement. The whole of this shift in position or state can be understood as progress. Thus, we take development here to mean progress and the context which it is applied is basically the human society, which includes change in social infrastructures, modernization, economic expansion or growth, realization of man's full potentials, good use of resources, etc. However, in order to avoid leaving the meaning of the term open, a few definitions relevant to the context of this essay will suffice.

The sense in which the term "development" is used in this work is largely related to social change, infrastructural and human development as well as economic welfare. The notion of the term "development," either tacitly or explicitly, had historically been interpreted or understood within the context of human affairs to connote a state of the human condition.[28] The notion of the term in the definition above simply reveals the goal of development. In other words, development is not an end in itself; rather, it is a means to an end which is geared towards human well-being. This is the reason why the World Bank sees development in terms of people's well-being and capacity-building or developing which would give rise to environmental or ecological control and establishing order in society. It is put thus: "development must be inclusive of future generations and the earth they will inherit. It must engage people, for without their participation, no strategy can succeed for long. This notion of development as well-being means that measures of development must include not just rates of growth, but the dispersion, composition, and sustainability of that growth."[29]

The transformation of society is relevant to the discussion of meaningful development. One of the indicators of meaningful development is the ability to provide desirable living conditions for humanity. In fact, development can be conceived from a subjective perspective, pending what desirable conditions are put in place in the transformation of society. Juliet and Garvin seem to elaborate on this view; "if we wish to judge whether a country is developing or not, we need to decide: (a) is it experiencing economic development, (b) what other changes-social, political, institutional, aesthetic, ethical-are taking place? To what extent are these changes desirable?"[30]

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[28] Adebayo Ninalowo, *On the Crisis of Underdevelopment* (Lagos: Prime Publications, 2007), 6.

[29] Ashok Dhareshwar, "A Mixed Development Record," in *The Quality of Growth*, ed. Bruce Ross-Larson, 1-25 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2.

[30] Clifford and Osmond, 18.

In line with the goal of development which as we have established earlier has to do with the well-being of humanity, Vinod Thomas simply annotates this point in his conception of development when he asserts that "development has to do with people's well-being, quality of life, and natural environment. It needs to be inclusive, mindful of future generations and the earth they will inherit."[31] Furthermore, it should be pointed out that development is not just maximizing utility or profits as seen in the definition of economics or from the goal of macroeconomics:

> Rather development is fundamentally about regime change and about the search for an optimal growth path, or at least one that is superior to the existing allocation of resources and current efficiency levels. Further, development typically requires new institutional patterns and organizational structures necessary to support such a dynamic process of change.[32]

The United Nations Development Program seems to employ a more detailed definition. According to them, development is, "to lead a long and healthy life, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community."[33] No doubt that this definition is focused on alleviating the poor social conditions of mankind. It is making man relevant to his community.

By and large, development is the progressive unfolding of the inner potentialities of a given reality. It is to de-envelop, that is, to bring out to light: existential, functional, and epistemic, what was enveloped, folded or hidden.[34] In this meaning of development, innate ideas become the bedrock for explaining concrete transformations that occur in society. In other words, innate ideas are the foundation that gives rise to the development experienced in the social re-engineering and revamping of society for the benefit or good of mankind. In the context above, the term "innate ideas" refers to ideas that are conceived in the mind or originate from the mind without being influenced or impacted by sensory experience. It is purely

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[31] Vinod Thomas, "Revisiting the Challenge of Development," in *Frontiers of Development Economics: The Future in Perspective*, eds. Gerald M. Meier and Joseph E. Stiglitz, 149-182 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 150.

[32] James M. Cypher and James L. Dietz, *The Process of Economic Development* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 17.

[33] UNDP: Human Development Reports, "What is Human Development?" accessed May 18, 2024, https://hdr.undp.org/about/human-development.

[34] Pantaleon Iroegbu, *Enwisdomization and African Philosophy*: *Two Selected Essays* (Owerri: International Universities Press, 1994), 81.

the mind's 'solo' activities, such as retrospection, reflection, thinking, cogitation, etc. These activities of the mind are not accompanied in any way by the senses. A typical example is Albert Einstein's laudable discoveries in physics, which was a product or outcome of pure abstract thought.

However, Iroegbu was meticulous in his philosophical reflection on the meaning of development. He contended strongly that development must be seen largely from the angle of the individual. It must include the full growth of the individual, as he puts it:

> The individual is involved in his fullness as an individual but an individual in community. Individuality involves selfhood and relationship. Both coordinates to make up the human person. Defined in his fullness, this human person is [...] a noema-noetic, psycho-somatic, psychosocial-physiological, socio-cultural, individual-rational and human divine integrated being. To talk of development is to talk of the human being progressing in these various aspects.[35]

George Ehusani is not far from following the definition above, when he discusses development froma dual perspective and characterizes it thus: (a) the maximal presence of human dignity and integrity, mutual love and justice, sociality and hospitality, responsibility and discipline, (b) the minimal presence (or desirable absence) of war, homicide, suicide, drug addiction, mental breakdown, oppression, and starvation.[36] In both views above, development must be seen as an integration and dynamic progression or upward motion in the moral, spiritual, and material well-being of the human person.

Man's physical and natural environment is not excluded in this integration. The integration of the various areas: pycho-personal development, the socio-cultural, the moral-religious, is important if the full meaning and complete demands of development are to be realized. It is only when the entire aspects, mentioned above are realized that development becomes authentic, meaningful, and holistic.

VII. A philosophical conceptualization of development

The meaning of the term "development" in the foregoing exercise is incomplete without delving into the basis upon which it is firmly grounded. In other words, great minds have well-articulated and represented

[35] Ibid.

[36] George Ehusani, *An Afro-Christian Vision: "Ọzọvẹhẹ!": Toward a More Humanized World* (New York: University Press of America, 1991), 224.

the term in their multifarious postulations, a term instrumental in the discussions of metaphysical principles and philosophical anthropology. In the history of philosophy, the meaning of development can be inferred from the works and thoughts of scholars such as Heraclitus, Aristotle, Hegel and Karl Marx, Ngwoke and Ugwu,[37] among others. These scholars see development as akin to change.

In fact, Heraclitus explains the meaning of development with the two terms "flux" and "logos." In substantiating this position, "Plato records Heraclitus' view that everything was motion."[38] It is from this, that we inferred the view of development that everything is in a state of constant change (transformation). For Aristotle, it was the theory of *hylemorphism*,[39] which is the theory of 'matter' and 'form.' Aristotle used both to illustrate the concept of change which constitutes the hub of development. Hegel's concept of development is hinged on his fundamental dialectics exemplified by the gradual acceleration of the Absolute in the manner of "thesis" "anti-thesis" and "synthesis."[40] Although Marx employed this method of Hegel, he departed from him in asserting the inevitability of change, not with regard to spirit, (Hegel's Absolute Spirit) but matter.

VIII. Kant's thought formation and its role in development

Our task here is to explain and lay a foundation for examining the phenomenon of development, using Kantian analysis of the human mind, which we have christened here as "transcendental ontology." What do we mean by 'transcendental ontology?' The word "ontology" has been employed both by Kant and Heidegger; "Kant as well as Heidegger is in agreement that ontology is the study or interrogation of the general structure of thought (i.e., transcendence) or what belongs to consciousness or human knowledge in general."[41] This meaning seems to suggest that ontology is akin to transcendence, which precisely is not improper. For Heidegger, "ontology" is the pure theory of Being, or the science of the Being of beings.[42]

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[37] Hilary C. Ngwoke and Anayochukwu K. Ugwu, "Promoting Innovation for Development through a Participatory-Based Pedagogy: The Freirean Model Considered," *Nnadiebube Journal of Education in Africa* 7, no. 1 (2022): 35-36.

[38] John Ferguson, "Notes on the Early Greek Philosophers," *Second Order: An African Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (1974): 39.

[39] Encyclopedia Britannica, "Hylomorphism," March 15, 2016, https://www.britannica.com/topic/hylomorphism.

[40] Jostein Gaarder, *Sophie's World: A Novel about the History of Philosophy*, trans. Paulette Moller (New York: Berkley Books 1996), 362.

[41] See Okoro, 211.

[42] Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph M. Manheim (London and

Ontology, originating from the Greek word for being, is a term from the 17th century that refers to the branch of metaphysics specifically dedicated to the study of existence. Hence Kant is referred to as the greatest opponent of the view that unaided reason can tell us in detail what kinds of things must exist.[43] 'Unaided reason' here, refers to knowledge that is not derived from the senses or supported by them. It is purely the mind's independent operations or activities that cognize knowledge. The process whereby the mind comes to such awareness of extra-empirical entities or realities is called transcendence. It is the mind's ability to go beyond the scope or limit of sense experience. Kant alluded to the term in his effort to combine empirical realism with transcendental idealism:

> In his (Kant's) attempts to combine empirical realism, preserving the ordinary independence and reality of objects of the world, with transcendental idealism, which allows that in some sense the objects have their ordinary properties (their causal powers, and their spatial and temporal position) only because our minds are structured that these are the categories we impose upon the manifold of experience.[44]

What Kant did in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is to take the question of the foundation of experience seriously. He tries to find the foundation of experience itself, and any such inquiry he describes as transcendental.[45] Hence "transcendental [...] refers to the necessary conditions of our experience."[46] Besides this, Kant refers to the term in two major senses; 'transcendental aesthetic' and 'transcendental logic.' The former is an inquiry into possible *a priori* elements in sensibility ('aesthetic' being the Greek term for 'sensation'), the latter, an enquiry into possible *a priori* in thought ('logos' being the Greek term for 'concept')[47] that is, the mind's place in the phenomenon of development.

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 61-62.

[43] Simon Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 261.

[44] Ibid., 368.

[45] B. E. Oguah, "Transcendentalism, Kant's First Analysis and Time," *Second Order: An African Journal of Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (1977): 3.

[46] Alfred C. Ewing, *A Short Commentary on Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason (London: Methuen and Co., 1965), 25.

[47] William Henry Walsh, *Kant's Criticism of Metaphysics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975), 16.

Kant's analysis of the human mind and how it underpins development can be understood from the following three perspectives. First, Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* established or endorsed knowledge that is sensible as well as knowledge that is independent of the senses. As a way of correcting the misleading position of the empiricist that 'all our knowledge is derived from the senses,' "Kant here lays down his famous principle that all our knowledge begins with experience but does not all arise out of experience, i.e. there is no knowledge temporally before experience but it is not all either causally due to or logically based on experience."[48]

By implication, Kant here implicitly presented a defensible view of rational knowledge which he called *a priori,* independent of sense experience. The logical end of Kant's position here was an attempt to clear the skepticism around the possibility of both *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge (i.e., understanding and sensibility). Having established the reality of both forms of knowledge (*a priori* and *a posteriori*), he proceeded to evince the convergence (the meeting point) between the two seemingly incompatible theories of knowledge; empiricism and rationalism, by what he called the *synthetic a-priori.*

In both of these forms of knowledge, the mind is at the center. It is the nucleus or engine of the human configuration which makes the reality of empirical and rational knowledge possible. This centrality of the mind is underscored by the fact that the mind possesses certain *a priori* principles and forms. It is in this way that objects, both in the outer and the inner sense can be known. These *a priori* principles and forms are the intuition of time and space and the categories.

These metaphysical principles, according to Kant, make it possible for the mind to stamp its forms on objects in nature as well as to structure sensibility in the outer or phenomena world. The process is simply that the five senses receive data from experience. The mind, as a reaction to what is obtained through the senses, imposes its forms on objects received, thus structuring, and organizing experience. By this act of structuring and organizing experience, the role of the mind goes into creating a congenial ambient, a socio-cultural transformation which entails stability, equality, justice, and social steadiness in society.

One of the hallmarks of social development is the arrangement or harmonization of social utilities in such a way as to create aesthetic haven and pleasure for mankind. This is what informed the development of recreation and amusement centers. The order seen in specialized sys-

[48] Ewing, *A Short Commentary on Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason, 16.

tems and intricate inventions, such as the mechanism of a wristwatch, computer, machines, etc., is owed to the mind's inherent coordination of sense experience. Natural principles, in abstract form such as natural law; the idea of justice, equality, and natural rights – to mention a few which exist in nature – were intuited by the mind which then arranged or re-ordered and codified them into concrete laws. In this regard, social interaction and peaceful co-existence between individuals, nations, states, and countries is achieved. This has no doubt fostered social development.

Second, according to Kant, the mind possesses the capability to apprehend *a priori* realities, specifically referring to the mind's retrospective and reflexive awareness of its mental operations The mind is able to conceive and initiate ideas, concepts, and imaginations. Though these ideas are metaphysical entities, they are transformed into visible forms which in turn account for the development witnessed in our existential world hitherto. Unah clearly articulated this point in this manner:

> *Without these ideas, concepts, plans and projects generated by human reason, no* meaning can be assigned to the world, no mobilization and organization of experience would be possible. It is because of the metaphysical capacity of the mind to generate ideas and concepts, plans and projects that we are able to create systems of meaning and add value to the world.[49]

With regard to issues relating to development, it can be argued that the world with its advancements – in technology, engineering, arts, medicine, architecture, agriculture etc., and human institutions such as politics (national and international), government, empires, kingdoms, etc. – would not have witnessed unprecedented evolution without the mind's input. It can be said presumptuously that these inventions were never the hand-work of any divine but that of "[...] human beings that invented the idea of politics and political institutions."[50] It can be vehemently argued that these ideas, concepts, plans etc., were first *a priori* entities before they were translated into concrete forms. In this light, it is undeniable, that Kant's philosophical evolution has had a significant

[49] Jim I. Unah, *Metaphysics* (Akoka-Yaba: University of Lagos Press, 2010), 139.

[50] Fred Miller, "Aristotle's Political Theory," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2022 Edition), eds. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/aristotle-politics/.

influence on nature. This was the view expressed by Schonfeld thus, "while traditional scholars largely dismiss his holistic ontology prior to the *Critique*, innovations in the environmental and physical sciences have validated Kant's claims as realistic insights in the workings of nature."[51]

Third, the *synthetic a priori* theory of Kant implicitly accounts for or takes the mind as the foundation of development. The mind at this level works on received data; let's say of a horse and a man. The mind then proceeds to imagine the possibility of a blend of these two, an object or creation which is partly human and partly animal, a centaur. This creation or imagination of the mind may not yet exist in the empirical world, but it already exists in the mind.

This is also a way of explaining or accounting for inventions and innovations in scientific and technological breakthroughs in the world. The mind first thinks up or conceives a possibility of something or an idea that has not yet existed. One way the mind achieves this is by drawing example or model from nature. Take for example the invention of the airplane ('a vehicle designed for air travel, which has wings and one or more engines'), the prototype is said to be inspired by observing a flying bird. Though it started as an idea conceived in the mind, these ideas soon crystallize into concrete realties, in the form of an airplane which we see today.

So, all other forms of inventions – train, vehicles, ship, motorcycle, electricity, bulb, computer, domestic machines, various forms of tools, etc. – started in like manner. In all, we say that the role of the mind is inexhaustible in the creation and re-creation of our world. What certainly brings illumination to the mind to initiate ideas, concepts, and remold them into material forms is the power of transcendence. As Okoro puts it:

> It is the power to institute transcendence that opens up new horizons or vistas of vision otherwise termed illumination. Illumination in turn unveils to us the hidden nature of assents as problems and the opening up of these hidden secrets of life implies new discoveries or inventions that help to revalidate and consolidate our knowledge of and control over nature. By so doing, we forge new concepts, demolish or surmount existent problems. It is the strict de-

[51] Martin Schönfeld and Michael Thompson, "Kant's Philosophical Development," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2019 Edition), eds. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2024/entries/kant-development/.

> votion, or the rigor, or discipline to remain consistent, to remain in focus, to be on course, on matters of universe demolition and reconstruction, that is, the motion towards self-realization and self-perfection otherwise termed development.[52]

Unah, reflecting on the concept of transcendence says that "transcendence itself is the act of forming relations; the act of forming notions of unity, notions of universality and notions of homogeneity. With these notions created by transcendence we are able to relate one thing to another, connect one experience to another to make them meaningful."[53] It is through all these essential ingredients of the mind (power of transcendence, the forms of intuitions and the categories of understanding) that development is accomplished in our social milieu. Thus, "the strived by man to sustain his environment remains therefore a mandatory ontological concern."[54]

IX. Kant's critique of traditional ontology and its implications

In his critique of traditional ontology, Kant made a distinction between transcendental and empirical use of concepts. "By means of the empirical use categories refer to objects which are given according to the forms of our sensibility. And the alleged transcendental use of concepts would entail a reference to things in themselves, i.e., to non-sensible objects."[55] The set of categories Kant talked about in the *Critique* cannot be applied to the *noumenon* but only to sensibility (phenomenon). The distinction pointed out by Kant is that while the *noumena* refer to things as they are in themselves, the *phenomena* are things as they appear to us. The latter is knowable, while the former is not. The clear implication this has on the mind's ability to conceive and originate ideas is that the mind unquestionably possesses an infinite capacity for creativity and innovation. The limited capability of the mind is reducible to sensibility, whereas it is limitless in the realm of transcendence – making the mind's imaginative ability/power infinite.

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[52] Okoro, 212.

[53] Unah, *Metaphysics*, 123.

[54] Wala Olajide, "Man and Environment: An Existential Appraisal," *Essence: An International Journal of Philosophy* 1, nos. 2-3 (1997): 18.

[55] Matias Orono, "Kant and the Objective, Logical and Transcendental Meaning of the Categories," *Estudos Kantianos, Marilia* 10, no. 1 (2022): 190.

X. Conclusion

From the foregoing, we have been able to explicate the conceptual framework of Kant's theory (ontology/transcendence), the origin of our thoughts or concepts formation, the constitution of the human mind, and establish its link to development. We have been able to establish that ideas and concepts, originating from the mind, are the essential pathways through which order and development, firmly take root in the existential world. Regardless of the order and development humans have been able to use their minds to initiate in their environment and existential space, the end must be the happiness and well-being of mankind. It is pertinent to affirm that the cultivation of values and morals in individuals plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable physical and ecological development in the tangible world.

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Mythological Aspects of Supreme Power Concept by Eusebius Pamphilus

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Abstract

The article deals with one of the earliest Christian interpretations of the supreme secular power created by Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Caesarea, during the life of the first Christian emperor Constantine the Great. It is proved that the concept by Eusebius contains mythological ideas transformed in a Christian context. In particular, the main focus of the interpretation of the Lord is the recognition of Him as Pantocrator [Παντοκράτωρ – the Lord of all] endowed with infinite power and authority over the Universe. Such an interpretation reconstructs archaic ideas about the deity as the centre of power and says nothing about his mercy and justice. This concept became the basis for the argumentation of the absolute nature of the Christian emperor's supreme power – Basileus [Βασιλεύς]. The Lord, communicating with Basileus through His Son, Christ the Logos, gives him the sacred right to reign and thus makes him godlike [Friend of God – Θεός, divinely favoured] – an icon of the Lord of all. Another mythological feature of Eusebius' interpretation of supreme power is the solution to the problematic relationship between the reign and the priesthood. Eusebius believed that the Lord's endowment of Basileus with the right to reign obliges him to perform priestly functions at the same time. The purpose of Basileus' priesthood was to enlighten his flock about the essence of the Word of God, and not to observe religious rituals. In this way, the role of the basileus-priest differed from the Patriarch. Thus, the mythological nature of the concept by Eusebius of Caesarea is the fact that he unconsciously replaced various semantic connections. This happened because he could not explain the essence of supreme power and its value to society in a different way. The foundation of Eusebius' mythological thinking is the beginning of the synthesized rationality (historical understanding of the real past) and myth (substitution of history by religious tradition) of the history of the Byzantine Empire.

Keywords: *myth; power; reign; priesthood; rationality; history; image; Logos*

I. Introduction

The ideas of Byzantine monarchs and thinkers about the nature of supreme power are largely determined by specific characteristics of the historical formation of the Byzantine Empire. In particular, there is still no consensus among researchers regarding the date when Byzantium became a political entity. Therefore, the process of its gradual organisation can be considered among the factors in the formation of supreme power idea that is unlike anything else. So to speak, the exceptional circumstances of the emergence of the Roman Empire gave rise to beliefs in the exceptional nature of its governance.

The history of Byzantium gives the impression of a mythical empire – it seems that as such it has always existed, even when it did not exist.[1] Being a part of various people, cultures and states, the future capital of the Second Rome asserted its universality and inviolability for centuries, while with the fall of the First Rome in 476, it freed itself from a political opponent and gained completeness and self-sufficiency. This is one of the reasons for the conception that the power of Basileus, as if emerges from infinity, rises from the depths of time, declaring its pre-eternity as the great prophecies declared: the pre-eternity of the Lord who walked here; the pre-eternity of Jerusalem and Rome; the pre-eternity of Constantinople, which appeared due to God's will under the hands of the Greeks and Romans to embody the religious idea born in the bowels of Judea – becoming a synthesis of three great cultures and civilizations.

The historical myth is formed as a consequence of the distortion and mutual substitution of cultural and historical connections, in particular, the substitution of an individual, physical subject by a collective, symbolic subject. Rome considered itself Athens' and Alexandria's successor, existed in this world and equipping it according to its own laws to eternal life here and now. Jerusalem arose as the Promised Land acquired by God's will. Constantinople regarded itself as the heir, earthly and heavenly, of both Rome and Jerusalem. It appeared in history of humankind in order for all humankind to pass Christ's way through the cross, to prepare its believers for the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven, so that they would be able to meet the Second Coming

[1] Petr Aleksandrovich Sapronov, *Vlast' kak metafizicheskaja i istoricheskaja real'nost'* [Power as a Metaphysical and Historical Reality] (Saint Petersburg: Cerkov' i kul'tura, 2001), 426. I employ here the BGN (United States Board on Geographic Names) and PCGN (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use) romanisation system for the Russian language for all the transliterated titles or words.

in the correct state and mood. You should not passively wait for the last Judgment, you should come to it raptured and cleansed from sin as much as possible. The mission and fate of the Basileus consisted of this task: his reign was nothing more than a repetition of the path of the God-man and the desire to save humanity during life, transforming it on the basis of Godlikeness into God-manhood – introducing it into the bosom of God during life in this world. Consequently, the seizure of geographical space, the political submission of people, as well as the emphasized isolation from them were not a priority of Byzantine policy: it is significant that for a thousand years of its existence Byzantium did not expand its geographical borders. In this sense, the end of the earthly existence of the Byzantine Empire was not predetermined historically and logically, but comprehended by each of its believers as an eschatological idea and put into practice as soon as another monotheistic religion was formed and strengthened nearby.

In other words, Byzantium did not need a historical myth or religious history as the basis of its existence, as long as it had a religious myth in which it acted as the subject of the historical continuity of the Christian idea. This religious myth could only be preserved by making it a form of supreme power. Therefore, instead of reforming foreign policy in order to expand new lands and arrange them in accordance with the norms and ideals of Eastern Christianity, Constantinople saw its destiny in implementing a strong conservative domestic policy to create an accurate earthly model of the Heavenly City. At the same time, it expanded and strengthened the authority as spiritual metropolis for foreigners and neighboring states, implementing the principle of universality of the Christian idea as its *supra-worldliness*, thus representing the autocratic imperial power as *world-powerful* (κοσμοκρατορικῆς). If Byzantium still had to fight, then the wars were defensive and solely for returning lost territories, as evidenced by numerous treatises on the art of war.[2] Constantinople, as the capital of the Heavenly City,

[2] It is about the Byzantine-Ottoman wars, since 1299 and a series of military conflicts with the Pechenegs in the IX–XII centuries: Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad*, trans. Elizabeth A. S. Dawes (Cambridge and Ontario: Byzantine Series, 2000); Nikifor Grigora, *Istoriya romeev* [Byzantine History], trans. R. V. Yashunsky, Vol. I (Saint Petersburg: Svoe izdatel'stvo, 2013); Georg Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. J. Hussey (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), VI, VII; Gennadiy Grigor'yevich Litavrin, *Vizantiyskoe obshchestvo i gosudarstvo v X-XI vv.* [Byzantine Society and State in the X–XI centuries] (Moskva: Nauka, 1977); Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The Belknap Press, 2009), 49-94, 124-136; *Maurice's Stratégikon: Handbook of Byzantine Military Strategy*, trans. George T. Dennis (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984); *The Taktika of Leo VI. Text*, trans. George Dennis (Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010), 12-15; Vasiliy Grigor'yevich Vasil'evskiy, *Vizantiya i pechenegi* [Byzantium and Pechenegs], in

the location where the image of the King of Heaven remained, needed to create conditions for the voluntary involvement of people in the shadow of Eastern Christianity, and not to pursue a policy of physical enslavement and political subjugation. This idea of synthesis (in fact, mutual substitution) of politics and religion was argued in ideas about the nature of imperial power for centuries.

II. Mythological interpretation of Basileus' godlikeness

The earliest documents that initiated a controversial theological understanding of the foundations of the supreme secular power are *De laudibus Constantini* (335) and *De vita Constantini, Libri IV* (337),[3] written by Bishop Eusebius Pamphilus of Caesarea. From the first line, the interpretation of the Lord as Pantocrator, the Almighty, is striking:

> Today is the festival of our great emperor: and we his children rejoice therein, feeling the inspiration of our sacred theme. He who presides over our solemnity is the Great Sovereign himself; he, I mean, who is truly great; of whom I affirm (nor will the sovereign who hears me be offended, but will rather approve of this ascription of praise to God), that HE is above and beyond all created things, the Highest, the Greatest, the most Mighty One; whose throne is the arch of heaven, and the earth the footstool of his feet.[4]

In the same way Christ is presented by Eusebius. He consciously focused on neither the supernatural essence, nor the creationist content, nor the mercy in relation to people, but the authority and functions of the supreme Judge:

> His being none can worthily comprehend; and the ineffable splendor of the glory which surrounds him repels the gaze

Trudy [Works], ed. Vasiliy Grigor'yevich Vasil'evskiy, vol. I, 1-175 (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiya Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk, 1908).

[3] Eusebius, "Oration in Praise of Constantine," in *Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, Oration in Praise of Constantine*, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Series II, vol. 1, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (New York: The Christian Literature Company; Oxford and London: Parker and Company, 1890), 581-610; ibid., "The Life of Constantine the Great," 481-559. George Ostrogorsky even believed that all Byzantine historiography begins with Eusebius. Georg Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. J. Hussey (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), 44.

[4] "[...] There is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God." Romans. 13:1. Eusebius, "Oration in Praise of Constantine," 582.

> of every eye from his Divine majesty. His ministers are the heavenly hosts; his armies the supernal powers, who own allegiance to him as their Master, Lord, and King. The countless multitudes of angels, the companies of archangels, the chorus of holy spirits, draw from and reflect his radiance as from the fountains of everlasting light. Yea every light, and specially those divine and incorporeal intelligences whose place is beyond the heavenly sphere, celebrate this august Sovereign with lofty and sacred strains of praise. The vast expanse of heaven, like an azure veil, is interposed between those without, and those who inhabit his royal mansions: while round this expanse the sun and moon, with the rest of the heavenly luminaries (like torch-bearers around the entrance of the imperial palace), perform, in honor of their sovereign, their appointed courses; holding forth, at the word of his command, an ever-burning light to those whose lot is cast in the darker regions without the pale of heaven [...]. Our own victorious emperor renders praises to this Mighty Sovereign, I do well to follow him, knowing as I do that to him alone we owe that imperial power under which we live.[5]

It is these functions of power and force that are directly bestows by the Lord to Basileus.

Thus, formally coordinating his thought with the biblical principle of the God-ordination of the supreme power, Eusebius emphasizes that the emperor cannot be similar to Him as the Creator, but cannot help being similar to and cannot help following Pantocrator, equipping the earthly world in the image and likeness of the Heavenly world:

> This is he who holds a supreme dominion over this whole world, who is over and in all things, and pervades all things visible and invisible; the Word of God. From whom and by whom our divinely favored emperor (θεῷ φίλος βασιλεὺς), receiving, as it were a transcript of the Divine sovereignty, directs, in imitation of God himself, the administration of this world's affairs.[6]

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., 583. Θεῷ φίλος is stable expression used by Eusebius: "But God was the friend, protector, and guardian of Constantine, and bringing the plots which had been formed in secrecy and darkness to the light, he foiled them." Eusebius, "Church History from A. D. 1-324," in

As it can be seen, Eusebius does not simply repeat or interpret Scripture, but continues Apostle's thought in a way that differs significantly in defining the functions of a ruler.[7] Eusebius, in response, introduces a strong and partly provocative term, with its straightforwardness and mythological immediacy very reminiscent of the ancient Egyptian court status of *the Semer*.[8] Thus, the thinker seems to hint that, unlike a simple Christian and a subject of Byzantium, Basileus is connected with the Lord Jesus Christ not only by faith, but also by something more tangible and substantive.[9] It is a paradox, but this homage to paganism was done solely for the sake of strengthening the authority of the power of the Basileus. The thinker insisted that Constantine more than once by his own experience (!) cognized the divinity of the Saviour, and not in words, but in deeds, preached this truth to everyone. That is, he did not necessarily perform any miracles; Basileus' initiative to convene the Council of Nicaea could well be regarded as an activity for the triumph of Divine Truth. Eusebius spoke of the fact that Basileus had a stable and constant relationship with the Lord, and he turned to Constantine almost like an apostle to Christ with a plea to perform a miracle.[10]

As we see, Eusebius is trying to show that the status of the emperor not only raises, but transforms a man of mould in the eyes of the public. This transformation does not affect the very human essence of the Basileus, but changes public perception, that is, by the will of the Lord, new

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Eusebius Pamphilius: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1890-1900), 630.

[7] St. Paul says: "[...] For he is God's minister to you for good. [...] he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil." Romans, 13:4.

[8] There is a kind of Egyptian title, defining an official's status in the nobility smr-wët(j) "courtier" (literally, "unique associate"). James P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 39-40.

[9] In general, this view was consistent with the general ambiguous state of faith of the early Christians. The emperor died in 337, and grief-stricken subjects performed very suspicious ceremonies in his memory: "Our enemy of God accuses the Christians of worshipping with sacrifices the image of Constantine set up upon the porphyry column, of paying homage to it with lamp-lighting and incense or praying to it as to a god, and of offering it supplications to avert calamities." Philostorgius, *Church History*, trans. Philip R. Amidon (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical literature, 2007), 35.

[10] "Yourself, it may be, will vouchsafe at a time of leisure to relate to us the abundant manifestations which your Saviour has accorded you of his presence, and the oft-repeated visions of himself which have attended you in the hours of sleep. I speak not of those secret suggestions (ἐναργεῖς) which to us are unrevealed: but of those principles which he has instilled into your own mind, and which are fraught with general interest and benefit to the human race." Eusebius, "Oration in Praise of Constantine," 610.

knowledge about the essence of the ruling subject is formed without actually changing his essence. Because if his essence completely changed and became divine, then his actions, functions, goals and individuality itself would become incomprehensible for the public and fell out of the general picture of the world. This happens only after the physical death of the Basileus. Describing this situation, Eusebius stated:

> He is more like his Saviour, who after the manner of seeds of corn multiplied with the blessing of God, and instead of one grain produced an ear and filled the whole wide world with his fruit. Just like him the Thriceblessed instead of one became manifold by the succession of his sons, so that he is honoured also by the setting up of portraits among all the provinces along with those of his sons [...].[11]

It can be assumed that, the lifetime transformation by the Logos means, on the contrary, the spiritual enrichment of the subjects and the improvement of their perception of the supreme power. Because transformation comes from the thoughts of God. Therefore, it does not matter how the status of Basileus is acquired and transmitted – by inheritance or election; in any case, the principle of supreme election as a consequence of the original Divine choice underlies the assertion of secular power.

Being on the semantic edge of the Divine and the human, the status of the Basileus is ambivalent: it is grandiose and inaccessible to any mere mortal, but inalienable from the Lord, because it is predicative to Him. Being "His Friend," the status of a Basileus has a valuable meaning in the undivided attitude of belonging to Him. Thus, he is not independent like any servant of the Lord, but at the same time, he is clothed with the qualitative attitude of the Lord – love and need, the impossibility of the Almighty to do without him.

So, Eusebius contributed to the process of forming the idea of supreme power, according to which Basileus is not an earthly incarnation or a temporary body shell of the Heavenly King, as it was, say, in Ancient Egypt, and is not an abstractly deified person by status, as in Rome. Basileus is *the image (icon) of the one Lord of all*. In other words, he does not embody the full divine essence (then he would be God incarnate), but only that hypostasis of God that a person needs to comprehend for a righteous life. This is the difference between God-likeness and God-incarnation. The emperor is godlike as the close bearer of certain divine characteristics. While as a ruler, he is absolute in his likeness to the Al-

[11] Eusebius, "Life of Constantine," 558-559.

mighty. His absoluteness lies in the fact that he uses and improves all his human qualities to demonstrate his likeness to the Almighty. Basileus ha reason, courage, mercy, justice, humility, etc., in order to be realised in god-likeness and thereby draw closer to the Lord. Therefore, remaining a pson, he leads the retinue of the Lord, being truly transformed under the influence of the Divine Logos, the Word of God.[12]

And leaving for another world "as if brought back to life he manages the whole administration, and Victor Maximus Augustus by his very name (αὐτῷ προσρήματι) commands the government of Rome."[13]

Thus, in Eusebius' interpretation of the god-likeness of Basileus, mythological features appear: the basis of god-likeness is not just enlightenment by the sacred divine Logos and not a connection with the Almighty through Him, but the possession of power and authority as a result of this enlightenment, which is consonant with the rule of the right of the strongest. Basileus finds his place in the veneration of the Almighty, co-reigning with Jesus Christ, acting as the first and beloved conductor of the Word of God to His flock and his subjects, and performing sacred rituals to His glory. Thus, according to Eusebius, *the reign* (βασιλεία) as an essential feature of the Basileus makes sense only in conjunction with the *priesthood* (ἱερωσύνη), the service of the Lord; in isolation from each other, the reign loses its ability to govern, turning into tyranny and arbitrariness;[14] the priesthood turns into idolatry.

III. Ἱερωσύνη and βασιλεία as the essential components of the supreme power of Constantine the Great

Eusebius believed that everything that is a manifestation of the Divine Essence does not become different in relation to It but as if continues,

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[12] After all "this only begotten Word of God reigns, from ages which had no beginning, to infinite and endless ages, the partner of his Father's kingdom. And [our emperor] ever beloved by him, who derives the source of imperial authority from above, and is strong in the power of his sacred title, has controlled the empire of the world for a long period of years." Eusebius, "Oration in Praise of Constantine," 583.

[13] Eusebius, "Life of Constantine," 558.

[14] It is important to understand that the ratio of the kingdom and the priesthood at this stage of functioning and comprehension is not yet "consent," that is, *the symphony*, as Justinian will later present. Two hundred years after Eusebius, the church would become such an autonomous institution that they would need mutual equalization of rights with the state. In the meantime, the church is entirely subordinate to the state and exists mainly thanks to the mercy of Basileus. Therefore, Eusebius quite sensibly interprets the relationship between the reign and the priesthood as the *identity* of the two aspects of the activity of the Basileus. The correctness of Eusebius is confirmed by the convening of the Council of Nicaea (325) by Constantine I and his direct participation in it.

multiplies this Essence in independent substantial and accidental manifestations. The Word co-reigns with the Lord-King, being not created like man and the world, but pronounced by Him (manifested absolutely and directly, as the Whole from the Whole). And therefore, communicating directly to Basileus through grace, endows him with exclusivity among mere mortals. This exclusivity is the reign.

The royal essence of Basileus explains his priestly function: who else but the Friend of God, who has assumed the ability to ascend and rule through the Word from Jesus Christ, is able to interpret Him to his people in the best way? As soon as the Divine Logos made Basileus a virtuous and true representative of earthly power, no one else but him would be able to enlighten his subjects on the need to create the earthly foundations of the Heavenly City. The most accurate way to comprehend is through faith as a sensual form of true knowledge. Consequently, Basileus must convey the faith to every subject by personal example and direct participation in religious ceremonies and rituals. According to Eusebius, once hosting the bishops Constantine said:

> [...] On one occasion, when entertaining bishops to dinner, he let slip the remark that he was perhaps himself a bishop too, using some such words as these in our hearing: 'You are bishops of those within the Church, but I am perhaps a bishop appointed by God over those outside' (ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς μὲν τῶν εἴσω τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἐγὼ δὲ τῶν ἐκτὸς ὑπὸ θεοῦ καθεσταμένος ἐπίσκοπος ἂν εἴην.)[15]

By this example, Eusebius distinguished between Basileus and the Patriarch in favour of the former, while the latter was a supporting and servant figure, only the first among the religious ranks[16]:

> [...] To the Church of God he paid particular personal attention. When some were at variance with each other in various places, like a universal bishop appointed by God (οἷά τις κοινὸς ἐπίσκοπος ἐκ θεοῦ καθεσταμένος) he convoked councils of the ministers of God. He did not disdain to be present and attend during their proceedings, and he participated in the subjects reviewed, by arbitration promoting the peace

[15] Eusebius, "Life of Constantine," 546.

[16] Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 81.

> of God among all; and he took his seat among them as if he were one voice among many [...].[17]

The patriarch is responsible for the state of cult and Christian idea, while the emperor is the embodied torch of Divine truth in the human image. He is not God, but His spiritual likeness. And in order to spread this sensual experience, he, as a Friend of God, needs a patriarch, the servant of the Lord, to help him.

Speaking about the rights and duties of Basileus to perform priestly functions, Eusebius insisted that these rights are given to the monarch not through the ceremony of Anointing, but directly from the Lord, about which there were corresponding instructions in the Holy Scriptures: in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle Paul writes about Melchizedek, spending parallels with Jesus Christ.[18] Eusebius develops this idea, drawing a parallel between Jewish and Byzantine rituals: if Melchizedec was not consecrated by any anointing oil, especially prepared, and not even belonging by descent to the priesthood of the Jews, than Basileus is not consecrates by any oil too.[19]

Thus, according to the logic of Eusebius, the priesthood of Basileus is neither his coercion nor accident, but a direct consequence of *God-ordination* of the supreme power. *God-stated* supreme power as a symbolic demonstration of its legitimacy in the ritual of crowning the kingdom does not give such authority; the Thinker argues this with the fact that modern rituals of God-statedness differ from the rituals of God-ordination of Christ and the first kings, and therefore cannot be considered sufficient to confirm the sacred nature of Basileus. Christ as the embodiment of virtue in its pure form and heavenly life,

> [...]being anointed not with oil made of material substances, but with the divine oil of gladness. It thus indicates his especial honor, far superior to and different from that of those who, as types, were of old anointed in a more material way.[20]

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[17] Eusebius, "Life of Constantine," 494-495.

[18] Hebrews, 6:20; 7:3.

[19] Eusebius, "Church History," in *Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, Oration in Praise of Constantine*, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Series II, vol. 1, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (New York: The Christian Literature Company; Oxford and London: Parker and Company, 1890), 86.

[20] Ibid.

Basileus necessarily undergo the ceremony of Anointing with oil made by a man to affirm the fullness of awareness of accepting the power of Christ through Basileus in society. The emphasis of this ritual on its individual substantive aspects reveals its mythological character: the symbolism of the ritual does not in the least detract from the idea of God-ordination of supreme power, and this power is such under any circumstances, because the Lord endows a mere mortal with the radiance of His Logos, and the mortal becomes Basileus, the blessed holder of knowledge about the Word. Just as the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples of Christ, the Divine Logos descends on the Basileus, endowing him with the knowledge of the Truth and forever linking him with Christ. Of course, it happens that the Lord tests His flock, and allows an impious and unvirtuous hierarch to ascend the throne; in this case, without violating the principle of God-ordination of power, he will not be God-stated. The true Basileus is the one "who has formed his soul to royal virtues, according to the standard of that celestial kingdom."[21]

Thus, in order to be divinely chosen, one must be wise like the Old Testament kings – consciously and heartily accept the authority of the Lord of all, consume His Logos-Truth into oneself, and follow His example in earthly governance by one's actions. This is the charisma of Constantine as the basis of the virtue of his royal policy. And this is *the philosophy* of all his acts. He is not just a believing sovereign, but a *true* believer.[22] And in this sense, Eusebius considers him the only or the first among the philosophers on the throne, a believer in order to understand himself and, therefore, the whole world entrusted to him.

All these merits made it possible to honour Basileus as Equal-to-the-Apostles after his death. Eusebius in *Life of Constantine* presented this not as the idolatry of the flock, but as the natural order of things, which was based on the infinite faith of Constantine himself.[23]

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[21] Eusebius, "Oration in Praise of Constantine," 585. And such is the emperor Constantine, "whose character is formed after the Divine original of the Supreme Sovereign, and whose mind reflects, as in a mirror, the radiance of his virtues. Hence is our emperor perfect in discretion, in goodness, in justice, in courage, in piety, in devotion to God: he truly and only is a philosopher, since he knows himself, and is fully aware that supplies of every blessing are showered on him from a source quite external to himself, even from heaven itself." Ibid., 586.

[22] In accordance with the covenant Πίστει νοοῦμεν (understand through faith). Hebrews, 11:3.

[23] Describing the temple of the Twelve Apostles erected by Constantine, the thinker noted that Basileus "had prepared the place there for the time when it would be needed on his decease, intending with supreme eagerness of faith that his own remains should after death partake in the invocation of the Apostles, so that even after his decease he might benefit from the worship which would to be conducted there in honour of the Apostles. He therefore gave instructions for services to be held there, setting up a central altar. So he erected twelve repositories (θήκας) like sacred monuments (στήλας ἱεράς) in honour and memory of the company of the

The installation of Constantine's tomb among the twelve arks likens Basileus to Christ among the twelve disciples. Although Eusebius does not say this directly, his following reflections lead to precisely this conclusion:

> Alone of mortals the Blessed One reigned even after death, and the customs were maintained just as if he were alive, God having granted this to him and no other since time began. Alone therefore among Emperors and unlike any other he had honoured by acts of every kind the all-sovereign God and his Christ, and it is right that he alone enjoyed these things, as the God over all allowed his mortal part to reign among mankind, thus demonstrating the ageless and deathless reign of his soul to those with minds not stonyhard.[24]

IV. Conclusion

Eusebius' interpretation of the essence of the supreme imperial power clearly demonstrates that his thinking did not completely overcome of pagan norms and formally retained many features of the myth, which was quite natural. Observing the rapid strengthening of the position of Christianity and its rapid spread throughout the territory of the Empire and beyond, the thinker hastened to believe in the possibility of the earthly achievement of the heavenly ideal of social system. Being a happy witness of the emergence of the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D. and the First Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D., Eusebius expected the imminent establishment of the Heavenly Kingdom on earth and the seat of Constantine at the right hand of Christ Pantokrator. The manifestation of mythological aspects in ideas about supreme power is not only a consequence of the remnants of paganism and the instability of rational norms of thinking. It is also the desire to perceive power as a concrete public phenomenon, close and understandable to the public consciousness, historically necessary and not alienated from every citizen. The monarch, who directly performs priestly functions, is positioned not as a formal ruler, but as a sovereign, which is with his whole soul and heart one with the Lord and his people.

Apostles, and put his own coffin (λάρναξ) in the middle with those of the Apostles ranged six on either side." Eusebius, "Life of Constantine," 555. Garth Fowden, "The Last Days of Constantine: Oppositional Versions and Their Influence," *Journal of Roman Studies* 84 (1994): 146-170.

[24] Eusebius, "Life of Constantine," 557.

Two hundred years later, in the reign of Justinian I, the impossibility of the Heavenly City on earth and the reign of Basileus as a Friend of God was finally realized. Justinian legalised the interpretation of the emperor's status as a disciple, servant, and imitator of the Lord, and forever separated the priesthood from the reign, favouring the former and establishing *a symphony*[25] relationship between them. On the one hand, this streamlined power relations, on the other hand, it made the Basileus's persona more symbolic and abstract and weakening of his connection with the people.

Nevertheless, the mythological nature of ideas about the supreme power declared by Eusebius did not disappear from the theological discourse and even received quite a strong development over time, as later writings testify. In particular, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, referring to Constantine the Great, pointed out that the exclusivity and holiness (ἅγιος) of the Basileus are manifested not only in themselves, but also in unity with objects that the emperor uses during sacred rites and ceremonies:

> [...] and it shall not be in the authority either of the emperor, or of the patriarch , or of any other, to take these robes of state or the diadems from the holy church of God. And mighty dread hangs over them who are minded to transgress any of these divine ordinances.[26]

Thus, over the centuries, there was preserved the irrational connection between the subject and the object.[27] It is expressed in particular in the very name of Constantine VII:

> The epithet 'Porphyrogenitus', that is, born in Porphyry, a special location of the palace, meant that the parents of

[25] "The greatest gifts that God, in his celestial benevolence, has bestowed on mankind are priesthood and sovereignty, the one serving on matters divine, and the other ruling over human affairs, and caring for them. Each proceeds from one and the same authority, and regulates human life. Thus nothing could have as great a claim on the attention of sovereigns as the honour of priests, seeing that they are the very ones who constantly offer prayer to God on the sovereigns' behalf. Hence, should the one be above reproach in every respect, and enjoy access to God, while the other keeps in correct and proper order the realm that has been entrusted to it, there will be a satisfactory harmony, conferring every conceivable benefit on the human race." Peter Sarris, *The Novels of Justinian. A Complete Annotated English Translation*, trans. David J. D. Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 97-98.

[26] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravscik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins (Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1967), 67-69.

[27] Gennadiy Grigor'yevich Litavrin, *Kak zhili vizantijcy* [How did the Byzantines live?] (Moskva: Nauka, 1974), 50.

> the Basileus then occupied the imperial throne, and, therefore, the 'Porphyrogenitus' had rights that, if not legally, then, by virtue of custom, gave him a number of advantages over 'non-Porphyrogenitus'. Of the 35 emperors in the 9th-12th centuries, hardly every third hold this proud title.

This connection is a mythological form of the relationship between man and the world; its violation was understood as the basis for the violation of the Law of God. This testified to the continuation of the Christian myth in the thinking of Byzantine theologians and the support of this myth in the public consciousness, which tends to remain conservative.

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Complexity, Reality and Ontological Insecurity: On Mistakes and Navigational Skills

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Abstract

This article explores the concept of reality and the transformation concerning the complex approach to the modes of existence based on the interrelation between diverse actants that make up our world. Considering recent ontological debates and critiques of modernity, the article argues for a shift away from ready-made suppositions about reality and the desire for simplified answers. We propose a radical idea of an actant interaction perspective grounded in Bruno Latour's and Hartmut Rosa's ideas of exploring an ontology embracing curiosity, imagination, and the importance of making mistakes as necessary attitudes in navigating the uncontrollable nature of reality. The article emphasizes the importance of embracing a sense of liberty when comprehending and interacting with the world. It encourages us to concentrate on the strengths and connections of living organisms.

Keywords: *ontology; mistakes; reality; adaptive transformation; uncertainty*

I. Introduction

This essay works by networking conceptual considerations and empirically informed descriptions, aligning them in a particular direction: a detailed elaboration of the adaptive transformation concept. Mainly, it is a place to transit through the question of how to engage complex realities and diverse living beings by elaborating contemporary questions around the ideas of the uncontrollability of reality and navigational capabilities.[1]

[1] Sebastián Alejandro González Montero, *Living in Transit: Youth, Nomads and Reality: A Narrative Essay on Becoming and Education* (Bogotá: Universidad de La Salle, Ediciones Unisalle, 2023).

We are real beings able to deal with reality through performances that express our capabilities and explorations.[2] Indeed, anyone interested in living knows that motivations, desires, goals, challenges, and achievements come from real life, which consists of unsolvable contradictions, like pain-love, sorrow and happiness, friends and not friends, inequality and privilege, and so on.[3] In the middle of reality and its challenges, we exist. It is not a dream. Real living does not concern illusions. We live surrounded by images, models of reality, simulacra of facts, electronic devices representing quotidian issues, and information ideologically displaying biased symbolized living scenarios. In any case, reality is there flowing by its immanent becoming.[4]

We live among real living beings and actual challenging events. That represents a human dilemma: to take over things or let them happen? Living is complicated. We constantly face similar issues. How to incubate a sense of good humor or appreciation of complexity and variation in the middle of living? How can we navigate reality by learning and making mistakes without renouncing to handle things and inventing scenarios to live? How can we manage change and simultaneously ask for stability?

To speak of adaptive transformation and reality as being radically complex is to take up a position in the recent ontological debates concerning the problem of human capabilities and the uncontrollability of the real.[5] It is well known that humans are keen to make decisions based on logical reasoning and planning. Who wants to drift into uncertainties without having a plan? "Out of the blue," goes the saying. Does reality conform to previously prescribed human programs? At times, that may be true, while at other times, it may not. How to be sure? Would I make it? There is a constant struggle to make it through. We are aware of the uncertain nature of reality. However, that awareness represents existential pressures provoking anxiety, weariness, and depression.[6]

Reality rebelliously exceeds us. Despite all our efforts to engineer

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[2] Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 191-255.

[3] Purissima Emelda Egbekpalu, "Aristotelian Concept of Happiness (Eudaimonia) and its Conative Role in Human Existence: A Critical Evaluation," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 6, no. 2 (2021): 75-86.

[4] Dave Elder-Vass, *The Reality of Social Construction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 64-86.

[5] Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, trans. Alan Sheridan and John Law (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 153-212; Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 181-291; Hartmut Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World*, trans. James Wanger (Cambridge: Polity, 2020), 60-85.

[6] Alain Ehrenberg, *The Weariness of the Self: Diagnosing the History of Depression in the Contemporary Age* (Montreal: McGill's Queen's University Press, 2010), 21-70.

the world, we are lost in seeking purpose and meaning. There are options, nevertheless. Curiosity, imagination, and exploration represent some of the best attitudes in front of open events, odd beings, and insubordinate realities. It is essential to note that while curiosity, imagination, and exploration can lead to growth, they also come with the risk of making mistakes and being wrong. On the other hand, being curious, imaginative, and explorative can also lead to making mistakes and being wrong sometimes. Can we deal with that and find reasons to live better?

A disregard for convention is needed here. It is better to say that it is necessary to disturb comfort regarding commonly shared habits of going into assumptions about reality that give us already-made answers and securities. *Ontology* has been the name for the tradition of discussing ready-made suppositions about reality and the field of seeking principles.[7] Essence, substance, nature, and identity are words about previously defined realities supposedly ensuring safety. Everything is better if it is possible to believe that, despite changes, struggles, and elusiveness, something is there to keep us safe in the framework of solid beings. At least, that is what we, humans, would prefer to think.[8]

How to think beyond our narrow perception of things and preformed beliefs? It can be a great relief to stop trying to reduce everything to a single source and seek a universal answer for everything. Authoritarian attitudes are behind those who seek simplifications. Elitism is the sociopolitical outcome of that. It comes from old wisdom the reckoning with this fact: Reality is real. It is out there independently of us.[9] On the other hand, conceptual procedures and methodological tools can provide the means to map and model reality.[10] At least, as a premise, it is possible to say that reality is objective, and reality's models are very useful human inventions attached to facts and enabling survival. We have inherited a similar thesis from modern times: we can manage uncertainty by modeling facts and creating tools for transformation and adaptation.[11]

That thesis comes with a concrete question, nevertheless. Is there a single model standing somewhere that will solve all problems? Let us say

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[7] Dale Jacquette, *Ontology* (Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing Ltd, 2002), 12-134.

[8] Hans Blumenberg, *Work on Myth*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 3-113.

[9] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 130-156; Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World*, 102-117.

[10] Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 179.

[11] Stuart Brock and Edwin Mares, *Realism and Anti-realism* (Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing Ltd, 2007), 11-48; Alfred W. Crosby, *The Measure of Reality: Quantification and Western Society, 1250-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3-109.

"no": There is no such thing.[12] What would happen if we were to say that we can only get to know realities when we encounter them and model them from diverse and complex perspectives? The reality principle is that there are neither places nor things much more significant than reality, where explanations are the strength of truth. The argument concerns a radical object-oriented *ontology*. We know nothing until we meet and follow realities, living beings' capabilities, and factual connections.[13] Ultimately, a particular topic is at the bottom of our effort here.

We are calling for freedom based on a realistic approach to reality. There is no more totality. There is no more substance. There are no more transcendental fields. "Things in themselves lack nothing."[14] We have traditionally framed our relationship with the world under the assumption that it is controllable and that we can project our lives onto the future through planning designs and collective goals. But what can happen if we consider avoiding metaphysical suppositions about reality? What could be the outcome of acknowledging that the way living things connect and intertwine with each other at various ontological levels creates active networks to explore?

Considering different frameworks and exploring more convenient routes can have enormous benefits. By embracing the unknown with fearless curiosity, we can avoid oversimplification and embrace the complexities of diverse realities. Instead of submission or judgment, our actions toward reality should focus on interpretation and comprehension. We can recognize, clarify, categorize, measure, and conceptualize the differentiated aspects of life without assuming that these operations lead to definite truths.

A final introductory word. Our research premise comes from recent ontological debates and discussions in cognitive sciences about reality's principle and our possibilities to know and think. We decided to isolate those debates and discussions going into Bruno Latour's and Hartmut Rosa's oeuvre as a methodological choice.[15] However, a caveat is needed. "Commentary is never faithful. Either there is repetition, which is not commentary, or there is commentary, which is said differently. In other words, there is translation and betrayal."[16] Following this idea, we do not work

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[12] Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 179.

[13] Graham Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology: A New Theory of Everything* (London: Pelican, 2018), 19-58.

[14] Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 193.

[15] Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World*, 96-90; Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 3-59; Bruno Latour, *After Lockdown: A Metamorphosis*, trans. Julie Rose (Cambridge: Polity, 2021), 19-29; Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*, 1-22.

[16] Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 193.

over a reproduction of their theoretical considerations. Instead, we work on a question in which their thoughts are at play and handle them creatively using complementary materials – from Kathryn Schulz's *Lost and Found* to Clarice Lispector's *The Complete Stories*.[17]

II. Uncontrolled reality

How do we build the structures required to control the problematic natural forces around us? How do we construct the social bonds necessary to support us? Those questions illustrate a well-known human driving imperative of getting safe environments to live our lives. True, Post-Industrial Western civilizations had been trying to engineer realities for a very long time. We have been attempting to control realities by making them visible and knowable by unfolding descriptions of what is there.[18] Engineering the world concerns how to make things accessible. The more knowledge we have about how things are, the better we manage them in terms of physical modification, manipulation, and alienation.[19] In addition, controlling realities concerns managemental administration.

> The history of our modern relationship to the world is a history of conquering and dominating the night with electric light, the sky with airplanes, the seas with ships, the body with medicine, the temperature of our surroundings with air conditioning, and so on.[20]

Finally, controlling the world refers to attempts to make it worthwhile. Transforming, designing, and producing: "What is there, what is present is instrumentalized, transformed into the material and the object of our projections and desires."[21] Throughout modern times and into late modernity, we have developed science, technology, economic systems, and political structures to exert control over the world through gradual and ongoing processes.

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[17] Clarice Lispector, *The Complete Stories*, trans. Katrina Dodson (New York: New Directions, 2015), 17-20; Kathryn Schulz, *Lost and Found: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 2022), 1-77.

[18] Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World*, 41-57.

[19] One of the most successful attempts to do that is, for instance, Pasteur's revolutionary comprehension and manipulation of the small entities behind diseases. Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 158-176.

[20] Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World*, 16.

[21] Ibid., 17.

III. Upheavals

History has made clear that reality resists us. A privileged example of that fact usually comes from the history of revolution – notably, the Latin American history associated with the ideas of emancipation and social justice.[22] History helps to illustrate that reality is wild and defiant because it is constitutively uncontrollable. The world constantly resists our attempts to control it, as evidenced by recent events such as the QAnon movement, Russia's involvement in international conflict, and the emergence of new COVID-19. Additionally, there have been political upheavals in the USA and Canada, protests in Latin America – e.g., Chile and Colombia – and ongoing debates between left-wing and right-wing groups.[23] Contemporary challenges are chaotic and difficult to manage, and they remind us that humans often feel lost and uncertain in our place in the world.

IV. Being lost

Being lost means that we are at the mercy of open possibilities. In that way, we are susceptible to constantly losing things (from loved people to capabilities) in the hands of non-human forces and events. Death is the limit of a regularly experienced situation of being lost[24]. We can indeed perish in this endeavor that is living. We can cease to exist. But being lost also concerns an existential condition of the living. We are here. And we can die. In the middle, we are radically lost because we do not know precisely how to face the endeavor of living while death comes. The ontological insecurity stands with the psychological insecurity – i.e., anxiety – coming from reality's absolutism: its stubbornness of not being at the human will and desires.[25]

In general, being lost is about the anxiety of not knowing what to do, what answers are better given the events already happening, and how to face open and uncontrolled possibilities in the upcoming present. We are lost until we die. Living is complicated because losing involves questions we do not know how to answer.

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[22] Enzo Traverso, *Revolution: An Intellectual History* (London: Verso, 2021), 32-72; Charles Tilly, Ernesto Castañeda, and Lesley J. Wood, *Social Movements, 1768-2018* (London: Routledge, 2019), 1-15.

[23] Fernando Calderón and Manuel Castells, *The New Latin America*, trans. Ramsey McGlazer (Cambridge: Polity, 2020).

[24] Schulz, *Lost and Found*, 16-25; Michel Foucault, *The Japan Lectures: A Transnational Critical Encounter*, trans. John Rajehman (London: Routledge, 2023), 125-150.

[25] Blumenberg, *Work on Myth*, 149-263; Carl G. Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*, trans. Richard Francis Garrington Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 31-63.

V. Powerlessness

"It is breathtaking, the extinguishing of a consciousness."[26] Death is not just about disappearing. It is about a diminishing process of becoming powerless. Being lost means we can be separated from the things we can do, the ideas we can engage in, and the habits we follow. We are lost when we are separated from action possibilities. That is poverty: the critical situation of being negated in the sense that the things we can do and the conditions of doing them are canceled, evaporated, and unjustly distributed. Lives, freedoms, and capabilities are the material conditions of doing things. Without that, we are lost in poverty: too poor to freely experience and enjoy the power of doing what we can do.[27]

VI. Quotidian difficulties

Being lost, misplaced, and imperfectly anchored to the time and place we are in is a fact that can come as a becoming by which we risk losing our minds and hearts. The nomad and the insane: the ordinary and the existential, are usually stuck together.[28] Existential questions are typically related to everyday situations. We are lost in the universe. But we can be lost in thought or a conversation. We can be adrift in a book. Alternatively, we can wander on unknown streets. We can fall in love and lose our minds. Quotidian losses are part of being unable to find one's way.

> We can lose our credit card, our driver's license, the receipt for the item we need to return; we can lose our good name, our life savings, and our job. We can lose faith and lose hope and lose the custody of our children.[29]

At a collective level, losses can be historically fixed: famine, terrorism, natural disasters, pandemics, political turmoil, and economic contingencies. In the end, we are lost. That is. We are lost in this universe surpassing us. Every time we see a picture of the Earth navigating the universe's space, we can be sure we are lost and powerless. How the universe is and how we can manage to live it is marked by losses and possibilities open to whatever can be the case, to whatever can be a

[26] Schulz, 15.

[27] Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2009), 31-124.

[28] Schulz, *Lost and Found*, 4; Julian Young, *Friedrich Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 273-293 and 528-531.

[29] Schulz, *Lost and Found*, 5.

change. "This is the essential, avaricious nature of loss: it encompasses, without distinction, the trivial and the consequential, the abstract and the concrete, the mere display and the permanently gone."[30]

VII. Being open

On the other hand, being lost is also about the diversity and open constitution of active thinking and the enterprise of discovering new things. Adaptive transformation: Starting with the idea that life is an adventure with no guarantees can be helpful in exploring its meaning. It involves risk but also offers promise.

Being lost and making sense of reality. We are lost because we are at the mercy of making mistakes while walking the world. We do not have truth as the signal we need to navigate uncertainties. Everything would be more accessible and comfortable otherwise. We have lost God. Moreover, we have lost the truth. Perhaps we never have had them but invented them because we are lost.[31] The fact is that we live precisely another way around. By making mistakes and engaging in dubitative inquiries, we can find ourselves lost but living within genuine opportunities to deal with the our-being-lost situation. The main consequence of that notion is that living and being lost are the same.

VIII. Being right, being wrong

Being right? Being wrong? We may enjoy all the moments of being right and reject the situation of being inaccurate, erroneous, and false. The enjoyment of being right is commonly related to the assumption that our convictions, beliefs, assessments, memories, concepts, and perceptions are valid and correct and good, proper, and complete. It is the biased condition of the mind, indeed.

In contrast, making mistakes has traditionally been an example of our limits and imperfections. Making mistakes has been understood as connecting with the worst human part. They have been equalized to stupidity, ignorance, laziness, lack of attention, timidity, and inferiority. Being wrong is a shame on us. Moreover, given the case that we can incorporate mistakes in our comprehension of things (not precisely a quotidian fact), our common attitudes to them are about delivering excuses ("I was wrong, but..."), acknowledging them as not being our own ("Mistakes were made by...") or considering them as being other people's

[30] Ibid., 6.

[31] Blumenberg, *Work on Myth,* 174-175.

responsibilities. We can excel at recognizing other people's mistakes. Even when we are wrong, we fight to be correct.[32]

IX. Making mistakes

Mistakes can be understood as presenting the opposite image of the thinker's goodwill to pursue the truth that desires, at the same time, to share it – i.e., philosophy and science understood in the context of the idea of seeking truth and knowledge.[33] The awareness of being lost, living in the middle of unknown and undecided possibilities, represents a strange situation. Curiously, we usually believe we are correct – that is, we can be straightforwardly right even knowing we are lost.

Paying attention to mistakes crystallized a more and less novel research path. Far from representing an environment to sustain imperfections and pathologies, making mistakes constitutes scenarios for human apprehension and cognition. Indeed, making mistakes allows us to think and learn amid uncertainties and changes. So, the questions to be made are other. It is not about getting the truth. It is about something other than being right. It is about the question of managing the situation of being wrong. What is the meaning of making mistakes for us who strongly desire and need to be right – i.e., being right is gratifying but also imperative for our survival?

X. Cloudy judgment

We can be wrong about facts, convictions, and beliefs. We can "believe something is true when it is false – or, conversely, believe it is false when it is true."[34] Mistakes are complex, nevertheless. We can be wrong in many ways. That is, we can make copious, abundant mistakes. It is a human, too-human capability. It is possible to find a detailed error taxonomy. Unfortunately, the list of human errors is too large to consider – i.e., error types and error forms.[35] So, let us take some limited examples.

There are slips, lapses, and mistakes. Slips are accidental declines in perception. We can wrongly notice how things are or escape to keep them on track. That means we may not see things correctly because they are beyond our perceptual limits.

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[32] Kathryn Schulz, *Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 50-77.

[33] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2001), 129-140.

[34] Schulz, *Being Wrong*, 11.

[35] James Reason, *Human Error* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 15-34.

We may get rid of information in the way things are happening. Lapses can be minor errors in assessing things: a vague impression mixed with biased judgments gives us blurred images of the events, producing inadequate and obscure final opinions and resolutions.

There are "errors of planning and errors of execution, errors of commission and errors of omission, design errors and operator errors, endogenous errors, and exogenous errors."[36] *Human Factors Research* and *Decision Studies* are fields where errors occur because of human bodily and cognitive features that have been recently interrogated.[37]

Comprehensively, mistakes can be understood as failures in perceptual and judgment processes. From inferences to selecting information procedures to build reference frames, we can proceed by deficiently making connections between states of affairs' descriptions, modeling, mapping, conceptualizing, and judging. Generally, we can make mistakes because of poor reasoning or carelessness – e.g., wrongly jumping between premises and conclusions.

XI. Wrongness

How can the experience of being wrong be described? That question represents an obsession for those who deal with the problem of knowing if truth and errors are real beings or, instead, results of how we perceive, apprehend, and reason about facts and entities.

On the one hand, there is an ontological way to face mistakes going into critical realism – that is, going into the idea that we can measure errors concerning a knowable reality.[38] Recent debates around the concept of the social construction of knowledge and reality can nurture complex notions about realistically incorporating human possibilities to create accurate models of reality and the awareness of the biased nature of those possibilities.[39]

On the other hand, we can examine and question the reasons to affirm our rightness concerning the possibility of being wrong. By doing that, we test convictions, beliefs, values, perceptions, and concepts. How do we think about being wrong? How do we feel about it? It is not enough to

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[36] Schulz, *Being Wrong*, 11.

[37] Dan Nathan-Roberts and David Schuster, "Looking Ahead: Human Factors in Sociotechnical Systems", in *Human Factors in Practice: Concepts and Applications*, eds. Haydee M. Cuevas, Jonathan Velázquez, and Andrew R. Dattel, 139-145 (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2016); Martin Peterson, *An Introduction to Decision Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 17-39.

[38] Roy Bhaskar and Tony Lawson, "Introduction: Basic Texts and Developments," in *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, eds. Margaret Archer, Roy Bhaskar, Andrew Collier, Tony Lawson, and Alan Norrie, 3-17 (Oxford: Routledge, 1998).

[39] Elder-Vass, 13-38.

say that being wrong is about a false belief because it is necessary to have access to objectively determinable facts to make comparisons. If we could have that access (or not) is an openly debated question.[40]

Complementary, it is possible to propose an alternative path. Instead of calling for objective scenarios supporting comparisons of facts and beliefs, "we could define [being wrong] as the experience of rejecting as false a belief we ourselves once thought as true."[41] To put it another way: as a premise, it is possible to accept that being wrong is about the experience of rejecting something that we previously considered valid, accurate, and rational – not a deviation from external reality or an internal upheaval in our reasoning about truth.

In that sense, being wrong is not just about the experience of noticing we are not correct: It is about the experience of being lost and realizing it.

Firstly, the experience of being wrong is challenging because we are usually blind to errors. It happens that we cannot notice mistakes while we are making them. It is possible to realize that we are making mistakes but precisely afterward recognize that we were sustaining a false belief, doing something improperly, following inadequate instructions, and wrongly making decisions. Arrogance, insecurity, and lack of self-examination are human factors in our error-blindness. Moreover, there is a structural necessity for that blindness: We cannot currently notice we are wrong because we need to witness that our beliefs are not correct in the first place. We usually realize we are wrong after comparing what we believe with what is actually true.

Secondly, we have difficulty remembering when we are wrong. Mistakes can be elusive sometimes because we do not keep track of errors. Moreover, holding up mistakes could be extremely laborious and painful. Forgetting mistakes involves a practical requirement: false beliefs, wrongdoings, lapses, etc., are rapidly replaced by another idea, action, consideration, etc. – all under the assumption that what is essential is to go ahead and get rid of errors in favor of apparently new "true" beliefs.

In any event, the experience of being wrong concerns an existential problem because it is related to an unaccustomed disagreement with ourselves that can endanger our loved identity and confidence in our righteousness. What was I thinking? How could I have done that? Those questions are challenging for every one of us. [42]

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[40] John R. Searle, *Mind: A Brief Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 159-192.

[41] Schulz, *Being Wrong*, 16.

[42] Ibid., 21.

XII. Curiosity

Kids are not afraid but curious about what is happening out there. Kids are travelers – not tourists. They are driven by curiosity and the desire to experience things that can change them. For them, the world represents the possibility of failing and learning simultaneously. "The world is enormous in childhood."[43] It is the opposite in adulthood. For us, the world gets scarier as it gets smaller. For that reason, kids can enjoy making mistakes while we suffer from them.

> What an astonishing thing it is to find something. Children who excel at it – chiefly because the world is still so new to them that they can't help but notice it – understand this and automatically delight in it.[44]

Discovering the world is joyful because it is different from believing. While learning is about changing your ideas, notions, perceptions, assumptions, hypotheses, etc., believing is about securing what was already there: an idea we take as valid; a concept that we consider adequate; perceptions that we think are previously granted, etc.

In that sense, discovering and learning contrast with believing because they are human faculties about being open to making mistakes by encountering things that we do not know how they are.[45] Making mistakes is helpful. It lets us face the event that our more convincing beliefs, cherished assumptions, and commonly engaged habits can be false and wrong. Moreover, making mistakes shows that the world's models, maps, reference frames, and concepts can differ.

> Our errors sometimes bear far sweeter fruits than the failure and shame we associate with them. True, they represent a moment of alienation, both from ourselves and a previously convincing vision of the world. But what is wrong with that? "To alienate" means to make unfamiliar, and to see things – including us – as unfamiliar is an opportunity to see them anew.[46]

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[43] Ibid., 79.

[44] Ibid., 81.

[45] Umberto Eco, *Kant and the Platypus: Essays on Language and Cognition*, trans. Alastair McEwen (London: Secker & Warburg, 1999), 12-55.

[46] Schulz, *Being Wrong*, 22.

XIII. Learning

Progressive learning processes are attached to errors. Making mistakes represents an open need to engage realities in the sense that getting rid of false beliefs, wrongdoings, etc., has to do with challenging struggles, with actual events and real beings resisting our assumptions. "It can be accepted that an outside world independently exists concerning us."[47] Such ontological assertion has concrete consequences at the human psychological level. Reality works as a regulatory principle. Moreover, reality works as an authority imposing restrictions, coordinates, and possibilities. It is well-known that we do not have access to reality. Accurately stated, we do not directly access reality. That means we must form a perceptual, cognitive, and emotional conception of reality. We create a world model in our heads by mapping and modeling real things and events hand in hand with adaptations.[48] The reality model is born on dynamic procedures held up to face becoming. In such a way, reality gradually educates us. We learn very quickly that reality has rules that we should not avoid. We realize that by making mistakes. Sometimes, humans need complications to learn. Death is around the corner if we forget gravitational forces or the connections between acceleration, an object's mass, and its experienced forces.

We also learn – again by making mistakes – that we can partially avoid reality through imagination. What happens in the middle of realizing that reality physically commands us by humanly unmanageable facts and psychologically by limiting our escaping creativity is a matter of numerous debatable issues in contemporary psychology since Freud's times.[49]

Reality is undeniable, even considering we do not have direct access to it. Things happen independently of a conscious ability to apprehend and interrogate facts and beings. Psychologically, acceptance of this has enormous consequences. We are dazzling beings in thinking about reality. We are lost precisely for that reason, indeed. Facing the independent reality's existence is all about producing errors. That is the same as saying that reality exists despite all cultural simulacra, human fantasies, and perceptual and cognitive misconceptions. The idea that we emotionally and cognitively represent reality has to be taken as

[47] Searle, 107-132.

[48] Jeff Hawkins, *A Thousand Brains*: *A New Theory of Intelligence* (New York: Basic Books, 2021), 13-109.

[49] Sigmund Freud, "'Formulations on the two principles of mental functioning' (1911b)," in *On Freud's "Formulations of the Two Principles of Mental Functioning,"* eds. Gabriela Legorreta and Lawrence J. Brown (London: Routledge, 2016), 6-14.

seriously as the notion that reality is independent of us.[50] Erratically wandering, making mistakes, and learning are tightly linked processes. Reality gives us diverse opportunities to inquire about what is happening through combinations of experience and errors.[51] What do I know? Following the old path of distinguishing errors from the truth is unnecessary. Unsolvable metaphysical assumptions compromise that path. Instead, facing reality leads to facing troubles. Reality surrounds us constantly, producing questions, emerging problems, and creatively limiting our ideas and beliefs. In that sense, reality is a source of mistakes: Imperfect glimpses of real things triggering extraordinary interrogative endeavors. In the end, saying that leads us to this notion: Reality constitutes a hard reference to consider. Besides enabling learning, making mistakes involves the human realization that reality is a field of messy events that must be faced – i.e., reality is fluid and nonbinary in nature. [52]

XIV. Questions

At this point, we must be cautious. What is reality? Of course, we will not declare what that is. Defining reality is tremendously tricky. Instead, we think we need to face that question insistently. That means we are living beings ontologically committed. It is acceptable that reality is out there. However, even with that acceptance, reality challenges us, supporting debates about the nature, meaning, and extent of the question: What is real? Do you believe in reality? We must – at least, pragmatically speaking.[53]

XV. Complexity

Traditionally, we have been committed to reality in the sense that we usually have engaged in reducing it to a particular image.[54] The vision of reality has sometimes been about a religious representation. Sometimes, that image has traditionally been about an abstract metaphysical representation. On other occasions, it has been about a pragmatic scientific world picture. Christians, astronomers, mathematicians, philosophers, engineers, semioticians, males, militants, women, professors, pundits,

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[50] Searle, 41-83.

[51] Schulz, *Being Wrong*, 41.

[52] Shohini Ghose and Barry C. Sanders, "Entanglement Dynamics in Chaotic Systems," *Physical Review* 70, no. 6 (2004): 1-6.

[53] Jacquette, 12-155.

[54] Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World*, 49-59.

politicians, etc.: All they have dreamt, from time to time, with answering the question of "What is real?"[55]

There is another way to do things regarding any attempt to present – and sometimes to impose – an image for everything. What about if reality is considered too fluid and messy to be reduced to concrete ideas? What about if reality precedes structures and entities – being simultaneously able to gain consistency at levels of mutually defined aspects and elements of the world? It is not strictly necessary to have an image of thought presently designed to offer a frame where every living being and fact suits it. Instead, being ontologically committed can be understood as an openly conscious activity to question what produces non-previously known modes of existence and unexpected existential possibilities involving unrestricted inquiries.

Just imagine William Herschel, "the astronomer who, in identifying Uranus, increased the known boundaries of the solar system by nine hundred million miles almost overnight."[56] Thinking about that discovery is not about the challenge of understanding the nature of existence in the speculative meaning of the expression – i.e., going into seeking a final substance supporting the real. It is about dealing with realities we cannot avoid but interrogate. Making mistakes teaches us that reality flows everywhere and fills everything and that we must constantly negotiate with it.

Being ontologically committed is being committed to the open question of what is happening. There are no trivial things or events here. It is possible to consider reality as a scenario in which objects, people, institutions, forces, decisions, desires, electrical stations, public transportation systems, libraries, social networks, communication devices, stories of love and stories of loss, trips, etc., all are relevant in searching for real life. How to look? When to look? How can we investigate reality? How to stop doing that? Instead of giving an image of ultimate causalities and definitive, comprehensive frames, it might be more beneficial to be oriented towards reality and deal with concrete questions expressing continuous seeking processes.

To summarize, *ontology* is about experiencing events, interrogating entities, and facing open questions.[57] We can avoid seeking substances and self-identical unities to propose and clarify open questions.[58] That idea refers to the calling for absolute concreteness.

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[55] Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 13.

[56] Schulz, *Lost and Found*, 122.

[57] Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 157.

[58] David Menčik, "Identity Theft: A Thought Experiment on the Fragility of Identity," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 5, no. 1 (2020): 71-83.

We can accept that there are no substances nor essences but real things and processes that display capacities in this world and can undergo specific becoming at peculiar moments and spaces.[59] In such a way, reality can be understood as a scenario of the ceaseless interplay among capable individuals affecting themselves by actions and forces open to possibilities. There is no need to presume something beneath remains identical beneath fluctuations and appearances. Reality is not trivial. We must take it seriously because it is a complicated field filled with actors experiencing transformations in what can be called "events."[60]

Trees and fungi.[61] Students and universities.[62] Mathematical theorems and pandemics.[63] Ultra-chips and advertisement.[64] Public transportation and citizen behavior.[65] Screens and love.[66] We only know about those things once we inquire into what they can do and how they are connected, altered, and mutated, given complex multiplicities. There are also strange creatures. Marriage, motherhood, clothes, family ties, financial issues, exile: Weird combinations of things, circumstances, and connections that make singular beings flourish and change.[67]

Reality is weird and messy. We cannot comprehend certain things because reality is not limited to what our senses perceive and our minds can understand. Reality goes beyond our perceptual models and conceptual maps. We make mistakes discovering the world because we are implicated in establishing connections between multiplicities expressing diverse activities and fluid interactions beyond our mapping and modeling abilities. How can it be done otherwise? The world is more significant and more extensive than our images of it. How can we avoid mistakes if

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[59] Marko Markič, "Conatus and Dasein: The Problem of an Existential Theory of Motivation," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 6, no. 2 (2021): 193-211.

[60] Graham Harman, *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics* (Melbourne: Re.press, 2009), 11-71.

[61] Peter Wohlleben, *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate: Discoveries from a Secret World*, trans. Jane Billinghurst (Vancouver, BC: Greystone Books, 2016), 6-14.

[62] Keri Facer, *Learning Futures: Education, Technology and Social Change* (London: Routledge, 2011), 1-14.

[63] Latour, *After Lockdown*, 24-36.

[64] Joachim Burghartz, ed., *Ultra-thin Chips Technology and Applications* (New York: Springer, 2010), VII-XII.

[65] Iain Docherty, Greg Marsden, and Jillian Anable, "The Governance of Smart Mobility," *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice* 115 (2018): 114-125.

[66] Alain Badiou, *In Praise of Love*, trans. Peter Bush (London: Serpent's Tail, 2012), 53-76.

[67] Lispector; K.H.L. Key, "Phasmatodea (Stick-insects)," in *The Insects of Australia: A Textbook for Students and Research Workers*, eds. I. D. Naumann et al., 394-404 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1991).

reality is so complex concerning the multiplicities of beings in action and dynamics? For that reason, making mistakes requires a constant willingness to change, improve, or dismiss our approaches to reality and a solid commitment to following what happens and how it happens.

XVI. Conclusion

Adaptive transformation is at odds with any entrepreneurial conception of human lives and purposes.[68] Instead of simply appropriating realities and making us more suitable for producing goods for consumption (including us), facing facts and engaging learning processes refer to the labor of metabolic interconnections with the outside and the things happening there.

The Western approach to reality involves transforming the world into commodities, leading to unfavorable consequences like alienation and reification (Theodor Adorno and Georg Lukács), a "loss of world" (Hannah Arendt), and a narrower comprehension of the world (Hans Blumenberg).[69]

Is it possible to have an alternative to alienation, reification, loss of the world, and disenchantment? Responsivity, or our capacity to actively respond to the outside, can be described as resonance, adaptive transformation, or becoming different by connecting with multiplicities.[70] The conclusion here is that we are corporally and cognitively open to realities and able to manage errors and learn from them – all within an awareness of networks highly connected and powerfully affecting themselves and others.[71]

a. Who are we? What can we know? What can we hope? Who knows? Those questions come from an old Kantian tradition and indicate a human challenge: all we can do is explore the living and make mistakes.[72]

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[68] Michel Scott Christofferson, "Foucault and New Philosophy: Why Foucault Endorsed André Glucksmann's *The Master Thinkers*," in *Foucault and Neoliberalism*, eds. Daniel Zamora and Michael C. Behrent (Cambridge: Polity, 2015), 6-21.

[69] Blumenberg, *Work on Myth*; Hans Blumenberg, *The Readability of the World*, trans. Robert Savage and David Roberts (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press and Cornell University Library, 2022); Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (London: Routledge, 2001); Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972); Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1990).

[70] Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World*, 30-34; Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 176-191.

[71] Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 26-57.

[72] Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 3-20.

Living beings make worlds for themselves. Embryos do that. Viruses do that. Fungi do that. We do that. By trying to create a world, we test our capabilities. That is, we challenge our strengths and weaknesses. That is all that we can do.

The spectacle of the living is there. It has been there. From time to time, we forget that the world is more significant than our impressions of it. But the world is there despite our lack of attention. It is still being determined if it will be there for us. The greatness of nature is that she does not need our attention – or presence. What about that insect? What about that mollusk? Is that ape asking herself if we can understand what she is doing? Is that Australian walking stick becoming different things to teach us how to change? Is the sun burning every day to give us warm moments? All we need is fresh air to wander from place to place, seeking to make our apprehension more comprehensive and improve our understanding of things. Can we have moments to respite from the constant human attempt to encapsulate, categorize, and control the living? From time to time, we all need an escapade from the confinement of the living: The boxes we invent to feel secure. That necessity is the expression of a particular question. How to accept that reality is free – that it does not obey us and is more voluminous than our representations and wilder than our "civilized" taste usually takes?

b. Sometimes, living beings can attempt to accommodate new situations. The bee's colony buzzing in the middle of a building. The tree's roots breaking the asphalt. The virus interrupting the citizens' lives. Bugs running everywhere despite cleaners' shifts. By moving one thing here and another thing there, we mobilize resources, trying, at the same time, to keep everything more and less, as has been the case. To surf. To flow.

> Lab studies have shown that perfectly normal frog skin cells, when liberated from the instructive influence of the rest of the embryo, can reboot their cooperative activity to produce a novel proto-organism, called a "xenobot."[73]

By making rebellious efforts, living beings can significantly modify themselves.

> If a new mutation results in an eye being in the wrong place, a hardwired organism would find it very hard to survive. However, modular systems can compensate for the change while

[73] Michael Levin and Rafael Yuste, "Modular Cognition," *Aeon*, March 8, 2022, https://aeon.co/essays/how-evolution-hacked-its-way-to-intelligence-from-the-bottom-up.

> moving the eye back to where it is supposed to be (or enabling it to work in its new location), thus having the opportunity to explore other, possibly useful, effects of the mutation.[74]

Radical changes or more subtle adaptations are extremes. However, all living beings are intelligent because they can manage open realities flexibly. This is true not only for embryos, birds, cephalopods, viruses, tissues, individual neurons, motor proteins, molecular networks, and axolotl: the Mexican salamander, etc. They are flexible problem-solving agents because they express intelligence when facing changing circumstances and responding to them by undertaking new steps, inventing new procedures, and connecting in novel ways – i.e., self-course-correcting within environmental perturbations.[75]

c. We can decide that this world is all about perceiving and thinking within the limits of our human condition. In such a way, we nurture mere human dreams and desires about ordering and commanding realities and reducing the world to accountable books and numbers. That has been an old dream and a traditional human passion.[76]

We can embrace our place among other beings and forces, respecting their autonomy and freedom. We can venture out and actively question our surroundings. The decision is ours to make to the extent that we cannot avoid the reality of our existence. Other entities live in varied circumstances, and challenges must be faced. All beings understand they must navigate uncertainties and adaptively negotiate to flourish. A crucial lesson to learn is to thoroughly evaluate our understanding of reality by recognizing possible obstacles, focusing on significant aspects of change, and enhancing our comprehension of facts based on imperfect processes of learning and making mistakes. A commonly shared ignorance makes us err so constantly. Curiously, it is also by making mistakes that we can understand the meaning of the word "reality."[77]

It is a creative doubtfulness that making mistakes displays in front of us. Can we better look at the liquidness and movements of what is currently happening? That is an achievable task. But it comes at a high price: It requires disciplined efforts to understand, investigate, and explore. Real things must be tested, counted, considered, mapped, measured, and

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Alan Jasanof, *The Biological Mind: How Brain, Body and Environment Collaborate to Make Us Who We Are* (New York: Basic Books, 2018), 65-89.

[76] Crosby, 129-139.

[77] Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 192-211.

interpreted by practical but imperfect means – i.e., from conceptual to methodological tools.[78]

Perhaps, we need to change some quotidian terms: "the universality of...," "the abstract meaning of..." Instead of that traditional gesture, we can try another one. We can try a more vigorous and fresh gesture. We can say that reality is a scenario of processes at play in which all living beings try to respond as better as possible. Is this the right moment? Is this a good place? Is this going to be provisional? Being here, will it be forever? Do things have to change? But how? Within a fluid reality full of events, we all need to answer the challenges at stake by acting more and less adequately regarding environmental conditions and situations. That means there are no useless and essential things. There are just questions to be made. We have to encounter things and produce questions in concrete circumstances. There are things in life. And inquiries related to them. Everything else is a matter of curiosity, research, discipline, and imagination. Can we listen to things' stories? Can we appreciate what living beings can do in their immanent richness and differentiation? Can we abandon our narrow perception of reality and favor a more uncomfortable and diverse viewpoint?

d. Living beings have a life of their own. That is, they can do things. Living beings are their actions: the things they can do in the middle of occurring realities. Living beings are, then, actants.[79]

That conclusion comes from understanding reality as open and constituted by forces becoming more and less stable, events displaying multiplicities and diverse relationships. More accurately, saying living beings are what they can do represents a conclusion based on the idea that reality is connected, performs immanent relations, and produces mutual connections.[80] Actants engage with gatherings full of others. They propose saturations and plenitudes. There are not isolated things, but things with more and less numerous connections performing agencies and forces directing growth and life. On that ground, apprehending and understanding are more about asking questions than theoretical abstractions and methodological categorizations. "What is the same and what is different? What is with whom? What is opposed, allied, or intimate? What constitutes, stops, abandons, hastens, or attached itself?"[81] Can we accept that there is no commanding principle over reality? Can we acknowledge there are no Gods, axioms, essences, substances, etc., giving meaning to reality? Can

[78] John Law, *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (London: Routledge, 2004), 45-68.

[79] Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 159.

[80] Ibid.,160

[81] Ibid., 167.

we renounce the idea of hierarchies and superiority as securing an abstract reality's organization? If we do that, the principle of reality can refer to the concrete circumstances where we constantly negotiate encounters, events, connections, disconnections, failures, routines, and changes.

That idea represents an unexpected gift: We must let go of reality's becoming and learn how to respond flexibly to changing circumstances.

Everything is involved in events, forces, and beings. We are the product of encounters: accidental clashes with the stuff of others.[82] There are tensions between reality's becoming and us: The struggle between training the necessary skills to navigate uncertainties and apprehend and interpret events and living beings at their speed, capabilities, and rhythm. Why not accept that control is an illusion? That does not mean we must get paralyzed or simply relaxed to the point of assuming it does not make sense to act. There is an interplay between what is not controllable and what can be done in the middle of that. To put it abstractly: Navigating uncertainties is about dealing with mistakes by seeking partial stabilization in the middle of open dynamics running at an independent acceleration and at different levels of becoming. That can be appropriately called "innovation."

e. Being burned is the recent price paid for the increasing demand for responding to changing environments.[83] Through escalation, we compete to do better and keep what we have. These days, people want more resources, open markets, technological capabilities, political rights, social interactions, access to information, security, leisure, etc. We want more and more. Nevertheless, we struggle to have the same and no less than that. It is the game of escalation – a game strongly "perpetuated not by lust for more, but by the fear of having less and less."[84]

Expand the models we use to navigate the world and become flexible by learning how uncontrollable reality represents an attempt to defeat the modern promises of expansion and escalation threats. Dynamic learning is not for getting motivational resources supporting the compulsion towards competition, personal enhancement, and pleasure. It is not for bringing more and more within our reach that we have said we can deal with changes. It is crucial to release any excessive need for control and the idea of solely pursuing personal endeavors to advance groundbreaking ethical standards. It is important to let go of extreme

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[82] Elena Ferrante, *In the Margins: On the Pleasures of Reading and Writing*, trans. Ann Goldstein (Rome: Europa Editions, 2022), 3-10.

[83] Byung-Chul Han, *The Burnout Society* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 16-35.

[84] Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World*, 9.

desires for control and the notion of pursuing individualistic efforts to promote novel ethical principles.

Learning navigational skills can be done in the name of more than the categorical imperative of conquering the present and buying shares of the world. Learning new abilities by making mistakes is about becoming different. That is a rebel assertion, an irreverent one because it expresses the possible modes of existence at stake when we face something new and learn. We know that thinking about the ethics of becoming (as it has been scholarly called) has the risk of repeating the slogan of the people defending the interactions of self-techniques and self-care practices turning into entrepreneurial ideologies – i.e., the liberal ideology of self-understanding and freedom.[85] Get empowered. Get inspired. Pundits create lists to do. Sellers usually gave speeches about strategies for being the better yourself. Any personal coacher would endlessly talk about being positive, customized spiritual care, and leadership that engages and motivates. Ultimately, facing complex realities is living by exploring and making mistakes. And it is about learning from them, trying, at the same time, to make connections as strong as possible with the things happening. How? There is no method. There are possibilities, nevertheless. It can be said that "resonate" is similar to "connect."[86] Resonating is about making connections: that is about creation and good fortune. No matter what is out there, we must be in contact with it if something can happen. Making connections requires resonating encounters. Again, there are no rules about that. Openly wandering guarantees nothing. It is possible to find no one. It is always probable that we can run into nothing. But it is also true that a simple phone call can be enough to make connections without previous intentions or desires. Reading all the collected books on the bookshelf is unnecessary to access an entirely new idea. A single page of a randomly found book can change everything. The same can be said about a song, a picture, a landscape, a conversation, a silence, a movie, a dream, etc. Researchers of the living are lucky persons, for sure.

How to know, on the other hand, that a connection has been made? That is a complex question to answer because nuances are at stake. There can be immediate connections. It is the chemistry of a situation in which things flow easily. Nevertheless, there can be connections in need of time because it is necessary to discover them and unfold their possibili-

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[85] Jan Rehmann, "The Unfulfilled Promises of the Late Foucault and Foucauldian 'Governmentality Studies,'" in *Foucault and Neoliberalism*, eds. Daniel Zamora and Michael C. Behrent, 134-158 (Cambridge: Polity, 2016).

[86] Hartmut Rosa, *Resonance: A Sociology of our Relationship to the World*, trans. James Wagner (Cambridge: Polity, 2019), 1-20.

ties after a while. Everything is there, and nothing happens. That can be true. But one day, an obscure trigger displays connections that are not already established but are possible. The secret is not to force connections and be attentive to the affections at play.[87] Truly, encounters need uncontrollable ingredients: unpredictability, non-trivial answers, and adaptation.

> When people experience resonance with a mountain, a book, a record, or the first snowfall, this means that they have encountered or confronted something that concerns them in some way, that has a meaning for them.[88]

That encounters can have meaning is not about transcendental contents or enigmatic substances contained as hidden entities behind the things. It has to do, instead, with actions and responses interlinked within a compositional scenario. That met person.

> I don't recall very clearly how it started. I transformed myself independently of my consciousness, and when I opened my eyes, the poison was circulating through my blood irremediably, its power already ancient.[89]

Living beings are very remarkably responsive. Something happened. Something is triggered. And dynamic openness and attempts to eliminate uncertainties must happen: We are more and less captured by one of those extremes.

Being excited or frustrated is not as important as the occasion of mutual affection between the events and us. Encounters are subtle because of the sense of the attachments at stake. What is at play? Encounters can materialize *cul-de-sacs*. Other times, they can take the form of open paths. There are boundless possibilities in the middle of those extremes. In any case, experiences are meaningful because they set dynamic changes expressing actions immersed in other activities. Responsiveness: Encounters are meaningful depending on how they trigger answers to them.

> He noticed my transformation and, if at first, he retreated in surprise at my courage, he took up the old yoke with still great-

[87] Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World*, 42.

[88] Ibid., 48.

[89] Lispector, 21.

> er violence, prepared not to let me escape. Yet I would find my own violence. We armed ourselves and were two forces.[90]

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[90] Ibid., 42.

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Grusovnik, Tomaz, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, eds. Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021

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Abstract

Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze edited by Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, stands as a groundbreaking work that delves into the intricate phenomenon of denialism, a critical barrier in addressing ecological crises and advancing animal rights. Through its compelling interdisciplinary lens, the book dissects the psychological, sociocultural, and political underpinnings of denial, challenging entrenched anthropocentric views. This review provides a critical analysis of the book and highlights its pivotal role in bridging theoretical ethics with real-world environmental and animal welfare challenges. The editors' adept selection of contributions guides readers through a thought-provoking journey in denialism, encompassing personal introspection, societal critique, and a scrutinizing look at economic, political, and legal frameworks. Despite its primarily Western-centric perspective, the book is essential in advocating for a broader, more inclusive global dialogue in future research. The book emerges not just as an academic text but as an urgent call to action, resonating with scholars, policymakers, and activists. In essence, this work emphasizes the necessity for a transformative shift in how we perceive and interact with the natural world and its non-human inhabitants.

Keywords: *animal welfare; anthropocentrism; denialism; environmental ethics; interdisciplinary approach; paradigm shift; psychological barriers; societal norms*

I. Introduction

In an era fraught with environmental crises and escalating debates over animal rights, the book *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting our Gaze* edited by Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, presents a timely and crucial exploration of denialism, emphasizing its pivotal role in exacerbating these issues by obstructing awareness and necessary action.[1]

Denialism represents a refusal to acknowledge established facts, often despite substantial evidence. It is often characterized by rhetorical strategies that stimulate debate, obscuring truths across various domains, including science and history.[2] This deliberate rejection, motivated by factors ranging from psychological to economic, significantly shapes public policy and opinion, obstructing progress in critical areas like environmental protection.[3]

Ubiquitous in its reach, denialism is underpinned by cognitive mechanisms like dissonance and reinforced by sociopolitical structures. Its presence in public health, evidenced by vaccine hesitancy, poses risks to communal well-being.[4] In education, evolution denialism challenges scientific curricula, substituting ideological narratives for empirical science.[5] Historical denialism, such as Holocaust negationism, represents not only a misinterpretation but an intentional distortion of facts, often driven by ideological beliefs.[6]

The realms of animal and environmental ethics are not immune to denialism's effects. Society's dismissal of climate change and animal sentience, despite clear evidence to their existence,[7, 8] poses a significant eth-

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[1] Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, eds., *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020).

[2] Pascal Diethelm and Martin McKee, "Denialism: What Is It and How Should Scientists Respond?" *European Journal of Public Health* 19, no. 1 (2009): 2-4.

[3] Olli Herranen, "Understanding and Overcoming Climate Obstruction," *Nature Climate Change* 13 (2023): 500-501.

[4] Gregory A. Poland and Ray Spier, "Fear, Misinformation, and Innumerates: How the Wakefield Paper, the Press, and Advocacy Groups Damaged the Public Health," *Vaccine* 28, no. 12 (2010): 2361-2362.

[5] Eric Plutzer, Glenn Branch, and Ann Reid, "Teaching Evolution in U.S. Public Schools: A Continuing Challenge," *Evolution: Education and Outreach* 13, no. 1 (2020).

[6] Jan Grabowski and Shira Klein, "Wikipedia's Intentional Distortion of the History of the Holocaust," *The Journal of Holocaust Research* 37, no. 2 (2023): 133-190.

[7] Mark Lynas, Benjamin Z. Houlton, and Simon Perry, "Greater than 99% Consensus on Human Caused Climate Change in the Peer-Reviewed Scientific Literature," *Environmental Research Letters* 16, no. 11 (2021).

[8] Heather Browning and Walter Veit, "The Sentience Shift in Animal Research," *The New Bio-*

ical challenge. The repercussions of such denialism extend to biodiversity, climate stability, and societal sustainability.[9] Addressing these denials is crucial for a balanced relationship with our planet and its inhabitants.

The book *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze* emerges as a timely and scholarly exploration of denialism, aiming to unravel its intricate layers and offering a critical lens through which to examine both individual and collective responses to pressing animal welfare and environmental issues. Its interdisciplinary structure is meticulously designed to guide the reader through a textured understanding of denialism. Each of the book's 11 chapters addresses a different facet of denial, whether it be its psychological underpinnings, cultural manifestations, or philosophical implications. The editors have selected contributions that address societal and individual denial aspects, critique anthropocentrism, and consider frameworks impacting the animals and the environment. The methodology employed encompasses both qualitative and quantitative analyses, combining empirical data with theoretical foundations. This structure allows the reader to appreciate the complexity and interconnectivity of the themes presented and facilitates a nuanced discussion that is both grounded in evidence and rich in philosophical insight. Overall, this carefully curated book provides valuable insights for a broad audience, fostering a more ethical and sustainable interaction with non-human animals and the environment.

This review aims to provide a critical perspective on the book, thereby contributing to the discourse on denialism as it pertains to the fields of animal and environmental ethics.

II. Understanding denial: Psychological and societal perspectives

Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze opens with a profound exploration of the psychological and cultural underpinnings of denialism. Chapters 1 and 2, penned by Susanne Stoll-Kleemann[10] and Arne Johan Vetlesen,[11] respectively, provide a foundational

ethics 28, no. 4 (2022): 299-314.

[9] Sarah R. Weiskopf et al., "Climate Change Effects on Biodiversity, Ecosystems, Ecosystem Services, and Natural Resource Management in the United States," *Science of The Total Environment* 733 (2020): 137782.

[10] Susanne Stoll-Kleemann, "From Denial to Moral Disengagement: How Integrating Fundamental Insights from Psychology Can Help Us Better Understand Ongoing Inaction in the Light of an Exacerbating Climate Crisis," in *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze*, eds. Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, 17-34 (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021).

[11] Arne Johan Vetlesen, "Denial as a Sense of Entitlement: Assessing the Role of Culture," in

understanding of how denial operates within individual and collective mindsets.

In chapter 1, Stoll-Kleemann delves into the psychological mechanisms that fuel climate change denial.[12] The denial of appropriate climate action, particularly in the form of low-carbon behavior, is identified as a prevalent issue.[13] Drawing on theories like Bandura's selective moral disengagement,[14] Festinger's cognitive dissonance,[15] and Kohlberg's moral development,[16] the author illustrates how denial is not merely a passive state of ignorance, but an active, psychologically comforting stance that individuals adopt to alleviate cognitive dissonance and moral discomfort. The analysis reveals how personal and societal factors such as egoism, self-interest, and political influences perpetuate this denial.[17] In this chapter, denial is portrayed as "convenient, comforting, and occasionally useful; but it also cripples our ability to face urgent public policy issues effectively."[18] The author explores different forms of climate denial, such as climate silence, defined as a

> "conspiracy of silence" based on people tacitly agreeing to "outwardly ignore something of which they are all personally aware" and the factors that hinder action on mitigation and adaptation in the case of the climate crisis,[19]

and moral corruption,[20] and argues that these are forms of "emotionally self-protective self-deception."[21] A call to comprehend the causes and

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Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze, eds. Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, 35-54 (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021).

[12] Stoll-Kleemann, 17-34.

[13] Ibid., 19.

[14] Albert Bandura, "Impeding Ecological Sustainability Through Selective Moral Disengagement," *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development* 2, no. 1 (2007): 8-35. Cited in Stoll-Kleemann, 20.

[15] Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive* Dissonance (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962), 4. Cited in Stoll-Kleemann, 19.

[16] Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development, Vol. II: The Psychology of Moral Development* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1984), 540. Cited in Stoll-Kleemann, 23.

[17] Stoll-Kleemann, 26.

[18] Adrian Bardon, *The Truth About Denial: Bias and Self-Deception in Science, Politics, and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 3. Quoted in Stoll-Kleemann, 26.

[19] Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Elephant in the Room: Silence and Denial in Everyday Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 29. Cited in Stoll-Kleemann, 18.

[20] Stoll-Kleemann, 18.

[21] Bardon, 2. Quoted in Stoll-Kleemann, 17-18.

mechanisms of denial in the private sphere is made, emphasizing the need for individuals to make better decisions for themselves.[22]

Chapter 2, authored by Vetlesen, shifts the focus to the cultural dimensions of denial.[23] Vetlesen examines the interplay between individual psychology and societal norms, which facilitate a kind of collective myopia towards the degradation of the natural world and the exploitation of animals. Through the lens of the Norwegian society, Vetlesen presents a compelling case study of how consumerism is inculcated from an early age, fostering a sense of entitlement to natural resources.[24] The author argues that this entitlement, infused with narcissism at the individual level and collectivism at the cultural level,[25] is a product of the industrial era, now exacerbated by capitalist consumerism.[26] Early socialization into consumerism is not merely a passive act but a dynamic process implicating individuals in environmental harm, leading to denial as a coping mechanism for the resulting guilt.[27] Denial, according to Vetlesen, is not just an avoidance of reality but a complex psychological defense intertwined with a culture that dampens effective communication and action against climate change.[28] The concept of "industrial ambivalence"[29] is introduced, which, Vetlesen argues, is emblematic of a deeper psychological conflict that manifests in an oscillation between environmental concern and a resignation to the status quo[30] – a sentiment that has been encapsulated in the work of Renee Lertzman, whose interviews with residents of Green Bay, Wisconsin, unearth a nuanced tension between local industrial activity and environmental degradation. In these interviews, the residents expressed

> both disgust and shock towards the level of local water and air pollution, yet on the other hand they quickly shifted modes and contradicted themselves to provide excuses or rationales for the very issues they just reported unhappiness over,[31]

[22] Stoll-Kleemann, 27.

[23] Vetlesen, 35-54.

[24] Ibid., 36.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 43.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Renee Lertzman, *Environmental Melancholia: Psychoanalytic Dimensions of Engagement* (East Sussex and New York: Routledge, 2015), 107. Quoted in Vetlesen, 40.

essentially recognizing the indispensable economic benefits and employment opportunities the industries provide. However, to counter denial, one must confront the ethical implications of personal choices, challenging the "out of sight, out of mind" mentality.[32]

These two first chapters of the book collectively dissect the multifaceted nature of denial, essentially laying the groundwork for understanding the broader book. Stoll-Kleeman's focus on individual psychological barriers complements Vetlesen's analysis of cultural and societal influences. Denial, whether psychological or cultural, is not merely a lack of awareness nor an information deficit, but a deeply ingrained, deliberate, and complex mechanism that serves to protect individual comfort and the societal status quo. This understanding is vital for anyone seeking to engage with and transform the prevailing narratives around animal suffering and environmental degradation. The message is clear: to create sustainable and ethical change, we must first confront and understand the roots of denial in ourselves and our societies.

III. Ethical reflections on animal subjectivity and human bias

Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 10 authored by Tomaž Grušovnik,[33] Adam See,[34] Craig Taylor,[35] and the team of Reingard Spannring and De Giorgio-Schoorl,[36] respectively, delve into the philosophical, psychological, and sociological nuances of how humans perceive and interact with animals, revealing a deep-seated denial of animal subjectivity and agency.

Chapter 3 written by Tomaž Grušovnik , opens with a philosophical inquiry into the moral agency of animals.[37] Grušovnik's argument

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[32] Vetlesen, 48-49.

[33] Tomaž Grušovnik, "Skepticism and Animal Virtues: Denialism of Animal Morality," in *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze*, eds. Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, 55-70 (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021).

[34] Adam See, "Human Uniqueness, Animal Minds, and Anthropodenial," in *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze*, eds. Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, 71-88 (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021).

[35] Craig Taylor, "Suffering Animals: Creaturely Fellowship and Its Denial," in *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze*, eds. Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, 89-102 (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021).

[36] Reingard Spannring and Jose De Giorgio-Schoorl, "The Horse in the Room: The Denial of Animal Subjectivity and Agency in Social Science Research on Human – Horse Relationships," in *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze*, eds. Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, 187-200 (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021).

[37] Grušovnik, 55.

navigates through the intellectual territory that traditionally denies animals the status of moral agents, relegating them to mere moral patients.[38] This discrepancy in moral recognition is not due to a lack of evidence or understanding but rather reflects a cultural and psychological reluctance to confront the ethical implications of animal suffering.[39] The author compellingly argues that societal structures, such as the mechanization and concealment of animal slaughter, not only hide the reality of animal suffering but also psychologically impact slaughterhouse workers, indicating an implicit awareness and avoidance of ethical responsibility.[40] Grušovnik's discussion extends to the concept of "uncanny proximity,"[41] a term encapsulating the human tendency to intellectually and morally distance themselves from animals. The author suggests that this distancing is a defense mechanism against the unsettling reminder of our own mortality, as mirrored in animal lives.[42] Conclusively, the chapter calls for a reevaluation of our ethical frameworks, acknowledging animal agency and moral complexity, urging a shift in perception towards a more inclusive understanding of morality.

In chapter 4, Adam See takes a different yet complementary approach. See's focus is on anthropodenial and anthropomorphic bias, particularly in the context of animal cognition. The author scrutinizes four principal strategies that deny or misrepresent animal cognition (denial by disparate contexts, cognitive simplicity, redefinition, and human ability),[43] highlighting the anthropocentric bias in these arguments. A significant challenge in animal cognition studies is highlighted: the so called "logical problem,"[44] underlining the difficulty in determining if behaviors result from mental state attribution (like predicting others' intentions or beliefs) or associative responses. The chapter emphasizes the importance of associative learning in complex human behaviors and criticizes the prevalent false dichotomy in cognitive studies that dismisses animals' unique skills when they do not mirror human capabilities.[45] It also challenges the exaggeration of typical human perfor-

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., 56.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 61-64.

[42] Ibid., 66.

[43] See, 71-72.

[44] Ibid., 72-74.

[45] Ibid., 77-79.

mance (anthropofabulation)[46] and the narrow definition of psychological terms at a human level (semantic anthropocentrism),[47] which lead to misunderstandings of animal capacities. Finally, the chapter stresses the importance of considering a wide array of evidence and developing a "consilience of inductions" to best explain the data in animal cognition research, rather than solely relying on crucial experiments.[48]

Chapter 5 by Craig Taylor, adopts a more ethical and philosophical stance. Taylor scrutinizes the moral individualism that often underpins human-animal relationships. The author refers to the limitations of animal advocacy, highlighting that animals, unlike human oppressed groups, cannot self-advocate, making humans their perpetual trustees.[49] It is argued that if certain characteristics warrant ethical treatment in humans, they should logically extend to animals with similar traits.[50] Taylor's critical analysis focuses on the societal tendency to evade confronting the harsh treatment of animals, suggesting a form of denial rooted in the avoidance of acknowledging shared vulnerabilities with animals.[51] Denial in this context is portrayed as enabling humans to ignore or minimize animal suffering.

Chapter 10 confronts the pervasive denial of equine subjectivity and agency in social science research, by drawing a parallel to the "elephant in the room" metaphor.[52] Authors Spannring and De Giorgio-Schoorl critique the anthropocentric perspective that dominates this field, often exhibiting "disciplinary blinkers,"[53] where horses are often relegated to the status of mere objects or tools in human-centric narratives.[54] The authors argue that this oversight is not just a matter of academic bias, but reflects deeper speciesist views embedded within societal norms and practices.[55] They emphasize that acknowledging the subjectivity and agency of horses is not only crucial for ethical research but also has profound implications for our moral responsibilities towards non-human animals. The chapter serves as a compelling appeal

[46] Ibid., 80.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., 75-76.

[49] Taylor, 90.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., 95-99.

[52] Spannring and De Giorgio-Schoorl, 187-200.

[53] Ibid., 189-190.

[54] Ibid., 190.

[55] Ibid., 187.

for rethinking our ethical and practical approaches towards non-human animals, emphasizing the need to see horses not just as passive entities in human narratives, but as sentient beings with complex socio-cognitive skills, experiences, and rights.

Collectively, these four chapters unravel the complexities of human-animal relationships. Each chapter brings a unique perspective, yet they harmoniously converge on the core issue of denial in the human perception and treatment of animals. The common thread is the profound denial of animal subjectivity and moral agency. This denial is not a mere oversight but a deeply ingrained cultural and psychological mechanism that allows humans to maintain existing norms and beliefs about human superiority and animal subordination. For example, research has shown that people tend to deny mental capacities to animals they consume, and this denial helps in reducing the cognitive dissonance that arises from eating meat while caring about animal welfare.[56] This denial of mental capacities to animals used for human consumption is a significant psychological process that enables meat-eating behavior and protects cultural norms associated with meat consumption. Overall, the themes explored in these four chapters serve not only as a scholarly critique but also highlight the book's commitment to challenging anthropocentrism and urge a reevaluation of our ethical frameworks and a shift in perception towards a more inclusive understanding of morality that encompasses non-human animals.

IV. Case studies in denial: From fisheries to meat marketing

Chapters 6 and 7, authored by Martin Lee Mueller and Katja Maria Hydle, and Karen Lykke Syse and Kristian Bjørkdahl, respectively, present compelling case studies exemplifying denial in industries ranging from fisheries[57] to meat marketing.[58] These chapters collectively offer a poignant critique of the systemic denial prevalent in our interactions with non-human animals, particularly in the contexts of food production and consumption.

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[56] Brock Bastian, Steve Loughnan, Nick Haslam, and Helena R. M. Radke, "Don't Mind Meat? The Denial of Mind to Animals Used for Human Consumption," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 38, no. 2 (2012): 247-256.

[57] Martin Lee Mueller and Katja Maria Hydle, "Brave New Salmon: From Enlightened Denial to Enlivened Practices," in *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial*, eds. Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, 103-126 (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021).

[58] Karen Lykke Syse and Kristian Bjørkdahl, "The Animal That Therefore Was Removed from View: The Presentation of Meat in Norway, 1950–2015," in *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze*, eds. Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, 127-144 (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021).

Perhaps one of the most compelling and eye-opening chapters of the book, chapter 6 explores the Norwegian salmon feedlot industry, providing a critical view of the commodification of salmon.[59] Mueller and Hydle's analysis is anchored in extensive empirical research conducted from 2010 to 2017, encompassing observations at industrial sites, interviews, and comprehensive studies of salmon farming practices. Their findings reveal a systemic denial of salmon's inherent aliveness and subjectivity within these practices. The authors scrutinize how instrumental rationality, a hallmark of Enlightenment thought emphasizing calculability and utility, has led to the assimilation of salmon into industrial frameworks, resulting in their commodification.[60] This rationality leads to practices that control external conditions such as weather and temperature,[61] and extend to manipulating salmon's genetic makeup and breeding.[62] The salmon, stripped of individuality and subjectivity, are reduced to mere units of production, embodying a profound "conceptual and perceptual rift between the rich inner worlds of humans and the rich inner worlds of all other living forms"[63] – a rift solidified by Enlightenment ideologies.[64] The authors argue that this paradigm, focused on control, efficiency, and utility, overlooks the intrinsic value of living beings, treating them as biomass to be manipulated for maximum yield and profit.[65] The ecological implications of this mindset are highlighted, pointing out the disregard for the limits of growth on a finite planet and the resultant exploitative relationship with nature.[66] In a call for a paradigmatic shift, the authors advocate for "Enlivenment," a concept that seeks to acknowledge and respect the interconnectedness of humans with the biotic community.[67]

Chapter 7 by Syse and Bjørkdahl delves into the transformation of meat presentation in Norway over several decades.[68] The authors examine how meat, once clearly identifiable as part of an animal, has gradually been transformed in its presentation to consumers, contributing to

[59] Mueller and Hydle, 103-126.

[60] Ibid., 103-104.

[61] Ibid., 106.

[62] Ibid., 114.

[63] Ibid., 105.

[64] Ibid., 105-106.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., 120.

[67] Ibid., 120-123.

[68] Syse and Bjørkdahl, 127-144.

a form of denial about its animal origins and a disconnection between consumers and the reality of meat production.[69] This disconnection contributes to a broader societal denial about the nature of meat consumption, where the reality of animal suffering and death is obscured.[70] This denial is portrayed not merely as an individual psychological response but as a culturally reinforced phenomenon, further complicated by the "meat paradox" – the societal difficulty in reconciling respect for certain animals with the consumption of others.[71] The authors discuss the rationalization of meat consumption through the "Four Ns" (natural, normal, necessary, and nice)[72] highlighting cultural alienation from the realities of meat consumption and the transformation in meat presentation.

In these chapters, denial manifests in multifaceted ways. Chapter 6 portrays denial as a philosophical and cultural phenomenon, where the reductionist view of animals as mere resources is deeply ingrained in societal and industrial practices.[73] Chapter 7, on the other hand, presents denial as a more subtle, yet pervasive, socio-cultural phenomenon, where the disconnection between meat consumption and animal suffering is reinforced through marketing and presentation strategies.[74] The critical analysis provided in these chapters draws attention to the ethical, environmental, and psychological dimensions of denial in our treatment of non-human animals. The authors highlight the need for a paradigm shift in how we perceive and interact with animals, advocating for a more humane, ecologically sustainable, and ethically responsible approach. Addressing the denial in industries related to animal products requires confronting not only individual choices but also the broader societal, cultural, and economic systems that perpetuate such denial.

V. Economic clout and political persuasion in animal agriculture

Chapter 8, authored by John Sorenson and Atsuko Matsuoka, examines the denialism in animal agriculture, focusing on how economic and political interests influence societal attitudes towards animal exploitation.[75]

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[69] Ibid., 129.

[70] Ibid., 131.

[71] Ibid., 130-131.

[72] Ibid., 141.

[73] Mueller and Hydle, 103-126.

[74] Syse and Bjørkdahl, 127-144.

[75] John Sorenson and Atsuko Matsuoka, "Political Economy of Denialism: Addressing the Case of Animal Agriculture," in *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze*, eds. Tomaž Grušovnik,

The chapter presents a nuanced critique of the animal industrial complex's strategies to sustain its dominance amidst escalating ethical and environmental scrutiny. The strategic image crafting employed by the industry, depicting farmers and ranchers as everyday, trustworthy figures[76] is meticulously dissected. The authors adeptly explore the theme of interpretive denial,[77] especially in response to veganism and animal rights activism.[78] They argue that the industry, through its considerable lobbying efforts and political contributions, not only seeks to promote meat consumption but also to discredit veganism, often framing it as a "malicious fringe movement."[79] This narrative construction serves a dual purpose: it counters the portrayal of animal rights activists as extremists and promotes meat consumption as a normative, benevolent practice.[80] This representation is critical in the industry's broader strategy to deflect criticism and maintain consumer demand. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the role of commodity checkoff programs in North America, which accumulate funds from all producers to promote animal products.[81] These programs have been pivotal in embedding products like milk, pork, and beef into the collective consumer consciousness, utilizing large-scale marketing campaigns.

Denial, as portrayed in this chapter, has been encapsulated by Jason Hannan under the term "meatsplaining" (a play on "mansplaining") functioning as "an umbrella concept for the multiple forms of denialism perpetuated by the animal agriculture industry."[82] The critical examination presented in the chapter culminates in a compelling insight: the meat industry's utilization of economic power, political influence, and strategic communication is not merely a reactionary stance but a well-orchestrated, strategic effort to counteract challenges to its practices and preserve its market position and public image. This insight is vital for understanding the dynamic nature of industry responses to ethical and environmental concerns, revealing

Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, 145-168 (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021).

[76] Sorenson and Matsuoka, 149.

[77] "In interpretive denial, the facts themselves are not denied but are instead given a different interpretation, taken to mean something else," in Vetlesen, 37.

[78] Sorenson and Matsuoka, 150-156.

[79] Ibid., 150.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Jason Hannan, "Meatsplaining: A Name for Animal Ag Rhetoric," *Faunalytics,* May 19, 2021, https://faunalytics.org/meatsplaining-a-name-for-animal-ag-rhetoric/.

a broader commentary on how industries can manipulate information and perception to maintain their status quo in the face of growing scrutiny.

VI. Technological dreams vs. environmental realities

Authored by Helen Kopnina, Joe Gray, Haydn Washington, and John Piccolo, chapter 9 critically examines the concept of "Techno-Eco-Optimism."[83] The premise of this concept is that despite evidence of human-caused biodiversity loss and environmental decline, there is reliance on the "belief that we will find technological solutions" to these problems.[84]

The authors argue that this societal optimistic bias, often leaning towards innovation over recognizing and addressing environmental threats, is misplaced and counterproductive. This perspective, positing technology as the panacea for environmental crises, is argued to be a form of denial, overlooking the grave ethical ramifications of biodiversity loss and ecological destruction. The authors advocate for an eco-realistic approach, urging acknowledgment and confrontation of the complex challenges in environmental conservation.[85] They promote "ecojustice"[86] and "eco-democracy,"[87] emphasizing the need for

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[83] Helen Kopnina, Joe Gray, Haydn Washington, and John Piccolo, "Celebrate the Anthropocene? Why 'Techno-Eco-Optimism' Is a Strategy of Ultimate Denial," in *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze*, eds. Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, 169-186 (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021).

[84] Kopnina et al., 170.

[85] Ibid., 175-176.

[86] Ecojustice is a concept that extends beyond the traditional focus on human-centered justice to include justice for nature itself. It is grounded in ecological ethics and ecocentrism, which recognize the intrinsic value and rights of all elements of the natural world, not just humans. Ecojustice challenges the prevalent anthropocentric bias that prioritizes human needs and interests in environmental issues. It incorporates the idea of distributive justice applied to nature, advocating for an ethic of bio-proportionality where all species and ecosystems have their rightful place and consideration. This concept refutes the notion that prioritizing nature's rights is anti-human, instead proposing that a balance can be achieved between social justice and ecojustice. For example, see Haydn Washington et al., "Foregrounding Ecojustice in Conservation," *Biological Conservation* 228 (2018): 367-374. When explored to its utmost extent, this conceptual framework can engender radical ideologies; see Evangelos D. Protopapadakis, "Environmental Ethics and Linkola's Ecofascism: An Ethics beyond Humanism," *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 9, no. 4 (2014): 586-601.

[87] Eco-democracy "refers to political processes that recognize the intrinsic value of non-human beings through 'inclusive pluralism,'" implying a shift from traditional anthropocentrism (the privileging of human beings over non-human entities) towards a more inclusive approach that values all beings within the ecosystem. For more information see Helen Kopnina et al., "Eco-democracy in Practice: Exploration of Debates on Limits and Possibilities of Addressing Envi-

a balanced approach that integrates ethical considerations into environmental efforts.[88] The "Nature Needs Half" movement[89] is presented as an example of eco-realism, advocating for significant ecological conservation.[90]

The form of denial presented in chapter 9, is portrayed as particularly dangerous as it provides a false sense of security and diverts attention from the need for fundamental societal change. A compelling argument is made for eco-realism over techno-eco-optimism and the necessity to move beyond mere technological fixes to acknowledge the complex ethical and ecological dimensions involved in sustainability efforts. Looking at the broader literature, however, there are examples of how technology, when thoughtfully applied and integrated with existing conservation frameworks, can effectively aid in conservation efforts.[91] This perspective complements the discussion in this chapter, by providing a pragmatic view of how technology can be part of the solution to environmental challenges, especially when it is co-produced with conservation decision-makers and practitioners.

VII. Denial in the courtroom: The neglect of non-human rights

In chapter 11, Opi Outhwaite presents a profound critique of the legal system's approach to non-human animal rights.[92]

The author, utilizing the example of habeas corpus cases for chimpanzees, illustrates the entrenched anthropocentric biases within ju-

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ronmental Challenges Within Democratic Systems," *Visions for Sustainability* 15 (2021): 9-23.

[88] Kopnina et al., 174.

[89] The "Nature Needs Half" movement, is a conservation initiative advocating for the protection of at least half of the Earth's land and seas. This ambitious goal is aimed at ensuring the long-term health of the biosphere and sustaining the diversity of life. The movement is based on scientific evidence which suggests that current global conservation targets are insufficient. By setting a higher target, the "Nature Needs Half" movement seeks to address the growing biodiversity crisis and ensure the maintenance of ecological processes and services critical for life on Earth. For example, see Harvey Locke, "Nature Needs Half: A Necessary and Hopeful New Agenda for Protected Areas," *PARKS* 19, no. 2 (2013): 13-22.

[90] Kopnina et al., 175-176.

[91] For example, the Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system to improve the implementation of the U.S. Endangered Species Act, HabitatPatrol for automated habitat change detection, and the Range and Mapping Protocol for collaborative species range mapping. For more information see Jacob W. Malcom et al., "Coproduce Conservation Technology with Conservation Decision Makers and Practitioners to Increase Its Impact," *Frontiers in Conservation Science* 2 (2021): Article 815854.

[92] Opi Outhwaite, "Still in the Shadow of Man? Judicial Denialism and Nonhuman Animals," in *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze*, eds. Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, and Karen Lykke Syse, 201-220 (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021).

dicial reasoning.[93] The legal system, through interpretive denial[94] and adherence to human exceptionalism,[95] consistently fails to recognize the rights and personhood of sentient animals, drawing a stark contrast to the legal protections afforded to, e.g., comatose individuals who lack sentience.[96] The chapter delves deeper into the mechanisms of this denial, highlighting the reluctance of the legal system to challenge existing societal norms regarding animals and criticizing it for its reliance on narrow legal interpretations and constructs that prevent the recognition of animals as legal persons. This approach, the author argues, significantly contributes to the ongoing abuse and suffering of animals.[97] It underlines the paradox in the legal system which, while acknowledging persuasive precedents that could extend rights to animals, continues to uphold a speciesist status quo that treats animals as mere objects.

In essence, chapter 11 calls for a fundamental reevaluation of the legal system's stance on non-human animals. It advocates for a shift in legal frameworks to overcome interpretive denial and to align with contemporary understandings of animal sentience and welfare. The author suggests that granting legal personhood and rights to animals is not just an ethical imperative but also a crucial step towards fostering sustainable societies and economies in the Anthropocene.[98] This reevaluation is essential for acknowledging the moral status and importance of non-human animals in our shared world.

VIII. Discussion

Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze weaves a tapestry of interconnected themes, dissecting the complex nature of denialism in animal and environmental ethics. It delves deeply into psychological mechanisms, such as cognitive dissonance and moral disengagement, enriched by cultural analyses that unveil the societal norms underpinning animal commodification and environmental degradation. Challenging traditional environmental discourse, the work advocates for a reevaluation of moral agency, recognizing non-human sentience and critiquing anthropocentric views. It also adeptly navigates the in-

[93] Outhwaite, 204-206, 208, 209, 211-213.

[94] Ibid., 208.

[95] Ibid., 209.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid., 207-208.

[98] Ibid., 201.

tricate interplay of economic and political forces in sustaining denialism, revealing their role in maintaining the status quo. Finally, the book places denialism within both historical and contemporary contexts, showing how it has evolved and how it manifests in current environmental and animal welfare challenges. Such contextual understanding is vital for comprehending the depth and persistence of denial in these areas. This holistic approach highlights the need for a multifaceted strategy to foster ethical and sustainable coexistence with nature and its non-human inhabitants.

The book diverges from conventional texts in environmental philosophy and animal ethics by focusing on aspects that contribute to the overlook or denial of ethical considerations in practice. The work stands in contrast to foundational texts such as Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There*[99] and Arne Naess's fundamental principles of deep ecology,[100] which establish standards of ecological conscience and respect for nature, by delving into the human tendencies that lead to ignoring these ethical principles, thereby addressing the gap between theory and practice. Similarly, in the field of animal ethics, while seminal works by Peter Singer[101] and Tom Regan[102] lay down utilitarian and deontological frameworks, respectively, this book probes into societal mechanisms perpetuating speciesism, highlighting barriers to realizing these ethical frameworks. Thus, the book fills a significant niche in the literature by addressing why established ethical principles often fail in real-world application, offering an interdisciplinary perspective that aligns with contemporary discussions

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[99] Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949).

100 Deep ecology is a theoretical framework or philosophy that advocates for an intrinsic value in all living beings and the natural environment, as opposed to an anthropocentric viewpoint. This philosophy emphasizes principles like biodiversity, ecological balance, and the interconnectedness of all natural entities. Naess's work is foundational in the field of environmental ethics and philosophy. Arne Naess, "The Shallow and Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary," in *The Selected Works of Arne Naess. Vol. 10, Deep Ecology of Wisdom: Explorations in Unities of Nature and Cultures: Selected Papers*, eds. Harold Glasser and Alan R. Drengson 2263–2269 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), 7-12. See also, Evangelos D. Protopapadakis, "Supernatural Will and Organic Unity in Process: From Spinoza's Naturalistic Pantheism to Arne Naess' New Age Ecosophy T and Environmental Ethics," in *Studies on Supernaturalism*, ed. G. Arabatzis, 173-193 (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2009).

[101] Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: Random House, 1975); also, Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal," in *Animal Ethics: Past and Present Perspectives*, ed. Evangelos D. Protopapadakis, 163-178 (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2012).

[102] Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983). Also, Tom Regan, "Empty Cages: Animal Rights and Vivisection," in *Animal Ethics: Past and Present Perspectives*, ed. Evangelos D. Protopapadakis, 179-195 (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2012).

recognizing the complexity of human attitudes towards animals and nature.

The book excels in laying a comprehensive theoretical foundation; however, an extension into more concrete, actionable strategies could further enhance its utility, providing readers with a more direct roadmap for addressing and overcoming denial in the context of animal welfare and environmental degradation issues.

For instance, the insights from this book can inform the development of more effective environmental education programs that go beyond mere information dissemination to address emotional and cognitive resistance. Research has shown that communication strategies focusing on engaging and educational content, such as well-researched books and documentaries, significantly impact the consumption of animal products.[103] Such methods likely foster a deeper emotional connection and cognitive understanding of the issues, which can be more persuasive and less likely to trigger defensive reactions compared to more confrontational or graphic methods. This aligns with the understanding that addressing emotional and cognitive resistance requires nuanced, empathetic, and well-rounded approaches to communication and education. Further, in addressing denialism, the principles of behavior change, as discussed by Stone and Fernandez,[104] can be effectively employed. This approach necessitates first fostering an awareness of the dissonance between an individual's professed values and their denialist stance,[105] such as the discrepancy observed when an individual claims to value animal rights yet denies the impact of factory farming on animal welfare. Implementing behavior change involves strategies like encouraging public commitment to consistent ethical stances, facilitating self-reflection to recognize contradictions, and providing education and support for gradual belief modification.[106] For instance, in an academic setting, students might be engaged in activities where they publicly endorse animal welfare, followed by guided discussions that illuminate their own contradictory behaviors, such as consuming products from sources that compromise animal welfare. While this process promotes cognitive dissonance, it harnesses it as a catalyst

[103] *Faunalytics*, "Planting Seeds: The Impact of Diet & Different Animal Advocacy Tactics," April 27, 2022, https://faunalytics.org/relative-effectiveness/.

[104] Jeff Stone and Nicholas C. Fernandez, "To Practice What We Preach: The Use of Hypocrisy and Cognitive Dissonance to Motivate Behavior Change," *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 2, no. 2 (2008): 1024-1051.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid.

for reassessing beliefs and adopting behaviors more aligned with the expressed ethical positions. The efficacy of this approach lies in its ability to subtly yet powerfully realign beliefs through self-realization and guided cognitive restructuring, thereby addressing denialism in a non-confrontational and introspective manner. Of course, the interdisciplinary nature of the book also suggests a need for collaborative efforts across different sectors – governmental, non-governmental, educational, and private – for practical efforts addressing the deep-rooted issues of denial to be successful.

While the book offers comprehensive and novel insights into denialism as it permeates attitudes towards animals and the environment, it is worth noting that it predominantly reflects a Western-centric perspective. Chapters that delve into specific industries, like fisheries[107] and meat marketing,[108] discuss these issues within the context of Western societies. Further, discussions on the Western culture of entitlement,[109] legal frameworks regarding animal captivity,[110] and speciesist culture in animal behavior science[111] highlight the Western-centric legal and ethical mindset and the influence of Western instrumental rationality. However, the book's focus primarily on Western perspectives may not adequately address the diverse global and cultural perspectives on animal and environmental ethics. For example, in non-Western contexts, denialism in animal welfare is exemplified by practices in traditional Chinese medicine, such as the use of rhinoceros horns and shark fins, driven by entrenched cultural beliefs. Despite scientific evidence negating their medicinal value and acknowledging the detrimental impact on wildlife,[112] these practices persist, reflecting a form of denialism deeply rooted in the historical and cultural norms of certain Asian societies. This highlights the complexity of addressing animal welfare issues globally, necessitating culturally sensitive and ethically informed approaches; ultimately, these will enhance the effectiveness of policies and initiatives.

Despite its Western-centric perspective, however, *Environmental and Animal Abuse Denial: Averting Our Gaze* stands as an invaluable resource in the study of denialism. It transcends being just a scholar-

[107] Mueller and Hydle, 103-126.

[108] Syse and Bjørkdahl, 127-144.

[109] Vetlesen, 35-54.

[110] Outhwaite, 201-220.

[111] Spannring and De Giorgio-Schoorl, 190.

[112] Bob Ladendorf and Brett Ladendorf-Schoorl, "Wildlife Apocalypse: How Myths and Superstitions Are Driving Animal Extinctions," in *Unreason: Best of Skeptical Inquirer*, eds. Kendrick Frazier and Benjamin Radford, 136-149 (Essex, CT: Prometheus Books, 2024), 137.

ly work, serving instead as a reflective lens on society, uncovering a façade deeply scarred by denial. As Thoreau retreated to Walden to ponder the essence of living deliberately,[113] so too does this collection beckon us to retreat into contemplation of our entanglements with nature and our fellow beings. In doing so, there remains hope that we may finally embrace the urgent necessity of change, not as an insurmountable challenge, but as an opportunity for collective growth and a healthier coexistence with the natural world.

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