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Al-Ghazali on Taqlid, Ijtihad, and Forming Beliefs

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Abstract

Medieval philosophy has often been stereotypically characterized as rigidly reliant on authority and lacking originality. However, the present research challenges this perception by unveiling the lively debates among medieval philosophers in the Islamic World regarding the autonomy of thought for both esteemed scholars and everyday individuals. Rather than passively accepting authoritative doctrines, these philosophers contemplated the extent to which independent reflection should play a role. Surprisingly, their reflections resonate in the contemporary world as we grapple with parallel questions about the balance between authority and individual inquiry in our society. The first part of the paper introduces a timeless challenge faced by medieval Islamic philosophers: the formation of beliefs. This predicament persists today – how much should we rely on authority without critical examination, and when should we subject our beliefs to scrutiny? The paper introduces an Islamic classical tradition followed by Muslim jurists, theologians, and philosophers: the nuanced distinction between Taqlid (following authority) and Ijtihad (independent reasoning) to address this. The perspective of Al-Ghazali, a prominent representative of this tradition, is thoroughly examined, highlighting its contributions and challenges. In its methodological approach, this paper rigorously analyzes primary and secondary sources relevant to Al-Ghazali's views in Arabic and English. This comprehensive analysis aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between authority and independent reasoning in the context of medieval Islamic philosophy.

Keywords: *Al-Ghazali; taqlid; ijtihad; belief; justification*

I. Introduction

When someone tells us that something will happen tomorrow or is happening outside of this room, we tend to ask them, what makes them think so? One way of justifying a belief is by showing sufficient evidence for the belief in question.[1] Howev-

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[1] For more discussion on evidentialism, see Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, *Evidentialism: Essays in Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1.

er, with the vast amount of information we are dealing with daily, we seem required to outsource the job of forming our beliefs to others.[2] For instance, when we think about the debate over the global economic crisis of inflation, many of us have an opinion about global inflation even though not everyone is an economist. Nevertheless, we all admit that global inflation is a critical issue that affects everyone's life, and we have beliefs about it despite not having any economic expertise. Similarly, we can run through all the political problems and controversies we face today, e.g., global warming and military conflicts. When we think about any of these issues, we see that to understand any problem deeply, we would probably need to have a Ph.D. in the relevant field, which may not be sufficient to understand the problem entirely. People often, for example, complain that even economists underestimate or do not understand the real implications of the problem of global inflation.

We are all in a situation of deferring to experts to form our beliefs about essential matters. This way of creating beliefs about a particular issue is causing much political upheaval because there is considerable debate about the circumstances under which we should be doing something but not the other. For instance, we have all these debates about fake news and how the public forms false beliefs.[3] It should be noted that this concern is not only about political matters. The same concern appears even when we think about everyday issues. For example, I would accept that the stove is off because my wife tells me so, though I risk lives when I take her testimony.[4] Alternatively, when colleagues ask me about screams they heard, they would believe what I tell them. Contemporary epistemologists refer to this matter as the problem of knowledge by testimony. A more general phenomenon plays out on many levels: the personal, the practical, and the political, which has to do with this way of forming beliefs where someone else tells you what is accurate, and you believe it because they say it is true.

It is natural and necessary to believe based on someone else's testimony. However, this way of forming beliefs is suspect because we usual-

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[2] See Alvin I. Goldman, "What Is Justified Belief?" in *Justification and Knowledge: New Studies in Epistemology*, ed. George Sotiros Pappas, 1-23 (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1979); and William P. Alston, "Concepts of Epistemic Justification," *Monist* 68, no. 1 (1985): 57-89.

[3] It is widely held that beliefs are attitudes one takes when one takes something to be true. According to Bernard Williams, one's belief 'aims at truth.' Bernard Williams, *Problems of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

[4] Testimony is usually taken as a source of justification for our beliefs. For example, Burge argues that 'if something is a rational source, it is prima facie source of truth.' Tyler Burge, "Content Preservation," *The Philosophical Review* 102, no. 4 (1993): 457-488.

ly tend to think that we should form our beliefs based on understanding why the thing we believe is true.[5] For example, if we talk to a climatologist and they say that global warming is a severe threat to humanity, we tend to ask why they believe so. If this climatologist says, "I believe that global warming is a threat to humanity because one of my friend's friend is a climatologist and told me that," then we would think they do not know what they are doing because they are not experts. If we are strict about it, we might think we should only believe things we know are true. According to Stoicism, when someone is not sure what to believe, one should withhold belief entirely, and thus:

> Only the perfected human agent genuinely knows anything, because only she possesses the wide-ranging argumentative expertise necessary to defend what she has affirmed against any possible challenge, together with a grasp of the further facts that explain its truth.[6]

Hence, Stoics will only commit themselves when they are certain.[7]

On the other hand, Scepticism suggests that if you hold the policy that we should only form beliefs when we are sure, then we should never form any beliefs because we can never be sure, even about things that we usually think we are confident about.[8] For instance, the apple I see on the table could be made of wax. Thus, we are between two extremes on the issue of whether to form beliefs based on authority. According to the Stoic point of view, we should not believe something because someone else says it, while Sceptic argue that we would never be sure about anything because any belief could be false.

II. Two ways of forming beliefs

The least productive period in the history of philosophy to solve the problem of how we should form our beliefs would be medieval philoso-

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[5] For challenges to testimony as a source of justification, see Anna-Sara Malmgren, "Is There A Priori Knowledge by Testimony?" *The Philosophical Review* 115, no. 2 (2006): 199-241.

[6] Marion Durand, Simon Shogry, and Dirk Baltzly, "Stoicism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2023 Edition), eds. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2023/entries/stoicism/.

[7] For recent discussion on Stoicism, see Nancy Sherman, "Stoic Consolations," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 565-587.

[8] For an overview of different accounts of scepticism, see Juan Comesaña and Peter Klein, "Skepticism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2019 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/skepticism/.

phy. We tend to have a prejudice about medieval philosophy: it is high-ly authority-bound, uncreative, and non-innovative because medieval philosophers followed previous authorities, such as Aristotle, or reve-lations.[9] So, there are better ways of criticizing the nature of authority than medieval philosophy. However, this is a misconception; there are many cases where authority is challenged. For example, although phi-losophy in the Islamic world is authority-bound, there are quite a few ostentatiously innovative philosophers. Philosophers such as Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes underline that they were following their own reason, even to the extent that they were not necessarily following re-vealed tradition.[10] So, they treat philosophy as an autonomous field of inquiry that confirms religious revelation but is not dependent upon it. However, why do these hardcore rationalists tend to be Aristotelians in the medieval Islamic world?

They partially got the idea of having purely rational science from Aristotle but also by observing Muslim jurists and theologians. Frank Griffel argues[11] that early Ash'arites theologians distinguish between emulating other people's sayings and making an independent judge-ment.[12] To explain this, we need to introduce two Arabic terms. The first is taqlid, which means uncritically accepting authority and is usu-ally used as a term for criticism.[13] For example, when I am told that

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[9] This prejudice toward medieval Islamic philosophy can be traced back to The French Orien-talist Ernest Renan (1823-1892). For Al-Afghani and Kemal's response to Renan's position, see Michelangelo Guida, "Al-Afghānī and Namık Kemal's Replies to Ernest Renan: Two An-ti-Westernist Works in the Formative Stage of Islamist Thought," *Turkish Journal of Politics* 2, no. 2 (2011): 57-70.

[10] Even though philosophers like Avicenna and Averroes can be seen as rationalists, they were committed to the idea of the "unity of truth," that is, both revelation and the human mind can realize the ultimate truth of our existence. For a discussion on the role that the idea of "unity of truth" played in the thought of some Islamic philosophers, see Mesfer Alhayyani, "Ibn Tufayl's Hayy Ibn Yaqzan: The Natural Progression of the Mind and Intellectual Elitism," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 103, no. 4 (2023): 2-3. It should also be noted that not all Islamic thinkers accept the idea of the unity of truth. For example, Al-Ghazali's core position in *The Incoherence of Philosophers* was that relying merely on human reasoning does not necessarily lead to realizing the ultimate truth of our existence; see Peter Adamson, *Philosophy in the Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 149.

[11] Frank Griffel, "Taqlīd of the Philosophers: Al-Ghazālī's Initial Accusation in his Tahāfut," in *Ideas, Images, and Methods of Portrayal: Insights into Classical Arabic Literature and Islam*, ed. Sebastian Günther, 273-296 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 279.

[12] Ash'arites represent widely held thought within Islamic theology/Kalam. Al-Ghazali is one of the prominent names of the Ash'arites, who share some common ideas within the school, such as the idea of divine intervention in causality. For more discussion, see Blake D. Dutton, "Al-Ghazālī on Possibility and the Critique of Causality," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 10, no. 1 (2001): 23-46.

[13] Griffel translates *taqlid* as 'uncritical emulation' in Griffel, "Taqlīd of the Philosophers," 274;

I am engaging in taqlid, it means that I have not thought something through for myself, and I say something just because I am following an authority or tradition. The second term is ijtihad, which means an effort (or making an "independent judgment").[14] Ijtihad is the antonym or the counter term of the word taqlid. Moreover, when I engaged in ijtihad, I thought about it and figured it out. Consequently, someone who engages in taqlid is called muqalid, and someone who participates in ijtihad is called mujtahid.

When we look at the Islamic legal tradition, we will find that early Muslim jurists started systematizing Islamic law based on the revealed tradition, which happened around the same time people started writing about philosophy in the Islamic world.[15] The question quickly emerges: What does it mean to make a legal ruling in this context? Jurists came up with the idea that there are two ways of making a legal ruling: through taqlid or ijtihad. The former way appears when a member of a legal school makes a legal ruling based on his master's previous ruling or whatever other members of the school have said. For example, when a jurist is ruling in an unclear situation, he could look for a previous ruling of someone considered authoritative and make that ruling rather than trying to figure it out himself. The other option is ijtihad, where the jurist is competent enough to return to the sources and make his own ruling based on revealed tradition. Islamic legal schools are founded by people considered to be mujtahids. For example, Al-Shafi'i, the founder of the Shafi'i legal school, can develop innovative new rulings. His ijtihad is based not only on his common sense or intuitions but also on the sources of Islamic law.[16]

Interestingly, these foremost jurists divide the juridical world into two kinds of jurists: mujtahids and muqalids. Note that the four significant jurists are pure mujtahids who start from first principles and

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and Frank Griffel, "Al-Ghazālī's Use of 'Original Human Disposition' (*Fitra*) and Its Background in the Teachings of Al-Fārābī and Avicenna," *The Muslim World* 102, no. 1 (2011): 1. However, the present author uses here Adamson's understanding of Al-Ghazali's notion of taqlid as an 'uncritical acceptance of authority' see Adamson.

[14] Adamson, 174.

[15] Besides the Quran, revealed tradition also involves *Hadith*, a collection of reports about things the Prophet said and did.

[16] According to Griffel, a consensus among early Muslim thinkers suggests that, despite the tireless efforts of teachers and prophets, a segment of individuals has perennially struggled – and will continue to struggle – with grasping even the most fundamental theological doctrine of Islam, namely monotheism. See Frank Griffel, "The Project of Enlightenment in Islamic-Arabic Culture," in *The Cultures of Maimonideanism: New Approaches to the History of Jewish Thought*, ed. James T. Robinson, 1-20 (Leiden: Brill, 2009) for more discussion.

figure out everything independently. There are also the so-called mu-jtahids within a school. For instance, a Shafi'i jurist can practice ijtihad by following the principles laid down by Al-Shafi'i and his followers. This jurist would be considered a compromise between pure ijtihad and pure taqlid. More importantly, most jurists who make everyday rulings can and should engage in taqlid because people might not trust their competence to engage in a high level of ijtihad. For the same reason, people not trained to be jurists should only engage in taqlid when it comes to law. These ideas of taqlid and ijtihad in making legal rulings emerged very early in the 8th and 9th centuries when Aristotle and other philosophical texts were first translated into Arabic.[17]

It seems that the same ideas of taqlid and ijtihad found their way to theology. Muslim theologians make a remarkably similar distinction. Theologians were interested in whether Muslim believers and expert theologians should be engaging in ijtihad or taqlid. Griffel describes Al-Ghazali's stance regarding this question:

> Emulating other people's thoughts is considered a grave mistake for those capable of independent reasoning. There should be no doubt that, in the case of the awamm, i.e., the ordinary people, taqlid is not only tolerated but welcomed since an acquaintance with independent thinking would run the risk of having this group of people fall into unbelief. A scholar or someone who considers himself a mutakallim [theologian] must, however, accept the religious impera-tive to reason independently.[18]

According to this understanding, the expert theologian is a person who engages in ijtihad. The theologian should try independent judgement, for example, to prove the existence of God through a rational argument rather than believing because the Quran says so. Similarly, a good theo-logian should be able to give a good reason for believing a proposition about God's nature or the nature of prophecy. In contrast, the non-ex-pert in theology, i.e., an ordinary person, is supposed to engage in taqlid regarding these matters. The reason behind this position is that ordinary people (non-expert theologians) are incompetent to engage on the is-sues that involve the existence of God, the divine attributes, etc.

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[17] See Emma Gannagé, "The Rise of Falsafa: Al-Kindī (d. 873), On *First Philosophy*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke, 30-62 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[18] Griffel, "Taqlīd of the Philosophers," 280-281.

However, Al-Ghazali in *The Deliverance from Error* argues that even the humble believer should engage in a limited amount of ijtihad, e.g., believers should be able to understand a good basic argument for the existence of God.[19] On the face of it, this sort of policy is desirable because it would make their beliefs secure. A person who believes that God exists, for example, would not be vulnerable once faced with challenges regarding belief in God:

> Since my first years and all the way to maturity, the thirst to perceive the real natures of things (darak haqāʾiq al-umūr) was my custom and habit: it was an innate disposition and nature (gharīza wa-fitra) placed in me by God, not something I would have chosen and cultivated for myself. The shackles of authoritarianism (taqlīd) therefore fell from me and inherited beliefs fell to pieces in my sight even while I was still a youth: this happened when I saw how the children of Christians never grew up to embrace anything other than Christianity, or the children of Jews anything other than Judaism, or the children of Muslims anything other than Islam. I also heard the Tradition according to which the Messenger of God said: "Every newborn is born with an innate nature (fitra): then his parents make him into a Jew, a Christian, or a Magi." Through this my inner being was moved into researching the reality of that original innate nature (haqīqa al-fitra al-aṣliyya) as well as the true nature of those accidental beliefs that [come about] by authoritative adherence to parents and instructors.[20]

The worry that Al-Ghazali addresses seems to differ from the one this paper described. Al-Ghazali's concern is not about keeping our beliefs stable, but it is that if you believe by taqlid, your beliefs will only be as good as those you follow, and the authority might be wrong. According to Al-Ghazali, if I were a Jew, I would follow Jewish tradition and Jewish authority, which would get me part of the correct answer because, for example, I would be a monotheist. However, I would also reject the prophecy of Mohammad. In such a case, the fact that I am a Jew rather than a Muslim is just a matter of epistemic luck, in which I be-

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[19] We can consider Al-Ghazali's views in this work as his final and most mature views since it was written a few years before his death.

[20] Taneli Kukkonen, "Al-Ghazālī on Error," in *Islam and Rationality*, ed. Frank Griffel, 3-31 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 4.

lieve certain things just because I grew up in a situation where the avail-
able authorities believed these such and such things, so I end up believ-
ing it.[21] For this reason, it seems Al-Ghazali rejected taqlid because it
was alarming. Instead, Al-Ghazali tried to figure out everything out on
his own. However, we have seen above that Al-Ghazali does not think
everyone should engage in ijtihad and abandon taqlid. Thus, it seems
that Al-Ghazali believes that only the independent-minded intellectual
elite should reflect rationally and prove everything for themselves.

On the other hand, the philosophers come along with the same
line of thought. Ironically, their posture of supreme independency,
purely rational philosophy – freed from the bonds of religious devo-
tions – was borrowed from the juridical and theological tradition. For
example, when Averroes wrote the Decisive Treatise, he said that the
people in the best position to understand the Quran are philosophers
because philosophers have an independent rational way of securing
truth through demonstrative proofs.[22] So, philosophers know what is
true independently and can tell what the Quran means. In this way,
Averroes recapitulates a way of thinking about rationality already well
established in Islamic juridical and theological tradition, which he knew
very well. His grandfather – also named Averroes – wrote works on
law. He describes various kinds of mujtahids and muqalids, correspond-
ing to Averroes' contrast between philosophers, theologians, and or-
dinary people.

Thus far, this paper addresses a problem that medieval Islamic think-
ers faced and described how a long tradition of jurists, theologians, and
philosophers reacted to it. However, this approach seems philosophically
unsatisfactory because it is elitist. To say that some people are capable of
figuring out everything vital for themselves and that ordinary people do
not figure out anything when it comes to essential matters is very elitist
because it classifies the majority of people as intellectually incompetent.
So, all ordinary people can do is follow the experts' opinions. This elitism
looks philosophically unattractive and might not be surprising if we lived
in the medieval era, where most people were not even literate. We might

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[21] For more discussion on epistemic luck, see Hamid Vahid, "Knowledge and Varieties of Epis-
temic Luck," *Dialectica* 55, no. 4 (2001): 351-362; and Duncan Pritchard, "Virtue Epistemol-
ogy and Epistemic Luck," *Metaphilosophy* 34, nos. 1/2 (2003): 106-130.

[22] Campanini lists Averroes' classification of humans: philosophers, theologians, and ordinary
folks. According to Averroes, there are interpretive problems about what the Quran means,
and since philosophers know what is true, they can check every interpretation against their
philosophical demonstrations. See Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, ed. Massimo Campanini (New
Jersey: Gorgias Press LLC, 2017).

be very pessimistic about the ability of ordinary people to form their beliefs through a rational form of expertise.

Nevertheless, this elitism is not only unattractive but also epistemically problematic. Even if you think that you are one of the elitists, it does not seem like an excellent policy to form all your beliefs based on your efforts. Should we have a criminology degree before voting intelligently on a new criminal law bill? Even if we do so, we would be experts in one field, namely, criminology. But what about other things? How can we have an opinion about climate change? Should we have a degree in climatology? What if I want to buy a new car but need clarification on the best one that suits my budget, lifestyle, daily routine, etc.? As a result, it is implausible to claim that all our beliefs should be formed based on our efforts. In many cases where we lack expertise, we should trust what the experts in a particular field tell us. Hence, in this context, the claim that we should figure out everything necessary by ourselves is not a good theory of belief formation.

III. Justified taqlid as a solution

An excellent solution to the problem that this paper discussed above can be found in Al-Ghazali. Consider the following quote from his autobiography where he is talking about convincing yourself that someone is a prophet:

> If doubt arises regarding whether a specific person is a prophet or not, certainty is only attained by knowing their circumstances. This can be achieved either through direct observation or through consistent accounts and testimonials. For instance, if you understand Medicine and jurisprudence, you can recognize the jurists and physicians by observing their conditions and hearing their statements. Even if you do not see them, you are not prevented from knowing whether al-Shafi'i was a jurist and whether Galen was a physician, not through blind imitation [taqlid] but by learning something from Jurisprudence and Medicine, reading their books and treatises. Thus, you gain necessary knowledge about what they are like. Similarly, if you comprehend the meaning of prophethood, by delving into the Quran and traditions, you acquire necessary knowledge that Muhammad is at the highest degree of prophecy.[23]

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[23] I translated this paragraph from Arabic to English from Al-Ghazali's *The Deliverance from*

The parallel that Al-Ghazali draws, Jurisprudence and Medicine, is more beneficial for us.[24] Al-Ghazali suggests that we do not need to be super experts in Jurisprudence and Medicine to recognize a competent jurist or a competent doctor; we need to know enough so that we are in a good position to identify the competent ones, and then we can follow their advice. So, the thought here is that we have some responsibility for figuring out which authorities to follow, but the responsibility does not arise to becoming an expert yourself. For example, I do not have to become an expert in Medicine – or have a Ph.D. in Toxicology – to tell good doctors from bad ones.

To distinguish between good and bad doctors, I need to know their qualifications: from which universities they graduated, at what hospitals they worked, etc. So, there are some criteria by which we can distinguish good doctors from bad ones, and then I choose to believe what the good experts say rather than the others. In this sense, I outsource my belief to the experts, but in a responsible way by at least finding out enough about the subjects that I know whom to trust.

We may call this stance a "justified taqlid," a compromise between absolute taqlid and absolute ijtihad. In this justified taqlid, I do not go so far as to figure out everything for myself like what a stoic would tell us to do, nor would I follow whichever authorities have been handed to me because then I will fall into the problem of epistemic luck. In this stance of justified taqlid, we would not believe whoever was put before us; instead, we would be critical about which authority to consider. We would have a good shot at having true beliefs when we are critical enough to determine which ones are the proper authorities. This might look like a satisfactory solution to the problem that this paper addressed above: "How should we form our beliefs?"

IV. Challenges to Al-Ghazali's view

Up to this point, we have explored Al-Ghazali's perspective on what we have termed "justified taqlid" as a plausible approach to the belief formation problem addressed in this paper. However, this concluding section delves into three concerns regarding Al-Ghazali's view.

Error/ Al-Munqid Mina-d-dalal. Abū Hāmid Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Al-Munqid Mina-d-dalal* (Bairut: al-Maktaba al-'Assriyyah, 2019).

[24] For more elaboration on Al-Ghazali's concept of prophecy, see Frank Griffel, "Al-Gazālī's Concept of Prophecy: The Introduction of Avicennan Psychology into Ašʿarite Theology," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (2004): 101-144.

The first concerns the ambiguity in demarcating the line between justified and unjustified taqlid. Establishing a clear distinction poses challenges analogous to differentiating between a good and less competent doctor. The degree of certainty in justifying taqlid varies based on the depth of inquiry. For instance, when determining the competency of a doctor, one may halt at various levels of confidence: recognizing the doctor's qualifications, delving into the history of surgeries performed, consulting other medical professionals, and so forth. The critical question emerges: at what point can one deem their taqlid justified in following a particular authority? The challenge lies in the realization that, regardless of where the search for evidence concludes, there may always be a higher degree of justification, leaving uncertainty about the threshold sufficient to validate taqlid.

The second concern highlights that the concept of justified taqlid, while offering a valuable framework, needs to provide a comprehensive solution to the overarching challenge of justifying all our beliefs. Instead, it imposes limitations, acknowledging that justified taqlid is attainable in some cases but not universally applicable. Al-Ghazali's perspective implies that to distinguish between proficient and inadequate doctors, one must possess a deep understanding of their qualifications and career history, subsequently choosing to trust the judgments of competent experts. However, this viewpoint appears overly demanding, especially considering its application across diverse fields. While one might successfully differentiate between competent and incompetent experts in Medicine, extending this discernment to every discipline seems implausible. Can one confidently identify proficient climatologists or economists with the same precision? The idea of justified taqlid offers a substantial resolution to part of the challenge. For example, individuals with a solid medical background may achieve a level of justified taqlid, enabling them to select the proper authorities to follow. Nevertheless, justified taqlid is not a panacea; its feasibility is constrained by the reality that we need more expertise in every field, rendering the problem only partially resolved.

The third concern raises the issue that the concept of justified taqlid does not eliminate the problem of elitism; instead, it compounds it by introducing a tripartite classification of individuals instead of a binary one. As argued earlier, this approach to categorizing people is philosophically unsatisfactory due to its inherent elitist nature. Expanding on the second concern, it becomes evident that there are three distinct classes of people: mujtahid (those capable of independently discerning everything necessary), justified muqalid (those capable of discerning

some important matters independently, as illustrated in Al-Ghazali's example of distinguishing competent doctors from incompetent ones), and ordinary people, or pure muqalid (who consistently defer to the opinions of others without regard to their ability to assess competence). This philosophical perspective, however, needs to be more attractive as it categorizes the majority as intellectually incompetent, posing significant ethical and epistemological challenges.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of Al-Ghazali's perspective on the formation of beliefs provides valuable insights into the intricate interplay between authority, independent reasoning, and the challenges of belief formation within the Islamic tradition. This paper has delved into the nuanced distinctions of taqlid and ijtihad, as articulated by Al-Ghazali, shedding light on the dynamic intellectual landscape cultivated by Muslim jurists, theologians, and philosophers.

As scholars continue to probe the philosophical underpinnings of belief formation and epistemic practices, future studies may build upon the foundation laid out in this paper. Potential avenues for further research include a more extensive examination of Al-Ghazali's specific contributions to the distinction between justified and unjustified Taqlid, as well as an exploration of how these concepts resonate with contemporary discussions on authority and expertise.

Moreover, an in-depth analysis of how Al-Ghazali's ideas intersect with broader philosophical traditions, both within and beyond the Islamic world, could offer a comprehensive understanding of belief formation as a universal human endeavor. Researchers may also delve into comparative studies, exploring parallels and divergences between Al-Ghazali's views and those of other influential thinkers across different cultural and religious contexts.

Furthermore, future investigations could extend into practical applications, considering how Al-Ghazali's insights might inform contemporary discussions on epistemology, education, and intellectual diversity. By engaging with Al-Ghazali's ideas in the context of modern challenges, scholars may contribute to the ongoing dialogue on belief formation and epistemic practices, fostering a more nuanced understanding of the dynamic relationship between authority and independent reasoning in the pursuit of knowledge.

In essence, this paper serves as a steppingstone for future research endeavors, offering a comprehensive exploration of Al-Ghazali's views on belief formation and laying the groundwork for continued scholarly

inquiry into the philosophical dimensions of epistemology within the Islamic intellectual tradition.

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An Encompassing, Normative Philosophy of Design: The Theory of Responsive Cohesion

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Abstract

Design is concerned with the ways in which we deliberately seek to arrange, organize, or structure things. From a philosophy of design perspective, the practice of design raises fundamental questions about the basic ways in which things can and should be organized. I advance a tripartite schema of the basic ways in which things (anything at all) can be organized and offer a triangular model of the "organization space" or "design space" they define. I refer to these three basic forms of organization as "responsive cohesion," "fixed cohesion," and "discohesion," and offer three reasons why responsively cohesive forms of organization are more valuable than the other two; indeed, the other two forms of organization are typically disvaluable. Beyond focusing on the value of individual instances of responsive cohesion, I further consider the fact that every responsively cohesive item exists within a wider context(s), which may itself tend more towards fixed cohesion, responsive cohesion, or discohesion. This raises a number of further issues; for example, what should we do if a responsively cohesive item clashes with – is discohesive with – its responsively cohesive context? I advance a normative theory of contexts to sort out these kinds of issues. In the context of this discussion, I briefly consider a range of other ideas that bear a family resemblance to the idea of responsive cohesion and indicate, equally briefly, why the theory of responsive cohesion approach is superior to these other approaches. I conclude with some guidance on how we can implement the ideas advanced here ("we" because we all design things in our own way) and then, more specifically, on the implications of these ideas for the professional designer-client relationship.

Keywords: *designing; forms of organization; responsive cohesion; fixed cohesion; discohesion; architecture; contexts; ecological*

Design is centrally concerned with the ways in which things can be envisaged, made, or enabled to hold together (cohere). This immediately raises several interesting questions, foremost among which are: What are the possible ways in which things *can* hold

together (or not)? Is one (or some) of these ways of holding together better in some sense than the others? Why? What follows from this in terms of how we should design things? Each of these questions is a philosophical one as much as a design-related one, since each concerns reason-based inquiry into fundamental questions – questions concerning, in this context, the nature and value of different forms of organization and the action guiding principles, if any, that follow from this when we deliberately seek to arrange, organize, or structure things (in other words, design things) in the world (the etymology of the word "deliberate" is instructive here: it derives from the Latin *deliberare*, "to consider well," which is precisely what philosophers and designers like to think of themselves as doing).

I intend to answer each of these questions in the course of this paper and thereby to offer an encompassing, normative philosophy of design. Each of these descriptors – "encompassing," "normative," and "philosophy of design" – earns its keep here. First, the approach I will advance is an encompassing one in two dictionary-sanctioned senses.[1] On the one hand, it will "include entirely or comprehensively" the possible ways in which things *can* hold together and, thus, the possible forms of organization that are open to designers. On the other hand, the approach advanced here will also offer a nested set of contexts (which can be visualized as a set of concentric or surrounding circles) within which any design must exist. (Another meaning of "encompass" is "to enclose within a circle; surround.") Second, the approach I advance here is a normative one (i.e., a priority ordering and action guiding one) in that I will advance arguments not only for the superiority of one general form of organization over its alternatives but also for the priority in which the contextual relations of any design should be considered and acted on. Third, the approach I will advance here proceeds within the ambit of philosophy of design in general (rather than a more immediately practical focus on design theory in particular) because it proceeds from foundational questions about the ways in which things can and should be organized.[2]

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[1] Definitional quotations here and below are from *Collins English Dictionary: Complete and Unabridged*, sixth edition (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 2003).

[2] For more on the young field of philosophy of design, see Glenn Parsons, *The Philosophy of Design* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), who draws a distinction between philosophy of design and design theory in his introductory section; see also the short piece by Per Galle, another pioneer in this area, entitled "Philosophy of Design: An Introduction," https://royaldanishacademy.com/cephad/philosophy-design-introduction, in which he characterizes philosophy of design simply as "the pursuit of insights about design by philosophical means," which is exactly what I am concerned with in this paper.

I. Three basic forms of organization: Fixed cohesion, responsive cohesion, and discohesion

I begin by working from first principles and argue that there are three basic ways in which things can hold together – or not. And by "things" here, I mean anything at all – from physical and biological stuff to conversations, narratives, lines of argument, presentations, artworks, buildings, towns, political systems, and so on. The three basic ways in which things can hold together (or not) are these:

> a. they can hold together by virtue of the mutual responsiveness – the mutual "answering" to each other (whether literal or metaphorical) – of the elements or salient features that constitute them;
>
> b. they can hold together alright, but do so in such a way that the elements or salient features that constitute them are not mutually responsive to each other;
>
> c. they can simply fail to hold together well or at all.

I refer to these three basic forms of organization as *responsive cohesion*, *fixed cohesion*, and *discohesion*, respectively.[3] The term "cohere" means to cling, hold, stick, or adhere together (from Latin *cohaerēre*, from *co-* together + *haerēre*, to cling, adhere). The term "responsive" derives from the Latin *rēsponsum,* answer. Thus, the term "responsive cohesion" can be thought of as referring to a structure or form of organization that holds together by virtue of the mutual "answering to each other" of its elements or salient features (again, this term is apt whether we consider the notion of "answering to each other" literally or metaphorically).

What about "fixed cohesion"? Although things can hold together in any number of non-mutually responsive ways, these typically fall into one of two main classes. First, it might be the case that one or a very

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[3] These categories and their implications were first advanced at book length in my *A Theory of General Ethics: Human Relationships, Nature, and the Built Environment* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006). Although these ideas were originally advanced in an explicitly ethical context, they have since been picked up and applied by several authors working in broadly design-oriented contexts ranging across architecture, craft, environmental aesthetics, garden design, landscape architecture, landscape management, and urban design (for a full listing, see the "Books" page of my personal website under the information on *A Theory of General Ethics*: https://www.warwickfox.com/books.html). That said, this is my own first paper-length elaboration of these ideas geared explicitly towards the philosophy of design per se.

few factors dominate the rest of whatever example is being considered such that "the rest" is forced, as it were, to bend to the will of these dominant factors, irrespective of what "the rest's" potential contributions might "call for" in their own right. Political examples of fixed cohesion include dictatorships and oligarchies; communicative examples include "conversations" in which one party dominates the other in terms of speaking time or the topics being "discussed." Second, it might be the case not so much that one or a few factors *within* whatever example is being considered dominate the rest, but rather that the entire example is itself predicated upon a restricted or stereotypical template that unduly constrains the possibilities that are actually available in the relevant situation. Examples here range far and wide: the hackneyed TV drama; the "pack-'em-in" architect's design brief that flattens landscape for bland identikit houses; the conversation in which both parties are playing such dutiful roles that they seem to be just "going through the motions."

Each of these forms of organization can be said to hold together alright – they're not "all over the place" or, in my terms, discohesive – but they hold together by virtue of various explicitly imposed or implicitly accepted constraints that serve to fix everything else in place. This stands in distinct contrast to responsively cohesive forms of organization, which hold together by virtue of the mutual responsiveness of the elements or salient features that constitute them. This, in essence, is the distinction between fixed cohesion and responsive cohesion.

I should also note here that the distinction between fixed cohesion and responsive cohesion does not map onto the distinction between static and dynamic. A painting is literally static, but can exemplify a massive degree of responsive cohesion in the interrelationships between its forms; conversely, dictatorships, hackneyed TV dramas, and conversations that are "stuck in a rut" are literally dynamical, but exemplify fixed cohesion in their forms.

I use the neologism "discohesion" to refer to things that fail to hold together well or at all. I do this rather than use similar terms such as "chaos" or "anarchy" because these terms can carry associated meanings that I do not want. Modellers of complex systems talk in terms of "deterministic chaos" and can provide us with simple equations that determine precisely (i.e., in a fixed way) developmental pathways for whatever "system" is under consideration but which nevertheless look like completely random order. This association of the term "chaos" actually pushes it in the direction of what I mean by "fixed cohesion" – albeit of an idiosyncratic kind – rather than "discohesion" since the whole apparently discohesive order is actually driven by a fixed template. And the term

"anarchy" slides between an everyday sense that is very similar to what I mean by "discohesion" and a political theory sense that can sound more like what I mean by "responsive cohesion." This is because the ideal form of anarchism promoted from its founding fathers on has extolled the idea of society organising itself (vs. being governmentally or centrally organized) around the principle of "mutual aid," which sounds very like "responsive cohesion." (That said, other forms of responsively cohesive political order with a better track record in practice are available, such as a well-functioning democracy.)

Given the trickiness of the territory here, I therefore want to steer clear of the unwanted mathematical-scientific and political theory associations that terms like "chaos" and "anarchy" can carry and instead use the term "discohesion" simply to refer to things that fail to hold together well or at all.

II. The relationship between these three forms of organization

It might initially be tempting to think of these three forms of organization as lying on a linear scale ranging from fixed cohesion to discohesion with responsive cohesion in the middle. But this is unhelpful, not least because it is possible to provide examples of things that are characterized essentially by fixed cohesion and discohesion (i.e., at opposite ends of what would seem to be the most natural linear mapping of these forms of organization) with no significant involvement of responsive cohesion at all. Examples here could include a strictly regimented dictatorship interrupted by pockets of spontaneous out-and-out rioting or a stereotypical paint-by-numbers cop show whose predictable plot line descends into an incomprehensible narrative mess. It is far better to envisage the three basic forms of organization I have outlined as representing the corners or vertices of a triangle that defines a notional "organization space" or "design space" (as in Fig. 1) onto which we can plot real world examples.
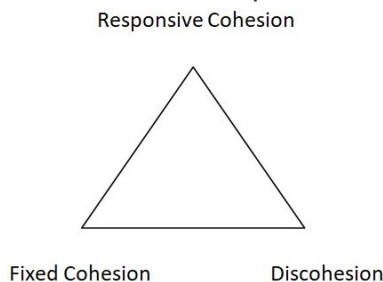
Figure 1. Notional "organization space" or "design space" depicting the three basic forms of organization in a two-dimensional triangular (as opposed to linear continuum) relationship.

I find it convenient to think of the line between fixed cohesion and dis-cohesion as the base of this notional triangle and responsive cohesion as the apex. (If the appropriateness of this "superior" location is not already obvious, then it will become so in the next section.) Exemplary forms of any one of these forms of organization would then be plotted on or very close to the appropriate corner of this triangle, combinations of any two at an appropriate point along one of the sides of the triangle, and combinations of all three at an appropriate point within the triangle.

It should also be noted that these categories of forms of organization are exclusive of each other and collectively exhaustive. In regard to being exclusive of each other, we can see from the definitions given earlier that to the extent that a form of organization is cohesive in some way, then it is not discohesive; and to the extent that it is responsively cohesive, then it is not fixedly cohesive (and vice versa). Anything at all can contain various mixtures of these categories, but the categories themselves are logically distinct. In regard to being collectively exhaustive, these categories exhaust the possible range of forms of organization because things can't be neither cohesive in some way nor discohesive (i.e., there are no other possibilities), and the responsive cohesion-fixed cohesion distinction is then simply one way — I think the most insightful way — to divide up the possible forms of cohesiveness.

III. Why responsive cohesion is the best form of organization

I contend that responsively cohesive forms of organization are superior to their alternatives in at least three profoundly important ways: a. they convey a clear sense of being more "alive" than the other two basic forms of organization; b. they are more interesting, engaging, or absorbing than their alternatives; and c. they are more balanced, fair, or "true" than examples of fixed cohesion or discohesion, where the use of "true" here is understood in the senses of "in tune: *a true note*" or "correctly aligned," as with a coin or dice that is "fair" or "unbiased." I will briefly consider these points in turn.

a. The "more alive" argument: The argument that responsively cohesive forms of organization are more "alive" than their alternatives is not concerned with the question of whether something is physically or literally alive or dead in a physiological or medical sense but whether they have a greater *quality* of "aliveness" about them. Healthy living

systems obviously possess such a quality, but so do many other kinds of things, from everyday objects to artworks, from buildings to conversations.[4]

With this in mind, we can say that responsively cohesive forms of organization convey a clear sense of being more "alive" than the other two basic forms of organization because they either are alive or at least partake in the responsively cohesive form of organization that we associate with living things. Conversely, fixedly cohesive and discohesive forms of organization convey a clear sense of being "deader" than responsively cohesive forms. This is because they either are dead or partake in the form of organization that we associate with dead or dying things: fixedly cohesive structures speak of a hardening of things, of sclerosis, fossilization, and rigor mortis; whereas discohesive structures speak of either an explosive ending or exhaustion and decay.

b. The "more interesting, engaging, or absorbing" argument: Responsively cohesive forms of organization are more interesting, engaging, or absorbing (and, thus, more rewarding of attention) than their alternatives because they combine semi-predictable order with far less predictable forms of creativity, novelty, or surprise. The overall sense of order that is conveyed by responsively cohesive forms of organization is expressed through their overall cohesive properties, whereas the creative, novel, or surprising features that are conveyed by these forms of organization are expressed through the complex mutual responsiveness of the elements or salient features that constitute them. In contrast, fixedly cohesive forms of organization are essentially boring, or rapidly become so, precisely because they are too rigidly ordered or repetitious to maintain our interest. Discohesive forms of organization, on the other hand, might initially be bewildering, but they rapidly become boring too, precisely because they are so predictably unpredictable.

Cognitive psychology shows us increasingly that our brains work on the basis of predictive models of the world.[5] We habituate to (i.e.,

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[4] The influential architect and design theorist Christopher Alexander has written much on this general topic including his four volume *The Nature of Order: An Essay on the Art of Building and the Nature of the Universe* (Berkeley, CA: The Centre for Environmental Structure, 2002); the environmental aesthetician Isis Brook has drawn on both Alexander's ideas and the idea of responsive cohesion in her paper "Enlivening and Deadening Green and Gray Spaces: An Exploration of Christopher Alexander's Features of Living Design," *Contemporary Aesthetics* 22 (2024), https://contempaesthetics.org/2024/01/22/enlivening-and-deadening-green-and-gray-spaces-an-exploration-of-christopher-alexanders-features-of-living-design/

[5] Andy Clark, *The Experience Machine: How Our Minds Predict and Shape Reality* (London: Allen Lane, 2023).

effectively screen out) signals or patterns that remain the same if we are not forced to attend to them; they do not sustain our interest because they are already anticipated. If we are forced to attend to such stimuli or patterns, then we quickly become bored. Equally, we can tend to screen out discohesive stimuli or patterns because they are *predictably* unpredictable and so in that sense are also already anticipated. But if we are forced to attend to them too, or are simply overwhelmed by them, then we become stressed and anxious and our performance on tasks suffers. These are common observations from our own experience, but their pedigree in experimental psychology can be traced at least to the early twentieth century in what has become known as the Yerkes-Dodson Law, the data for which support the idea that there is an optimal level – a Goldilocks' level if you like – of arousal for each of us.[6] A certain amount of stress or stimulation – in this case we are considering the amount of information processing, or how hard our neural "prediction engine" has to work – improves arousal and motivation (or what I am referring to here as interest or engagement), whereas too much has a negative effect on us.

c. The "more balanced, fair, or 'true'" argument: Responsively cohesive forms of organization exemplify these qualities far more than the other two basic forms of organization because responsively cohesive forms of organization – and only these forms of organization – represent the upshot of the myriad of both cooperative and competitive elements or salient features that constitute them. In other words, all these elements or salient features have, as it were, been "taken into account" or "factored into" the resulting form of organization. The upshot is that responsively cohesive forms of organization are the forms of organization that best resolve the tensions that may exist between the elements or salient features that constitute them. They therefore represent a balanced, fair, or "true" outcome (no matter how far from "equilibrium" this outcome might be in, say, a physics or complexity theory sense). In contrast, fixedly cohesive forms of organization are those in which tensions are actively kept under strict control or at least so highly constrained in their initial set-up that they are unable to express themselves freely as it were. As I have noted, examples are everywhere, from dictatorships and strict codes imposed by social customs to generic or template kinds of design "solutions." As for discohesive forms of organization, the question of balance is a non-starter; these are the

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[6] Robert M. Yerkes and John D. Dodson, "The Relation of Strength of Stimulus to Rapidity of Habit-Formation," *Journal of Comparative Neurology and Psychology* 18, no. 5 (1908): 459-482.

forms of organization whose centre does not hold (even though they might be in "equilibrium" as, say, with the eventual heat death of the universe).

We generally think we have good reasons for considering the qualities of aliveness, interestingness, and balance (lack of bias, fairness, being "in true") to be distinctly better than their contrasts – deadness, uninterestingness, and being out of balance (biased, unfair, being "out of true").[7] It follows that we ought to take the form of organization that generates the former set of properties to be distinctly better than those forms of organization that generate the latter set of properties. In other words, responsive cohesion represents a distinctly better form of organization than either fixed cohesion or discohesion (and, as I have already noted, these forms of organization exhaust the range of basic forms of organization). In so far as we are responsible for bringing about certain forms of organization, we should therefore aim to bring about responsively cohesive forms of organization. This, in a nutshell, is the key to good design.

IV. A brief note on alternative concepts to responsive cohesion

Before moving on, it is worth noting that other philosophers, architects, and art theorists who have considered the relationship between form and value have reached conclusions that bear a family resemblance to the concept of responsive cohesion: for example, the significant American philosopher and educationalist John Dewey points, in his main work in aesthetics, to the value of "Mutual adaptation of parts to one another in constituting a whole;"[8] the influential American philosopher Robert Nozick emphasizes the fundamental value of "organic unity;"[9] the Finnish-American architect and art theorist Eliel

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[7] I have presented the qualities/properties of aliveness, interestingness, and balance as actual/objectively instantiated properties of responsively cohesive forms of organization. (More precisely, they are actual/objectively instantiated "dispositional properties" of responsively cohesive forms of organization, whether these forms of organization are consciously registered or not; just as, say, fragility is an actual/objectively instantiated dispositional property of glass or china whether it is broken or not.) But from a more explicitly experiential or phenomenological point of view we can also note that the qualities of aliveness, interestingness, and balance are central to what we have in mind when we speak of finding "meaning" or "absorbed involvement" in the world: see, Jacob Bell, "The Reinstatement and Ontology of Meaning," *Conatus - Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2023): 77-86.

[8] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Penguin/Perigee, 2005), 140.

[9] Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1981); Robert Nozick, *The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditations* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989). See also my earlier critical commentary on Nozick's conception of organic unity – along with some other ideas that might invite comparison with the concept of responsive cohesion – in

Saarinen emphasizes the value of "organic order;"[10] the British architect and aesthetician Peter F. Smith has argued for the interlinked values of "elegance," "balance," and "harmony;"[11] and the architect and general design theorist Christopher Alexander has argued for the value of "aliveness" (which, as we saw, represents one of the three kinds of arguments I advanced for the value of responsive cohesion).[12]

This brief name checking of the central concepts of these theorists in regard to this discussion is unfair to the richness of their work in this area, but then given the limits of this (essentially expository rather than comparative) paper I must equally restrict my own remarks in regard to these "similar in some ways to responsive cohesion" concepts. The *general shape* of my responses to claims that any of these conceptions is superior to or more useful than the set of ideas I have advanced here can be briefly captured as follows. First, these alternative concepts are not always very clearly defined (there are exceptions, e.g., Dewey's definition, above, which, as it happens, is very close to my definition of responsive cohesion). Second, these alternative concepts are, in any case, often underdeveloped: one usually wants more details, more texture in order to set these concepts to work in reasonably clear and useful ways. Third, regardless of whether the central concepts of these alternative approaches are well-defined or substantially developed (and these two requests are not the same), they are too often left merely to imply their contrast (or contrasts) rather than their contrast (or contrasts) being explicitly named, let alone clearly defined and also developed. Fourth, whether the contrast to each theorist's central concept is implied or well defined, we *are* typically talking about a single contrast rather than more than one contrast (which, as I hope to have shown with my tripartite specification and definitions of fixed cohesion, responsive cohesion, and discohesion is necessary in order to exhaust the space of possible forms of organization). Finally, none of these theorists' ideas is developed by its advocates into anything like the normative theory of contexts that, as I will argue below, is central to a full explication of the theory of responsive cohesion. This matters immensely because, as I hope to show, a normative theory of contexts is crucial to *any* fully developed normative philosophy of design.

"Appendix to Chapter 4: A Note on the Concepts of Responsive Cohesion, Reflective Equilibrium, Organic Unity, Complex Systems, and So On" in my *A Theory of General Ethics*, 115-123.

[10] Eliel Saarinen, *The Search for Form in Art and Architecture* (New York: Dover, 1985).

[11] Peter F. Smith, *Architecture and the Human Dimension* (Westfield, NJ: Eastview Editions, 1979), see esp. chapters 1-3.

[12] Alexander, *The Nature of Order*.

V. The importance of contexts: Individual vs. contextual forms of responsive cohesion

Every individual thing, structure, or form of organization exists within a wider context – or, more precisely, wider contexts, some of which might be more salient in some circumstances than others. If we accept that our task as designers is to bring about responsively cohesive forms of organization, then we want this to run all the way through our designs: from individual items of interest to the contexts in which they are located (considered in their own right) to the relations *between* these individual items of interest and their contexts. (Note that I am writing in this context as if we are *all* designers, which we are in our own ways as we seek deliberately to arrange, organize, or structure things in our worlds. I will later address professional designers more specifically.) This raises a series of questions:

a. If responsive cohesion is the best form of organization, then what should we do if a responsively cohesive form of organization is placed in a context that is itself largely fixedly cohesive or discohesive?

b. If responsive cohesion is the best form of organization, then what should we do if a responsively cohesive item is placed in a context that is itself responsively cohesive but where the relationship between these two forms of responsive cohesion – the item and the context – is nevertheless discohesive? Examples here could include placing a perfectly responsively cohesive chair in an otherwise perfectly responsively cohesive kitchen but where the chair just doesn't fit with – is discohesive with – that particular kitchen. Or placing some perfectly responsively cohesive bars of music in an otherwise perfectly responsively cohesive symphony you have just written, but much as you like these new bars of music, they just don't fit well – are discohesive – with the rest of the symphony.[13] What should have relative priority here, the responsively cohesive item or the responsively cohesive context?

c. Most acutely of all: working with the idea that things can typically be viewed within multiple contexts, what should we do

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[13] This musical example might seem to be a less obviously "design world" example than that of the ill-fitting chair and kitchen, but of course a musical composition is brought about by "design" just as surely as more familiar "design world" examples. Moreover, this musical example helps to emphasize the fact, in a fairly literal way, that there can be "disharmony" between a responsively cohesive item and its responsively cohesive context.

when an individual item of interest is responsively cohesive with one or more of its relevant contexts (such as a streetscape or its immediate social context), but not with others (such as its wider environmental or ecological context)? Which of these contexts should be given priority?

VI. Addressing the first two questions (i.e., examples of responsive cohesion placed in non-responsively cohesive contexts on the one hand and responsively cohesive contexts on the other)

The first of these questions is relatively straightforward to address. If a responsively cohesive item we produce jars with the relatively fixedly cohesive or discohesive context — that is, the *non*-responsively cohesive context — into which it is placed, then, to put the matter bluntly, so much the worse for the non-responsively cohesive context. Our obligation as designers is to add examples of responsive cohesion to the world: to add, in other words, examples that are more "alive," more interesting, and more balanced, fair, or "true" than otherwise. If these additions jar with fixedly cohesive or discohesive contexts, then so be it. What, after all, is the alternative: to achieve a perverse kind of "cohesion" by adding examples of fixed cohesion to already fixedly cohesive contexts or examples of discohesion to already discohesive contexts, and thereby to contribute to embedding the plethora of "dead" (or deadening), boring, and out-of-kilter designs that already populate the world? Of course, a sophisticated designer might design something that is highly responsively cohesive in itself but that also tips its hat, as it were (even if perhaps ironically), to its fixedly cohesive or discohesive contexts, thereby softening the clash between them a little. But regardless of that, adding responsively cohesive designs to fixedly cohesive or discohesive contexts adds value to the whole, since where before there was no responsive cohesion, now there is at least some. Moreover, such additions might serve to nudge or, more positively, to inspire others to work towards transforming these hitherto fixedly cohesive or discohesive contexts in a more responsively cohesive direction.

Whereas my first question concerned placing an example of responsive cohesion in a *non*-responsively cohesive context, my second question is more challenging since it concerns placing an example of responsive cohesion in a context that is itself responsively cohesive, but with the twist that the relationship between these two forms of responsive cohesion — the item and the context — is itself discohesive (like the kitchen chair and bars of music examples given above). What should have relative priority here, the responsively cohesive item or

the responsively cohesive context? The answer to this dilemma is given to us by the logic of the argument for responsive cohesion. If I add a responsively cohesive item to a responsively cohesive context such that the relationship between the item and the context is discohesive, then I have clearly reduced the responsive cohesion of the "system" as a whole (i.e., the item plus its context), since where before there was only responsive cohesion, now there is responsive cohesion plus a prominent example of discohesion. Speaking colloquially, I could say that what was a "good egg" considered in its own right is now a "curate's egg" – only good in parts.

Given that we want to add responsive cohesion to the world and avoid introducing discohesion, the solution to the above problem is either to place the newly added responsively cohesive item in another responsively cohesive context in which it is more fitting (i.e., more responsively cohesive) or to modify the newly added item and the context in the direction of each other. If the latter, then the logic of the argument for responsive cohesion suggests that, in this case, we should give priority to the (responsively cohesive) context over the (responsively cohesive) item. To do otherwise would be to endorse modifying a context's worth of responsive cohesion every time a new responsively cohesive item didn't fit with it. It doesn't take much imagination to see that this would amount to the functional equivalent of discohesion on an ongoing basis: imagine some builders tearing your house apart and rebuilding it every time something they ordered for it didn't fit; these would truly be the builders from hell, the builders who realize your worst nightmares. If these builders – or our previous interior kitchen designers or symphonic composers – fail to understand the appropriate "direction of fit" between contexts and introduced elements, if they "come at things from the wrong end," then they will fail in their tasks of completing their different kinds of composition; they will fail to leave things "well arranged" (the word "composition" derives from the Latin *compositus*, "well arranged"). The upshot is that responsively cohesive additions should be modified far more in the direction of their responsively cohesive contexts than vice versa. As the architect Christopher Day simply puts it: "To be harmonious, the new needs to be an organic development of what is already there, not an imposed alien."[14]

We can see here that there is an important asymmetry in our responses to these first two questions. It boils down to this: if a responsively cohesive item is placed in a fixedly cohesive or a discohesive

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[14] Christopher Day, *Places of the Soul: Architecture and Environmental Design as a Healing Art* (London: Thorsons/HarperCollins, 1990), 18.

context (i.e., any kind of non-responsively cohesive context), then that example of responsive cohesion trumps those contexts; but if a responsively cohesive item is placed in a responsively cohesive context such that the relations between them are discohesive, then, in this case, it is the (responsively cohesive) context that trumps the (responsively cohesive) item.

I've expressed this priority rule as starkly as possible here – in terms of what trumps what – in order to illustrate the asymmetrical nature of our responses to the first two questions I've considered. However, in regard to the second question of responsively cohesive items failing to fit in with their responsively cohesive contexts, it should be noted that this priority rule itself needs to be understood in a responsively cohesive sense. What I mean here is that the degree of priority that is accorded to a context vis-à-vis a new item needs to be weighted according to their relative scales: it makes both common and responsive-cohesion-endorsed sense to find a mutual accommodation between potentially equal parts or contributors to something, whereas obviously larger or more embracing responsively cohesive contexts should be given appropriately greater weight.

VII. The theory of responsive cohesion's normative theory of contexts

This brings us to our third question, which, you will recall, runs like this: since things can typically be viewed within multiple contexts, what should we do when an individual item of interest is responsively cohesive with one or more of its relevant contexts (such as a streetscape or its immediate social context,) but not with others (such as its wider environmental or ecological context)? Which of these contexts should be given priority? What we are looking for here is, in effect, a normative (i.e., an action guiding and, in particular, a priority-ordering) theory of contexts.

I have elsewhere[15] argued in some detail that there are three broad kinds of contexts in the world: a. the spontaneously generated natural biophysical (or ecological) realm; b. the linguistically-mediated human social realm (which, following Merlin Donald, I have also referred to as the "mindsharing" realm)[16]; and c. the human-constructed realm, which includes the built environment and all the other things we make that build on the first two contexts (I also referred to this realm, more

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[15] Fox, *A Theory of General Ethics*, see chapter 6 and following.

[16] Merlin Donald, *A Mind so Rare: The Evolution of Human Consciousness* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2001), 11, 144.

formally, as the "compound material realm"). I cannot go into the detailed argument for this tripartite division of the world in the space of this paper, but the main point to realize for our purposes here is that these contexts can be thought of as nested within each other (like a set of concentric circles) such that each realm or context constitutes the context of the next. Specifically, the ecological realm constitutes the generative and sustaining context of the linguistically mediated human social realm and these two contexts in turn form the generative and sustaining contexts of the human-constructed realm. To put the matter starkly: no natural biophysical realm, no human social realm; no human social realm, no human-constructed realm.

This nested set of contextual relations enables us to see that each realm or context is to its wider realm or context as the individual items I considered in our second question were to their immediate context. Considered in this light, we can see that the priority ordering principle I established earlier of contextual responsive cohesion over individual examples of responsive cohesion has profound implications – implications that go well beyond the tame domestic and musical examples I have employed to this point for the sake of illustration. The first of these implications is that we should give overall priority to acting and making things in ways that are responsively cohesive with the largest responsively cohesive form of organization in which they can exist. For all practical, earthly purposes, the largest responsively cohesive form of organization in which the things we do and make can exist is the responsively cohesive functioning (which, in effect, is also to say the healthy functioning) of the planet's biophysical realm (or "nature" in general).[17]

This should not be taken to imply that we shouldn't, as is impossible anyway, interfere with or use the natural world at all – or go back to "living in caves" or some such simplistic kind of reaction; rather, we are as "entitled" as the next species to live out our lives in our own creative ways. But it is to say that we should seek to channel these creative capacities in ecologically sustainable ways, and here I would take the reduction of our contributions to greenhouse gases and the preservation of biodiversity to be crucial indicators of our success or otherwise. What is more, this "ecological context first" principle can at times warrant considerable modification of the biophysical realm in

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[17] Although published some years ago, for an enlightening discussion of the principal normative concepts in conservation biology of "ecosystem health," "biodiversity," and "biological integrity," it is hard to beat J. Baird Callicott, Larry Crowder, and Karen Mumford, "Current Normative Concepts in Conservation," *Conservation Biology* 13, no. 1 (1999): 22-35.

the name of *enhancing* the responsively cohesive (which, again, is also to say the healthy) functioning of ecosystems through ecological restoration and rewilding projects.

Beyond this, we should seek to support responsively cohesive forms of organization within the human social realm including, most obviously, responsively cohesive forms of politics (which, in the modern context is essentially to say, democratic forms of politics) that are responsively cohesive with the healthy functioning of the ecological realm and that promote responsively cohesive societies *in that ultimate order of priority*. And beyond this, we should create a human-constructed realm including, most obviously, a built environment that is responsively cohesive with the ecological realm, the human social realm, and the human-constructed realm *in that ultimate order of priority*. Here, though, we must never forget that the ideal of good design is to aim for the preservation, regeneration, and creation of responsive cohesion at all levels.

VIII. Implementation: Thinking and designing in terms of responsive cohesion

How can we best implement these ideas in any given design situation? Thinking and designing in terms of responsive cohesion requires us to ask two basic questions:

> a. What is the specific design objective under consideration?
> b. How should we modify our initial design ideas in the light of the theory of responsive cohesion's normative theory of contexts?

I will consider these questions in turn.

a. What is the specific design objective under consideration?

This is straightforward enough. For example, our specific design objective might be to design an everyday object, such as a chair, cup, or book cover; to design a house or larger building; to design or redesign a streetscape, an urban park, or a larger urban development; to design a management strategy for a cultural landscape; to design a private garden or a larger garden to be enjoyed by the general public. From the perspective of the responsive cohesion approach, the question that follows in each case is: How can we best get our design to hold together, or cohere, by virtue of the mutual responsiveness between its parts? In other words, how can we make our design as responsively cohesive

as possible? If we achieve this, then our design, *considered in its own right* (and thus, non-contextually), will "sing;" it will be more "alive," more interesting, and more balanced, fair, or "true" than its alternative possibilities.

b. How should we modify our initial design ideas in the light of the theory of responsive cohesion's normative theory of contexts?

The theory of responsive cohesion's normative theory of contexts provides us with an argument for the ultimate priority of more encompassing responsively cohesive contexts over less encompassing responsively cohesive contexts. It is not an argument for the ultimate priority of any more encompassing context – such as a fixedly cohesive or a discohesive context – over any other less encompassing context, but rather an argument for the ultimate priority of more encompassing *responsively cohesive* contexts over less encompassing *responsively cohesive* contexts. As I argued earlier, if a context is not responsively cohesive, then a responsively cohesive item within that context trumps contextual considerations, since responsive cohesion is always better than no responsive cohesion.

Assuming we are dealing with responsively cohesive contexts, the theory of responsive cohesion's normative theory of contexts directs us, first and foremost, to note that any specific design problem we are dealing with will – for all earthly purposes at least – be situated within the biosphere. This has always been the case, but the fact that the theory of responsive cohesion explicitly emphasizes this means that this approach is in any case very much in tune with the needs of the times, since these are times in which humans are now violating the majority of the earth's "planetary boundaries" for a humanly habitable planet[18] and in which the multiplier effect of multiple ecological stresses triggering a nonlinear collapse of the systems we depend upon to survive would seem to be closer than we thought.[19] Once we recognize this and revise our design as (or if) appropriate in ways that respond to the overarching responsively cohesive context of the biosphere, we can then move on to consider more local ecological considerations.

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[18] Johan Rockstrom et al., "Safe and Just Earth System Boundaries," *Nature* 619 (2023): 102-111; see also the report related to this paper: Jonathan Watts, "Earth's Health Failing in Seven out of Eight Key Measures, say Scientists," *The Guardian*, May 31, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/may/31/earth-health-failing-in-seven-out-of-eight-key-measures-say-scientists-earth-commission.

[19] Simon Willcock et al., "Earlier Collapse of Anthropocene Ecosystems Driven by Multiple Faster and Noisier Drivers," *Nature Sustainability* 6 (2023).

Ecological considerations – biospherical and more local – will be more relevant to some designs than others, but they are always there, and the responsive cohesion approach makes this explicit. For example, we always need to ask questions such as: What materials will be used? Where will they come from? What greenhouse gas emissions will our design generate, in both fabrication and on an ongoing basis? Does our design have implications for biodiversity? Can we do better in terms of minimizing the ecological impacts of our design (where, at the risk of labouring the point, "better" is understood, here and below, as better in terms of achieving more responsively cohesive outcomes)?

Within this (always responsively cohesive focused) ecological context we then come to the linguistically-mediated human social realm. Consideration of this realm generates its own set of questions, ranging from the practical to the symbolic. For example, practical questions will include all kinds of accessibility and ease of use issues, including broader questions around these too, such as how people are expected to reach the site – if it is a site – in the first place. In each case we want to ask: Can we do better? Questions at the symbolic level will be of the kind: What does this building/urban development/cultural landscape/public garden/book/website design say about us in terms of our practice and endorsement of the value of responsive cohesion? Can we do better?

Finally, we come to the human-constructed (or compound material) realm. Will our design be placed in an already responsively cohesive human-constructed context? If not, then so much the worse for the non-responsively cohesive context: we should add our responsively cohesive design since, as I noted above, some degree of responsive cohesion is always better than a lack of responsive cohesion. If, on the other hand, our design is to be placed in a responsively cohesive human-constructed context (e.g., a streetscape), then is it responsively cohesive with that context? If so, well and good; if not, can we modify it in the direction of being more responsively cohesive with that context? If the clash is just too great, then perhaps our (internally) responsively cohesive design nevertheless belongs elsewhere.

The aim, of course, is to achieve responsive cohesion at all levels, but when priorities clash – as they will in the real world – then this ecological, social, human-constructed ordering of nested contexts is the priority ordering that should hold sway relative to the responsively cohesive item that is being added to these contexts.

IX. The client and the designer

We should now be able to see that the theory of responsive cohesion's theory of contexts encourages us to cast our net more widely than many designers have been trained to do (and here I *am* primarily addressing professional designers, although the points being made still have a wider applicability). For example, in the case of building a house, the theory of contexts directs us to begin not with the client's wishes per se (from which we then work outward in terms of what is allowable under planning regulations and, perhaps, added to that, a side-order of some aesthetic considerations in regard to the immediate streetscape), but rather with the client's wishes considered *within the nested set of contexts advanced by the theory of responsive cohesions normative theory of contexts*.

From this perspective we can see that the besetting sin of many approaches to design problems is that they construe the problem situation too narrowly; too much in terms of human *centred* desires per se as opposed to human *initiated* projects that are sensitive to, and suitably modified by, wider biospherical, and then more local ecological, social, and human-constructed realm considerations. However, designers who are alive to this perspective will begin to see their task in these kinds of terms: just as a client's wishes must *inform* the designer's work, so the designer will in some cases need to play a positive, and sometimes frankly educative, role in helping their client to *re-form* their design wishes in such a way that the client still gets the essence of what they want, but does so in consultation with the designer's sensitivity to the wider ecological, social, and human-constructed contexts that encompass their proposal.

That said, it might occasionally be the client who takes the leading role in this collaboration by working to get their designer of choice to be as alive to these contextual concerns as they already are. On yet other occasions, it might be the case that the client and designer need to part ways over "irreconcilable differences" in addressing these issues. But then that has always been a risk when people try to work together towards what they individually think is a shared goal. We should acknowledge that different interests – sometimes fundamentally different interests – will come into play in any kind of collaborative work. But as a guide to and a container for discussions of these matters, I submit that the theory of responsive cohesion approach to the philosophy of design provides a powerful framework – an encompassing, normative framework – that enables designers to engage in construc-

tive dialogues within a solidly-grounded, shared, and accessible framework of meaning. The promise of this approach is that it will act as a stimulus and a guide towards the development of a world that is more responsively cohesive at the ecological, social, and human-constructed levels; a world that is more "alive," interesting, and balanced.

Acknowledgement

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Authoritarian Leaders as Successful Psychopaths: Towards an Understanding of the Role of Emotions in Political Decision-making

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Abstract

In this paper, we seek to understand the psychology and cognitive strategies of people with the psychological profile of authoritarian leaders. To understand their personality traits, we compare them with literature concerning successful psychopaths. We also see both personalities in the light of literature in the field of self-help for success in business. We say these psychological profiles are shaped by culture, as self-help literature shows. Our intention in comparing successful psychopaths and authoritarian leaders is not to reinforce the idea that authoritarian leaders are unemotional, but rather the opposite. We wish to explore this relationship from the perspective of embodied cognition, according to which emotions are a fundamental part of decision-making, including political decision-making. Traditionally, both successful psychopaths and authoritarian leaders are understood as unemotional and therefore completely rational: here we explore the idea that this apparent rationality hides a particular emotional profile and a certain stubbornness and impulsivity regarding previously set goals. Also, as self-help literature reveals, set goals are closely associated with their identity, so that compromise regarding goals is seen as a loss of said identity. The study of the authoritarian leader as a gnoseological category helps us think about the relationship between volition, rational thought, identity, and emotions in decision-making; and to understand the way of acting of authoritarian leaders, and the way they succeed and fail.

Keywords: *psychopathology; authoritarianism; political behavior; emotions in decision-making processes; leadership in business; Machiavellianism*

Obstacles do not exist to be surrendered to, but only to be broken.
Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*[1]

Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough.
Og Mandino, *The Greatest Salesman in the World*

I. Introduction

How do we make decisions? What are the roles of reason and emotion in this process? Pascal's famous quote, "Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connait point"[2] seems to point to the same kind of opposition between reason and emotion that is evident in Descartes' *Passions of the Soul*[3]: the heart moves us in ways that are opposed to, and not explicable through, deductive reasoning. However, a more subtle reading is possible: reason is not aware of how it is moved by the heart; it fancies itself the master when it is, unbeknownst, the servant. Or, perhaps, the reasons of the heart aid reason to come to wise decisions, in ways that are yet to be reasoned-out. In this text, we explore the relationship between reason and the heart by examining a particular kind of decision-making mechanism, that of the authoritarian leader. As we will see, this exploration yields interesting consequences for both philosophy of mind and political philosophy.

Although the label "authoritarian" is usually used to designate a politically conservative ideology, it is also used to designate a certain kind of psychological profile. Regardless of ideology, authoritarians support authority and conventional thinking,[4] and therefore this label includes, e.g., the stalwart defenders of the Soviet Regime when it was in power. There is much scholarship around the authoritarian personality, which is defined by certain traits such as support for the power of authority over individuals, defense of conventional values, and enthusiasm for violent retaliation against offenders.[5]

The authoritarian personality type has, crucially, two subdivisions: authoritarian followers and authoritarian leaders. When this issue was

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[1] Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 20.

[2] Blaise Pascal, "The Heart has its Reasons which Reason Itself does not Know," in *Pensées and Other Writings*, trans. Honor Levi, ed. Anthony Levi (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 158.

[3] Rene Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul and Other Late Philosophical Writing*, trans. Michael Moriarty (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 191-192.

[4] Bob Altemeyer, "Nacionalismo y Autoritarismo de Derechas entre Legisladores Americanos," *Psicología Política* 7 (1993): 8.

[5] Geoff Boucher, "Class Politics and the Authoritarian Personality," *International Critical Thought* 12, no. 3 (2022): 483-500.

first approached no clear distinction was made,[6] but it is an important one to keep in mind to understand the relationship between the authoritarian personality and its social and political role: authoritarian leaders and followers act in different ways, have different goals, and relate differently to others.[7]

In this paper we will focus on the personality and mode of acting of the authoritarian leader, a person characterized by his[8] narcissism and self-centeredness. We are interested in the personality of people who are very emphatic in the decisions they take, unwaveringly believe that these decisions are right, and do everything in their power to achieve their goals.[9] We propose that this kind of self-centeredness of the authoritarian leader and his decision making has illuminating similarities with another psychological type that has been studied in psychology and philosophy of mind: namely, the *successful psychopath;*[10] the person that, although possessing the traits of a clinical psychopath such as lacking in sympathy (that being, not being capable of reacting emotionally to the emotions of others)[11] and being self-centered, can nevertheless fit in social contexts and achieve leadership roles.

It seems that certain people can be socially successful precisely because of their "cold heart." The lack of sympathy enables this kind of people to enter social relationships without the difficulties created by affective dilemmas.[12] The successful psychopath can establish relationships without the intersubjective implications that this normally entails; for example, without being affected by the decisions and opinions of others.

Our intention, in comparing successful psychopaths and authoritarian leaders, is not to reinforce the idea that authoritarian leaders are unemotional, but rather the opposite. We wish to criticize the idea that

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[6] Theodor Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson, and Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality: Studies in Prejudice Series* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), 1-56.

[7] Bob Altemeyer, *The Authoritarians* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2006), 8.

[8] We have decided to refer to authoritarian leaders using the male pronoun with a view towards simplicity of language and because, historically, a great majority of authoritarian leaders have been male.

[9] Altemeyer, *The Authoritarians*, 160.

[10] Robert Hare, *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of Psychopaths Among Us* (New York: The Gilford Press, 1999), 113; Somogy Varga, "Identifications, Volitions and the Case of Successful Psychopaths," *Dialectica* 69, no. 1 (2015): 87-106.

[11] Jérôme Englebert, "A New Understanding of Psychopathy: The Contribution of Phenomenal Psychopathology," *Psychopathology* 48, no. 6 (2015): 368-375.

[12] Varga, 89.

cognition is a set of processes guided by purely rational criteria, by taking an enactive and embodied perspective.[13] This perspective posits that cognitive processes are extended to the body, the environment, and other cognitive agents; and that emotions play a relevant normative role in cognition, in that they link the individual with others when taking moral decisions.[14] We posit that, authoritarian leaders are not unemotional, and therefore not particularly rational, but, rather, have a particular emotional makeup that gives prevalence to certain emotions over others.

To explore the mind of the authoritarian leader, we delve into the philosophical discussion of the mind of successful psychopaths. From the perspective of embodied cognition, philosopher Somogy Varga suggests, against popular belief, that people with this kind of personality don't really take decisions with a cool head; rather, their decision-making processes are permeated by emotion-based reasons that are strongly related to their self-image in relation to a given goal[15]. Rather than portraying these people as completely calculating, Varga portrays such pretended rationality as a façade for the impulsivity of the successful psychopath. This does help to make them successful in certain aspects: they are intensely embedded in and committed to their activities and are persistent and assertive. At the same time, however, they show a harmful lack of flexibility and sensitivity to changing environments. Therefore, successful psychopaths fall as quickly as they rise.

As a gnoseological category, the successful psychopath provides a path to the study of the authoritarian leader. Using Varga's characterization, it provides a way to explore the relationship between volition, rational thought, and emotions in the context of political decision-making. We are not suggesting, *a priori*, that all authoritarian leaders are psychopaths; we are not interested in the category of the successful psychopath as a clinical diagnostic; but we believe that using what we know about successful psychopaths as a lens to examine authoritarian leaders can bear interesting fruit.

A look at self-help literature in the field of business will help complete the picture we are trying to paint; it can help show us how successful psychopaths and authoritarian leaders come to be, and how these personality profiles are related to social dynamics in which suc-

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[13] Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1992), 9.

[14] Giovanna Colombetti, *The Feeling Body* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 94.

[15] Varga, 97.

cess is associated with emotional control.[16] Self-help books recommend a laser-like focus on specific goals, a Machiavellian attitude towards associates (that is, they are only valuable to me as much as they help me further my goals), and a conscious disregard for the feelings of others. That self-help books recommend attitudes that are quite similar to those of authoritarian leaders and successful psychopaths is an interesting (and perhaps worrying) symptom of our times, but it also provides us with clues to account for the kind of success and failure that are experienced by authoritarian leaders.

We interpret self-help literature as showing that the perspective that portrays the success of "cold hearted" political and business leaders as a result of the cultivation of rational thought is wrong; rather, what is cultivated is a certain emotional profile: self-help books that promote a supposedly rational style of acting do not ask their readers to practice calculus or syllogisms, but to prioritize certain feelings and disregard others.

Using these sources, we will argue that 1) neither successful psychopaths nor authoritarian leaders have a "cool head" (a reasoning process that is unhindered by emotions); 2) that this emotional makeup is the result of their identity being intertwined with a chosen goal; and 3) that the resolution and steadfastness of such personality types comes at the price of stubbornness, and an inability to change course.

II. From followers to leaders

Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents,*[17] can be read together with Freud's epistolary exchanges with Einstein[18] to understand the relationship between power, law, and violence, and how the relationship between these factors and the individual psychical makeup is an obstacle to the achievement of peace. For Freud, society is founded on the necessity of dominating the individual drive to violence, so that this violence is guided toward the benefit of a community. However, in social power dynamics, this domination tends to benefit some at the expense of others. This kind of domination implies that a few (who exercise power) repress the primary drives of the rest: this entails repressing not only aggressive

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[16] Mark Fisher, *The Instant Millionaire: A Tale of Wisdom and Wealth* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 1990), 37-44; Og Mandino, *The Greatest Salesman in the World* (New York: Bantam, 1983), 63-67; Robert Kiyosaki, *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* (Scottsdale, AZ: Plata Publishing, 2017), 129-145.

[17] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010).

[18] Sigmund Freud, "Why War?" in *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*, Volume 22, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), 199-215.

drives, but also drives associated with love and care for others (that is, drives associated with life), that need to be sublimated (that is, subject to controlled exteriorization) according to the interests of the rulers.

Freud's writings were a diagnosis and a warning about the future of human societies; but above all, they implied recognizing that politics, social organization, and psychological structures are interrelated. Freud's findings are of a piece with the political realism of authors such as Han Fei[19] and Machiavelli:[20] politics, rather than a matter of rational consensus building and cooperation, is more about the psychologically motivated struggle for power.

A few decades after *Civilization and its Discontents*, and in the context of World War II, the relationship between political power and psychology was again brought to the forefront through the analysis of the authoritarian personality.[21] Influenced by Freud, the work of Adorno, et. al.[22] categorizes individuals as authoritarians if their personality is governed by the super-ego: they are conventional, afraid to be seen as different from the members of their community, submissive to authority figures, tend towards religious extremism and have an inflexible sense of morality.[23] According to Adorno, et. al., the super-ego of authoritarians must face an ambivalent ego that is both submissive and narcissistically self-centered. Because of this ambivalence, authoritarians tend to attach themselves to authority figures whom they admire. They idolize the authoritarian political leader that embodies the father figure.[24]

In the 80's, and in the context of the Cold War, Bob Altemeyer used Adorno's conceptual and methodological framework to characterize authoritarianism, leaning on Albert Bandura's theory of social learning.[25] He developed the Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale (RWA) to measure the covariance of three types of attitudes that he sees as characteristic of authoritarian followers: i) authoritarian submission: a high degree of submission to the legitimate and recognized authorities of their community; ii) authoritarian aggression: a general aggressiveness directed towards people they believe to be marginal-

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[19] Panagiotis Kallinikos, "Political Realism in the Chinese Warring States Period and the European Renaissance: Han Fei and Machiavelli," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2023): 127-166.

[20] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. George Bull (New York: Penguin, 2003), 105-107.

[21] Adorno et al., 1-56.

[22] Ibid., 753.

[23] Ibid., 751 and 735.

[24] Ibid., 653 and 680.

[25] Albert Bandura, *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 70.

ized by legitimate authorities; and iii) conventionalism: a high degree of adhesion to the social norms that are approved by society and by legitimate authorities.[26] The RWA scale has been used to study authoritarian personalities in such places as Israel, Palestine,[27] or Brazil.[28] It is considered to be complementary to other scales that measure right-wing personality traits such as traditionalism or conservatism,[29] and its items have been reduced and applied to large populations and diverse demographic groups.[30]

A particularly interesting trait of the RWA scale is that it distinguishes authoritarian leaders from authoritarian followers. The monolithic category of the "authoritarian personality" developed by Adorno becomes bifurcated in the work of Altemeyer[31] through the discovery of the personality type of the authoritarian leader. Although the leader shares many traits with the followers (such as aggression to outsiders and conventionalism), he does not seek to follow an authority figure but to become one. The leader, through an understanding of their mindset, can present himself as his followers' desire: he represents authority, inflexible values, ideological steadfastness; he becomes the embodiment of an externalized super-ego in collective authority.[32]

Altemeyer's perspective can be complemented with George Lakoff's study of conceptual metaphors.[33] Authoritarian attitudes are

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[26] Altemeyer, "Nacionalismo y Autoritarismo," 8.

[27] Gidi Rubinstein, "Two Peoples in One Land: A Validation Study of Altemeyer's Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale in the Palestinian and Jewish Societies in Israel," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 27, no. 2 (1996): 216-230.

[28] Felipe Vilanova, Taciano L. Milfont, and Angelo Brandelli Costa, "The Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale for the Brazilian Context," *Psicologia: Refexão e Crítica* 36, no. 17 (2023): 1-12.

[29] John Duckitt and Chris G. Sibley, "Personality, Ideology, Prejudice, and Politics: A Dual-Process Motivational Model," *Journal of Personality* 78, no. 6 (2010): 1861-1894; John Duckitt, Boris Bizumic, Stephen W. Krauss, and Edna Heled, "A Tripartite Approach to Right-Wing Authoritarianism: The Authoritarianism-Conservatism-Traditionalism Model," *Political Psychology* 31, no. 5 (2010): 685-715; Bo Ekehammar, Nazar Akrami, Magnus Gylje, and Ingrid Zakrisson, "What Matters Most to Prejudice: Big Five Personality, Social Dominance Orientation, or Right Wing Authoritarianism?" *European Journal of Personality* 18, no. 6 (2004): 463-482.

[30] Boris Bizumic and John Duckitt, "Investigating Right Wing Authoritarianism with a Very Short Authoritarianism Scale," *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* 6, no. 1 (2018): 129-150; Ayline Heller, Oliver Decker, Bjarne Schmalbach, Manfred Beutel, Jörg M. Fegert, Elmar Brähler, and Markus Zenger, "Detecting Authoritarianism Efficiently: Psychometric Properties of the Screening Instrument Authoritarianism-Ultra Short (A-US) in a German Representative Sample," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020).

[31] Altemeyer, *The Authoritarians,* 160.

[32] Adorno et al., 683.

[33] George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004)*,* 57.

internalized in a set of frameworks that include concepts and meta-phors such as authority, leader, father, friend, enemy and hero.[34] As an example, authoritarian submission is associated with ideas such as, that to complain about the government is a sign of being lazy and undis-ciplined (because a good citizen was raised by a proper authoritarian parent), that going to war is to heroically defend one's country, etc.

Such frameworks are held together by the deployment of negative emotions (such as anger or fear), and of positive emotions such as grati-tude.[35] When certain metaphors such as that of the strict father[36] are used, they carry with them not only a representation of what leadership should look like, but also a set of emotions. Authoritarian ideologies make use of these conceptual metaphors to trigger emotions in the public sphere.[37]

The work of Altemeyer is a good starting point to approach the au-thoritarian leader's personality as the embodiment of the *strict father.*[38] As he points out[39] the personality of the follower has been the subject of much more study than that of the leader. There are at least five big differences between the follower and the leader 1) the latter has a desire for power that the former does not share, a desire to control others; 2) the leader's ideological and axiological commitments (e.g., religious) tend to be adopted in order to further his search for power, rather than due to personal conviction; 3) his aggression is not channeled towards a feared "other" (as is the case with followers), but rather towards enemies that stand in the way of his goal of power 4) it seems that the leader does not suffer from the cognitive unease brought about by contradic-tions, reasoning problems, and compartmentalized thinking that his fol-lowers do; finally, 5) the leader does not have the tendency to seek out authorized sources in whom to place his trust.

The mind of the authoritarian follower is a set of firm and fixed (al-though sometimes contradictory) convictions; the mind of the leader is flexible and bends towards whatever the quest for power demands of him.[40] Whereas the follower thinks of him or herself in possession of the truth, the leader is more of a sophist that believes with Protagoras

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[34] George Lakoff, *Thinking Points: Communicating Our American Values and Vision* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 49-66.

[35] Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Penguin, 2013), 188.

[36] Lakoff, *Thinking Points*, 57-58.

[37] Edward Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York: Liveright, 1928), 28.

[38] Lakoff, *Thinking Points*, 57-58.

[39] Altemeyer, *The Authoritarians*, 161.

[40] Ibid., 170.

that "man is the measure of all things:"[41] whatever convictions lead to power are flexibly adopted by the leader. This flexibility includes what Schimmel[42] calls *pseudocognitive* acrobatics, that is, argumentative strategies that tend to appeal to fallacies or contradictions to avoid cognitive dissonance; as well as what Bandura[43] calls moral disengagement, a set of strategies for rationalizing away moral responsibility.

This is strengthened by the leader's high capacity for argumentation and for apparent mastery of his own emotions. It seems that the leader's desire for power (perhaps their only clear belief,)[44] the clarity about his own goals, is associated to a "cold heart" that contrasts with the volatility, the cognitive dissonance, and the actions based on rage and fear that characterize followers: the rational leader, in control of his emotions, offers his followers a common enemy and a clear way to channel their anxieties. In a way, followers have given the leader the task of deciding what to do with their rage and fear; and turned him into the embodiment of their passions.[45] Aggression towards the outgroup is not a result, as one may think, of adherence to such authoritarian values as loyalty, respect for authority, and purity; rather it is flexibility towards one's own values which correlates with a disposition to harm members of the outgroup.[46] People with a strong moral identity tend to extend their values towards the outgroup, whereas people with a weak moral identity are willing to negotiate and compartmentalize them. Such is the case with authoritarian followers, who give their leaders *carte blanche* in the name of their emotions.

The leader uses a totalitarian logic in which emotions such as rage and fear become an expression of a desire for justice: *x* is unfair, where *x* is what threatens the leader's power; and the leader presents himself as a restorer of justice. His plan appears perfectly logical: if *x* is unfair, *x* must be destroyed.

This argument is often presented as if it emanated from the leader's "cool head," in correspondence with his "cold heart," but the idea

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[41] Plato, *Theaetetus*, 152a.

[42] Solomon Schimmel, *The Tenacity of Unreasonable Beliefs: Fundamentalism and the Fear of Truth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 29.

[43] Bandura, 385.

[44] Altemeyer, *The Authoritarians*, 170.

[45] See for the case of Trump: David Norman Smith and Eric Allen, "The Anger Games: Who Voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 Election, and Why?" *Critical Sociology* 44, no. 2 (2018): 195-212.

[46] Isaac H. Smith, Karl Aquino, Spassena Koleva, and Jesse Graham, "The Moral Ties That Bind… Even to Out-Groups: The Interactive Effect of Moral Identity and the Binding Moral Foundations," *Psychological Science* 2, no. 8 (2014): 1554-1562.

that he does not suffer from paralyzing emotions is more of a persuasion strategy than a cognitive reality. Empirical evidence seems to show that people who possess the "dark triad" of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (including authoritarian leaders like Hitler or Saddam Hussein), also show several personality disorders, make difficult negotiating partners, and exhibit erratic behavior.[47]

Likewise, authoritarian regimes project an image of efficiency and rationality that doesn't correspond to their rather chaotic reality. A paradigmatic case is the Third Reich: the outward-facing image of a cold and efficient machine contrasts with a chaotic internal reality, full of improvisation, betrayals, and internal struggle.[48] Authoritarian leaders are anything but steadfast executors of a master plan; rather, their stances change with the prevailing winds, and administrative priorities change with opinion polls.[49]

This observation is in accordance with Hannah Arendt's diagnosis of totalitarianism as a complete loss of common sense:

> If it was the peculiarity of the ideologies themselves to treat a scientific hypothesis, like "the survival of the fittest" in biology or "the survival of the most progressive class" in history, as an "idea" which could be applied to the whole course of events, then it is the peculiarity of their totalitarian transformation to pervert the "idea" into a premise in the logical sense, that is, into some self-evident statement from which everything else can be deduced in stringent logical consistency.[50]

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[47] Taylor Vossen, Frederick Coolidge, Daniel Segal, and Jennifer Muehlenkamp, "Exploring the Dark Side: Relationships Between the Dark Triad Traits and Cluster B Personality Disorder Features," *Journal of Psychiatry and Psychiatric Disorders* 1, no. 6 (2017): 317-326; Frederick Coolidge and Daniel Segal, "Was Saddam Hussein Like Adolf Hitler? A Personality Disorder Investigation," *Military Psychology* 19, no. 4 (2007): 289-299.

[48] Michael Geyer, "The Nazi State Reconsidered," in *Life in the Third Reich*, ed. Richard Bessel, 57-68 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[49] For the case of China's authoritarianism, see: Xiao Tang, Weiwei Chen, and Tian Wu, "Do Authoritarian Governments Respond to Public Opinion on the Environment? Evidence from China," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 15, no. 2 (2018): 266; and for the case of Donald Trump: Hunter Schwarz, "The Many Ways in which Donald Trump was Once a Liberal's Liberal," *The Washington Post*, July 9, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/07/09/ths-many-ways-in-which-donald-trump-was-once-a-liberals-liberal/.

[50] Hannah Arendt, "Understanding Politics," in *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken, 2005), 317.

In totalitarianism, logic ceases to be a tool for seeking out the truth and becomes a weapon for the pursuit of power. In what follows, we compare the figure of the authoritarian leader with that of the successful psychopath to better understand their psychological and emotional makeup, and how it affects decision-making.

III. Authoritarian leaders and successful psychopaths

The scales that have served to identify right-leaning personalities,[51] do not specifically account for the personality of the authoritarian leader. They are focused on prejudices and conservative traits but are not designed to identify the manipulative tendencies and the obsession with power that are traits of the leaders and are a better suited to authoritarian followers. We believe a specific characterization of the authoritarian leader is important, and the category of the successful psychopath could be useful in this regard.

In fact, a comparison has been made between the RWA scale and the Social Dominance Scale,[52] which has found that there is no correlation between authoritarian tendencies and social dominance. Therefore, the personality of the authoritarian leader must be seen as independent from the general authoritarian personality. We hypothesize that a psychological profile that fits authoritarian leaders is that of the successful psychopath,[53] which can be detected through social dominance scales, or those that measure Machiavellianism (such as the Mach IV).

If we compare the traits of the authoritarian leader (as described by Adorno or Altemeyer) with the Psychopathy Checklist-[54] we see that there are at least 10 traits that these two profiles have in common:

> Item 1. Glibness/ Superficial Charm
> Item 2. Grandiose Sense of Self-Worth
> Item 4. Pathological Lying
> Item 5. Conning/ Manipulative
> Item 6. Lack of remorse or guilt
> Item 7. Swallow affect
> Item 8. Callous/Lack of empathy

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51 Altemeyer, *The Authoritarians,* 10.

52 Ibid., 160.

53 Varga, 87-106.

54 Stephen Hart, David Cox, and Robert Hare, *Hare Psychopathy Checklist Screening Version (PCL:SV)* (Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems, 1995), 10.

Item 10. Poor behavioral controls
Item 13. Lack of realistic long-term goals
Item 14. Impulsivity
Item 16. Failure to accept responsibility for own actions

Of these items, a few are considered characteristically psychopathic[55]: narcissism (item 2), Machiavellianism (item 5) and lack of empathy (item 8) are the most studied in the case of successful businessmen.[56] We find these traits to be close to the profile of the authoritarian leader, at least according to Dutton's[57] description. However, the above-mentioned traits are accompanied by impulsivity (item 14), lack of realistic goals (item 13) and a deficient control of conduct (item 10), which seem to contradict the Machiavellianism and apparent cool head of the psychopath.

The relationship between narcissism and the rational thinking of the authoritarian leader has been subsumed under the term "Machiavellianism."[58] This characterization of Machiavellian traits leads to the creation of the Mach IV scale, which sought to measure the capacity of certain people to manipulate and instrumentalize others.[59] Machiavellianism corresponds to a subgroup of psychopaths, those known as *successful psychopaths*.[60] Successful psychopaths are Machiavellians who achieve positions of power and respect in their community[61] (their success has been studied in the field of business).[62]

The category of "successful psychopath" is not nosological (that is, it has no consequences in terms of classification and treatment of a pathology), but rather gnoseological: it implies a philosophical and sociological understanding of a specific personality type.[63] Therefore, there is no diagnostic method for detecting successful psychopathy beyond that which is afforded by a diagnostic scale of psychopathy in general.[64]

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[55] Ibid., 3.

[56] Varga, 90.

[57] Kevin Dutton, *The Wisdom of Psychopaths* (New York: Scientific American, 2012), 33.

[58] Richard Christie and Florence Geis, *Studies in Machiavellianism* (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 1-9.

[59] Christie and Geis, 15-33.

[60] Stephen Benning, Noah Venables, and Jason Hall, "Successful Psychopathy," in *Handbook of Psychopathy*, ed. Christopher Patrick (New York: The Guilford Press, 2018), 585-608; Varga, 87-106.

[61] Jessica Brown, "Do Psychopaths Really Make Better Leaders?" *BBC*, November 2, 2017, https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20171102-do-psychopaths-really-make-better-leaders.

[62] Varga, 90.

[63] Benning et al., "Successful Psychopathy;" Dutton, 13-20; Varga, 92.

[64] Robert Hare, *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of Psychopaths Among Us* (New

Psychopathy occupies a particular place among personality disorders; it is unlikely that a psychopath will seek psychological or psychiatric help. Therefore, diagnoses generally occur when a crime has been committed. This relationship between psychopathy and crime is quite frequent, which has led to the disease being associated with immorality.[65] On the other hand, psychopathy is understood as being the product of a lack of emotions, especially empathic emotions.[66] Therefore, the study of psychopathy has led to the idea that morality requires empathic emotions, and that those who lack them are necessarily amoral, like the psychopath.[67] Other researchers see psychopathy more as the product of a kind of control over the emotions, rather than an absolute lack.[68] This affective control is understood as adaptive, in that it allows the psychopath to achieve a given goal. Successful psychopaths organize their actions around a fixed, inflexible goal. This has to do with their reification of goals and of people: they treat goals inflexibly; and people purely as means to ends. If we bear in mind the second formulation of Kant's categorial imperative,[69] where duty is defined precisely as treating other moral agents as ends in themselves, successful psychopaths would be essentially amoral: they may act according to law when it suits them, but their decisions would never be colored by moral considerations.

This way of acting is curiously reminiscent of the advice given in certain self-help books that promise success in the field of business. A look at the kind of ideal businessman that is promoted in such literature will help us better understand authoritarian leaders, successful psychopaths, their strategies, and the way they have of succeeding and failing.

IV. Self-help and the making of successful psychopaths

In the field of business, we meet the same apparent "cold heart" of the authoritarian leader. We can even find authoritarian political leaders

York: The Gilford Press, 1999), 190.

[65] Varga, 90.

[66] Hare, *Without* Conscience, 197.

[67] David Shoemaker, "Psychopathy, Responsibility, and the Moral/Conventional Distinction," in *Being Amoral Psychopathy and Moral Incapacity*, ed. Thomas Schramme, 247-274 (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014).

[68] Englebert, 368-375.

[69] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* trans. and ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 4:429-431.

who are successful businessmen or branded as such: Donald Trump and Silvio Berlusconi are good examples. The juxtaposition of both roles reveals another interesting characteristic of the personality type we are exploring: ideological flexibility. For many years, Trump styled himself as a liberal businessman, in favor of legal abortions and universal healthcare,[70] and is now a strongly authoritarian leader (if not fascistic in the mold of Hitler or Mussolini).[71] The common denominator between both roles- politician and businessman- is the achievement of power and success, and this accounts for ideological flexibility (being liberal is good for business, being conservative is good for getting elected). In Berlusconi we see a similar political trajectory, from pro-business liberal to a conservatism that flirts with fascist elements.[72]

Is the "cold heart" of the authoritarian leader similar to that of the successful businessman promoted in self-help books? According to the texts we consulted,[73] we can see two characteristic aspects related to emotional control: these books promote the idea that success is related to i) the control over emotions related to the individual (such as anxiety); and ii) to the control over emotions related to others, such as empathy.

With respect to the first class, one of Kiyosaki's main commandments for success is the control of fear. In fact, a large part of his book is dedicated to explaining how fear can impede success, and how it can be used advantageously:

> By not giving in to your emotions, you were able to delay your reactions and think. That is important. We will always have emotions of fear and greed. From here on in, it's imperative for you to use those emotions to your advantage, and for the long term to not let your emotions control your thinking.[74]

For Kiyosaki, using emotions such as fear to one's own advantage has to do with channeling them towards specific emotions that are useful in the moment: fear can be turned into courage; greed can be turned

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[70] Schwarz.

[71] Warren Goldstein, "Trump, the Religious Right and the Spectre of Fascism," *Critical Research on Religion* 9, no. 1 (2021): 3-7.

[72] Giovanni Orsina, "El Berlusconismo," *Ayer* 4 (2016): 43-66.

[73] Fisher, 37-44; Kiyosaki; Mandino, 63-67.

[74] Kiyosaki, 34.

into desire, etc., according to strategic needs. Kiyosaki, therefore, proposes a specific emotional regime, strategically geared towards furthering a goal in the short term, and disregarding the long term and the wider consequences of one's actions.

Kiyosaki is a typical exemplar of this kind of literature: these books heavily promote the virtue of emotional control as a tool for business success.[75] Emotional control has to do with being focused on a goal[76] (e.g. "becoming a millionaire"); this control must be cultivated before putting any plan in place, and a sharp focus on the goal is more important than the actions that are undertaken.[77] Strategies toward success include the control of fear and anxiety[78] and the control of superfluous desires to focus on concrete goals.[79]

Now we turn to the second class of emotions, those related to others. In books such as Kiyosaki's, there is an emphasis on an individualistic and narcissistic "know thyself" at the expense of interpersonal relationships and resonance with others. Many self-help books implicitly suggest suppressing sympathetic resonance with others: *Rich dad, poor dad* suggests that we must suppress sympathetic resonance with people who hinder our business success, and that we must attend only to those that further it.[80] Only one kind of person is worthy of attention: those that can help us achieve our goals. Other people ought to be seen as stepping-stones or instruments: "Yes," said rich dad. "Some people say I exploit people because I don't pay as much as the sugar plantation or the government. I say the people exploit themselves. It's their fear, not mine."[81]

The instrumental view of others that is promoted in the literature even applies to a specially valued human relation, that of mentor and mentee. These kinds of books speak of a relationship between the "millionaire-to-be" and a kind of spiritual guide (the "millionaire," the "Greatest Salesman in the World," the "rich dad"). This relationship does not imply an affective commitment; the master is only a model to be followed, a source of tips and wisdom for an undertaking that is clearly individual.

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Fisher, 37-44; Ibid*,* 129-144.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid*.,* 114; Amy Morin, *13 Things Mentally Strong People Don't Do: Take Back Your Power, Embrace Change, Face Your Fears, and Train Your Brain for Happiness and Success* (New York: William Morrow, 2017), 21-22.

[79] Kiyosaki, 68.

[80] Ibid., 23.

[81] Ibid.

It is remarkable that, contrary to what might be expected if we consider "cold hearted" successful psychopaths to be lacking in emotions, these books seem to understand that emotions are present in decision-making, and that smart decisions imply controlling and shaping them (as opposed to suppressing them). If this is true, people who are known as cold and calculating (such as Machiavellian political leaders, and a certain type of successful business leaders) are not unemotional thinking machines but rather, as Varga suggests when discussing successful psychopaths, they are driven by a particular set of emotions.

What does it say about our culture that it holds up this kind of behavior (so similar to that of both authoritarian leaders and psychopaths) as an aspirational ideal? As Englebert points out "The social function of psychopaths depends on conditions in the environment. In times of peace, we lock them up; in times of war, we count on them and cover them with medals."[82] We must eschew this interesting sociological question as it takes us too far afield from our goal of understanding the decision-making mechanism of authoritarian leaders and the role played by emotions therein. However, we can point to the work of Joel Bakan[83] as perhaps providing an important clue: corporations, according to this author, behave like psychopaths. That is, the way that corporations are legally structured (e.g., with the legal obligation to maximize shareholder value, and with the freedom to act irresponsibly provided by limited liability) makes their way of acting as single-minded and amoral as that of a psychopath. Perhaps successful psychopaths and people who can act as such (and perhaps, thereby *become* psychopathic) are successful in corporate environments because the business world is structured in such a way that it rewards this kind of behavior and mindset.

What we wish to understand is how authoritarian leaders act, the way their psychological makeup conditions their decision making. Self-help literature provides us with a clear model of a certain way of acting because it presents it in a positive manner that is free from clinical or diagnostic concerns. This gives us a perspective that eschews the issue of mental health and puts a certain kind of decision-making mechanism into focus.

V. A decision-making mechanism based on emotions

The relationship between the emotions and other bodily phenomena in cognitive processes has been observed since Aristotle,[84] and was

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[82] Englebert, 372.

[83] Joel Bakan, *The Corporation* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 56.

[84] Aristotle, *De anima*, 427a 17- 429a 9.

one of the central concerns of thinkers such as Descartes or Spinoza.[85] In the twentieth century this relationship is complicated by the emergence of the computer as a metaphor for human cognition, under which it is seen as mere information processing; as well as by the rise of a neurocentrism that placed cognitive processes squarely in the brain, which was seen as the sole organ of cognition, and as something apart from the rest of the body.[86] In this perspective, decision-making was conceived as a process based on rational criteria and information processing; moral decisions were evaluated through a consequentialist lens and had to do with expectations of future results; in sum, moral reasoning was seen as wholly apart from the body and the emotions.[87]

This rationalist perspective contrasts with views that recognize the role of emotions in moral judgements. For example, Jonathan Haidt's social intuitionist theory[88] states that moral judgements (that is the evaluation of actions as good or bad) are caused by, spontaneous moral intuitions that occur without moral reasoning (and are not necessarily reliable). These moral intuitions are highly affective: good and bad are experienced in the emotions; and only later lead to moral reasoning. Similarly, Dual Process Theory[89] proposes that while some moral judgments are based on highly controlled cognitive processes, deontological judgments, such as disapproving of killing one person to save several others, are driven by emotional responses, as Haidt argues. If we look at the particular case of successful psychopaths, we can derive a concrete image of a decision-making mechanism which can contribute to this debate. What our detour through self-help books has shown is that in order to act like a successful psychopath (and reap the benefit of such clear mindedness) one must manage one's emotion in a specific way, rather than suppress them. In what follows, we will explore the kind of decision-making that is undertaken by people who manage their emotions in this way.

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[85] Descartes, 191-200; Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, tr. Robert Harvey Monro (New York: Hafner, 1949), 83-95, 136-142.

[86] Varela et al., 22.

[87] Colombetti, 94.

[88] Jonathan Haidt, "The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment," *Psychological Review* 108, no. 4 (2001): 814-834.

[89] Joshua Greene, "Dual-Process Morality and the Personal/Impersonal Distinction: A Reply to McGuire, Langdon, Coltheart, and Mackenzie," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 45, no. 3 (2009): 581-584; Joshua Greene, "The Rat-a-gorical Imperative: Moral Intuition and the Limits of Affective Learning," *Cognition* 167 (2017): 66-77.

Kahneman and Tversky[90] critique the theory of utility according to which people take decisions by weighing risks and benefits. Utility is not the result of mathematical weighing, but of the felt worth of an experience, which has to do with the pleasure and displeasure it promises. The authors point out that "rationality" is a more complex concept than a mere mental function based on logico-mathematical operations; it is dependent on context and affective experience. If we take these thoughts to heart, we can see how suppressing negative emotions can lead to irrational behaviors. Yes, that feeling in the pit of our stomach that tells us we are entering dangerous territory or acting in a morally wrong manner is not a pleasant feeling; and yes, such a feeling can be paralyzing and hinder assertive action; but it has its role, and successful psychopaths go without it.

Emotions such as compassion, contempt, guilt, or shame, also have prosocial roles.[91] Prosocial emotions have to do with sympathetic resonance with others (e.g., I cannot feel shame if I don't experience others as assessing my actions). Even in Kanheman and Tversky's[92] economic theory, decision making has to do with attending to and resonating with the actions of others: the heuristic processes in which we base our actions are largely based on other people. This does not necessarily lead to maximally rational decisions, but they serve as a starting point for it, and something we usually count on.

Let's think about what it means to control emotions such as fear and anxiety. To be sure, these are negative emotions that can lead to our postponing, regretting or abandoning courses of action. However, they are useful evolutionary adaptations, reactions to danger that help us survive. Furthermore, it has been suggested that negative emotions are at the basis of moral judgements;[93] the suppression of an emotion such as shame can lead to our being unable to feel the weight of moral transgressions (this is not to say that the person who does this is intellectually unaware that a given action is immoral: authoritarians are highly conventional and therefore mindful of what is socially considered right and wrong; psychopaths know the rules, but they understand them as conventional rather than moral).[94]

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[90] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, *Choices, Values, and Frames* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 29-55.

[91] Jonathan Haidt, "The Moral Emotions," in *Handbook of Affective Sciences,* eds. Richard Davidson, Klaus Scherer, and Hill Goldsmith, 852-870 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[92] Kahneman and Tversky, 29-55.

[93] Haidt, "The Moral Emotions," 852-870.

[94] For an approach to the distinction between conventional and moral norms, see Elliot Turiel,

If we understand that negative emotions have an adaptive function, this could explain why the psychopath, by controlling them, becomes stubborn regarding goals, as well as impulsive and incapable of controlling his own behavior.[95] He is not open to the contextual signals through which we can evaluate our actions, since these signals are apprehended through emotions. The environment may give hints that a goal is not achievable or sustainable (for example, all my political allies are being incarcerated),[96] but these hints go unheeded.

Through a specific kind of control of their emotions, successful psychopaths may perhaps achieve a degree of moral blindness. The recognition of moral facts is necessary for making moral decisions and this recognition is not attained by mere rational cogitation of facts. Rather, it involves i) a *moral awareness* regarding the moral nature of a given situation, ii) a *moral sensitivity* to moral facts in general, and iii) a *moral attentiveness* to the moral saliencies in given situations.[97] If emotions play a role in these conditions,[98] a systematically skewed emotional profile may become blind to moral facts, situations, and saliences.

In general, human beings avoid relationships that go against their moral principles (e.g., interacting with an openly corrupt person), and find it troublesome to embark upon ventures that are inconsistent with what they think is right (e.g., doing business with a company that is a known polluter). Successful psychopaths don't have such hang-ups. But, according to Varga,[99] a lack of sympathy seems insufficient to explain this phenomenon. Varga[100] has pointed out that the main char-

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The Development of Social Knowledge: Morality and Convention (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 33-40.

[95] Hart et al., 1-4; Robert Hare, *Manual for Revised Psychopathy Checklist* (Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems, 2003).

[96] See, for the case of Donald Trump: Martha Busby, "How Many of Donald Trump's Advisers Have Been Convicted?" *The Guardian*, September 14, 2018, 201, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/aug/22/how-many-of-trumps-close-advisers-have-been-convicted-and-who-are-they.

[97] Scott J. Reynolds and Jared A. Miller, "The Recognition of Moral Issues: Moral Awareness, Moral Sensitivity and Moral Attentiveness," *Current Opinion in Psychology* 6 (2015): 114-117; Scott J. Reynolds, "Moral Awareness and Ethical Predispositions: Investigating the Role of Individual Differences in the Recognition of Moral Issues," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 91, no. 1 (2006): 233-243.

[98] Jean Decety, Kalina J. Michalska, and Katherine D. Kinzler, "The Contribution of Emotion and Cognition to Moral Sensitivity: A Neurodevelopmental Study," *Cerebral Cortex* 22, no. 1 (2012): 209; 220.

[99] Varga, 102.

[100] Ibid., 102-103.

acteristic of the successful psychopath is the relationship between his identity and the goal he pursues: the person is the goal. The psychopath holds on to a goal despite its unfeasibility because he is identified with it: to abandon it is to abandon himself. Understanding that success in a given goal is linked to the identity of successful psychopaths helps us to account for the way in which they operate and gives us clues to understand authoritarian leaders. The goal may be unrealistic, and the actions irrational, but they are held fast to, because the identity of the leader is at stake.

The notion of "identity" in this context, bears some clarification. We do not refer to the notion of personal identity in the sense discussed by e.g., Locke[101] or Hume,[102] who take on the problem of the validity of identifying a person whose thoughts, perceptions, attitudes, etc., change, as being the same over time, and e.g., being responsible for past actions. When we say that the goal of the successful psychopath is tied with their identity, we mean, rather, that the achievement of said goal is so tied up with the person's sense of self-worth, that goal and person are indistinguishable; that, e.g., people who are harmful to the goal are seen, thereby, to be harmful to the successful psychopath. However, should the psychopath fail in attaining his goal, he would still see himself as the person he was before failing.

Let us contrast this with normal self-constitution: a normal identity is many-faceted, and a given goal may have to do with one aspect of ourselves (e.g., seeing oneself as a successful businessman) but not with others (e.g., being a loving family man): normal people (while sensitive to framing and to social pressures)[103] tend to make decisions taking these multiple aspects into account. In a person with a multi-faceted identity, the possibility of regretting decisions and of re-thinking goals has to do with the cultivation of the emotions. Indeed, emotions can help us asses the situations we find ourselves in; without emotions, we may have access to sense-data about our predicaments, but emotions give salience and relevance to different aspects of them.[104] These emotions can also be extended in others; since others offer perspectives and evaluations of environments, and openness to such perspectives

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[101] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* ed. Kenneth P. Winkler (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett,1996), 133-140.

[102] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), 84-85.

[103] Cass Sunstein, *Conformity* (New York: New York University Press, 2021) 11-34.

[104] Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain* (London: William Heinemann, 2003), 27-82.

and evaluations requires sympathetic resonance.[105] But sympathetic resonance is unavailable to successful psychopaths.

There is no evidence to indicate that the psychopath lacks either emotions or emotional understanding.[106] Rather, psychopaths control some emotions, but are controlled by those that relate to the goal they have identified themselves with. The psychopath still desires and has emotions, but his monomania causes him to desire and feel against himself.

VI. Rise and fall

The apparent cool head of the authoritarian leader hides the fact that important emotions are being suppressed, and that those emotions are necessary for re-thinking goals in accordance with a changing context. Following Colombetti[107] the medium- and long-term failure of authoritarian leadership may have to do precisely with the kind of emotions involved in authoritarian decision making. This idea is in accordance with a radical thesis, that was perhaps first formulated by David Hume[108] several centuries ago: no one can suppress the emotions, no purely rational self is in control: rather, different kinds of people are controlled by different kinds of passions, and reason is not their master but their slave. Politics is not merely a matter of game theory; ideological alignments and leadership types have to do with the way the emotions of the relevant actors are organized.[109]

The rise and fall of authoritarian leaders can be understood in this way. Their capacity to instrumentalize and manipulate followers, as well as their total commitment to their goals (which projects confidence), gives the leader a loyal following. Both the leadership and the followers practice moral disengagement: the former believe any means is valid towards their ultimate end, the latter blindly trust that they are being led somewhere good, and that the leader has contemplated and pondered the consequences of his actions: either immoral actions are reframed as morally valid, or the agent's responsibility for them is

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[105] Maria Clara Garavito, *Hacerse Mundo Con Otros. Intersubjetividad Como Co-Constitución* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2022), 319-358.

[106] Englebert, 368-375.

[107] Colombetti, 24.

[108] Antonio José Cano, "Hume y la Concepción de las Pasiones en Four Dissertations," *Araucaria. Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política y Humanidades* 20, no. 40 (2018): 285-310.

[109] Lakoff, *Thinking Points*, 56.

explained away.[110] In this way, a committed and single-minded move-ment, capable of "coloring outside the lines" when required, is formed. These traits give the movement the capacity for rapid and spectacular success.

What happens next? The very ability of authoritarian leaders to in-stantiate their projects and goals is their downfall. Since they lack the emotional tools to properly evaluate their grandiose plans, these are doomed to failure in the real world. They are, however, put in practice in some way, impossible as they are (e.g., Donald Trump's impractica-ble border wall).[111] Furthermore, since they have no qualms about the allies they make in order to achieve power, they can make many useful alliances; but once in power, these allies behave in a corrupt manner.[112] Therefore, spectacular rise to power is followed by spectacular failure.

The figure of Albert Speer (chief architect of the NSDAP from 1934 to 1937) serves to summarize the dynamics of the rise and fall of authoritarian leaders. Besides winning a war against most of Europe, Hitler dreamt of spectacular architectural achievements for Germany. Speer even built a few, such as the Zeppelinfeld for military parades; but the great majority of Hitler and Speers' grandiose plans (such as a stadium for 400.000 spectators) remained in the drawing board, and their architectural legacy was one of ruins. In his memoirs, written in prison after the defeat of the Third Reich, when trying to explain to himself why he was blind to the regime's shortcomings, Speer talks of massive, constant self-deceit.[113] Speer appears to have been blinded by his enthusiasm for certain goals, as if they shone too brightly and impaired his peripheral vision.

VII. Conclusion

We have consulted literature regarding successful psychopaths, as well as self-help literature in the field of business, to get a sense of the de-cision-making mechanism of authoritarian leaders, their way of being stubborn and steadfast: obstacles, according to the author of *Mein*

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[110] Ulf Schaefer and Onno Bouwmeester, "Reconceptualizing Moral Disengagement as a Pro-cess: Transcending Overly Liberal and Overly Conservative Practice in the Field," *Journal of Business Ethics* 172, no. 3 (2020): 525-543.

[111] Robert Cotter and Nathan Kasai, "Trump's Great Wall of Failure," *Third Way*, July 31, 2020, https://www.thirdway.org/memo/trumps-great-wall-of-failure.

[112] Sam Berger, Liz Kennedy, and Diana Pilipenko, "Confronting the Cost of Trump's Corruption to American Families," *Center for American Progress*, June 4, 2018, https://www.americanprog-ress.org/article/confronting-cost-trumps-corruption-american-families/.

[113] Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 291.

Kampf, exist only to be broken.[114] We have endeavored to show that i) authoritarian leaders, far from being unemotional, have a particular emotional makeup, ii) that this emotional makeup has to do with their binding their identity with a given goal, iii) that this emotional makeup gives them a focus and confidence that helps them achieve their goals, iv) that, however, it is also the reason for their disastrous failure once they are in power. Additionally, through the case of psychopathic political and business leaders, we have marshalled arguments in favor of a view of decision-making that is compatible with the perspective of embodied cognition: no mind is a mere processor of information; all human decisions have to do with the emotional makeup of the agent that makes them.

This text, therefore, is a contribution to both philosophy of mind and political philosophy. With regards to the former, we not only illustrate how human decision-making mechanisms incorporate emotions, but that they do so in a granular fashion, according to the way in which particular people manage their emotions. The implication for political philosophy is that political actors ought not to be treated as homogenous, as sharing the same kind of reasoning processes (as, e.g., neoclassical economics tends to assume).[115] There are kinds of people (e.g., followers and leaders) and they operate in a differentiated manner. Likewise, the idea of states as rational actors can be put into question: perhaps a country can share an emotional profile (e.g., a certain relationship to trauma), and therefore act in a manner that is systematically skewed by certain collective emotions.[116]

Political decision-making involves an emoting that is historical and contextual. This goes against the idea that leadership implies a cool head and a cold heart. In fact, such emotional coldness can be harmful even for the political leader. As far back as Plato's *Republic*,[117] book IX, we find reflections on the misfortune of the tyrannical leader: keeping power requires great personal and social sacrifice: friends must be betrayed, lies must be told, valuable people must be sacrificed, all in

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[114] Hitler, 19-20.

[115] Héctor Malleta, "La Evolución del Homo Economicus," *Economía* 33, no. 65 (2010): 9-68; Oscar Rogelio Caloca Osorio and Cristian Eduardo Leriche Guzmán, "Racionalidad del Homo Económicus Versus Creencia Racional: Una Visión a Través de la Teoría de Juegos," *Análisis Económico* 20, no. 43 (2005): 101-124.

[116] Irit Keynan, "Collective Trauma and National Behavior in Times of Threat-The Israeli Public and the 2014 War in Gaza," *Cultural and Religious Studies* 4, no. 5 (2016): 300-309.

[117] Plato, *Republic*, 571a- 569c.

the name of power, to which the tyrant appears as enslaved.[118] History shows that authoritarian leaders tend to meet dreadful fates. Mussolini was captured in northern Italy as he was trying to flee to Switzerland, was executed along with his mistress, and their corpses were destroyed by an angry mob. It is thought that news of this occurrence contributed to Hitler's decision, after two weeks of hiding in an underground bunker, to commit suicide and have his remains burnt.[119] Quite a pair of endings indeed, for the men who believed that obstacles do not exist to be surrendered to, but only to be broken.

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[118] Ibid., 431a-d.

[119] Benjamin Soloway, "Did the Brutal Death of Mussolini Contribute to Hitler's Suicide?" *Foreign Policy*, April 28, 2015, https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/28/did-the-brutal-death-of-mussolini-contribute-to-hitlers-suicide/ .

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Decoding Spinoza: Navigating Essence and Existence through Gnoseological Lens

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Abstract

This work aims to depart from conventional interpretations of Spinoza's notions of essence and existence by offering an alternative perspective called the onto-gnoseological reading. Typically, these concepts of essence and existence are approached from an ontological standpoint or are simply disregarded. The objective of this paper is to demonstrate that Spinoza, within his corpus associates these notions with the activity of the genres of knowledge rather than with the ontological realm. This reinterpretation of the concepts from a gnoseological standpoint allows for a deeper comprehension of Spinoza's philosophical undertaking. It becomes evident that this project involves the coexistence of gnoseological duality in perfect harmony with the univocity of reality, serving as a crucial instrument for recognizing the boundaries and possibilities of human knowledge and, subsequently, the potential for achieving human virtue.

Keywords: *onto-gnoseology; human knowledge; Spinoza; duality; monism*

I. Introduction

The reception of Spinoza's ontology has throughout history been marked by what appears as an insurmountable problem: the problem of an apparent contradiction between a defense of the univocality of the real (monism), on the one hand, and the use of conceptual pairs that seem to refer to a strict ontological duality, on the other. These pairs, which all constitute different expressions of one and the same dual-

ity, are the pairs of *infinite-finite*, *essence-existence*, *eternity-duration*, and *substance-modes*. In the face of this, Spinoza readers have felt obligated to decide which aspects to conserve and which to suppress of an account that otherwise would have appeared paradoxical. This has given rise to, not only different, but also conflicting readings.[1] In more recent times, the main conflict has fundamentally concerned two radically antagonistic interpretations: the dualist and the univocal interpretation of Spinoza's ontology. The dualist interpretation – defended by authors like Valtteri Viljanen,[2] Christopher Martin,[3] Tad Schmaltz,[4] and Charles Jarrett[5] – clings to the above-mentioned conceptual pairs to sustain that Spinoza's account ends up reproducing a Platonic ontology in which the real is perceived to be divided into two completely different realms: the infinite, essential, and eternal on the one hand, and the finite, existing, and durable, on the other. In contrast, the univocal interpretation – proclaimed by authors like Gilles Deleuze,[6] Marilena Chaui[7] and Vittorio Morfino[8] – ignores or suppress the dualities that Spinoza postulates in order to be able to embrace the absolute univocal character of reality. In sum, these interpretations of Spinoza's ontology have been inclined towards either duality or univocality.

This article inserts itself into the above-mentioned problematic context with the objective to gather evidence for a hypothesis which I call

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[1] It is possible to identify a first wave of reception of Spinoza's philosophy between the years 1677 and 1830, that is, from the time of Spinoza's death to Georg W. F. Hegel's interpretation of his ontology. These first readings can be denominated unilateral readings in that they hold that Spinoza first separates the real into two areas, just to then embrace only one of these areas of being at the expense of the other. Among these first readings, it is possible to detect two confronting stances. The first was taken by those who accused Spinoza of annulling God, the eternal and the infinite; that is, of being atheist or pantheist. Among them we find Christian Thomasius (1688), Pierre Bayle (1697), Georg Wachter (1699), Sebastian Kortholt (1700), Johannes Colerus (1705), Christian Wolff (1739), and Moses Mendelssohn (1785). The second was taken by those who accused Spinoza of suppressing the finite and existing; that is, of being acosmist. Among them we find Friedrich H. Jacobi (1785), Friedrich W. J. Schelling (1795), and Georg W. F. Hegel (1830).

[2] Valteri Viljanen, *Spinoza's Geometry of Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[3] Christopher P. Martin, "The Framework of Essences in Spinoza's *Ethics*," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 16, no. 3 (2008): 489-509.

[4] Tad M. Schmaltz, "Spinoza on Eternity and Duration: The 1663 Connection," in *The Young Spinoza: A Metaphysician in the Making*, ed. Yitzhak Y. Melamed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[5] Charles Jarrett, "Spinoza's Distinction between Essence and Existence," *Iyyun: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly* 50 (2001): 245-252.

[6] Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1968).

[7] Marilena Chaui, *A nervura do real: Imanência e liberdade em Espinosa* (São Paulo: Companhia Das Letras, 1999).

[8] Vittorio Morfino, "Esencia y relación," *Revista Pensamiento Político* 6 (2015): 1-26.

the *onto-gnoseological reading*.[9] Basically, the hypothesis holds that Spinoza's project is richer and more profound than traditionally admitted, and that this richness stems precisely in the coexistence of univocality and duality. In order to make way for such a coexistence, the hypothesis holds as its central tenet the aspect of human understanding, an aspect that tends to have been overseen by Spinoza scholars when trying to interpret the problem in question.[10] Thus, my hypothesis is that the references to dualities that we can find within Spinoza's works, far from being references to ontological dualities, ought to be considered as references to the different ways by which human being understands.

Guided by this hypothesis, I will in what follows investigate more closely the conceptual pair of essence-existence.[11] I wish to show how these concepts do not refer to different ontological spheres, but rather to the ways by which human beings conceive of reality or nature. Such a gnoseological resignification of the concepts allows us to, on the one hand, conserve the pair of *essence-existence* without damaging Spinoza's expressed ontological univocality; on the other hand, to investigate the Spinozian philosophical project in greater depth. The latter is important in so far as that project, I would argue, is principally characterized by an ethical objective with gnoseological roots:[12] the objective of making the human being, together with other individuals, access "the knowledge of the union that the mind has with the whole of Nature."[13] Once achieved,

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[9] I have developed this hypothesis elsewhere; see Antonieta García Ruzo, "La Ética de Spinoza como proyecto onto-gnoseológico," *Daimon: Revista Internacional de Filosofia* 86 (2022): 101-116.

[10] I should, however, mention Julie R. Klein's article "'By Eternity I Understand': Eternity According to Spinoza" as an exception. There, Julie R. Klein suggests an analysis of the eternity-duration pair from the perspective of Spinoza's theory of knowledge. Julie R. Klein, "'By Eternity I Understand': Eternity According to Spinoza," *Iyyun: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly* 51 (2002): 295-324.

[11] I have investigated this very hypothesis from the perspective of the other conceptual pairs previously. See Antonieta García Ruzo, "Eternidad y duración: perspectivas de la naturaleza spinoziana," *Contrastes: Revista Internacional de Filosofía* 28, no. 3 (2023): 81-99.

[12] Herman De Dijn, "Metaphysics as Ethics," in *God and Nature: Spinoza's Metaphysics: Papers Presented at the First Jerusalem Conference*, ed. Yirmiyahu Yovel (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 123; Henry E. Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza: An Introduction* (New Heaven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 84. For a reading that unites the ethical project and the gnoseological approach with the ontological aspect by focusing on the concept of conatus see Neşe Aksoy, "Spinoza's Conatus: A Teleological Reading of Its Ethical Dimension," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 6, no. 2 (2021): 107-130.

[13] TdIE §13. Spinoza's Works are cited according to the pagination of the canonical edition: Carl Gebhardt, ed., *Opera*, 5 vols. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1925). I follow the translation of Edwin Curley: Edwin Curley, ed., *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985). I employ its method of referring to the parts of the text. References

this knowledge will unfailingly lead to the highest form of blessedness; that is, the highest human virtue.

II. On the different notions of essence

Already when approaching the conceptual pair of *essence-existence,* it stands clear that the problem of dualism comes accompanied by others. In fact, Spinoza does not limit himself to only using these two concepts but makes the account more complex by using different notions of essence: *formal essence*, *objective essence*, *actual essence*, and *singular essence*. This situation renders the problem before us even more opaque and calls for a few complementary clarifications. Above all, I must explain how these different notions of essence become fixated as the concepts of essence and existence, such as these appear in Spinoza's texts.

The notion of *formal essence* appears in the *Ethics* for the first time in the scholium to Proposition 17 of Part One and is presented as the opposite to *objective essence*. In this scholium Spinoza resumes Descartes and Suárez' s scholastic postulates[14] by stating that:

> If intellect pertains to the divine nature, it will not be able to be (like our intellect) by nature either posterior (as most would have it), or simultaneously with, the things understood, since God is prior in causality to all things (P16C1). On the contrary, the truth and formal essence of things is what it is because it exists objectively in that way in God's intellect.[15]

Although, as Mogens Laerke points out, this statement has serious complications associated with the postulation of a God who first conceives the world, and then creates it – postulation that is at the opposite end of the entire Spinozian project[16] – it is useful for the distinction that I am

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to the *Ethics* are abbreviated according to the following standard method: Ethics (E), axiom (a), corollary (c), definition (d) before proposition, demonstration (d) after proposition, lemma (L), proposition (p), postulate (post), scholium (s) explanation (exp). Example: E2p7s = Ethics, part 2, proposition 7, scholium. References to the non-geometrically ordered passages from the *Ethics*, are sometimes supplemented by references to Gebhardt's edition *Spinoza Opera*, according to the following form: G II/208/25–30 = Gebhardt, Vol. 2, page 208, lines 25-30).

[14] Harold H. Joachim, *Spinoza's* Tractatus de intellectus emendatione: *A Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 56.

[15] E1P17s.

[16] Mogens Laerke, "Aspects of Spinoza's Theory of Essence: Formal Essence, Non-Existence

currently analyzing. It is in this scholium that Spinoza introduces the difference between formal and objective essence. What does he, more specifically, say about these two classes of essence? As indicated by Vidal Peña, "the 'objective essence' is, for Spinoza, the concept or idea of a reality in the face of the 'formal essence', which is this very reality."[17] In the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* (TdIE), Spinoza explains this difference basing himself on the concept pair *idea-ideatum*. One thing, he states, is the – true – idea of a circle and another is the circle itself. The idea of something is associated with the objective essence of that thing; it is the way by which the thing is intelligible, the possible object of an idea: in this case, the idea of a circle. The circle, in so far as its ideatum, holds a formal – or real – essence. In other words, the formal being of a thing is its real being, it is the thing itself; the objective being is its being in so far as it is an object of an idea, that is, the being of the idea in so far as it is an idea of this thing.

What is, then, the objective essence of something? Spinoza himself explains this in the TdIE: "From this it is clear that certainty is nothing but the objective essence itself, i.e., the mode by which we are aware of the formal essence is certainty itself."[18] There is no real difference, then, between formal and objective essence. The latter is the true mode of perceiving things, i.e., formal essences. What led to the "parallelism"[19] of the attributes, is nothing more than the assertion that the attribute of thought objectively contains within itself the formal essences of all things.[20] Or, in Laerke's words, that

> whenever I have an adequate idea of a thing, or that the thing is objectively given in the intellect, there must be a corresponding formal essence of that thing in the relevant attribute.[21]

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and Two Types of Actuality," in *The Actual and the Possible: Modality and Metaphysics in Modern Philosophy*, ed. Mark Sinclair (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 24.

[17] Spinoza Benedictus, *Ética: demostrada según el orden geométrico*, trans. Vidal Peña (Madrid: Alianza, 2016), footnote 12.

[18] TIE §35. These ideas, in turn, have a formal being in so far as they are modes of the attribute of thought: "the formal being of ideas admits God as a cause only insofar as he is considered a thinking thing, and not insofar as he is explained by any other attributes." E2p5.

[19] The proclamation made by Spinoza in E2p7 has been defined as his expression of parallelism: "the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things," which implies that "whatever follows formally from God's infinite nature, follows objectively in God from his idea in the same order and with the same connection." E2p7c.

[20] KV II, appendix 2, 3.

[21] Laerke, 25.

This explanation permits me to make the following synthesis: formal and object essences are not different essences, but rather one and the same essence looked upon from different perspectives. Objective essence refers to the truthful conception of a thing's formal essence. Let us now take a closer look at this *formal* essence. In his *Metaphysical Thoughts* (CM), the appendix to the *Principles of Descartes' Philosophy*, Spinoza establishes that

> the *formal essence* neither is by itself nor has been created, for both these presuppose that the thing *actually exists*. Rather it depends on the divine essence alone, in which all things are contained. So, in this sense we agree with those who say that the essences of things are eternal (emphasis added).[22]

Here, Spinoza introduces a characterization of formal essence that will remain intact throughout all of his work. It is a characterization that is based on the separation of formal essence and *actual existence*, and, on the affirmation that formal essences are contained in God and, therefore, are eternal. Proposition 8 of Part Two of the *Ethics* – a proposition that is known for its complexity – is proof of the invariability of Spinoza's understanding of formal essence. There, Spinoza writes that "the formal essences of the singular things, or modes, are contained in God's attributes,"[23] insisting on placing the formal essences in a direct relationship with the divine essence. In what remains of his magnum opus, Spinoza almost never returns to the concept of formal essence, but when he does, it is in relation to the essence of the attributes. To this end, it is for instance noteworthy that he uses the concept to characterize intuitive knowledge as knowledge that "proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the [formal] essence of things."[24]

Let us now take a look at the concept of *actual essence*. In Part Three of the *Ethics*, Spinoza establishes that "the striving by which each thing strives to persevere in its being (*conatus*), is nothing but the *actual essence* of the thing" (emphasis and inserted parenthesis added).[25] This striving is associated by Spinoza with the power to act that each

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[22] CM, G I/239.

[23] E2p8.

[24] E2p40s2, bracketing in original.

[25] E3p7.

and every single thing holds.[26] With respect to this matter, Spinoza adds in Part Four of the *Ethics* that:

> The power by which singular things (and consequently, [any] man) preserve their being is the power itself of God, or Nature (by IP24C), not insofar as it is infinite, but insofar as it can be explained through the man's actual essence (by IIIP7). The man's power, therefore, insofar as it is explained through his actual essence, is part of God or Nature's infinite power, i.e. (by IP34), of its essence.[27]

What Spinoza is establishing, on the basis of this demonstration, is that the *actual essence* of a certain thing is not associated with the way in which it is infinite and eternal, but rather the way in which it possesses actuality. Precisely that which is excluded by the formal essence – that is, the actual existence of the thing – is what appears to be associated with the actual essence.

In the Part Five of the *Ethics*, Spinoza provides for a distinction between two ways of conceiving things. This distinction is fundamental for making sense of the different kinds of essences discussed so far. In that part he writes:

> We conceive things as actual in two ways: either insofar as we conceive them to exist in relation to a certain time and place, or insofar as we conceive them to be contained in God and to follow from the necessity of the divine nature. But the things we conceive in this second way as true, or real, we conceive under a species of eternity, and to that extent they involve the eternal and infinite essence of God.[28]

Here, Spinoza distinguishes between two different *ways of conceiving* singular things: either in relation to a determined time and place – that is, as things in duration – or as contained within God – that is, as eternal. The first manner in which it is possible to conceive singular things appears to be nothing more than a conception of their actual essences.

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[26] As Josep Maria Bech points out, in Spinoza each thing will persevere in its being "insofar as it is unaffected by anything else." It means that nothing has "in itself" anything by which it can be destroyed. Josep Maria Bech, "Spinoza's Conatus Undoes Bourdieu's Habitus," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 6, no. 2 (2021): 133.

[27] E4p4d.

[28] EVp29s.

In so far as this essence is related to striving to persevere in being, or, in existence, we conceive its durable character. When the striving to persevere stops, existence stops; that is, the *actual essence* ceases. To this end, what Spinoza calls actual essence is the durable existence of a singular thing.[29] As phrased by Marilena Chaui:

> a singular thing is a power to suffer and to act, and this pas-
> sion and action are the striving of one's own perseverance
> in existence, this striving or causality being nothing more
> than the actual essence of a singular thing.[30]

The second manner in which we can *conceive of* things is, according to Spinoza, associated with the divine necessity and with the real, and it appears as being nothing other than the conception of the formal essence of the singular thing. In the subsequent proposition to the just cited one, Spinoza insists on this issue pointing out that

> to conceive things under a species of eternity, therefore, is
> to conceive things insofar as they are conceived through
> God's essence, as real beings, or insofar as through God's
> essence they involve existence.[31]

Thus, to conceive things on the basis of – or as being *in* – God, is to conceive their *formal* and corresponding *objective essen*ce. This being *in* God is no other thing than the being contained in the divine attri-butes. This is to say that things' objective essences are *in* and conceived through the attribute of thought as true ideas of the formal essences, which are *in* and conceived through the attribute of extension.

So, what does this brief analysis so far allow us to establish? It tells us that the concepts of formal and actual essences can be linked and simplified as the *essence* and *existence* of things, respectively.[32] In what follows, I will try to show how this pair finds its coherence with-in the system through the *onto-gnoseological* proposal. This is, based on maintaining that the distinction between essence (formal essence)

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[29] Steven Nadler, "Spinoza's Monism and the Reality of the Finite," in *Spinoza on Monism*, ed. Philip Goff (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 237.

[30] Chaui, 46.

[31] E5p30d.

[32] This conclusion has been reached by various scholars. Mogens Laerke, for instance, states that "for each thing, there is, on the one hand, a being of its essence (or formal essence) and, on the other, a being of its existence (or actual essence)." Laerke, 12.

and existence (current essence) must be preserved so as not to falsify the Spinozian project, but that, nevertheless, must be understood as a duality introduced by human knowledge. The concept of *singular essence* will be analyzed later – once the link between formal and actual essence in finite things has been investigated – finding its reason for being also in Spinoza's theory of knowledge.

III. Essence and existence: Identity and difference

Spinoza addresses the problem of the distinction between essence and existence from the outset of his philosophical project. In the second chapter of the CM, he seeks to cast light on these concepts that, as he shows, had been defined by many authors before him.[33] In order to do this, Spinoza distinguishes between the *being of essence* and the *being of existence*. About the first, he states that "*being of essence* is nothing but that manner in which created things are comprehended in the attributes of God,"[34] giving evidence of a visible continuity between the CM and what he later stipulates in the TdIE and the *Ethics* about *formal essence*. About the second, he states that "*being of existence* is the essence itself of things outside God, considered in itself. It is attributed to things after they have been created by God."[35] Here Spinoza stipulates something that, as I will demonstrate, will maintain itself identical throughout his entire work: essence and existence both are and are not, the same. From the ontological point of view, *being of existence* is the (very) *essence* of things.[36] From another perspective, however, it is necessary to distinguish between something's essence and that same thing's existence. This perspective is no other than the perspective of human knowledge. Here, *being of essence* refers to the things in so far as they are comprehended within God's attributes; *being of existence* refers to the things in so far as they are considered as in themselves, as outside of God. In this same sense, Spinoza indicates that

> in God essence is not distinguished from existence, since his essence cannot be *conceived* without existence; but in other things it does differ from and certainly can be *conceived* without existence (emphasis added).[37]

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[33] CM 239.

[34] CM 238.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

Thus, just as he comes to do in the *Ethics*, Spinoza associate the differentiation between essence and existence, not to the realm of being, but to the realm of knowledge. The distinction is based on the human capacity to conceive of one thing without the other. Now, with the objective to clarify even further what he understands by essence – although without providing any concrete definition of that concept, just as in the *Ethics*[38] – Spinoza writes after the just quoted statement that: "[s]ince we can give no definition of anything without at the same time explaining its essence, what do we understand more clearly than what essence is, and what existence is?"[39] Thus, something's essence appears to be related to that thing's definition. This clarification dismisses any kind of Platonic dualist reading of Spinoza's philosophical project: far from holding that the essence of things is contained within an ontological realm different from their existence, here Spinoza argues that what he calls essence is *thinkable* or *definable* regardless of existence. The following example, illustrates this in a clear way:

> Finally, if any Philosopher still doubts whether essence is distinguished from existence in created things, he need not labor greatly over definitions of essence and existence to remove that doubt. For if he will only go to some sculptor or woodcarver, they will show him how they *conceive* in a certain order a statute not yet existing, and after having made it, they will present the existing statue to him. (emphasis added).[40]

Again, it is clear that something's essence can be thought of, without that something actually being in existence. The sculptor can *conceive* of the statue's essence even when the statue does not actually exist.

In the third chapter of this early work, as Spinoza deals with the distinction between the necessary, the impossible, the possible, and the contingent, he immediately goes back to essences and existences. There, we find him insisting on that "God exists necessarily in respect to his essence, for his essence cannot be *conceived* without existence."[41] What then about the finite things? Spinoza explains that the

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[38] The definition in E2d2 is far from being a definition of essence as it rather thematizes the relationship between a thing and its essence.

[39] CM 239.

[40] Ibid.

[41] CM 240.

same identification between essence and existence does not take place among things, because in things, essence depends on the eternal laws of nature whereas existence depends on the series and order of causes.[42] Is he not in fact making here, then, a dualist proclamation? Should we then conclude that essence and existence are indeed distinct when it comes to finite things? We find the clarification of this matter in the following section in which Spinoza introduces the concepts of possibility and contingency. Here, he states that:

> [T]hese [the possible and the contingent] are taken by some to be affections of things. Nevertheless, they are nothing but a defect in our understanding. [...] a thing is called *possible*, then, when we understand its efficient cause but do not know whether the cause is determined. So, we can regard it as possible, but neither as necessary nor as impossible. If, however, we attend to the essence of the thing alone, and not to its cause, we shall call it *contingent*. That is, we shall consider it as midway between God and a chimaera, so to speak, because we find in it, on the part of its essence – neither any necessity of existing (as we do in the divine essence) nor any impossibility or inconsistency (as we do in a chimaera) (emphasis added).[43]

The distinction that Spinoza introduces here between the possible and the contingent is indeed interesting.[44] Both, he clarifies, are defects in our perception. In other words, they are modes of conceiving that are partial, inadequate, defective, and definitely false.[45] Now, here a distinction is made between two ways of perceiving things partially; one in relation to essence, and another in relation to existence. This is to say that Spinoza is affirming that it is as defective to conceive of the real solely from the perspective of essences, as it is to do so from the perspective of existences. Let us clarify this. For Spinoza, as already established, essence depends on the eternal laws of nature, whereas

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[42] CM 241. The same explanation can be found in E1p33s1.

[43] CM 242.

[44] It is a distinction that, although important, appears to make the terms interchangeable: "And if anyone wishes to call contingent what I call possible, I shall not contend with him. For I am not accustomed to dispute about words." CM 242.

[45] In this context, Spinoza's definition of falsehood (or error) as a deprivation or lack of knowledge should be recalled. See TdIE §110, E2p35, E2p41.

existence depends on the series and order of causes.[46] When speaking about the possibility and the contingency, Spinoza is saying that when we understand the efficient cause of a particular thing, but ignore if it is determined, then we think of it as *possible*. This we do as a consequence of not knowing the eternal laws of nature; that is, the thing's essence. We call a particular thing *contingent* when we conceive it through its essence but ignore its efficient cause; that is, we think of the fact that this thing could or could not exist as something contingent. In both cases, we clearly ignore something.

Thus, already in the CM, Spinoza links the essence-existence pair to human ways of knowing. He does so in two ways in this early work: first by explaining that the only way to separate or isolate the essence from the existence is as a consequence of a lack of knowledge. That is to say, by attributing duality to a gnoseological question. Against any dualistic interpretation, Spinoza posits that essence and existence are only separatable in a thing as a consequence of human perception: we can conceive the existence of finite things without conceiving their essence, and vice versa. For Spinoza, conceiving things this way constitutes an insufficient way of knowing; it is a way to *not* know Nature, to distort it. Second, Spinoza links the essence-existence pair to human modes of knowing by rendering explicit the fact that if nature is fully examined – that is, without partialities – then the possible and the contingent disappears, leaving us only with the *necessary*. What is the necessary? It is the verification of the unbreakable unity between essence and existence. In effect, Spinoza argues:

> if he attends to nature and how it depends on God, he will find that there is nothing *contingent* in things, that is, nothing which, on the part of the thing can either exist or not exist, or as is commonly said, be a real contingent.[47]

Dealing with the same issue, but phrased more illustratively, is a footnote of the CM where he establishes:

> But we also say that the necessity of really *existing* is not distinct from the necessity of *essence* (II, ix). That is, when we say that God has decided that the triangle shall exist, we

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[46] CM 241. About this matter, Harold H. Joachim indicates that "The 'essentiae' of particular things which have a time-less actuality in the Attributes of God, have also an actuality or existence which shows itself as their appearance in the temporal and local series." Harold H. Joachim, *A Study of the* Ethics *of Spinoza:* Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), 80.

[47] CM 242. In E1p29 and 33 this is repeated almost verbatim.

> are saying nothing but that God as so arranged the order of nature and of causes that the triangle shall necessarily exist at such a time. So, if we understood the order of causes as it has been established by God, we should find that the triangle must really exist at such a time, with the same necessity as we now find, when we attend to its nature, that its three angles are equal to two right angles (emphasis added).[48]

True knowledge lets us see the necessity of reality. This necessity can be seen as expressed through, among other things, by the ontological unity, or identity, between essence and existence. If the order of causes were adequately comprehended, and the way in which we are *in* God, we would comprehend that there are no essences without existences.

From all of this, it stands clear that it is Spinoza himself that gives us the key to understand the conceptual pair of essence-existence from the point of view of the gnoseological factor. It is necessary, then, to rethink it from the perspective of the different ways by which human beings conceive: the imagination, reason, and intuitive knowledge. In the next section, I will therefore analyze these different kinds of human knowledge by asking what they can tell us about essence and existence.

IV. Duality and kinds of human knowledge

The *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* distinguishes between two kinds of imaginative knowledge: between what is called perception "from report" and perception of "random experience." With respect to the first, Spinoza holds that

> apart from the fact that it is a very uncertain thing – we do not perceive any essence of a thing [...]. And since the existence of any singular thing is not known unless its essence is known (as we shall see afterwards), we can clearly infer from this that all the certainty we have from report is to be excluded from the sciences.[49]

Within the context of random experience, the same problem connected to being ignorant of the essences is also visible. About this context Spinoza establishes:

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[48] CM 243.

[49] TdIE §26; G/II/12.

> As for the second [kind of knowledge], again, no one should be said to have the idea of that proportion which he is seeking. Apart from the fact that it is a very uncertain thing, and without end, in this way no one will ever perceive anything in natural things except accidents. But these are never understood clearly unless their essences are known first. So, that also is to be excluded.[50]

So, the problem is replicated in both of the imaginative kinds of knowledge: the essences are inaccessible to imagination. That is to say, that *the being of essence* or the *formal essence* of things is off-limits to the first kind of human knowledge. This position can also be seen in Spinoza's treatment of fictive, false, and doubtful ideas in the TdIE. Fictive ideas, for example, emerge from considering things as possible, that is, when being ignorant of a thing's essence, human beings cannot be sure of either its necessity or its impossibility.[51] This consideration appears to be in perfect continuity with what was established by Spinoza in the CM: when we understand the efficient cause of a thing, but ignore whether it is determined, we think of the thing as possible. This is what happens when we perceive based on imagination. Possibility emerges due to the ignorance of the eternal laws of nature – that is, the essence of things.[52]

Imaginative knowledge, however, can indeed give us access to one perspective of reality. Hence, imaginative knowledge is not absolutely false, rather only partial, or distorted.[53] Imagination puts us in contact with things' *existence*.[54] Through imagination, the human being has a direct experience of the external world. In the *Ethics*' in-depth analysis, Spinoza clarifies that the first kind of knowledge is based on the impacts of external bodies upon one's own body. The impressions, or affections, of the external things left upon us give rise to *ideas of affections*.[55] Albeit strictly speaking confused – implying two different natures, that of the external body and that of the own body[56] – they are fundamental ideas with respect to their vitality and vividness, in so

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[50] TdIE §27; G/II/13.

[51] TdIE §53, G/II/20.

[52] CM 242.

[53] E2p35.

[54] E2p17.

[55] E2p16.

[56] E2p28d.

far as they emerge from the interaction of our body – and mind – with the world. Now, how exactly does the imagination *conceive of* reality? The mind, Spinoza writes, cannot imagine external bodies in any other way than as *actually existing*,[57] that is, as something present.[58] "In this sense, the imagination acts as a first conception of the world based on the relationship through which it recognizes things' existence from their affections."[59] Thus, these ideas of affections provide the mind with the perception of things that exist in experience. In other words, it is a knowledge of the existence of the singular bodies in the external world.[60]

What can we say at this point, then, about the conceptual pair of essence-existence from the perspective of imagination? Imagination, in being ignorant of essences, knows only what *is* from the point of view of existence, or *actual essence*. Put differently, the imaginative mode of knowing is existential and therefore, the term *existence* comes to allude not to a form of being, but rather a form of understanding or comprehending. Existence is nothing more than the perception of a thing as present, as actually existing, here and now. When we perceive a singular thing from what Spinoza classifies as the first kind of knowledge, we separate it from God and what is its essence; we ignore the way in which it is contained in the attributes and follows from other things in virtue of the divine nature's necessity.[61] From this inability to capture the necessity by which things exists due to their essences emerges the partial perspective that makes us comprehend things as possible.

Let us now take a look at the second kind of human knowledge. The second kind of knowledge in the *Ethics* is approached with the help of a concept that Spinoza uses for the first time in this work: *common notions*. Reason is defined as that which allows us to have common notions and adequate ideas of things' properties.[62] What are these notions? How can we make sense of them? Gilles Deleuze points out that, according to Spinoza, any existing thing possesses a singular essence, but also a set of characteristic relations through which it composes

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[57] E2p26d2.

[58] E2p17d.

[59] Rodrigo M. Benvenuto, "El concepto de imaginación y la constitución de lo imaginario en la filosofía de Spinoza," in *Actas del cuarto simposio de filosofía moderna. Rosario, 2017*, eds. Alberto Mario Damiani et al. (Rosario: UNR Editora. Editorial de la Universidad Nacional de Rosario, 2019), 112.

[60] Diana Cohen Agreste, *Spinoza: una cartografía de la Ética* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2015), 101.

[61] E5p29s.

[62] E2p40s2.

and decomposes with other different things in existence. A common notion, Gilles Deleuze argues, is precisely the idea of a composition of relations among many things.[63] Therefore he, in turn, establishes that these common notions oscillate between two thresholds in the *Ethics*: the maximum threshold of what is common between all bodies, and the minimum threshold of what is common between at least two singular bodies – my body and another one. That is, between common notions of more or less universality.[64] The first kind refers to those things that are common to all things, and which are equal in the part and the whole.[65] Put differently, to those things in which all bodies concord.[66] The second kind, being less universal, refers to that which is common and proper to the human body and to certain other external bodies by which the human body usually is being affected, and which is equally given in the part and in the whole in whatever of these bodies.[67] In so far as these notions constitute the basis of our human reason, both kinds of them will be perceived by everybody adequately, that is, clearly and distinctly.[68]

With this in mind, let us return to the question of what, more concretely, these common notions are. In the second Lemma to Part Two of the *Ethics*, Spinoza gives us a specific example of them. There he establishes that

> all bodies agree in certain things. [In effect:] all bodies agree in that they involve the concept of one and the same attribute (D1), and in that they can move now more slowly, now more quickly, and absolutely, that now they move, now they are at rest.[69]

Spinoza is clearly referring here to the common notions of maximum universality, those who refer to all bodies. All bodies, in virtue of being extended bodies, have in common the fact that they belong to the attribute of extension. This attribute is a common feature of all the bodies which the essences encompass. As a common notion, it "is not

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[63] Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 1988), 114.

[64] Ibid., 115.

[65] E2p37.

[66] E2p38.

[67] E2p39.

[68] E2p38 and 39; E5p12d.

[69] E2p13L2.

be confused with any essence; it designates the unity of the composition of all bodies: all bodies are in extension."[70] Just as described by Spinoza, these notions do not refer to anything else than the essential character traits of the attributes which have been identified previously by him as the infinite immediate modes[71]: movement and rest, in the case of extension. In this sense, and as pointed out by Diane Steinberg, the most basic knowledge of what is common to all finite things is also knowledge of the divine essence.[72] That in which bodies agree, their shared properties, is what makes them be *in* God.[73] *Common notions* are in this sense, according to Gilles Deleuze, "more biological than mathematical, forming a natural geometry that allow us to comprehend the unity of composition of all of Nature and the modes of variation of that unity."[74]

What is it, then, that the common notions allow us to understand? More importantly, however: what is the relationship between this second kind of human knowledge and the conceptual pair of essence-existence? Just as explained by Spinoza, common notions are nothing but the mode through which we know the attributes' essences, that is, what is common to all essences of singular finite things. Put differently, through *reason* and *common notions* human beings have access to the essences of God's attributes, which in turn are nothing but the totality of the essences of singular things. Let me explain this last consideration a little further. As mentioned, Spinoza establishes that the immediate infinite mode of extension is movement and rest. Regarding the immediate infinite mode of the attribute of thought, he postulates the

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[70] Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 114.

[71] Ep. 64. With respect to the association between infinite immediate modes and common notions, see Edwin Curley, *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza's* Ethics (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 45; Jonathan Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's* Ethics (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1984), 107; Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretic: The Marrano of Reason* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989): 161. Eugene Marshall explains it with in the following terms: "Common notions are of common properties, which are those found equally in the part and in the whole; that is, they are found in their entirety in every mode of an attribute. The capacity for motion and rest is one such common property. This common property is an infinite mode, something that follows directly from the nature of extension itself. Thus, at least some of the common notions are ideas of infinite modes under extension [...]." Eugene Marshall, *The Spiritual Automaton: Spinoza's Science of the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 32.

[72] Diana Steinberg, "Knowledge in Spinoza's *Ethics*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's* Ethics, ed. Olli Koistinen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 150.

[73] With respect to this issue, Spinoza states in E2p46d that: "whether the thing is considered as a part or as a whole, its idea, whether of the whole or a part (P45), will involve God's eternal and infinite essence."

[74] Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 57.

absolutely infinite understanding.[75] As argued by Vidal Peña, "to say that movement and rest is the immediate infinite mode of extension is equivalent to saying that all bodies obey the natural laws of movement and rest."[76] So, when we know through the common notions of reason, we perceive what is common to all finite bodies: their extension, which will inevitably be found either in movement or in rest. Thus, we understand the way in which bodies are in God, and from here we can conceive of them from *an aspect of eternity*. In other words, we get to know that, which is their formal essence. What about the absolute and infinite understanding, then? This is, according to Spinoza, an infinite idea which contains within itself all of nature objectively speaking, and just as it really is (*Short Treatise* appendix 2, 4).[77] It is the impersonal and universal order of rational ideas, that is, of things' *objective essences*. In this sense, immediate infinite modes are those which allow us to think the unity of the finite: with respect to extension, the unity of the *formal essences*; with respect to thought, the unity of the objective essences.[78]

However, as a direct consequence of this way of understanding the formal essences, the question of whether we can say that these essence are singular is emerged. It would seem that if we sustain that the formal essence of a singular thing is its mode of being *in* God – that is, of being in God's attributes – and if we define common notions as those notions that give us knowledge of these formal essence, then the singularity of these essences ends up being hard to affirm. The common notions of maximum universality provide me with the knowledge of what singular things share with each other, that is, being a mode of extension, moving and being at rest. Aren't these essential traits common to everything finite? According to Christopher Martin, who reads

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[75] In the *Short Treatise* Spinoza calls the infinite modes: "universal natured nature," and he contraposes these with the "particulars" referring to finite modes. Of the infinite modes he says that they neither exist for themselves nor can they be perceived by themselves, but rather only through the means of the attributes of which they are modes. KV I, 8 and 9.

[76] Benedictus, *Ética*, footnote 15. In the same spirit, Nadler writes that Spinoza's denomination of the immediate infinite mode of extension – that is, movement and rest – is an abbreviation of the formal essences of all finite bodies. Thus, to know *the* formal essence of a determined thing is to conceive of that thing as a part of God's essences as expressed through its attributes in the shape of immediate infinite modes. Nadler, "Spinoza's Monism," 234.

[77] Joachim defines it as: "an act of apprehending which would comprehend all reality." Joachim, *A Study of the* Ethics, 94.

[78] About the identification of the formal essence with the infinite modes, see Don Garrett, "Spinoza on the Essence of the Human Body and the Part of the Mind that is Eternal," in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics*, ed. Olli Koistinen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 8; Martin, "The Framework," 504.

Spinoza's ontology as a dualist ontology, the events that define us as particular individuals belong to our existence in duration, but not to eternity. In this sense, he claims that, for Spinoza, the formal essence is impersonal.[79]

In support of a reading like Christopher Martin's, we find, for instance, the following scholium:

> [...] [A] man is the cause of the existence of another man, but not of his essence, for the latter is an eternal truth. Hence, they can agree entirely according to their essence. But in existing they must differ. And for that reason, if the existence of one perishes, the other's existence will not thereby perish. But if the essence of one could be destroyed, and become false, the other's essence would also be destroyed.[80]

Here, Spinoza once again distinguishes between two aspects of singular things: existence and essence. While existence always depends on the series and order of causes, that is, of other finite things – man is the cause of the existence of another man – from which it differs,[81] what happens with essence is something quite different. First of all, it cannot depend on a finite cause, since it is an eternal truth. Furthermore, it seems not to differ from the essence of another finite thing, in the case of the example, from the essence of another man. On the contrary, "if the essence of one could be destroy, and become false, the other's essence would also be destroyed."[82]

In contrast to this reading, other authors, like Steven Nadler, hold that a thing's formal essence should be identified as a kind of mathematical formula that describes a certain part of a particular extension. According to this view, the essence of every single body is a specif-

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[79] Martin, "The Framework," 493. Martin, however, does not identify formal essence with the immediate infinite modes, but with humanity: the formal essence of the human mode is common to all human beings and only to them.

[80] E1p17s.

[81] Spinoza affirms that "every single thing, or any thing which is finite and has a determinate existence, can neither exist nor be determined to produce an effect unless it is determined to exist and produce an effect by another cause, which is also finite and has a determinate existence; and again, this cause also can neither exist nor be determined to produce an effect unless it is determined to exist and produce an effect by another, which is also finite and has a determinate existence, and so on, to infinity." E1p28.

[82] E1p17s.

ic ratio of movement and rest[83] that should not be confused or exchanged with another. Thus, the formal essence amounts to only one of the infinite modes of being extended. Defending this position, Mogens Laerke holds that the formal essence, in so far as being singular, eternal, and invariable, can be found as existing as well as non-existing within the divine attributes, although always in some form or other as an individual essence.[84]

In what follows, and in line with the interpretative hypothesis that I have suggested, I will now demonstrate that neither of the two mentioned readings manages to account for Spinoza's explanation, and this due to the fact that they do not take into account the factor of human knowledge. Adding this factor to the equation, the discussion of the singularity or universality of formal essences becomes more nuanced. I say nuanced because, although it remains a question to be analyzed, it no longer has to be analyzed from an ontological point of view. The formal essences, as we have seen, are the ways in which we know singular things from the point of view of reason. This way, just as imagination knows in an existential kind of way, reason knows in an essential kind of way. Reason, through the common notions, conceives of reality from the perspective of the common or general. This is something that Spinoza himself renders explicit when calling rational knowledge "universal knowledge."[85] Thus, in this sense we can indeed say that formal essences cannot be, in any kind of way, singular. In addition to the scholium cited earlier,[86] I think that this conclusion is supported by two further reasons. First, it is supported by Spinoza's exposition in the so-called "physical digression" about the nature of bodies inserted between proposition 13 and 14 in Part Two of the *Ethics*. There, he explains something that I have already mentioned: that "all bodies agree in certain things," fundamentally in the fact that they all involve the concept of one and the same attribute. In addition, he states, they agree in that they can all either move or be at rest.[87] This is the way, then, that Spinoza points out to us what all bodies have in common. However, he also explains how we can come to distinguish between different singular bodies: these "are distinguished from one and another by reason of motion and rest, speed and slowness, and

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[83] Steven Nadler, *Spinoza's Heresy: Immortality and Jewish Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 112.

[84] Laerke, 32.

[85] E5p36s.

[86] E1p17s.

[87] E2p13L2.

not by reason of substance."[88] Immediately after this, he affirms that this movement and rest is determined in the bodies by other singular bodies, which have been, in turn, determined by others, and so on, infinitely.[89] What can we infer from these affirmations? What all bodies have in common is that they are extended, and this extension – as we have established earlier – has movement and rest as essential traits. In this way, all bodies either move or rest, and they do so either more slowly or faster. The common notions allow me to truthfully know the essential traits of all singular things; that is, modes' formal essences. However, singular things are determined by a specific quantity of movement and rest, a specific ratio that cannot be confused with another. This is what makes a mode unique and different from all other extended modes. And this specificity can only be thought in relation to actuality or duration.[90] So, there is no way to distinguish a singular ratio in eternity. While we think of ourselves as being *in* God – in God's attributes – we conceive of what we have in common with all other singularities, leaving to a side that makes us singular, particular, individual, modal, parts. Second, I think that this issue becomes easier to grasp if we recall the characterization of reason which Spinoza provides in his theory of knowledge: reason is ignorant of *singular essences*. This term, which Spinoza goes to some lengths to distinguish from formal essence and actual essence, is incorporated into his account in order to warn us about the limitations of rational knowledge. With respect to this question, the TdIE states that through reason "nothing is attributed to it except propria, not the essence of a particular thing" (emphasis added).[91] In the *Short Treatise*, in absolute continuity with the TdIE, it is stated that this kind of knowledge can only say what corresponds to the being of a thing – that is, its general character traits –, and not what a thing really is.[92] In the *Ethics*, Spinoza insists on the same:

> It is of the nature of Reason to regard things as necessary and not as contingent (P44). And it perceives this necessity of things truly (P41), i.e., as it is in itself (IA6). But this necessity of things is the very necessity of God's eter-

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[88] E2p13L1.

[89] E2p13L3.

[90] With respect to this question, Gilles Deleuze points out that "The existence of a mode is therefore its very essence in that it is not only contained in the attribute but it endures and possesses an infinity of extensive parts." Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 67.

[91] TdIE §19, footnote f.

[92] KVII, 4,1, footnote a.

nal nature (IP16). Therefore, it is of the nature of Reason to regard things under this species of eternity. Add to this that the foundations of Reason are notions (P38) which explain those things that are common to all, and which (P37) *do not explain the essence of any singular thing*. On that account, they must be conceived without any relation to time, but under a certain species of eternity, q.e.d. (emphasis added).[93]

Thus, common notions give us access to the common traits of singular things. They are our means of getting to know the essence of the divine attributes in which we are contained: all extended things either move or rest.[94] Nonetheless, such notions seem to vanish into infinity, become enthralled by the divine, wander away in eternity. So much so that they end up losing sight of the finite, the individual, the *actual essence,* or *existence*, and, therefore, of the *singular essence*.

As Michel Henry points out, while imaginative knowledge showed us singular things as effects without causes, presenting the individual separated from the universe;[95] what happens with reason is the opposite. Primarily, because it allows us to know not the existential and singular aspect of external bodies, but rather what these necessarily share simply by virtue of being. That is, what they have in common, what makes them equal or equivalent. In other words, it shows us "the necessary relationship that links the individual to the universe."[96] In this sense, it reveals to us, based on common notions, the attributes of substance, that is, the divine essence. Thus, in Michel Henry's words, it must be considered as a partial knowledge, since it retains only the general laws of the total nature. The second kind of knowledge, the author indicates, fails to provide us with a complete explanation or vision of reality: one that allows us to discover the part as a consequence of the whole, in which it has its condition of intelligibility and existence.[97] This vision, as we will show below, can only be provided by intuitive science.

Let us now turn to the last and most perfect kind of knowledge: intuitive knowledge. In the TdIE, Spinoza explains that "the best conclusion

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[93] E2p44c2d.

[94] E2p8.

[95] Michel Henry, *Le bonheur de Spinoza: suivi de: étude sur le spinozisme de Michel Henry, par Jean-Michel Longnea* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004), 97.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid., 132.

will have to be drawn from some particular affirmative essence,[98] or, from a true and legitimate definition."[99] This definition can only be achieved through intuitive knowledge, a knowledge that goes from cause to effect. This means in the case of finite things, from the absolute beginning, or God, as the first cause, to the singularity of this particular thing. In the *Short Treatise,* Spinoza holds that this last kind of knowledge allows us "an enjoyment of, and immediate union with what is known to be better than the first and enjoyed more,"[100] and that this is possible because intuitive knowledge apprehend the union between the singular and God in one and the same act.[101] In this sense, the last kind of knowledge turns back to the singular, but only to understand its union with the totality. In the *Ethics*, Spinoza insists on the same proposition when he sustains that intuitive knowledge "proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things."[102] This progression from the formal essence of the attributes towards the essence of things is what gives rise to *singular essences*. With reference to this issue, Spinoza therein states:

> I thought this worth the trouble of noting here, in order to show by this example how much the knowledge of singular things I have called intuitive, *or* knowledge of the third kind (IIP40S2), can accomplish, and how much more powerful it is than the universal knowledge I have called knowledge of the second kind. For although I have shown generally in Part I that all things (and consequently the human Mind also) depend on God both for their essence and their existence, nevertheless, that demonstration, though legitimate and put beyond all chance of doubt, still does not affect our Mind as much as when this is inferred from the *very essence of any singular thing* which we say depend on God (emphasis added).[103]

Thus, this last kind of knowing seems to give us access to precisely that which escapes reason: the *singular essence*. Now, more precisely, what is

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[98] The particular affirmative essence is in the TdIE tied to the theory about the perfect definition (§ 95-97). About this link see Chaui, 11.

[99] TdIE §93.

[100] KV II 21, 2, footnote a.

[101] KV II, 22, 3.

[102] E2p40s2 and E5p25d.

[103] E5p36s.

this *singular essence*? I believe that it is nothing other than the result of the *immediate union*[104] between the *formal essence* (essence) and the *actual essence* (existence) of singular things; a union that lies in the overcoming of all kinds of duality, that is, in understanding of the absolute univocality of nature.

As we have seen, the imaginative way of knowing is *existential* – the imagination knows singular existences.[105] To this end, its ignorance of the totality of the real makes imagination's ideas inadequate or partial. The rational way of knowing, in being *essential*, indeed complements this lack of imagination, but only to give us another perspective that, in terms of perspective, it does not cover the totality of being. In the face of these insufficient kinds of knowledge, then, intuitive knowledge presents itself as a synthesis that perfectly overcomes all perspectival knowing.[106] The third kind of knowledge, instead of being biased thinking or proceeding by separating aspects of the real so as to hypostatize them, shows us the complexity and unity of what *is*. Its activity allows us to observe, in Michel Henry's words, that

> Parallel to this unity of thought, or rather beneath it, there is a unity of reality that also arises from the presence of the Whole in the part, of the absolute Being in each singular being, of the actuality of *Natura naturans* in every parcel of *Natura naturata*, and ultimately, from the immanence of essences in existences, and thus, of eternity in time.[107]

When we conceive something through intuitive knowledge, we neither perceive a skewed perspective of nature, nor do we confuse a concept of the real with the real. Rather, we capture the unity between the different perspectives. This means that when we know a thing through this kind of knowledge, the terms *essence* and *existence* are rendered completely superfluous. Singular essence is the expression of the overcoming of any form of duality; that is, the union between singular

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[104] This is the term with which Spinoza describes intuitive knowledge in the *Short Treatise*. There he states: "[...] must be something that is more powerful, like an enjoyment of, and immediate union with, what is known to be better than the first and enjoyed more. And when thus is present, the conquest is always inevitable [...]." KV II 21, 2, footnote a.

[105] Chaui, 9.

[106] For a defense of this hypothesis, see Antonieta García Ruzo, "Univocidad y ciencia intuitiva en Spinoza," *Areté* 35, no. 2 (2023): 324-334.

[107] Henry, 136 (the translation is mine).

things and God,[108] or, what amounts to the same, the inseparable unity between actual essence and formal essence in finite things.

V. Closing notes

As I have demonstrated in this article, the conceptual pair of essence-existence finds its explanation not in an ontological kind of duality, as the dualist interpreters sustained, but rather in a gnoseological one. In this way, the distinction between *formal essence* (essence) and *actual essence* (existence) in finite things does not need to be eliminated in order to preserve the univocity of being, as the univocal readings made, but rather must be understood as indispensable to comprehend the ways in which human beings know. In fact, the separation between essence and existence is evidence of the limits of human cognition and teaches us – those of us who is ready to see it – that the truth, as difficult to grasp as it is rare,[109] is possible to attain. Intuitive knowledge shows us that we can rise above any form of separation in order to verify – through the *singular essence* – the absolute unity of the real. A verification that has as a corollary the supreme human perfection and, consequently, the highest form of happiness.[110]

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108 TdIE, §13.

109 E5p42s.

110 E5p27d.

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Fixed Ideas and Ideologies: Developing a New Epistemology Rooted in Apathy

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Abstract

Epistemologies are overwhelmingly riddled with biases, influenced by ideologies and fixed ideas. Max Stirner and Louis Althusser argue at length regarding the negative impact of these on our way of thinking. This paper argues that the only escape from Stirner's fixed ideas or Althusser's ISAs (Ideological State Apparatuses) is through an apathetic disposition to the truth – something very unphilosophical in nature. In order to create parallactic shifts in thought, we must also develop a new epistemology, one rooted in apathy. Through this, we can become true philosophers and thinkers moving towards a truth not solely determined by our pre-held assumptions.

Keywords: *Stirner; marxism; ideology; skepticism; apathetic skepticism; political philosophy*

I. Introduction

In the early 1930s, Louis Althusser developed a theory in reaction to the Marxist tradition. Rejecting the prominence of the repressive state apparatus, Althusser suggested an alternative. Instead of the state acting as a repressive agent, he posited that various institutions exert power, or influence, over individuals through the spread and centrality of a given ideology. This ideological state apparatus is far from strictly Althusser's attempt to refocus Marxist

thought. Instead, this stems from a tradition Marx himself turned against.

In 1880, a young Hegelian named Max Stirner, published his only full-length philosophical work, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum.* In it he takes up a position, now called individualist egoism, as well as a dialectical materialism.[1] Initially, Marx was heavily influenced by Stirner's ideas. Once Engels and Marx began their philosophic relationship, however, Marx took a different approach, even going so far as to criticize Stirner in a chapter entirely devoted to doing so in his *German Ideology.* However, Althusser returns to the single most important concept in Stirner, an *idée fixe.* Previously, I have argued that any idea that can be called supreme, any *idée fixe* can take the form of a spiritual placeholder.[2] In this paper, I will argue that ideology, understood in a general sense, and Stirner's fixed idea, are nearly identical concepts, with the sole distinction that the ideological state apparatus is itself, as a concept, a fixed idea.

II. Althusser's ideological state apparatus

Althusser begins his essay *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, by supporting Marx's claims regarding labor and the necessity to continuously reproduce the very conditions of production. However, he is quick to note that Marx's view of the state is not quite representative of what actually takes place. For Marx, the state was a repressive structure which allowed for the ruling class to dominate the working class in order to obtain the most surplus value that could be generated through the exploitation of labor power.[3] This is what has since been labeled as the repressive state apparatus and contains everything that is public and belongs to the 'state,' such as government, military, the court system, etc. Althusser considers this to be a *descriptive theory*, which means that it "really is, without a shadow of a doubt, the irreversible beginning of the theory" and secondly, "that the 'descriptive' form in which the theory is presented requires, precisely as an effect of this 'contradiction', a development of the theory which goes beyond the form of 'description.'"[4] In other words, though Marx identified a

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[1] Though he scoffs at Hegel's dialectic.

[2] Zachary Isrow, "Political Theology Without Religion," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies* 3, no. 1 (2021): 24-31.

[3] Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 137.

[4] Ibid., 138.

crucial starting point for understanding the state and the way that it functions, there is something left out of this theory which is not accounted for.

While the Marxist tradition distinguishes the state apparatus from state power, there is another aspect that must be evaluated as it too makes up a part of the repressive state apparatus. This extra element is what Althusser terms, the *Ideological State Apparatus*. While the repressive state apparatus remains in the public sphere, the ideological state apparatus is entirely private. Religion, culture, and family are all examples of the ideological state apparatus. It is private insofar as it affects, it belongs solely to the individual. The influence each (ideology and Stirner's fixed idea) holds over the individual is strictly dependent on that individual, and thus it can be contrasted with the repressive state apparatus.

Additionally, Althusser notes a distinction between the functioning of these different apparatuses. In the former, the repressive state apparatus, it functions "predominantly *by repression* (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology" while the "Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly *by ideology*," though they "also function secondarily by repression."[5] Thus, while the state uses violence and punishment, though not strictly in terms of physical violence or punishment, the church or the school ideological state apparatus holds power over the individual not in this same way, but instead first and foremost through the ideology that it ingrains within the individual.

Each of the many ideological state apparatuses has its role in securing state power *vis a vis* the ideology it spreads. Althusser writes the following:

> The political apparatus [spreads and exploits] by subjecting individuals to the political State ideology, the 'indirect' (parliamentary) or 'direct' (plebiscitary or fascist) 'democratic' ideology. The communications apparatus by cramming every 'citizen' with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism, etc, by means of the press, the radio and television. The same goes for the cultural apparatus (the role of sport in chauvinism is of the first importance), etc. The religious apparatus by recalling in sermons and the other great ceremonies of Birth, Marriage and Death, that

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[5] Ibid., 145.

man is only ashes, unless he loves his neighbour to the extent of turning the other cheek to whoever strikes first.[6]

Still, if each has its own task in order to establish the unity that will secure state power, there must then be a central ideological state apparatus, one which takes on the most important role. Although, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri write in *Multitudes,* the current condition of labor and immaterial production creates a scenario "when our ideas and affects, or emotions, are put to work, for instance, and when they thus become subject in a way to the command of the boss" resulting in

> new and intense forms of violation or alienation...for example, in various forms of immaterial labor to blur the distinction between work time and nonwork time, extending the working day indefinitely to fill all of life.[7]

Althusser seems to indicate that the most primary ideological state apparatus is the school. Certainly, it is in fact the case that "no other Ideological State Apparatus has the obligatory (and not least, free) audience of the totality of the children in the capitalist social formation."[8] In what way does education form the most primary, that is, the most powerful ideological state apparatus? No other apparatus has as direct of an influence on our ideological development than the education system. Given the amount of time spent in the education systems, the ideological agenda from schooling is clear. Although education is marketed as a time to learn skills and knowledge needed, it is ultimately geared towards developing only that which is deemed necessary to be an active and engaged citizen. Indeed, there has been a major push for citizenship education in the last couple decades globally, which raises the question of education as such versus education as a form of indoctrination.[9]

Beginning quite early in life, youth are sent to learn the many necessary habits and customs of the current ruling ideology. Civics, ethics, and general behavioral customs are passed down to them, only shortly before they learn the background of the development of this ideology

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[6] Ibid., 154.

[7] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 65.

[8] Althusser, 156.

[9] Alan Sears and Andrew Hughes, "Citizenship: Education or Indoctrination," *Citizenship and Teacher Education* 2, no. 1 (2006): 3-17.

through history, literature, science, and the like. Eventually, they are thrown out into the world with the goal of continuing to reproduce the conditions of production such that the capitalist paradigm and the surrounding ideologies remain intact.

A longer discussion of the school as an ideological state apparatus is required if indeed it has the greatest influence. To suggest that the school is such arguably alters the role that the system sets for itself. If it is the case that its end is the furthering of the ideological status quo, then its end is not one of education, but *indoctrination*. Education seeks to enlighten an individual to think for themselves, to gain knowledge that will prove useful *to them.* Indoctrination has, instead, as its primary goal, "promoting loyalty to the group" – the spreading of ideology ensures this end.[10]

If we reconsider the child at school, who is being 'taught' in order to eventually become another cog in the ideological machine of the state, all that is being done is indeed promoting this 'loyalty.' If we all can agree that "efforts to instill beliefs that simultaneously lead a person to ignore the force of reasons for or against the belief, or to believe counter to the weight of evidence and reason, are clear-cut instances of indoctrination."[11] Kant stated in his lectures on education, that a child submits (to education) in either a positive or negative way.

> Positive in that he is obliged to do what he is told, because he cannot judge for himself, and the faculty of imitation is still strong in him; or negative, in that he is obliged to do what others wish him to do, if he wishes others to do him a good turn.[12]

Birgit Schaffer best explains this as "Either the child stands in the way of the freedom of others, or someone else forces an obligation upon the child."[13]

It would be better, however, to add the evaluation that the child becomes dependent upon his obligations that come with instruction. Kant writes "In the former case, the consequence of not obeying is pun-

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[10] Max Hocutt, "Indoctrination V. Education," *Academic Questions* 18, no. 3 (2005): 37.

[11] Chris Hanks, "Indoctrination and the Space of Reasons," *Educational Theory* 58, no. 2 (2008): 195.

[12] Immanuel Kant, *Kant on Education (Über Pädagogik)*, trans. Annette Churton (Boston, MA: D. C. Health & Co., 1906), 27; IX: 453, 20-24.

[13] Birgit Schaffar, "Changing the Definition of Education. On Kant's Educational Paradox Between Freedom and Restraint," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 33, no. 1 (2014): 13.

ishment; in the latter, the fact that people do not comply with his wishes" and so thus the child must obey if he is to realize his own pleasures (which arise out of others' compliance with his will).[14] When obligation comes with education, can we still call it as such? As has been pointed out above, such is better referred to as indoctrination. As Max Hocutt writes, "indoctrination obviously serves the group, it does not so obviously help the pupil, who may, in fact, be called on to sacrifice himself for the group's benefit," and this 'obligation' which Kant notes in education, is this sacrifice.[15] The individual no longer gains knowledge for its own sake, nor even for the sake of his own, but instead, does so in order to fulfill an obligation towards the 'other,' for the 'state,' and for the current ideology.

It was for this very reason that Mandeville so vehemently opposed the formation of charity schools in 18th century England. These schools were not formed out of a virtue of being good-hearted and charitable, but instead out of the self-indulgent empathetic need to eliminate the suffering of others that arises out of the passion of pity.

> No Habit or Quality is more easily acquir'd than Hypocrisy, nor any thing sooner learn'd than to deny the Sentiments of our Hearts and the Principle we act from: But the Seeds of every Passion are innate to us, and no body comes into the World without them.[16]

Indeed, these charity schools were established out of a hypocrisy, or more so, a failure of men to "know their own hearts," and recognize that "Pride and Vanity have built more Hospitals than all the Virtues together."[17] The teachers used these schools in order to simply impart and to subject students to ideologies that they wanted or which would continue the reproduction of the productive conditions.

It is clear exactly how the institution of education serves as the primary ideological state apparatus, through what can be labeled as an *indoctrination* insofar as it has as its objective, to instill in children the ideology of the state. This very idea, however, of an ideological state apparatus, bears startling resemblance to the conception of a 'fixed idea' as remarked by Max Stirner. Stirner poses to us "what is it, then,

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[14] Kant, 27; IX: 453, 24-26.

[15] Hocutt, 37.

[16] Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees Or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, ed. Frederick Benjamin Kaye (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1924), 319.

[17] Ibid., 294.

that is called a 'fixed idea?'" to which he proposes, "An idea that has subjected the man to itself. When you recognize, with regard to such a fixed idea, that it is a folly, you shut its slave up in an asylum."[18] A fixed idea is one that takes hold of an individual, and in quite a literal sense for Stirner, and is one from which he cannot escape – he has become fixated of it, subjected to it.

Initially, this may appear to be similar to the concept of ideology, in that an ideology can be seen as a fixed idea. While this is certainly the case, it is false to assume that the two are equivalent, for ideology is only one example of a fixed idea. Instead, Stirner's fixed idea is more like the ideological state apparatus itself than strict ideology. Although there is still a major distinction between the ideological stat apparatus and a fixed idea in Stirner's conception of it, viewing it this way allows for a better understanding of the relation between the two concepts. We must first articulate the distinction between ideology and a fixed idea more clearly before moving on to evaluate the relationship between the ideological state apparatus and Stirner's fixed idea.

III. Ideology and the fixed idea

As Althusser uses the term, though he takes this from Marx, "ideology is the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group."[19] If we then take ideology in this use of the term, we note the similarity with a 'fixed idea.' Both possess and dominate the individual, taking control and fixing them on itself above all other ideas. As we break down ideology further, Althusser states two theses regarding the term. First, "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" and second, that "Ideology has a material existence."[20] While I will not comment on the latter of these theses, as it is too unclear as to whether Stirner would grant this same mode of 'existence' to fixed ideas, this is not necessary to show the distinction between a fixed idea and ideology, as will be articulated below.

In response to the first of these theses, the fixed idea not only subjects the individual to it, but as John F. Welsh notes, "it 'fixes' reality as a realm which elevates essences, specters, and ghosts, to the subject or

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[18] Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, trans. David Leopold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 43.

[19] Althusser, 158.

[20] Ibid., 162-165.

absolute idea, and reduces persons to the predicate."[21] The fixed idea then, does everything to subject the individual but reflect the *real* conditions of his existence. It hides everything *real* from the individual and keeps them in a "haunted" modernity of ghosts, spooks, spirits, and more. This 'haunting' or 'ghostliness' of the fixed idea is quite different than the 'ghostliness' of my conception of a spectricity, which 'haunts' objects in its own way, but which is nevertheless entirely real.[22] There is nothing real about the fixed idea one holds nor is there a hidden truth underneath the fixed idea – other than the hidden truth that the fixed idea is false! However, there is more to ideology than simply that it obscures real relations to conditions of experience. In fact, Althusser continues to suggest a similar sentiment with the following regarding ideology:

> all ideology represents in its necessarily imaginary distortion not the existing relations of production (and the other relations that derive from them), but above all the (imaginary) relationship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that derive from them. What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live.[23]

Thus, the similarities between the two are great; however, they are not the same. Let us now consider what distinguishes the two.

Reconsidering what an ideology is, it is necessarily a "system" of ideas. Terry Eagleton outlined four meanings of ideology, including that it is "ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power" whether these ideas are true or not.[24] Regardless of how one defines that system, it is the connected ideas which formulate a combined system that is an ideology. For example, it is clear that "humanism" is an ideology in that it represents a system of ideas that helps a particular 'power' dominate. However, it is *not* a fixed idea. Humanism, as an ideology, contains many theses and ideas, perhaps most central of which

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[21] John F. Welsh, *Max Stirner's Dialectical Egoism: A New Interpretation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 65.

[22] Zachary Isrow, *The Spectricity of Humanness: Spectral Ontology and Being-in-the-World* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 179-181.

[23] Althusser, 154-164.

[24] Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (New York: Verso, 1991), 1.

is that "man" is supreme, rather than the divine. This, along with the other theses of humanism, turns it into an ideology. Here, though, we have an example of a fixed idea: "man." Man as the "supreme" is a fixed idea, as it subjects one to itself – it fixates the individual's mind on his being supreme; it turns the individual into the predicate. Thus, we may note that all ideologies are made up of fixed ideas, fixed ideas constitute ideology. In other words, all ideologies are fixed ideas, or a series of fixed ideas, but not all fixed ideas are ideologies, since there could be a fixed idea that is not a part of the constitution of any ideology.

Another difference between these that is important to be addressed regards Althusser's conception of interpellation. According to Althusser, "ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing."[25] In other words, ideology 'calls' the individual and turns him into a subject, through bringing them to accept the role they fill in society. Gender roles, social roles, political role, and the like, are all brought about *via* interpellation which occurs due to the hold of ideology on the individual.

On the contrary, fixed ideas do not function through interpellation. A fixed idea subjects an individual strictly by means of the very fixation they instill within the individual. To see this, consider when Stirner writes "*People* is the name of the body, *State* of the spirit, of that *ruling person* that has hitherto suppressed me."[26] 'State,' he claims, is just one of the fixed ideas that subjects the individual to itself. Interpellation is the process through which one's identity is determined through ideological means. That is to say, it is how one's identity is shaped by the ideological influence of culture. But this process and that of becoming a subject differ from each other in that the later, interpellation, does not 'fix' itself into any given state; the identity one is 'given' is not predetermined by a set fixation. Thus, we can suggest that the individual becomes a subject not due to interpellation, but rather because there is something placed higher or above the individual to which they submit themselves. There is not a specific role which the individual accepts and is interpellated to, *i.e.,* gender, social or otherwise, but instead the individual only accepts to be in a secondary state, secondary to whatever the fixed idea is, *i.e.,* God, Man, State, and the like.

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[25] Althusser, 174.

[26] Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, 242.

Therefore, the two, ideology and a fixed idea, are distinct from each other, although certainly related. If a fixed idea can be considered to be what constitutes an ideology, in the sense that an ideology is made up of a series of fixed ideas, then fixed ideas give rise to ideology. Fixed ideas are that which ideology cannot exist without, and which by virtue of themselves, as well as through ideology that is constructed out of them, subject the individual. If this is the case, then fixed ideas function more along the lines of the ideological state apparatuses, insofar as both use ideology to subject the individual. In short, they both seek to perpetuate themselves.

However, there is reason to keep the two distinct from each other. I have elsewhere noted that ideology and fixed ideas can be distinguished in the following two ways:

1. The ends which they serve are, though not entirely or by necessity, different.
2. The ideological state apparatus, as set forth by Althusser contains within it everything necessary to term it in itself, a fixed idea.[27]

Thus, although ideology is not itself a fixed idea, the ideological state apparatus is definitively so. Reflecting further on the second of these two points, will make it more clear that we must treat Althusser's ideological state apparatus itself as a fixed idea.

IV. The ideological state apparatus as a fixed idea

In the case of Althusser's conception of the ideological state apparatus, the interpellation of the individual to the ideological pressure exerted by any of the given apparatuses holds as its main agenda, ensuring that the primary ideology spreads producing the most productive society. It is for this reason that insofar as one lives in a society, the ideological agenda of that society is necessarily at work on the individual who is interpolated through the various state apparatuses – be it the church, school, etc. This is why Stirner talks of the importance of awakening a sense of freedom in individuals rather than merely educating them.[28] In other words, invoking a passion in the individual to pursue their own way of live, to discover and embrace truth, is the only real 'education'

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[27] Isrow, "Political Theology Without Religion," 29.

[28] Max Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education,* ed. James J. Martin (Colorado Springs: Ralph Myles, 1967).

that can circumvent becoming an ideological state apparatus. It is not unlike Bloom's suggestion that "Education is the taming or domestication of the soul's raw passions – not suppressing or excising them, which would deprive the soul of its energy – but forming and informing them as art."[29] This is the only route education can take to avoid the decay of the individual.

Unfortunately, the ideological state apparatuses are so widely embedded into the fabric of social order that the ideological positions which are exerted through them are nearly inescapable for the individual. At every turn one is subjected to them. For even if one could, as Stirner or Bloom suggest, allow for the individual to embrace a freedom of thought so intense that is circumvents the ideological state apparatus of the school, to continue with this example, the individual will nevertheless be exposed to social pressures, themselves reactions to the ideological state apparatuses.

Indeed, there is a cultural pressure felt in one obtaining an education and this is part of the ideological agenda. But education operated as an ideological state apparatus dictates 'truth' to the individual and is not a breeding ground for innovation. As Ludwig von Mises wrote, and this is one thing with which I agree, "Education rears disciples, imitators, and routinists, not pioneers of new ideas and creative geniuses. The schools are not nurseries of progress and improvement, but conservatories of tradition and unvarying modes of thought."[30] Through setting up the parameters of thought approachable for the individual, the ideological state apparatus of education subjects the individual to it in a fundamental way. This holds true for the other modes of ideological state apparatuses as well.

We may therefore suggest, that it is only if the ideological state apparatus is itself a fixed idea, one which subjects the individual to itself, that the ideological state apparatus is able to function according to Althusser's conception of it. This then identifies the distinction between fixed idea and the ideological state apparatus – they are not the same, but rather Althusser's ideological state apparatuses are fixed ideas.

V. Paths forward from fixed ideas

Having outlined the relationship between the two, how can we go about formulating an epistemology that is not governed by an external

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[29] Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 71.

[30] Ludwig von Mises, *Theory and History: An Interpretation of Social and Economic Evolution* (Auburn, AL: Ludwig van Mises Institute, 2007), 256.

determinant? To accomplish this seemingly impossible task, we must focus on two things:

1. The elimination of fixed ideas
2. A methodology of *apathetic skepticism*

An epistemology that is not governed by an ideological agenda, or not subjected to the ideological state apparatuses, requires that we eliminate all fixed ideas to which we are already subjected. Although this seems impossible, since how does one eliminate a fixed idea once they already possess it – or more accurately – once they are possessed by it? In my previous article on this subject, I argued that to "eliminate fixed ideas is no easy task; it is perhaps the most difficult of tasks. Not because it cannot be done, but because we have an aversion to being without them" and I still hold this as fundamentally correct.[31]

Despite the certain difficulty in doing so, eliminating fixed ideas is indeed possible–if it seems impossible, that is only because of the general comfort that they bring to us, even if we, on an intellectual level, see the problematic nature of them. Fixed ideas form a sort of 'safe zone' for us, for our beliefs and way of life. Living with fixed ideas can evade the responsibility one has to themselves. It is often the case that the individual "fears the responsibility of being free. It is often easier to let others make the decisions or to rely upon the letter of the law."[32]

Nowhere is this more clear to me, than in academia, where specialization and narrow-focused agendas are strongly supported. Henry Giroux, a leading figure in critical pedagogy, writes that:

> too many academics retreat into narrow specialisms, allow themselves to become adjuncts of the corporation, or align themselves with dominant interests that serve largely to consolidate authority rather than to critique its abuses. Refusing to take positions on controversial issues or to examine the role they might play in lessening human suffering, such academics become models of moral indifference and examples of what it means to disconnect learning from public life.[33]

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[31] Isrow, "Political Theology Without Religion," 30.

[32] Albert Nolan, *Jesus Before Christianity: The Gospel of Liberation* (Claremont, RSA: D. Philip, 1976), 71.

[33] Henry A. Giroux, "Higher Education under Siege: Implications for Public Intellectuals," *Thought and Action* 22 (2006): 64.

This is a growing problem in education generally, and it only furthers the hold of ideology, of fixed ideas which are commonly propagated by specialisms, showcasing further the need for individuals to take on the responsibility of eliminating fixed ideas Stirner advocates for. But how is this done?

To do so requires a new generalized epistemological starting point that positions the individual as their own sole fixed idea. Without any fixed ideas, other than that of themselves, the individual is led to the ability to rebuild an epistemology that accurately depicts and relates directly to the relationship between the individual and himself, as well as the world. This "beginning" is a state of *apathetic skepticism*. It denotes a state of indifference to truth. It may be unclear how this can ever be the case, but in fact, having eliminated fixed ideas, there is no other way for it to be. Any motive or stake one might have in truth stems directly from a fixed idea.

If we take, for example, truth in order to bring about change,[34] "change" becomes a fixed idea. Or, perhaps, we hold stake in truth for the sake of being "right." Regardless of the stake one holds, it becomes a fixed idea. If we eliminate fixed ideas, then there is no stake that one can hold in truth, and if this is the case, then we begin not simply with no stake in truth, but from a standpoint of skepticism.

Despite holding no stake in truth, this does not subject one to a view of relativism. It does, however, require one to be skeptical about truth, especially absolute truth, until given enough reason and evidence to hold a position. Thus, the apathetic skeptic, holding no stake in truth, critically evaluates all views remaining in a state of *ποχή,* and thereby establishes for himself an existence lacking fixed ideas.

Beginning from this standpoint, and not serving any fixed ideas, one can build an epistemology, can formulate truth claims that are grounded in themselves, not in any fixed ideas or ideologies. They are thus, in every sense, of and for themselves. It is as Stirner writes, "If I concern myself for myself, the unique one, then my concern rests on its transitory, mortal creator, who consumes himself."[35] One can henceforth claim: "*Ich hab' Mein' Sach' auf Nichts gestellt.*"[36]

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[34] Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 145.

[35] Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, 324.

[36] Ibid., 324. The English version reads: "I have set my affair on nothing."

VI. Conclusion

If, indeed, Stirner and Althusser are correct about ideology and its impact on our ability to be individually free and our own masters, then it is clear to see the importance of overturning our subjection to these ideologies and fixed ideas. Yet, the only way to remove ideological barriers, to free ourselves from our being subjected to fixed ideas, is to give ourselves a fixed idea, one rooted in indifference, in apathetic skepticism. In this way, although we may remain bound by ideology and fixed ideas, they are self-imposed and thus we remain with a genuine sense of autonomy. To do this, however, we must first confront models of education as it is through education that we develop an epistemological framework and derive autonomy through gained knowledge. As Allan Bloom wrote, it is education that "has within it the source of autonomy — the quest for and even discovery of the truth according to nature."[37]

The problem then is not education itself, or any of the individual ideological state apparatuses, but rather that in their functioning as a propagator of ideological spread, that is, as fixed ideas, that there remains little room for the individual to reach their potential and help shape a more fulfilling future unshaped, or unburdened by the ideological agendas of the past. The individual must break free from the fixed ideas to which they are subjected. Although beginning from a standpoint of apathetic skepticism might seem antithetical to the philosophical spirit, it is in fact, I propose, the only means of producing true philosophical inquiry that does not bring with it the burden of ideological influence.

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[37] Bloom, 254.

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The Stoic Paradigm of Ethics as a Philosophical Tool for Objectifying the Concepts of Organizational Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Corporate Governance

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Abstract

In this article, the relationship between ethics in general and business ethics in particular to Stoic philosophy is investigated. Stoic ethics is used as a research tool, which step-by-step deciphers the position of the human as a functional part of a larger organization, such as the natural environment or civil society. Ethics is inextricably linked to the rational, free choice of what is right for both the individual and the total organism. Ethical rightness imposes a form of rational order within the organization, in the sense that each part must perform the function appropriate to its abilities. At the maximum degree of ethical integration stands the paradigm of the Stoic sage as a model of a virtuous leader, who is able to understand the causes of each decision or action and direct the organization towards the set goal. From this perspective, concepts such as leadership, organizational ethics, or corporate social responsibility acquire an objective status and view the philosophical cosmopolitanism of the Stoic sage as a timeless example of ethical rightness.

Keywords: *ethics; stoic philosophy; leadership; organizational ethics; corporate social responsibility; corporate governance*

I. Introduction

Organizational Ethics, in relation to Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Governance, is a dynamic, non-static area of research, as there is a separation of the purpose of ethical action and the purpose of the free market.[1] The purpose of ethics is the improvement of human nature and the blissful pursuit of human coexistence,[2] while the purpose of the free market is the unfettered and unstoppable profit as a result of equating bliss with the accumulation of material goods.[3] As Hobbes would say, bliss consists in the continuous transition from one pleasant material good to another, a course that ends only in death.[4] In the free market, human individualism and selfishness find fertile ground under the acquisition and management of capital, which translates into the possibility of acquiring material goods.[5] The more one possesses, the happier one is. So, the goal is not only the possession of matter, but also its possession to a greater degree than others.[6] This signifies a ceaseless competition between individuals or companies, to the extent that profit is not simply identified with success, but with surpassing others in the acquisition of material goods, an endless process without fulfillment.[7]

Here, the issue of objectivity arises; is there an objective perspective of a successful course within the free market, or is everything based on historicist criteria, that is, the consolidation of subjectivity as objectivity by force at a given historical moment?[8] Can business eth-

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[1] Elias Vavouras, "Hobbes' Hedonism in Front of Classical Hedonism and the Free Market's Way Out," *Dia-noesis: A Journal of Philosophy* 13 (2022): 85-114.

[2] Hans Friedrich August von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1964), 3: 140 [henceforth: *SVF*].

[3] Richard De George, "Can Corporations Have Moral Responsibilities?" *University of Dayton Review* 15, no. 2 (1981): 3-15.

[4] Elias Vavouras, "The Machiavellian Reality of Leo Strauss," *Dia-noesis: A Journal of Philosophy* 12 (2022): 265-273; Anusorn Singhapakdi, "Ethical Perceptions of Marketers: The Interaction Effects of Machiavellianism and Organizational Ethical Culture," *Journal of Business Ethics* 12, no. 5 (1993): 407-418.

[5] Peter French, "The Corporation as a Moral Person," *American Philosophy Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1979): 207-215.

[6] Robert Solomon, "Business with Virtue: Maybe Next Year?" *Business Ethics Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (2000): 319-331.

[7] Christopher Gohl, "Reimagining Business Ethics as Ethos-Driven Practice: A Deweyan Perspective," *Journal of Human Values* 30, no. 1 (2024): 75-90.

[8] Elias Vavouras and Michail Theodosiadis. "The Concept of Religion in Machiavelli: Political Methodology, Propaganda and Ideological Enlightenment," *Religions* 15, no. 10 (2024): 1203; Elias Vavouras, "Machiavelli's Ethics of Expansion and Empire," *Conatus – Journal of*

ics provide a solid ground of objectivity and value, or is everything in a stormy fluidity? Is it possible for an organizational ethic to create objective success parameters of a business that is linked to the individual and collective bliss of man?[9] In this study we will try to show that business ethics analyzed through organizational ethics, corporate social responsibility, and corporate governance can be a solid basis for the development of business success in the free market, but also for individual and collective bliss under the participation of all stakeholders.[10] Stoic ethics will be a tool in this project, given that it responds more than any other ethical proposal to the concept of a universal ethics-political system that applies to every individual or collective human expression, but also fully understands the concepts of the part and the whole found in every living, political, or business organism. Undoubtedly, this is a demanding research project, but the data will lead us to important findings about the importance and objective nature of business ethics.[11]

II. Stoic ethics: The part and the whole

I must always remember, what is the nature of all things and what is mine.
Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 2.9

One may wonder why the Stoic example is chosen to analyze the epistemological background of concepts such as organizational ethics or corporate social responsibility. What does Stoic ethics have to do with matters that fall within the realm of organizations and corporations and whose ultimate goal may be material gain? Also, why is Stoic ethics specifically chosen and not, for example, Platonic or Kantian ethics? The answer to these doubts lies in the view of Stoic ethics about the part and the whole.[12] Whatever a person does, whether as an individual or a total organism, is always done in relation to something larger than themselves, such as the political community or the world, or something smaller, such as the parts of their body or the material goods

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Philosophy 8, no. 2 (2023): 703-723.

[9] Elias Vavouras, "The Political Philosophy as a Precondition and Completion of Political Economy in the *Ways and Means* of Xenophon," *Dia-noesis: A Journal of Philosophy* 9 (2020): 183-200.

[10] Matthias Huehn, "Ethics as a Catalyst for Change in Business Education?" *Journal of Management Development* 35, no. 2 (2016): 170-189.

[11] Claus Dierksmeier, "What is 'Humanistic' about Humanistic Management?" *Humanistic Management Journal* 1, no. 1 (2016): 9-32.

[12] Malcom Schofield, "Stoic Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. Brad Inwood, 233-256 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

they manages. Stoic ethics always moves from the microcosm to the macrocosm and vice versa, granting the human individual or collective action a greater responsibility to each part with which it is necessarily involved. Nothing in this ethical model moves individualistically; everything happens in relation to other people or organizations.[13]

But the purpose of ethics is human bliss,[14] which means that the purpose of man is a kind of progress from an imperfect to a perfect state. Bliss is a course of improvement from something worse to something better and not the other way around. If this improvement process is always done in relation to other human actors or wider environments, this means that the happiness of others is inevitably entangled with our own happiness, and vice versa.[15] If someone succeeds in being happy, perhaps this individual happiness contributes to the bliss of the whole organism to which it belongs, while conversely a happy organism contributes to the bliss of its parts. This implies that any individualistic or selfish action is contrary to ethics, but also contrary to individual or collective bliss, because the whole and the part are communicating vessels and the happiness of the individual passes through the happiness of the organism of which it is a part. [16]

Whatever a person does with a selfish purpose, it will always interfere with the general purpose and cannot change it significantly.[17] The Stoics likened the individualistic action of the human subject to a dog tied behind a carriage. Any individualistic action of man cannot vary the course of the chariot which is something bigger and stronger than him. The dog is well tied to the carriage, any selfish direction he attempts to take will only

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[13] Pablo Ruiz-Palomino and Ricardo Martínez-Cañas, "Ethical Culture, Ethical Intent, and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: The Moderating and Mediating Role of Person–Organization Fit," *Journal of Business Ethics* 120, no. 1 (2014): 95-108.

[14] Diogenes Laertius, 7. 94.

[15] Ludwig Edelstein, *The Meaning of Stoicism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 1.

[16] According to Long, "All ancient ethical theories are 'self-centered' in the sense that they recommend how to achieve eudaimonia, the best possible life for oneself. They are no less socially oriented because they all treat ethical excellence (arete) – courage, justice, etc. – as either the most important ingredient of eudaimonia (Aristotle and Plato), or an essential instrument of eudaimonia (Epicurus), or entirely identical to eudaimonia (Stoicism). According to Stoicism, human beings are born with instincts both for self-preservation and for family and community life. In caring for other people, the ideal Stoic is also caring for himself, i.e., his own excellence as a virtuous person. He is motivated by the desire to activate his virtues because they are the basis of his living well and successfully. He is not altruistic in the sense that he acts for the sake of others instead of herself, or by sacrificing his own interest. In doing good to others and desiring so to act, he is simultaneously desiring and doing good for himself." Anthony Arthur Long and Despina Vertzagia, "Antiquity Revisited: A Discussion with Anthony Arthur Long," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 5, no. 1 (2020): 119; cf. Anthony Arthur Long, *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 180-206.

[17] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 10. 6.

make it difficult for him, as he will end up dragging and forcibly aligning himself with the overall course of the carriage. To selfishly act contrary to the whole organism to which we belong essentially hinders our very path to happiness. It is up to us whether we align ourselves with the course of the carriage from the start or whether we sway selfishly left and right, making our path to happiness difficult.[18] There is no happiness of the part independent of the happiness of the whole, and the sooner we realize it, the easier it will be to get closer to happiness.[19]

III. Ethics as rational free choice

Ethics, then, is a path towards the good, towards human improvement and perfection. But this path of integration is not naturally predetermined; it depends on the correctness of human choices. In the world, there is not only good, but also evil. In fact, choosing correctly is much more difficult, and therefore rarer, than choosing incorrectly.[20] The predominance of evil and wrong in the majority of human choices is not necessarily a negative thing viewed from a Stoic perspective; it is better to be evil so that you can turn out to be good, than not to exist at all. Wrong choices are preferable to none,[21] as morality moves from a stage of imperfection to a stage of perfection. So, at the beginning of this endeavor, it is reasonable to be imperfect by making wrong choices, only to, then, rise to a higher stage of perfection by making the right ones. Good could not exist for man if evil did not exist. For some choices to be defined as good, the opposite, bad choices, must also exist.[22]

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[18] Cleanthes, *SVF*, 1: 527.

[19] Linda Treviño, Kenneth Butterfield, and Donald McCabe, "The Ethical Context in Organizations: Influences on Employee Attitudes and Behaviours," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (1998): 447-476.

[20] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1106b.28-3: ἔτι τὸ μὲν ἁμαρτάνειν πολλαχῶς ἔστιν τὸ γὰρ κακὸν τοῦ ἀπείρου ὡς οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι εἴκαζον τὸ δ᾽ ἀγαθὸν τοῦ πεπερασμένου τὸ δὲ κατορθοῦν μοναχῶς διὸ καὶ τὸ μὲν ῥᾴδιον τὸ δὲ χαλεπόν ῥᾴδιον μὲν τὸ ἀποτυχεῖν τοῦ σκοποῦ χαλεπὸν δὲ τὸ ἐπιτυχεῖν καὶ διὰ ταῦτ᾽ οὖν τῆς μὲν κακίας ἡ ὑπερβολὴ καὶ ἡ ἔλλειψις τῆς δ᾽ ἀρετῆς ἡ μεσότης ἐσθλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἁπλῶς παντοδαπῶς δὲ κακοί [Moreover, wrong is done in many ways (because the evil and the infinite go together, as the Pythagoreans taught, while good goes together with the finite), but right is done in only one way (that is why the one is easy, while the other is indeed difficult, it is easy to fail in our goal but difficult to achieve it) therefore for these reasons excess and lack characterize wickedness, while measure is virtue, we become good only in one way, but bad in many]; Matthias Hühn and Marcel Meyer, "Sophistry or Wisdom in Words: Aristotle on Rhetoric and Leadership," *Business Ethics, the Environment & Responsibility* 32, no. 2 (2023): 544-554.

[21] *SVF*, 1: 537; 3: 760.

[22] Robert Solomon, "Aristotle, Ethics, and Business Organizations," *Organization Studies* 25, no. 6 (2004): 1021-1043; Anthony Arthur Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy. Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 182-183.

Man is absolutely free, precisely because he can choose either good or evil. If he were limited to being only good or bad, he would cease to be free. However, true moral freedom is doing the right thing in the right way,[23] because only then will one improve one's condition and not be destroyed. Human freedom collides with the anatomy of the human essence; one cannot be called free if one acts irrationally towards one's annihilation or deterioration. Human freedom, too, would be impossible without man's rational potential, which separates him from other living beings. The choice between good and evil, or its definition, presupposes rational thinking. Man chooses correctly when he properly weighs all the parameters through reason, and errs when he makes mistakes in the rational processes of choosing what is right or wrong.[24] Therefore, ethics is inherent in freedom and rationality; one cannot be ethical if one does not act freely and at the same time rationally.

IV. The objectivity of ethical choice

But if the ethical choice has certain axes of successful outcomes, this implies that not every choice is ethical, but only those with certain characteristics. As we have seen, the first basic feature of an ethical choice is freedom; it is not possible to speak of ethics when someone is forced to act against their own free will.[25] Free will, however, includes the element of rationality.[26] For there to be a will, there must be a reason. Therefore, to think irrationally against one's natural self-sufficiency and improvement is not aligned with the ethical orientation, but with self-destruction. Rationality is opposed to irrationality, and this excludes a huge range of human unethical choices.[27] Ethical choice, then, is identified with free will and, therefore, with rationality, that is, with the perception of natural improvement, not the destruction

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[23] According to Strauss, "License consists in doing what one lists; liberty consists in doing in the right manner the good only." Leo Strauss, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy: Ten Essays* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 53.

[24] Cicero, *De finibus*, 3.23; 31.

[25] Jennifer Chatman, "Improving Interactional Organizational Research: A Model of Person-Organization Fit," *Academy of Management Review* 14, no. 3 (1989): 333-349.

[26] Matthias Hühn and Sara Mandray, "Is Rationality Reasonable? How Ancient Logos Changes Management Theory," *Journal of Business Ethics* 191, no. 3 (2023): 1-15.

[27] Nicholas Epley and Amit Kumar, "How to Design an Ethical Organization," *Harvard Business Review* 97, no. 3 (2019): 144-150; Sotiria Triantari and Elias Vavouras, "Decision-Making in the Modern Manager-Leader: Organizational Ethics, Business Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility," *Cogito* 16, no. 1 (2024): 7-28.

of man.[28] Therefore, there are no infinite ethical choices, as there are human opinions or the variety of positive law of different states, but specific rationally validated choices that promote the natural improvement and integration of man.[29] In this sense, ethics is opposed to relativism and subjectivism and acquires an objective or scientific status. So, every ethical rule, if it is to be called moral, must derive from the common objective background of reason and free will.[30]

The Stoics believed that understanding this common ground of ethical choice paved the way for human fulfillment and improvement. Free will is truly free and rational when it is freed from the limiting obstacles of internal or external influencing factors. The internal obstacles that prevent the free rational process are the passions, and thus ethics must be free from them in order to function effectively. Reason must be dominant over the passions within man for there to be ethical autonomy.[31] On the external level the ethical choice must not be influenced by the phenomena that can disturb rational clarity and lead the human will to wrong judgments. Therefore, when we refer to business ethics, we are not referring to a subjective perception of human affairs that is relativized over time, but to a solid, objective edifice of a scientific view of man and his natural integration under the integral factors of rationality and free will.[32] Business ethics must have a single objective background and not be based on subjective opinions motivated by selfish motives. Business ethics derives from reason and free choice and is intended to improve the people under its influence.[33]

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[28] Long and Vertzagia, 111-122.

[29] René Brouwer, *The Stoic Sage: The Early Stoics on Wisdom, Sagehood and Socrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 39.

[30] Hian Koh and El'fred Boo, "Organizational Ethics and Employee Satisfaction and Commitment," *Management Decision* 42, no. 5 (2004): 677-693.

[31] John Cooper, "The Emotional Life of the Wise," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 43, s. 1 (2005): 176-218.

[32] Mantzanas observes that "Man is his moral conscience and is fortunate or unfortunate (*SVF*, 3: 52, 18) because he freely and consciously chooses the way of living he consistently leads (*SVF*, 2: 295, 31). Personal morality (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditationes* 1.14, 15) according to the Stoics, must result from a rationalised moral conscience, which has a universality as the Universal Totality. The prevention of moral deviations is not subject to metaphysical designing but constitutes mental processing in the process of the distinction between good and evil. This is the formative role of moral conscience according to the Stoics: to lift the excuse that we cannot set apart good from evil or just from unjust. The stoic theory of moral conscience casts deficit and moral deficiency out from moral inaction." Michail Mantzanas, "The Concept of Moral Conscience in Ancient Greek Philosophy," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 5, no. 2 (2020): 78.

[33] Maiju Kangas, Joona Muotka, Mari Huhtala, Anne Mäkikangas, and Taru Feldt, "Is the Ethical Culture of the Organization Associated with Sickness Absence? A Multilevel Analysis in a Public Sector Organization," *Journal of Business Ethics* 140, no. 1 (2017): 131-145.

V. Revisiting ethical choices: Business ethics

Another key feature of ethical choice is ethos. People may not be aware of the purpose of their ethical choices, but by repeatedly making ethical choices, they can be continually drawn towards an ethical tendency. Aristotle notes that the term 'ethics' is etymologically derived from the word 'ethos,' and that ethical virtue is acquired through the monotonous repetition of similar actions. However, it is not enough just to repeat similar actions; to be ethical, one must repeat the right actions.[34] One would need some scientist – a very good connoisseur – of the building art to show them the right way to build and thus with constant repetition, they will become competent builders. It is the same with all the arts, but also with ethical virtue.[35]

According to the Stoics, all people have a natural tendency towards goodness and rationality, but this alone is not sufficient for the attainment of virtue.[36] This natural tendency depends on two factors: a) by nature, by the agreement of the ethical choice with human nature, and b) by reason, by the rational justification of this choice.[37] The repetition of these accords with the nature and reason of ethical duties or functions and directs man ever nearer to the completion of his purpose.[38] The first stage of virtue is the habit of choosing according to human nature – e.g., exercising, eating the right foods, or thinking rationally are choices that help preserve and improve one's nature.[39] The second stage is the stability of these choices, not because they have simply become a way of life, but because the ethical agent's choices can be rationally justified; that is, the cause or purpose of each choice can be stated.

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[34] Saviour Nwachukwu and Scott Vitell, "The Influence of Corporate Culture on Managerial Ethical Judgments," *Journal of Business Ethics* 16, no. 8 (1997): 757-776.

[35] Aristotle, 1103b 8-14: ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ κιθαρίζειν καὶ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ καὶ κακοὶ γίνονται κιθαρισταί. ἀνάλογον δὲ καὶ οἰκοδόμοι καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ πάντες ἐκ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ εὖ οἰκοδομεῖν ἀγαθοὶ οἰκοδόμοι ἔσονται ἐκ δὲ τοῦ κακῶς κακοί. εἰ γὰρ μὴ οὕτως εἶχεν οὐδὲν ἂν ἔδει τοῦ διδάξοντος ἀλλὰ πάντες ἂν ἐγίνοντο ἀγαθοὶ ἢ κακοί. οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν ἔχει [Because playing the guitar makes both good and bad guitarists, and similarly builders and all other craftsmen. That is, by building houses in a good way, they will become good builders, but by building in a bad way, bad ones. For, if things were not so, there would be no need for a master, but all craftsmen would be good or bad from birth. It is exactly the same with the virtues].

[36] *SVF*, 1: 566; Seneca, *Epistulae*, 120.4.

[37] Diogenes Laertius, 7.108.

[38] Shelby Hunt, Van Wood, and Lawrence Chonko, "Corporate Ethical Values and Organizational Commitment in Marketing," *Journal of Marketing* 53, no. 3 (1989): 79-90.

[39] *SVF*, 1: 202.

This theoretical documentation forms the basis of business ethics. Through the application of an ethical code, the executives of an organization acquire a tendency towards ethical behavior that contributes to its long-term coherence. In this first stage, most executives may not understand precisely the cause and purpose of the ethics standard, they simply get used to repeating rules or functions that they tend to believe to be correct. Gradually through human rationality, each part of the organization realizes that applied business ethics contributes to the development of both the parts and the whole organization and previous habits acquire a responsible character.[40] The ethics of each part is determined not only by habit, by the repetition of right choices, but, above all, by the knowledge of the cause and purpose of these actions. Therefore, in the second stage of ethical choice responsibility, everyone knows what they are doing and why they are doing it. It is important to understand that business ethics is not only the blind application and repetition of an ethical standard by all parts of an organization, but the responsibility of making the right choice through awareness of the cause and purpose of each choice.

VI. Reason, order and function: Organizational ethics

However, ethical choice is inherent in the right reason; it is not possible for a person to weigh possible options of action without going through a rational process of examining and evaluating those options. Man can be ethical only because he participates in rationality and can judge all the parameters of choosing right and wrong. Also, an ethical and at the same time rational choice cannot be directed towards chaos and disorder, i.e., towards dissolution, but towards order and reason, which leads to creation and unity. Ethical selection means the alignment with a rational order of unity of the parts of an organism. At the individual level, this translates into the proper order of human nature in terms of sustaining the existence and achievement of man's purpose. Reason must dominate the passions, which are an attractive force towards disorder and dissolution.[41] The dominance of passions over reason means an inability to properly evaluate options and an increased likelihood of catastrophic mistakes. At the collective level, this is perceived as enforcing the right order between the parts of the

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[40] Judith Irwin and Katherine Bradshaw, "The Ethics Challenge: Establishing an Ethics Ambassador Network to Help Embed an Ethical Culture," *Strategic HR Review* 10, no. 4 (2011): 26-32.

[41] Daryl Koehn, "Some Modest Proposals for Improving Business Ethics from Primarily an Aristotelian Perspective," *Journal of Human Values* 30, no. 1 (2024): 38-51.

organization in relation to their efficiency and the value of their operation. This is precisely where organizational ethics emerges, as the imposition of proper order and function on the parts of an organization. Not everyone can perform all functions; it is necessary to define the function of each part according to its capabilities and value, and to impose an evaluative hierarchy of parts in relation to their importance.[42]

With organizational ethics, another important proposal of Stoic philosophy is applied; the avoidance of multitasking.[43] Each part of the organization must perform the work that is appropriate to its capabilities and not be involved in fields that it cannot respond to. This division of labor through self-awareness and proper discrimination of individual abilities gives the organization greater efficiency and stability and provides the parties with the opportunity to pursue a degree of refinement in their area of work responsibility.[44]

Thus, they become absolutely experts in the specific subject and do not need outside assistance to complete their work. Each activity runs on its own and supervisor oversight is almost formal or ancillary. Moreover, specialization opens a path of self-improvement, as it allows the individual to fully develop a natural gift or technique to which they are exceptionally responsive.[45] This granting of absolute responsibility in a specific area mobilizes the energy and initiative of the parts of the organization, pushing them simultaneously develop themselves while striving to contribute to the development and well-being of the organization. Specialization aligns with ethical choice, since they person who knows his field of action perfectly always chooses correctly between right and wrong and is not distracted by extraneous factors. Doing the right thing is both an ethical choice and work-organizational correctness.[46]

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[42] Michael Brown, Linda Treviño, and David Harrison, "Ethical Leadership: A Social Learning Perspective for Construct Development and Testing," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 97, no. 2 (2005): 117-134.

[43] Marcus Aurelius, 1.5.1: τὸ αὐτουργικὸν καὶ ἀπολύπραγμον.

[44] Mari Huhtala, Taru Feldt, Anna-Maija Lämsä, Saija Mauno, and Ulla Kinnunen, "Does the Ethical Culture of Organisations Promote Managers' Occupational Well-Being? Investigating Indirect Links via Ethical Strain," *Journal of Business Ethics* 101, no. 2 (2011): 231-247.

[45] Muel Kaptein, "Developing and Testing a Measure for the Ethical Culture of Organizations: The Corporate Ethical Virtues Model," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 29, no. 7 (2008): 923-947.

[46] Maribeth Kuenzi, David Mayer, and Rebecca Greenbaum, "Creating an Ethical Organizational Environment: The Relationship between Ethical Leadership, Ethical Organizational Climate, and Unethical Behavior," *Personnel Psychology* 73, no. 1 (2020): 43-71.

VII. The relationship with the social and natural environment: Corporate social responsibility

The world is something like a city and a common state,
each of us individually is a part of this world;
this implies our obligation by nature to put
the common good above the individual
Cicero, *De finibus*, III.19, 64.

Did I do something for the society as a whole? So, I am benefited.
Always keep this in mind and never forget
Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 11.4.1.1-2.[47]

The central Stoic idea is likeness to nature – living by nature. Man is a natural microcosm, part of a larger macrocosm. Rationality prevails within this great world, which can only be perceived and understood by rational human beings. All parts of the universe, both animate and inanimate, participate in its intended course, but only the human factor can express it rationally and reproduce it through ethics. Every ethical choice has substance if it corresponds to the correctness that nature reasonably transmits to the human mind. This implies that every human being is part of a larger natural organism and, therefore, must respect and serve the purpose of that greater whole. It is necessary to respect the natural environment, just as we do our individual existence, because we are a part of it, and its disharmony will cause us displeasure as well.

There is no stronger foundation than this for the construction of the concept of corporate social responsibility, since respecting and serving the purpose of the whole is a condition for the preservation and bliss of the parties. This perception makes the coexistence of human activity and the natural environment a necessary condition. But businesses are part of human activity, and that is why they must be harmonized with respect for the natural whole, otherwise they will contribute to the destruction of the people who make them up (executives, workers), as well as those with whom they interact (customers, society).[48] Respect for nature thus becomes a completely rational project, while, on the contrary, disrespect for nature is an obvious irrationality that contributes to the self-destruction of the business and its human

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[47] Πεποίηκά τι κοινωνικῶς οὐκοῦν ὠφέλημαι. τοῦτο ἵνα ἀεὶ πρόχειρον ἀπαντᾷ καὶ μηδαμοῦ παύου.

[48] Mitchell Neubert, Dawn Carlson, Michele K. Kacmar, James Roberts, and Lawrence Chonko, "The Virtuous Influence of Ethical Leadership Behavior: Evidence from the Field," *Journal of Business Ethics* 90, no. 2 (2009): 157-170.

parts.[49] Business is not just about numbers and cold profit, but about living human organisms struggling to fulfill their nature within a larger natural environment. From this point of view, the respect and protection of nature, as everything that surrounds us, is not just a resounding modern slogan, but an act of self-awareness and responsibility, which makes business activity a participant in human well-being. In addition, respect for the total natural organism includes respect for the rest of the organic parts.[50] Each party respects the existence and function of the other, even if they are diametrically opposed to its own. Marcus Aurelius describes this coexistence and contrasting function with the image of the bones of the upper and lower jaw, where the teeth constantly collide with each other and yet this opposition is necessary for the chewing of food and the maintenance of man's existence.[51] Therefore, within the organization itself, opposition does not necessarily mean conflict or dissolution, but rather the performance of a different functions to achieve the goal of collective welfare.[52]

The acceptance of the rationality of nature by every rational part of it and its service elevates all people who participate in the common rationality to citizens of the world.[53] Men who perceive through reason the common promptings of nature are citizens of a universal natural state, where there is no positive law, but all willingly obey natural law.[54] In fact, the Stoics[55] – Zeno, in particular[56] – envisioned the creation of such a cosmopolitanism, where people would live peacefully, each one performing the task assigned to them by nature according to

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[49] Marcus Aurelius, 10.2.

[50] Patricia Douglas, Ronald Davidson, and Bill Schwartz, "The Effect of Organizational Culture and Ethical Orientation on Accountants' Ethical Judgments," *Journal of Business Ethics* 34, no. 2 (2001): 101-121.

[51] Marcus Aurelius, 2.1: γεγόναμεν γὰρ πρὸς συνεργίαν ὡς πόδες ὡς χεῖρες ὡς βλέφαρα ὡς οἱ στοῖχοι τῶν ἄνω καὶ τῶν κάτω ὀδόντων. τὸ οὖν ἀντιπράσσειν ἀλλήλοις παρὰ φύσιν [We were born to work together like feet, hands, eyelids, like rows of upper and lower teeth. So being opposite and fighting each other is against to the nature].

[52] Sean Valentine, Seong-Hyun Nam, David Hollingworth, and Callie Hall, "Ethical Context and Ethical Decision Making: Examination of an Alternative Statistical Approach for Identifying Variable Relationships," *Journal of Business Ethics* 124, no. 3 (2014): 509-526.

[53] Marcus Aurelius, 4.4; Epictetus, *Dissertationes*, 2.10, 1-4; 3.24, 64-67.

[54] Malcom Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Chicago, IL, and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 69; 103.

[55] *SVF,* 1:265; Plutarchus, *De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute*, 329a-d.

[56] David Konstan, "Cosmopolitan Traditions," in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Political Thought,* ed. Ryan K. Balot, 471-484 (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 473-484.

their individual abilities.[57] In this natural state there would be no conflict, not even private property or the acquisition of material goods, and all would voluntarily cooperate in achieving the common welfare. In this sense, corporate social responsibility in modern businesses is not only aimed at the selfish interest of the business,[58] but also at the interest of all its human parts, as well as the society in which the business operates. If the business does something good for society as a whole or the natural environment, it certainly benefits itself, as long as it is part of these wider natural or social organizations.[59]

Furthermore, at this point, the objectivity and universality of moral norms is validated once again. Business ethics is not something ephemeral and subjective that varies according to space and time, but something fixed and non-negotiable, based on human and natural rationality. Whoever applies the moral rules is not just a citizen of a country or a member of a business, but a citizen of the world[60] and part of a global organization, where all parties who think morally and act morally contribute to the overall well-being.[61] Thus, business ethics must take on a unified status, in every business or organization, wherever it is based, ethical actors must think and act obeying the same ethical background.[62]

VIII. Knowing the causes: Leadership and corporate governance

All of this leads to the conclusion that ethical virtue cannot arise suddenly or by accident; there must be a reference point to label something ethics or non-ethics. To become ethical, one must receive some guidelines of ethical correctness based on knowing the causes and ef-

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[57] Anton-Hermann Chroust, "The Ideal Polity of the Early Stoics: Zeno's Republic," *The Review of Politics* 27, no. 2 (1965): 173-183.

[58] Iraklis Ioannidis, "Shackling the Poor, or Effective Altruism: A Critique of the Philosophical Foundation of Effective Altruism," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 5, no. 2 (2020): 25-46.

[59] Gordon Wang and Rick Hackett, "Virtues-Centered Moral Identity: An Identity-Based Explanation of the Functioning of Virtuous Leadership," *Leadership Quarterly* 31, no. 5 (2020): 1-12.

[60] *SVF*, 3: 625.

[61] According to Dimitriou, "Collectively, the community formed in a business context is an environment in which members and leaders can behave virtuously towards the good of all involved parts. Furthermore, the products offered by a group behaving virtuously can be reasonably assumed to benefit society as a whole. Business entities are thus vehicles through which people involved have the opportunity to act for the common good." Dimitrios Dimitriou, "Corporate Ethics: Philosophical Concepts Guiding Business Practices," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. 1 (2022): 42.

[62] Yoav Verdi and Yoash Weiner, "Misbehavior in Organizations: A Motivational Framework," *Organization Science* 7, no. 2 (1996): 151-165.

fects of a choice or, in other words, knowing the essence and purpose of man.[63] There are some who have reached a higher level of this ethical knowledge and therefore can transmit the ethical parameters to others.

Institutionalizing and controlling ethics cannot be done by everyone, there must be an expert who will promote the whole process, i.e., give others the correct moral rules, allocate the parts of the organization to the appropriate roles, control any deviations from the ethical standard, and generally supervise the proper arrangement.[64] This means that there are some parties that excel the rest in moral completeness and, therefore, deserve to have a leadership function.[65] This arrangement of authority within the organization according to ethical integration is linked to corporate governance, which is the way the organization's purpose is actually implemented and developed. The way management and decision-making are carried out is not unrelated to the organization's ethics; ethics not only includes the path to the final goal, but also reflects the individual value and specialized function of the parties. If ethics as a guarantor of the right choice is connected to the right decision-making, those who make the critical decisions must be the best in this regard. Therefore, ethical choice is inescapably linked to leadership and corporate governance.[66] The main parameter of this connection is the knowledge of the causes and effects of each action;[67] such knowledge is characteristic of science and philosophy, in particular, as a field of ethical inquiry.[68]

Leadership is thus inescapably linked to the ethical integration of man; not everyone can become a leader, but only those who have reached a high ethical level can now transmit this moral direction to

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[63] Elina Riivari and Anna-Maija Lämsä, "Organizational Ethical Virtues of Innovativeness," *Journal of Business Ethics* 155, no. 1 (2019): 223-240.

[64] Akwasi Ampofo, Bahaudin Mujtaba, Frank Cavico, and Laura Tindall, "The Relationship Between Organizational Ethical Culture and the Ethical Behaviour of Employees: A Study of Accounting and Finance Professionals in the Insurance Industry of the United States," *Journal of Business and Economic Research* 2, no. 2 (2011): 13-24.

[65] Walter Nicgorski, "Cicero on Expertise in Governance," in *Scientific Statesmanship, Governance, and the History of Political Philosophy*, eds. Kyriakos N. Demetriou and Antis Loizides, 41-55 (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[66] John Thoms, "Ethical Integrity in Leadership and Organizational Moral Culture," *Leadership* 4, no. 4 (2008): 419-442.

[67] *SVF*, 3: 285.

[68] Andreas Scherer and Christian Voegtlin, "Corporate Governance for Responsible Innovation: Approaches to Corporate Governance and Their Implications for Sustainable Development," *Academy of Management Perspectives* 34, no. 2 (2020): 182-208.

the entire organization. Stoic ethics points the way to the objectification of the leader's value over other executives and the direct correlation of leadership with the application of business ethics. Ethics is not only connected with making the right choice, but also with determining the value of a part in terms of the function it performs. Business ethics is an objective scale of evaluation of the parts in terms of the achievement of the organization's purpose. At the top of this ethical scale are the leaders who determine the functioning of the rest of the parts through knowledge of the causes and purpose behind every decision and action.[69]

IX. The ethics agent as an example: The Stoic sage as a paradigm of ethical leadership

Additionally, someone who has reached a maximum level of ethical perfection and functionality serves as a living model and an instructive example for others. The Stoics saw the sage as fulfilling this important role. Although it is very difficult, if not utopian, to reach a level of complete wisdom and ethical virtue, there are some people who come close to this goal, or, at the very least, are steadily aiming towards it.[70] The complete avoidance of passions, the diagnosis of the right moment for action, the delineation of man or the state as organisms within the great cosmic organism, and the Stoic sage's rational understanding of natural justice and causation make him an important and constructive influence on others who attempt to apply the ethical standard. The sage is a true citizen of the world, the embodiment of justice and ethics. He does not need the code of ethics or law to do the right thing, as he is the proven expression of ethics in the human condition. The possessor of ethics virtue always makes right choices, wherever they are, at any time, without having to refer to a manual of ethics. The figure of the sage also shows the goal of ethics; to create the conditions for making right choice in every situation.[71] If one is governed by an ethical

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[69] Faust Corvino, "Sweatshops, Harm and Exploitation: A Proposal to Operationalise the Model of Structural Injustice," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 5, no. 2 (2020): 9-23.

[70] Minna-Maaria Hiekkataipale and Anna-Maija Lämsä, "(A)moral Agents in Organisations? The Significance of Ethical Organisation Culture for Middle Managers' Exercise of Moral Agency in Ethical Problems," *Journal of Business Ethics* 155, no. 1 (2019): 147-161.

[71] Long aptly notes that "The Stoics used the word eukairos (*SVF*, 3, 521) to describe their wise man's 'timely' character and behavior. Chrysippus defined the Stoic goal of life as 'living according to experience of natural events.' (*SVF*, 3: 5-6; 9-10.) Such experience ideally equips people to be excellent judges of what it is appropriate or opportune for them to do by assessing their external circumstances, abilities and social roles and functions (duties). At the limit, you might need to decide, whether it would be better to die rather than to live. Epictetus gives

mindset, one will avoid error and accept the function that suits one's abilities by accepting order and rationality within the organization one is called to participate in.[72]

The sage is a model for other people in the midst of the ethical enterprise.[73] The way of thinking and acting of the ethical actor makes him an example from which others can learn and reach the ethical goal faster through imitation. When someone imitates, he may not initially be able to justify the cause and purpose of the imitated act, but, gradually, as he repeats the right action, he is ready to understand rationally the logical sequence of his actions and their purpose.[74]

The image of the Stoic sage as a teaching agent holds special importance in organizations that apply business ethics. Executives who reach a point of ethical integration and excellence can, through their actions, be reinforcing catalysts for the rest of the company members, so that they assimilate the right behavior more quickly and effectively, and understand rationally the organization and order of the whole. It is easier for someone to become self-aware of their functional role if they see the ideal form of rationality and functionality developing before them. Business ethics is enlivened by its correct application across the different parts of a company, because when a whole works exceptionally well, it is difficult for any arrhythmias to show, even by newly hired parts.[75]

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copious examples of such 'timely' behaviour. The essence of ancient Stoicism was not passively 'accepting events as they are' (that is a modern distortion), but making best possible use of events: as Epictetus said with reference to Socrates, he always played the ball well, even in prison" (Epictetus, 1.12). Long and Vertzagia, 119.

[72] Michael Brown and Linda Treviño, "Ethical Leadership: A Review and Future Directions," *Leadership Quarterly* 17, no. 6 (2006): 595-616.

[73] "It is evident that the members of underprivileged classes derive inspiration from leading figures within their community. The sense of affinity with the idealized person plays a crucial role in the community's overall development. Role-models who have overcome similar hardships, exploitation, and difficulties as the members of the community they belong, encourage their own people, especially when compared to idealized figures who belong to other communities. The mission of role-models is not to inspire others to become what they have become, or to achieve what they have achieved, but to stimulate their inner potential towards fulfilling desired objectives according to their own free will. In that sense role-models are not used as a means, but as ends-in-theirself, since taking incitation from an ideal does not violate one's intrinsic worth as an end-in-itself.19 The sense of belongingness pro-vides people immense encouragement to overcome hardships that are owed to centuries-long deprivation and exploitation." Sooraj Kumar Maurya, "A Reply to Louis P. Pojman's Article 'The Case Against Affirmative Action,'" *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 5, no. 2 (2020): 92.

[74] Jason DeBode, Achilles Armenakis, Hubert Field, and Alan Walker, "Assessing Ethical Organizational Culture: Refinement of a Scale," *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 49, no. 4 (2013): 460-484.

[75] Elias Vavouras, "Natural Right and Historicism: From Thucydides to Marx," *Cogito* 13, no. 1 (2021): 7-20.

Also, any disharmony starts at the top, with the leading members of an organization. No matter how well an ethical program is implemented, if those who control it and instill it are not functioning properly, then the whole organizational edifice will collapse with painful consequences. So, if the leaders of an organization are not ethical examples for the rest of the functional parts, business ethics becomes impossible, creating a vicious circle.

X. Fortune is afraid to enter the room of ethics

The house of the wise man is cramped, without care, without noise, without luxuries, served by no porter who directs the multitude of visitors with slavish arrogance, but through the empty threshold that is free from porters fortune does not pass: she recognizes that there is no place for it, where there is nothing of its.
Seneca, *De constantia sapientis*, 15.3-5

In another Stoic allegory[76] the wise man – and at the same time possessor of ethical virtue – is seen sitting alone in his small and unkempt room surrounded by few material goods in complete silence, while fortune stands fearfully outside the threshold knowing that even within his reach there is no room for it.[77] The ethics-luck opposition is reflected in this image, in the sense that the ethical moral virtue develops more as the influence of random factors is reduced.[78] This is because ethical choice is the child of rationality, order, and natural necessity, and when these factors fully influence human activity, there is no room for unforeseeable deviations from the pursuit of purpose.[79] Also, in the poor realm of ethics, quietness prevails; there are no violent movements and sudden transitions, as everything goes according to the ethical planning and the rational reading of man and the natural or social context to which he belongs.[80]

This example can be transferred to the field of business ethics, demonstrating that ethical rules contribute to the stability of an organization over time and in times of crisis. Ethics is not simply limited to the self-awareness of the human factor and the right order of the parts of the

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[76] Seneca, *De constantia sapientis*, 15.3-5.

[77] David Collinson, "Dichotomies, Dialectics and Dilemmas: New Directions for Critical Leadership Studies?" *Leadership* 10, no. 1 (2014): 36-55.

[78] Edward R. Freeman and Jeanne Liedtka, "Corporate Social Responsibility: A Critical Approach," *Business Horizons* 34, no. 4 (1991): 92–99.

[79] Philip Roth, "How Social Context Impacts the Emergence of Leadership Structures," *Leadership* 18, no. 4 (2022): 539-562.

[80] Nigel Hope, *A Commentary on the De Constantia Sapientis of Seneca the Younger* (Royal Holloway: University of London, 2017), 230.

organization, it also refers to the drawing of unshakable guidelines that will keep the course of the enterprise stable towards the achievement of the intended purpose.[81] Ethics is not man's subjective perception of things, but a scientific knowledge and practice of how man will become better and complete; the scientificity and objectivity of ethical choice eliminate the random factor and harmonize with the order of moral rules that lead seamlessly to the realization of the goal.[82]

The order and unity established through organizational ethics within an organization create conditions for long-term health and stability,[83] making that unified whole invulnerable to adverse circumstances. When each party accepts a specific role that corresponds to its capabilities and performs exceptionally well, a condition of complete satisfaction is created that can hardly be disturbed by random interference. Also, ethics as a rational justification of human behavior opposes the influence of the passions that open the door to chance. Ethics means primarily the mastery of reason over passions so that human choices are freed from the harmful influence of the passions that lead them away from their intended goal.[84]

XI. Conclusions

a. Ethics is not characterized by relativism and subjectivism; rather, is a free, rational choice towards the integration of man. Man is free to choose between good or evil, however ethical choice is not related to the destruction of man, but to his preservation and improvement. Ethical choice is a beneficial choice, tested by objective criteria as to the essence and purpose of man.

b. Part of ethical choice is the imposition of a kind of order consistent with nature. Organizational ethics is concerned with enforcing good order within an organization. Each party must perform the work appropriate to its nature and abilities and accept the evaluative gradation resulting from the value of the work produced. The correct order is the result of a correct rational process, which aims at the unity of the whole and the achievement of the goal.

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[81] Gillian Peele, "Leadership and Politics: A Case for a Closer Relationship?" *Leadership* 1, no. 2 (2005): 187-204.

[82] Aleksandra Jasinska, "Bring Back Philosophy: The Roots of Both Business and Ethics," *Journal of Human Values* 30, no. 1 (2024): 26-31.

[83] *SVF*, 3: 510.

[84] Susan Key, "Organizational Ethical Culture: Real or Imagined?" *Journal of Business Ethics* 20, no. 3 (1999): 217-225.

c. The person or organization is part of a larger whole, such as civil society or the natural environment, within which they perform a specific task. It is absurd for the actions of man or organization to cause harm to the wider organization to which they belong. If the unity and integrity of the civil society[85] or the environment are disturbed, then this disharmony will affect both parties, i.e., the person and the business. Corporate social responsibility is a clear extension of ethical choice, as it oversees the harmonious relationship of the part with the whole. The whole is the receptacle of human integration; the better the functioning of the whole, the easier the human or organism can function. Respect and contribution to the civil society and the natural environment is not an optional benefit, but the most important moral duty emanating from human reason, which realizes that the improvement and development of the individual or the enterprise presuppose the favorable political or natural reception.

d. Ethical choice cannot be made automatically by all humans. Humans tend towards the right and can, through habit, reach a stability of ethical choices, but they need guidelines to fit into the right moral framework. It takes an expert who can direct others in matters of moral order. This specialist, for the Stoics, is the sage, who has reached a maximum level of natural integration, mental order, and ethical rightness, and this superiority makes him the regulator of the moral conduct of the rest.[86] In companies, the structuring of the management of the organization and the evaluative classification of the staff in terms of decision-making fall under the field of leadership and corporate governance. Therefore, the implementation of business ethics is impossible without ethical leadership and corporate governance, which determines which executives will be found through evaluation at the leadership level to determine, through organizational ethics and corporate social responsibility, the goals of the organization and the long-term prime.

e. From the above findings, it can be seen that Stoic philosophy provides all those methodological tools for delimiting and clarifying the function of moral terms within business ethics and ethical leadership. The likeness to nature as human integration, the inescapable relationship of the part to the whole, the moral tasks as functions within the social or natural whole, and the wise man as a paradigm and model of

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[85] Jula Wildberger, *The Stoics and the State: Theory – Practice – Context* (Baden: Nomos, 2018), 51-67.

[86] Arthur Walzer, "Quntilian's '*Vir Bonus*' and the Stoic Wise Man," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2003): 25-41.

ethical rightness[87] are a guide to the understanding of ethical problems and the conceptual shielding of the concepts that make up business ethics, such as organizational ethics, corporate social responsibility, and corporate governance. In the era of modernity, where, under the power of historicism, moral concepts replace relativism and nihilism, the Stoic paradigm of ethics serves as a safe house for anchoring moral concepts and their beneficial development in the field of human entrepreneurship, which constitutes a part of human well-being.

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[87] R. W. Sharples, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics: An Introduction to Hellenistic Philosophy* (NewYork: Routledge, 1996), 100-114; Nancy Sherman, "Stoic Consolations," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 565-587.

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Is Numenius' Doctrine of the World Souls Identical with Calcidius' Relevant Doctrine?

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Abstract

The present article deals with the subject of the doctrine of the Middle Platonist philosopher Numenius about the world souls, *according to the testimony of Calcidius. At first, it is being investigated whether the theory presented by Calcidius is an exact reproduction of Numenius' view or whether some elements have intruded into it, which reveal Calcidius' view of the soul. Subsequently, the interpretations of the divisible and the indivisible essences of* Timaeus *– from which the world soul is created – which have been given by Calcidius, Proclus and Numenius are compared. In addition, it is examined whether the source of Calcidius' interpretation of* Timaeus' *psychogony is Numenius or Plotinus. At the same time, the* world souls *are outlined more clearly according to the theory of Numenius. Finally, what was analyzed above is summarized and some conclusions are drawn, regarding the relationship between the views of Calcidius, Numenius and Plotinus on the universal and human soul, as well as the general character of the system of the last two philosophers.*

Keywords: *beneficent world soul; evil world soul; indivisible essence; divisible essence; Numenius; Calcidius; Plotinus*

I. Introduction

The subject of this study is Numenius' theory of the *world souls*, as presented by Calcidius in chapter 297[1] of his work *In Timaeum*. The question of the creation of the *world soul* and the existence of two *world souls*, one beneficent and one evil,

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[1] The chapter in question is part of Fr. 52 of Numenius in his edition of Des Places; see Numénius. *Fragments*, ed. Édouard Des Places (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1973), 96-97.

is introduced by Plato in *Timaeus* and in *Laws* respectively. Some later Platonic philosophers, such as the Middle Platonists Numenius of Apamea and Plutarch, as well as the Neoplatonists Plotinus, Calcidius and Proclus are based on this Platonic theory and have given different interpretations. The present article will mainly analyze the theories of Numenius and Calcidius, while references will be made and correlations will be identified with the other interpretations.

According to Numenius, as referred in paragraph 297 of Calcidius, there are two souls of the world, the beneficent and the evil.[2] The beneficent *world soul* is associated with reason and God,[3] while the evil *world soul* is identified with Matter[4] or soul of Matter[5] or *Necessity*.[6] It is evident that regarding this issue Numenius agrees with Plato, who in *Laws* X 897c7-d1 distinguishes two souls of the world, the excellent soul and the bad one. According to Plato, the perfect soul ("ἀρίστη ψυχή") is the one that is beneficent ("εὐεργέτις"), acting under the guidance of the intellect ("νοῦν μὲν προσλαβοῦσα"), i.e., it takes care of the whole world and leads it towards the path of reason, while the bad soul, "ἀνοίᾳ δὲ συγγενομένη" (that is related to folly, i.e., bereft of the guidance of the intellect), directs the world towards fury and disorder.[7] So, the evil soul of the *Laws* seems to have the same meaning as the *Necessity* of the *Timaeus*[8] and the "Necessitas" or

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[2] Fr. 52.66: "beneficentissimam" and "malignam," respectively. cf. Calcidius, *In Timaeum* c. 300. See Jan Hendrik Waszink, *Timaeus: A Calcidio Translatus Commentarioque Instructus* (Londini: Instituti Warburgiani, 1962), 301-302.

[3] c. (*caput* or *capitulum*, i.e., chapter) 297.31: "ratione ac deo."

[4] c. 297.24: "silva."

[5] c. 298.17: "silvae anima." Because the movement of Matter is inherent in it (Fr. 52, c. 297.24-27), Matter itself is a soul. See John Phillips, "Numenian Psychology in Calcidius?" *Phronesis* 48, no. 2 (2003), 147.

[6] c. 296.10; c. 299.24: "necessitate." See Jacobus Cornelius Maria Van Winden, *Calcidius on Matter: His Doctrine and Sources. A Chapter in the History of Platonism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 113-114. Van Winden's view that, according to Calcidius and possibly Numenius, the "beneficentissima mundi anima" is identified with reason and God (i.e., the Demiurge/Creator), based on c. 297.30-31 ("rationabilis animae pars auctore utitur ratione ac deo"), does not seem entirely correct as regards Numenius, since the *world soul* constitutes the third God of Numenius, produced by the second God-Demiurge, when the latter comes to contact with Matter.

[7] *Laws* X 896c9-897d1. See Edwin Bourdieu England, ed., *The Laws of Plato*, t. II (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 27, 159-160; Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato: Including the Letters* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1961), 1452-1453.

[8] Reginald Hackforth, ed., *Plato's Phaedrus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 71.

"Silva" (*Necessity* or Matter) of Numenius, which is persuaded and dominated by the *Intellect*, and constitutes the principle of cosmic imperfection or evil.[9]

II. Does Calcidius accurately reproduce Numenius' theory of the soul?

Calcidius in chapter 297 of *In Timaeum*, in the context of the exposition of the Numenian theory, states that the evil *world soul* creates and rules the passive part of the human soul ("patibilis animae pars"), in which there is a material, mortal and corporeal element, while the rational part of the soul ("rationabilis animae pars") has reason and God as creators.[10] The passive part, i.e., that which is subject to passions and is the source of "ira" and "cupiditas" (of the "vitiosae partes animi"),[11] according to Plato,[12] was created by the lower gods and added to the logical part.

However, it is known that Numenius did not mention that there are two parts of the soul, but two souls both in the world and in man, a rational and an irrational one;[13] the correspondence between the two souls of the macrocosm and the microcosm is obvious. Therefore, Van Winden's conjecture that Calcidius modified the theory of Numenius

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[9] However, Plutarch in *De animae procreatione in Timaeo* 1014d2-1015a5 [see, Plutarchus, *Moralia*, ed. Curt Hubert and Hans Drexler (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubner, 1959), 149-150] expresses his disagreement with those who attribute the *necessity* ("ἀνάγκη") of the *Timaeus* (48a, 56c, 68e) and the *Philebus'* "περὶ τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἧττον ἐλλείψεως καὶ ὑπερβολῆς ἀμετρίαν καὶ ἀπειρίαν" [measurelessness and infinitude in the varying degrees of deficiency and excess; see, Plutarch, *Moralia*, ed. Harold Cherniss (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1976), 188-189] to matter and not to the soul. He explains that this is not consistent with what is mentioned in *Timaeus* (50e-51b) about matter as "ἄμορφον καὶ ἀσχημάτιστον [...] καὶ πάσης ποιότητος καὶ δυνάμεως οἰκείας ἔρημον" (amorphous and shapeless and devoid of all quality and potency of its own), which "is likened to odorless oils which makers of perfume take for their infusions" (see ibid.). In addition, he argues that it is not possible for Plato to assume that "τὸ ἄποιον καὶ ἀργὸν ἐξ αὑτοῦ καὶ ἀρρεπές" (what is without quality and of itself inert and without propensity, see ibid., 190-191), i.e., matter, is "αἰτίαν κακοῦ καὶ ἀρχὴν [...] ἀπειρίαν αἰσχρὰν καὶ κακοποιόν" (the cause of evil and [...] ugly and maleficent infinitude, see op. cit.), as well as "ἀνάγκην πολλὰ τῷ θεῷ δυσμαχοῦσαν καὶ ἀφηνιάζουσαν" (*Necessity* which is largely refractory and recalcitrant to God, see op. cit.). Therefore, Plutarch does not accept the identification of Matter with the "disorderly and indeterminate but self-moved and motive principle" ("ἄτακτον καὶ ἀόριστον αὐτοκίνητον δὲ καὶ κινητικὴν ἀρχήν;" see ibid., 186-187), which Plato in the *Timaeus* calls *Necessity* and in the *Laws* (896d ff) the disorderly and maleficent soul ("ψυχὴν ἄτακτον [...] καὶ κακοποιόν;" see Plutarch, op. cit.).

[10] c. 297.27-31.

[11] See cc. (*capita* or *capitula*, i.e., chapters) 186-187.

[12] *Timaeus* 69c-e, 42d-e.

[13] Fr. 44 Des Places (= Test. 36 Leemans): "[...] δύο ψυχὰς ἔχειν ἡμᾶς οἴονται, ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλα, τὴν μὲν λογικήν, τὴν δ' ἄλογον."

to conform with his own conception of the human soul, which he considered as a unity, seems correct.[14]

Waszink disagrees with this view,[15] pointing out that Fr. 52 is a translation of a passage of Numenius from Calcidius. He assumes that in this passage, Numenius' interpretation of Plato and his own view were not clearly separated or were somehow coordinated. In my opinion, Van Winden's explanation is more correct, as it is possible that Calcidius is not translating literally Numenius' specific period of speech[16] but freely, attempting to interpret it at the same time. Thus, based on his own theory of the unity of the soul, he might have introduced the phrase "patibilis animae pars" instead of "anima maligna," and the phrase "rationabilis animae pars" instead of "anima beneficentissima." Besides, Calcidius' introduction of his own words, and the combination of translation and interpretation are also observed in several places in the *Timaeus* translation.[17]

In contrast to Numenius, Calcidius characterized the whole soul as rational. This is evident from c. 261.11, where he speaks of a "patibilem partem rationabilis animae," as well as from c. 54.1, where he refers to "rationabilis mundi anima." He considered the latter to consist of a purely rational and a material part, the "anima stirpea."[18]

III. The divisible and the indivisible substance according to Calcidius, Proclus and Numenius

In chapter 53 Calcidius mentions that the *world soul* has been created by the fusion of two substances ("essentia sive substantia [...] duplex"), the indivisible ("individua") and the divisible ("dividua") essence, and therefore its nature is appropriate to the nature of numbers, whose principles are Unity ("singularitas") and Dyad ("duitas").[19]

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[14] Jacobus Cornelius Maria Van Winden, *Calcidius on Matter: his Doctrine and Sources. A Chapter in the History of Platonism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 114.

[15] Jan Hendrik Waszink, "Porphyrios und Numenios," in *Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique, Tome XII: Porphyre*, eds. Heinrich Dörrie, Jan Hendrik Waszink, and Willy Theiler, 33-83 (Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1966), 76-77.

[16] c. 297.27-31.

[17] For example, in Calcidius' translation of *Timaeus* 37a2-c5. See Gretchen Reydams-Schils, *Calcidius on Plato's* Timaeus: *Greek Philosophy, Latin Reception and Christian Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 65-67.

[18] c. 31. See Van Winden, 114; Jan Hendrik Waszink, *Timaeus: A Calcidio Translatus Commentarioque Instructus* (Londini: Instituti Warburgiani, 1962), 80, 102.

[19] Waszink, 101-102.

These agree to some extent with the theory of Numenius, Aristander and most other commentators,[20] who, according to Proclus, considered the essence of the soul to be mathematical, in between the physical and the supersensible beings ("ὡς μέσην τῶν τε φυσικῶν καὶ τῶν ὑπερφυῶν"), and specifically as a number produced by the Monad, as indivisible, and from the indefinite Dyad, as divisible ("οἱ μὲν ἀριθμὸν αὐτὴν εἰπόντες ἐκ μονάδος ποιοῦσιν, ὡς ἀμερίστου, καὶ τῆς ἀορίστου δυάδος, ὡς μεριστῆς"). As Waszink observes, there can be no doubt that in this passage the indivisible Monad ("μονὰς ἀμέριστος") is identified with God, and the divisible indefinite Dyad ("ἀόριστος δυὰς μεριστή") with Matter.[21]

In chapters 29-31, Calcidius presents two interpretations of the Platonic words "ἀμέριστος" and "μεριστὴ οὐσία" (i.e., the indivisible and the divisible essence).[22] According to the first, the indivisible essence is the species or *Idea* ("species") of the intelligible world, while the divisible essence is matter. According to the second interpretation, with which Calcidius agrees, the "individua substantia" is the "eminentior anima" (higher soul), while the "dividua substantia" is the "stirpea anima" (vegetative soul); the fusion of these two substances results in the "tertium animae genus rationabile."[23] Also, in chapters 53-54, as mentioned above, it is argued that "rationabilis mundi anima" comes from two substances, and in c. 31 it is stated that it was created from two souls, the incorporeal and the vegetative soul. So, according to Calcidius, the two souls should be understood as the indivisible and the divisible substance.

However, the explanation of Proclus regarding the creation of the *world soul* in the Platonic *Timaeus* is different. In more detail, in *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria* II 147-156,[24] Proclus mentions that the soul is in between the indivisible and the divisible essence, which means that the "indivisible" ("ἀμέριστον") of the soul is inferior to the "indivisible" par excellence, and its "divisible" ("μεριστόν") is superior to the "divisible" par excellence.[25] The being of the soul (το "εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς"), therefore, was created through the union of the middle kind of "identity," the middle kind of "otherness" and the corresponding kind of "essence."[26] This explanation is considered correct

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[20] Fr. 39 Des Places (= Test. 31 L.).

[21] Numénius, 89; Waszink, XLIV-XLV.

[22] See *Timaeus* 35a1-4.

[23] c. 29.

[24] Proclus. *Commentaire sur le Timée*, t. III, ed. and trans. André-Jean Festugière (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1967), 188-200.

[25] II 148-149.

[26] II 156.

by Cornford,[27] pointing out that the different interpretation given by other commentators, in which the soul comes from the fusion of the indivisible and the divisible essence, is wrong, as they argue that "τοῦ τε ἀμεροῦς αὐτῶν καὶ τοῦ κατὰ τὰ σώματα μεριστοῦ"[28] denotes the indivisible and the divisible kind of essence, and not the indivisible and the divisible kind of "identity" and "otherness." According to Cornford, this interpretation is to be rejected, because it leads to the identification of the "identity" ("ταὐτόν") and the "otherness" ("ἕτερον") with the indivisible and the divisible essence, respectively, and for this reason it is inconsistent with the Platonic *Sophist*.

It is obvious that the explanation adopted by Calcidius coincides with the latter interpretation, and therefore differs from that of Proclus. It is not clear exactly what Numenius' view on this matter was, based on the remaining fragments. But, as it has already been pointed out in *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria* II 153.17-25,[29] it is mentioned that Numenius is among those who considered the essence of the soul to be mathematical, in between the sensible and the suprasensible beings ("ὡς μέσην τῶν τε φυσικῶν καὶ τῶν ὑπερφυῶν"), and indeed as a number produced from the indivisible Monad and the divisible indefinite Dyad ("ἐκ μονάδος [...], ὡς ἀμερίστου, καὶ τῆς ἀορίστου δυάδος, ὡς μεριστῆς"). In conjunction with what is mentioned in Fr. 52, as well as in Fr. 11 and 18 (Des Places), we conclude that the excellent *world soul*, i.e., the third God of Numenius, is produced by the Demiurge by the 'mixing' of the indivisible and the divisible essence, i.e., when the indivisible essence of the first God-Monad, from which the second God-Demiurge derives,[30] comes into contact with the divisible essence of the Matter-Dyad,[31] which the Demiurge unites, but it is divided from it.[32]

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[27] Francis MacDonald Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology. The "Timaeus" of Plato Translated with a Running Commentary* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner; New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1937), 60-61.

[28] *Timaeus* 35a5-6.

[29] Fr. 39 Des Places.

[30] Joshua Lee Langseth, *Knowing God: A Study of the Argument of Numenius of Apameia's on the Good* (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2013), 134-135.

[31] The interpretation given by Waszink ("Porphyrios und Numenios," 75) to Fr. 39 is different. Specifically, he considers that the Numenian definition of the soul as a number produced by the Monad (the indivisible essence, and the indefinite Dyad), i.e., the divisible essence, proves that the *world soul*, according to the Apamean, is unified and consists of a divine and a material component. However, based on Proclus' explanation of the creation of the soul in *Timaeus* (*In Platonis Timaeum commentaria* II 147-156), which has been mentioned above, as well as the previous analysis regarding the souls of the world in the theory of Numenius (based on Fr. 52, 11, 18 and 44), it is concluded that Waszink's view is not correct; the soul of the world (third God), according to Numenius, is not produced through the union of a divine and a material part (the indivisible and the divisible essence), but through the "contact" of the Demiurge (second God) with Matter.

[32] Fr. 11.13-15 Des Places: "ὁ θεὸς μέντοι ὁ δεύτερος καὶ τρίτος ἐστὶν εἷς· συμφερόμενος δὲ τῇ

Proclus disagrees with the above view of Numenius which he cites in *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria* II 153.17-25, emphasizing that Plato had not yet considered the soul as a number, therefore it is inappropriate to look for its numerical principles.[33] Nevertheless, we notice that both Numenius and Proclus present the soul in between sensible and suprasensible beings. Their positions, therefore, seem to be closer to the first than to the second interpretation of the divisible and the indivisible essence presented by Calcidius.

IV. The source of Calcidius' interpretation of *Timaeus*, and the *world souls* according to Numenius

As to the source of Calcidius' interpretation of the *Timaeus*, various opinions have been expressed by scholars. In particular, Phillips[34] argues that two fundamental components of Plotinus' psychology are evident in Calcidius' interpretation of the *Timaeus*, namely the theories of the unity of the soul and the undescended higher soul. According to Phillips, these theories of Plotinus have been drawn to a large extent from aspects of Numenius' interpretation of Platonic *psychogony*. Therefore, he tries to prove that Numenius was the direct and unique source of Calcidius, and that the explanation given by Plotinus to *Timaeus* 35a ff. as well as his aforementioned theories came directly from the theory of Numenius, which Calcidius maintained.

First, he states that the correct interpretation of *Timaeus's psychogony* is the second of those expounded by Calcidius, according to which the indivisible soul is the *Intellect* that remains undescended in the intelligible world, while the lower or vegetative soul is divisible into bodies; it rules and cares for the physical world, turning her gaze in two directions, both toward the divine nature and toward the sensible. According to Waszink and Van Winden, the vegetative soul is identified with the evil soul of the Numenian Matter. However, as Deuse aptly points out,[35] the vegetative soul in cc. 29-31 of Calcidius cannot

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ὕλῃ δυάδι οὔσῃ ἑνοῖ μὲν αὐτήν, σχίζεται δὲ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῆς."

[33] II 154.10-12.

[34] Phillips, 132-151.

[35] Werner Deuse, *Untersuchungen zur Mittelplatonischen und Neuplatonischen Seelenlehre* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1983), 75-76. Reydams-Schils also agrees with Deuse's view [Gretchen Reydams-Schils, *Calcidius on Plato's* Timaeus: *Greek Philosophy, Latin Reception and Christian Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 168-169 and n. 22], underlining that Calcidius does not consider the lower soul, which is intertwined with bodies, as evil in itself, as he does not attribute this characterization to it, but he simply refers to the regularization of its disordered movements by the Demiurge.

be understood as an evil *world soul* that continues to function as the principle of evil in the entire universe after the creation of the world, as in cc. 295-300 – where it is certain that the theory of Numenius is set forth – but as a benevolent soul of life, i.e., a force that contributes to the preservation of the world.

Phillips attempts to counter this argument by summarizing the evidence of Waszink and Van Winden,[36] who hold that cc. 27-31 and 54-55 come directly from Numenius. A key argument of theirs is that in c. 31 the "anima stirpea" is described both as that which animates the sensible world and as a disorderly motion which God brings to order, equivalent to the "animae motum" of Numenius and the eternal, chaotic motion of *Timaeus* 30a, associated with the evil *world soul*. Therefore, according to Phillips, although the evilness of the lower soul is not expressed in cc. 29-31, it is clearly implied.

Another remark of Waszink[37] is that in the Calcidian chapters in question, the evilness of the material soul is omitted, as it is inherent in the *world soul*, which animates a perfect and immortal body and is, therefore, entirely free from passions,[38] as opposed to the human soul. However, if we accept the view that the rational *world soul* consists of the higher soul and the soul of Matter, which according to Numenius being the cause of evil opposes the salutary plans of Providence,[39] it is not possible to consider that this *world soul* is exempted from passions.

Another argument with which we could refute the claims of Waszink, Van Winden and Phillips is that Numenius, according to the testimony of Porphyry,[40] supported the existence of two souls, one rational and one irrational, and not the existence of one soul consisting of two or three parts. Although this passage refers mainly to the human soul, it is evident from Fr. 52.64-67[41] that he believed the same about the souls of the world. Therefore, by merging the irrational soul of Matter and the higher soul-*intellect* into one rational soul, Calcidius deviates

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[36] Waszink, *Timaeus*, XLVIII ff.; Van Winden, 256 ff.

[37] Waszink, *Timaeus*, XLIX.

[38] c. 187.

[39] cc. 296, 298.

[40] Fr. 44 Des Places (= Test. 36 L.), Porphyry, Περὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεων, in Ioannes Stobaeus, *Anthologium* I 49.25a. See Curt Wachsmuth, *Ioannis Stobaei Anthologii Libri Duo Priores qui Inscribi Solent Eclogae Physicae et Ethicae*, t. I (Berlin: Weidmann, 1884), 350.25 -351.1; Des Places, 91.

[41] "Platonemque idem Numenius laudat, quod duas mundi animas autumet, unam beneficentissimam, malignam alteram, scilicet silvam [...]."

greatly from the theory of Numenius, since the irrational or vegetative soul is presented not as separate but as the lower part of the rational soul.

Furthermore, according to Numenius, the "anima mundi beneficentissima" constitutes the third God,[42] which is produced by the second God-Demiurge and is inseparably connected with him. The beneficent *world soul*, in fact, constitutes the second aspect of the Demiurge, which appears when he looks to Matter and is divided from it. Numenius explicitly mentions that the Demiurge is good,[43] while the soul of Matter is evil. Therefore, according to the theory of the Apamean, it is absurd to claim that within the excellent soul of the world there is an evil soul that is the cause of evil.

In addition, it is noteworthy that the Calcidian theory of the rational soul of the world (consisting of the higher and the vegetative soul of matter) contradicts the radical dualism of Numenius, who absolutely separated and considered the first principles as opposites, namely the (first) God as the cause of good, and Matter as the source of evil. Therefore, the third God, that is, the excellent soul of the world – produced by the second, originating from the first God – could not include the soul of Matter.

From all the above it is concluded that the opinion of Waszink, Van Winden and Phillips that Calcidius' interpretation of Platonic *psychogony* derives from Numenius, is not correct.[44] We could, however, conjecture that this interpretation has derived mainly from Plotinus, who, like Calcidius, in the *Enneads* IV 2 [1] (*Περὶ οὐσίας ψυχῆς δεύτερον*)[45] and IV 9.3 follows the usual explanation of *Timaeus* 35a

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[42] Dodds is also in favor of this position, who mentions that the third God of Numenius is characterized only by *intellect* ("διάνοιαν," based on Fr. 22 Des Places), so he does not correspond to the material world but to the *world soul* of Plotinus [Eric Robertson Dodds, "Numenius and Ammonius," in *Les Sources de Plotin: Dix Exposés et Discussions*, ed. Eric Robertson Dodds, 3-61 (Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1960), 14]. However, Waszink disagrees with Dodds, arguing that the good soul of the world is to be sought not in the third but in the second hypostasis, namely the Demiurge. He considers that, according to Numenius, the higher part of the *world soul* functions as the Demiurge. See Waszink, "Porphyrios und Numenios," 73-74.

[43] Fr. 16 (= 25 L.): "ἀγαθός."

[44] Regarding this issue, Reydams-Schils (170-171) – although she recognizes the significant influence Numenius exerted on Calcidius – points out that the latter does not follow him in all his views, but he makes independent use of the ideas he drew from him, which reveals the relative independence of his authorial voice.

[45] *Ennead* IV 2 [1].14-17: "Τὸ οὖν ἐκ τῆς ἀμερίστου καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ σώματα μεριστῆς ταὐτὸν τῷ ἐκ τῆς ἄνω [καὶ κάτω] οὔσης καὶ τῆς ἐκεῖθεν ἐξηρτημένης, ῥυείσης δὲ μέχρι τῶνδε, οἷον γραμμῆς ἐκ κέντρου." See Plotinus, *Ennead, Volume IV*, trans. A. H. Armstrong, Loeb Classical Library 443 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984) 20-21. See also Paul Kalligas, ed., *Plotinus' Fourth Ennead* (Athens: Research Centre for Greek and Latin Literature, 2009), 34-35 [in

that the indivisible essence ("ἡ ἀμέριστος") corresponds to the logical level of the soul, while "that which is divisible in the sphere of bodies" ("ἡ περὶ τὰ σώματα μεριστή") corresponds to the irrational level, whose power, according to Plotinus, is the vegetative soul ("φυτική ψυχή"). Furthermore, he considers that the highest part of the soul, namely its undivided nature, does not undergo incorporation, but remains high, in the intelligible sphere.[46] Plotinus emphasizes that the soul is one, although its powers are many.[47] The similarities of the present Plotinian theory with the Calcidian interpretation are obvious.[48] Also, it is noteworthy that Plotinus uses the term "vegetative soul" ("φυτική ψυχή"), as does Calcidius ("anima stirpea").[49]

Phillips also finds other similarities between Calcidius' and Plotinus' theories mentioned above. One of these is that the soul after its fall and incorporation maintains its fundamental unity through its continuous contact with its undescended, undivided nature,[50] looking both to *Intellect* and to the sensible world.[51] Phillips states, however, that according to Plotinus evil cannot be part of the soul's nature but is an external addition resulting from its contact with Matter after its fall. However, as already pointed out, the "anima stirpea" in cc. 29-31 is not presented as an evil soul, so contrary to Phillips' claim, there is no contradiction between Calcidius' theory and Plotinus' on this matter.

As a further presumption that Calcidius was influenced by Plotinus, one could cite the sentence of c. 176.9-11 "est autem intellegibilis essentia aemulae bonitatis propter indefessam ad summum deum conversionem," which, according to Switalski, alludes to Plotinus' theory of the divine contemplation and the undescended soul.[52] As Hadot ob-

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Greek]. According to Kalligas, in the *Ennead* IV 1 [2] (which he numbers as IV 2) Plotinus gives a different explanation of *Timaeus* 35a, as he emphasizes on the intermediate nature of the soul – between the indivisible intelligible Essense and the divisible "essence" of the sensible bodies. Moreover, Kalligas points out that in IV 1[2] there are two intermediate ontological levels, i.e., soul (which is "ἀμερίστως μεριστή") and enmattered forms ("ἔνυλα εἴδη," which correspond to the "μεριστὴ περὶ τὰ σώματα" essence). See Kalligas, 316-319.

[46] *Enneas* IV 1 [2].1; IV 3.4; IV 3.19. See Plotinus, *Ennead, Volume IV*, 8-15, 44-47, 92-95. See also Kalligas, 24-29, 44-47, 76-79.

[47] *Enneas* IV 9.3.8-18. See Plotinus, *Ennead, Volume IV*, 434-435. See also Kalligas, 308-309.

[48] cc. 28, 31.

[49] See Phillips, 144-150.

[50] *Enneas* VI 2.22.28 ff.

[51] cf. Calcidius, *In Timaeum* c. 31.

[52] See Bronislaus Wladislaus Switalski, *Des Chalcidius Kommentar zu Plato's Timaeus. Eine historisch-kritische Untersuchung* (Münster: Druck und Verlag der Aschendorffschen Buchhandlung, 1902), 51, n. 1; Phillips, 146, n. 38. It is worth noting that Switalski (50-51 and n. 3)

serves,[53] in c. 176 of Calcidius the contemplation of the first principle and its likeness to it (in terms of goodness) are connected. Hadot does not agree with Switalski but with Waszink, who argues that this development reveals the influence by Numenius and the *Chaldean Oracles*. Waszink conjectures that the second God of Numenius, the Demiurge, is identified with the good cosmic soul, i.e., the higher part of it. It is argued, therefore, that the relevant theories by Plotinus and Porphyry were an evolution of the Numenian teaching, as both assume the division of the *world soul* into two parts. In my opinion, Waszink's interpretation is not correct, because as has been mentioned above, in the theory of Numenius, the Demiurge and the beneficent *world soul* are not identical but constitute respectively the second and the third God. Therefore, Switalski's point of view is correct, since the passage c. 176.9-11 directly refers to the Plotinian theory of the turning of the *Intellect* towards the Good, while at the same time the equation of the *Intellect* with the intelligible essence ("intellegibilis essentia") in c. 176 recalls the Plotinian complete identification of the *Intellect* with its intelligible objects,[54] in contrast to the distinction of the *Intellect* from the intelligible essence according to Numenius.[55]

Beyond that, however, Phillips emphasizes that, according to Plotinus, the transition from disorder to order cannot be attributed to matter[56] and that it is wrong to believe that matter "before" the creation of the world was in a state of disorder, i.e., "ἀκόσμητος."[57] Regarding this, it is evident that Calcidius[58] does not agree with Plotinus' opinion but with Numenius', as he mentions that God arranged what was without order and measure.

From the previous analysis, it can be concluded that the interpretation given by Calcidius to the Platonic *psychogony* seems to have been

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also refers to c. 252 of Calcidius ("Sunt qui nostrum intellectum pervolitare convexa putent, miscereque se divinae menti, quam Graeci νοῦν vocant [...]"), which, as he underlines, recalls Plotinus' theory of *ecstasy* (see the parallel passages he cites: V 3.4 .1-4; IV 8.1.1-9).

[53] Pierre Hadot, ed., *Porphyre et Victorinus*, t. I (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1968), 459-460, n. 2.

[54] *Enneas* V 4.2.44-49. See Plotinus, *Ennead, Volume V*, trans. A. H. Armstrong. Loeb Classical Library 444 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 148-149. See Paul Kalligas, ed., *Plotinus' Fifth Ennead* (Athens: Research Centre for Greek and Latin Literature, 2013) 106-107, 331, 337 [in Greek].

[55] Fr. 16.14-17 Des Places.

[56] *Enneas* III 6.11.19 ff. See Plotinus, *Ennead, Volume III*, trans. A. H. Armstrong. Loeb Classical Library 442 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 252-257. See also Paul Kalligas, ed., *Plotinus' Third Ennead* (Athens: Research Centre for Greek and Latin Literature, 2004), 174-177 [in Greek].

[57] *Enneas* IV 3.9.17 ff. See Armstrong, 62-63. See also Kalligas, *Plotinus' Fourth Ennead*, 56-57.

[58] c. 31.

greatly influenced by the corresponding theory of Plotinus.[59] Nevertheless, we can also discern certain influences from Numenius, such as the idea of God arranging what lacked order.

V. Epilogue – Conclusions

To recapitulate, Calcidius in c. 297 of *In Timaeum* does not reproduce precisely, but modifies in some points Numenius' theory, so that it is consistent with his own theory of the unity of the soul. In particular, he refers to the two parts of the human soul, the rational and the passive, while Numenius, according to Fr. 44, supports the existence of two human souls, the rational and the irrational. The difference of their theories is also evident regarding the macrocosm, as Numenius, according to c. 297 of Calcidius, advocates the existence of two radically opposed *world souls*, the beneficent and the evil, while Calcidius in cc. 29 and 31 argues that the higher and the vegetative *world soul* co-constitute the rational *world soul*.

Moreover, the interpretations given by the two philosophers to the indivisible and the divisible essence ("ἀμέριστος" and "μεριστὴ οὐσία") of *Timaeus* 35a1-4 are different. More precisely, Calcidius mentions two possible interpretations, but adopts the second one, claiming that the indivisible substance ("individua substantia") is the higher soul, while the divisible substance ("dividua substantia") is the vegetative soul and from their fusion, the rational soul is created.[60] On the other hand, Numenius believes that the soul is a number produced by the indivisible Monad and the divisible indeterminate Dyad.[61] So, based on Fr. 11 and 18, the beneficent soul of the world (third God), according to Numenius, is pro-

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[59] This view is also supported by Switalski. On the contrary, Steinheimer in the interpretation of the Platonic *psychogony* of Calcidius identifies aspects of the thought of Plotinus' student, Porphyry. In particular, he claims that the passages in which Calcidius refers to Jewish wisdom (such as c. 55) were taken from Porphyry, who, in his opinion, enthusiastically accepted the teachings of the Jews as well as other Eastern religions. Waszink disagrees with Steinheimer, stressing that Porphyry, according to Eusebius [Εὐαγγελικὴ προπαρασκευὴ X 9.11; cf. Karl Mras and Édouard Des Places, *Eusebius Werke. Achter Band: Die Praeparatio Evangelica. Einleitung. Teil 1: Die Bücher I bis X* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982), 587], used to accuse not only the Christians but also the Jewish prophets, such as Moses. He claims, therefore, that the cc. 51-55 and 27-31 of Calcidius come from Numenius, pointing out that in c. 55, with the reference to the Jewish teaching, the interpretation of the Platonic theory of cc. 53-54 and 27-31 is validated. After all, both Numenius and Calcidius often mention the Hebrews and also Philo, while in Porphyry there is no trace of the Philonian theory. See Steinheimer, 47; Waszink, XLIII-XLIV and n. 2; Phillips, 136.

[60] c. 29.

[61] Fr. 39.

duced when the Demiurge – originating from the undivided essence of the first God-Monad – comes into contact with the divided essence of the Matter-Dyad and unites it, but is divided from it. Proclus' interpretation differs from the previous two, as he considers that the being of the soul ("εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς") was produced by the union of the middle kind of "identity," the middle kind of "otherness" and the corresponding kind of "essence."[62] By presenting the soul in between sensible and supersensible beings, both Proclus and Numenius seem to be closer to the first interpretation cited by Calcidius, according to which the indivisible essence is the *Idea* ("species"), while the divisible essence is matter.

As regards the interpretation of *Timaeus* by Calcidius, it was found that its source is Plotinus' theory of the soul, and not the corresponding theory by Numenius. This is true because both Calcidius and Plotinus refer to a single bipartite soul, consisting of the higher-purely rational and the lower-irrational level. On the other hand, Numenius maintains that there are two opposing souls of the world, one beneficent, identifying with the third God, and one evil, belonging to the Matter-Dyad. So, the identification of Calcidius' vegetative soul – which is outlined as a beneficial force – with the evil soul of the Matter of Numenius is not correct. Additionally, the two opposing souls of Numenius could not possibly constitute the *world soul* (third God), since this constitutes the second aspect of the good Demiurge, so it could not contain an evil soul.

Other elements that prove Calcidius' influence by Plotinus are the reference to the tireless shift of the intelligible essence towards the supreme God[63] – which alludes to the corresponding Plotinian theory of the turning of the *Intellect* towards the Good – as well as the identification of the *Intellect* with the intelligible substance by Calcidius, reminiscent of Plotinus' equation of *Intellect*-intelligibles, but in contrast with Numenius' view. However, Calcidius has received the idea of God's arranging the things lacking order[64] from Numenius, and not from Plotinus who rejects it.

From all the above, it becomes clear that Calcidius's theory of the soul and the interpretation he gives to Platonic *psychogony* show more similarities with the corresponding theory by Plotinus than with Numenius'. In the latter's metaphysical theory, a radical dualism of Pythagorean origin[65] is observed, as he advocates the existence of two

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[62] II 156.

[63] c. 176.

[64] c. 31.

[65] According to Puech [Henri-Charles Puech, "Numénius d'Apamée et les Théologies Orientales au Second Siècle," in *Mélanges Bidez* ("Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orien-

opposing first principles, God-Monad as the source of good, and Matter-Dyad as the cause of evil, as well as two opposing souls, the rational-excellent and the irrational-evil both in the world and in man. On the contrary, Calcidius does not consider matter inherently evil, adopting a minimal dualism in relation to Numenius' and the Pythagoreans'.[66] It is remarkable that, although Numenius is regarded as the father of Neoplatonism, the dualism of his system – like that of Gnosticism and Manichaeism – was rejected by many later Neoplatonic philosophers, such as Plotinus, Proclus and Simplicius.[67] Plotinus formulates a monistic theory, positing the One-Good as the cause of everything, thus deviating significantly from the Apamean philosopher, despite the strong influence he received from him.

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tales," t. II), ed. Joseph Bidez, 745-778 (Bruxelles: Secrétariat de l'Institut, 1934), 776], the dualism of Numenius is of Gnostic origin.

[66] Reydams-Schils, 168.

[67] See Henri-Charles Puech, ibid.

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The Ethics of War and Peace in Russian Philosophy and the Ethical Consequences of Modern Legal Precedents on Warfare and Armed Forces

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Abstract

The first part of the study is devoted to a comparative analysis of the concepts of the Ethics of War and Peace in Russian philosophy and its influence on the world practice of nonviolence. The second part of the study is devoted to analyzing the impact of changes in legislation and law enforcement practice on the moral state of society concerning the Armed Forces and military operations after the collapse of the USSR. In conclusion, a summary of the research is given. The relevance of the ideas of Russian thinkers about the need for a clear definition of the concepts with which we describe reality, the relevance of non-violent conflict resolution, the priority of preserving and developing human-oriented culture, law and morality for the formation of a healthy society with the conditions of the Noosphere are drawn.

Keywords: *Russian philosophy; ethics of war; ethics of peace; anthropological catastrophe; post-non-classical war; repressive laws; noosphere*

I. Introduction

The first question we ask is whether there is an ethics of war. It seems that incompatible words are combined in this combination, or is it an oxymoron,[1] a concept with zero volume, denoting something that does not exist, as, for example, is reflected in the

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[1] See, among others, Armen Sargsyan, "The Problem of the Legitimacy of War in the Context of Ethical Concepts: The Example of the 44-day War," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 545-563.

titles of famous works *The Living Corpse* by Leo Tolstoy, *Dead Souls* by Nikolai Gogol, *Optimistic Tragedy* by Vsevolod Vishnevsky or *True Lies* — the action movie by James Cameron?

"War" will initially be defined as a conflict between political entities (states, political groups, etc.), in the form of armed confrontation, and military (combat) actions between their armed forces. For example, the *Philosophical Dictionary* defines war as "an armed struggle between states or peoples, between classes within a state."[2]

Unlike ordinary forms of violence, wars create for a person an existential situation of the need for violence, calling into question not only individual norms of morality but also the very foundation of modern morality, actualizing the main philosophical and anthropological question of "how to remain human in an inhuman situation?"[3]

The current existential situation is significantly aggravated by what M. Mamardashvili called an "anthropological catastrophe," going into a kind of "behind the looking glass," an imitation of being that destroys the foundations of culture:

> the destruction of the foundations of civilization produces something with the human element, with the human matter of life, expressed in anthropological catastrophe, which, perhaps, is the prototype of any other, possible global catastrophes.[4]

At the same time, the big problem of the modern world is the phenomenon of the "mass man" — a phenomenon of mass culture,[5] or "an insignificant person, a banal person" who does not have critical, objective thinking. This is one of the consequences of the "ordinary nature of evil,"[6] associated with the commission of atrocities "by order," "out of a sense of duty," "duties," etc. — without reflection, awareness and responsibility for their actions.[7]

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[2] Ivan T. Frolov, ed., *Philosophical Dictionary* (Moskva: Respublika 1991), 93 [in Russian].

[3] Petar Boyanich, ed., *The Ethics of War in the Countries of Orthodox Culture: Collective Monograph* (Sankt-Peterburg: Vladimir Dal', 2022) [in Russian]. On maintaining humanism in what is probably the most challenging duty during wartime, the doctor's duty to the suffering, see also Lu-Vada Dunford, "Doctors with Borders," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 95-128.

[4] Merab Mamardashvili, "Consciousness and Civilization," in *How I Understand Philosophy,* ed. Yuri P. Senokosov, 107-122 (Moskva: Progress, 1992), 107 [in Russian].

[5] José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (London: Routledge, 1961). The translator at his own request remains anonymous.

[6] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

[7] For an existential outlook on war, see Purissima Emelda Egbekpalu, Paschal Onyi Oguno, and

The concept of "peace" in Russian is polysemantic. The explanatory dictionary of the Russian language identifies seven meanings of the word "peace" to denote the Universe or Universum and three to denote the absence of war.[8] In this study, we use the concept of peace not only as the absence of war and violence but also as a healthy state of society, which provides opportunities for the physical and spiritual development of a human being in harmony with the universe (from the ancient Greek understanding of the unity of micro and macrocosm).

The concept of "ethics" is defined as a set of norms of behavior, the morality of a particular social group, and the doctrine of morality (morality), its principles, norms and role in society. There are positive ethical categories or moral principles of war – courage, masculinity, nobility, honor, fortitude, wisdom, resourcefulness, military strategy, valour, self-defence, national self-consciousness, etc.

Given the different types of wars, the status of the participants, ethical principles also differ. According to their scale, wars are divided into world (conflicts of a planetary nature) and local (conflicts of local significance). In addition, wars are divided into "external" (external warfare) and "internal" (internal warfare). An external war is a war with an external enemy, with another state (in turn, it is divided into defensive or attacking, liberation or predatory, for example, colonial). Internal war takes place within the state (civil war). Depending on the space in which military operations are predominantly carried out, wars are classified as air, sea, and ground wars, while regarding the nature and methods of confrontation, they can be classified as information wars, cold wars, distraction wars, etc.

Currently, the concept of post-non-classical war is substantiated, the content of which will be discussed in more detail below.[9] Accordingly, the ethos and ethics of war are not universal, since moral dilemmas are different: the norms of the military leader differ from the norms of the soldier,[10] the norms of the attackers from the norms of the defenders, the norms in relation to comrades-in-arms, enemies, civilians, norms at the front and norms in the rear, etc.

Princewill Iheanyi Alozie, "Dialectics of War as a Natural Phenomenon: Existential Perspective," *Conatus - Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023), 129-145.

[8] Sergei Ivanovich Ozhegov and Natalia Yulevna Shwedova, eds., *Dictionary of the Russian Language* (Moskva: Azbukovnik, 1999), 358 [in Russian].

[9] Irina N. Sidorenko, "Modern Wars: Transformation and Traditions," in *The Ethics of War in the Countries of Orthodox Culture: Collective Monograph*, ed. Petar Boyanich, 87-97 (Sankt-Peterburg: Vladimir Dal', 2022), 87 [in Russian].

[10] On the difference between the ethics of the leader and the ethics of the soldier, see George Boutlas, "Führerprinzip or 'I Was Following Orders' in Jus in Bello Era," *Conatus - Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 77-93.

Considering the diversity of wars and the statuses of participants, we answer the first question as follows: the ethics of war exist because war is built according to certain laws, including moral ones, and this ontology is reflected in the language of ethics through dialectically related opposite concepts of "peace" and "war," "good" and "evil," "non-violence/force" and "violence."

Although there are different opinions about the status of the existence of some alternatives – for example, in the pair "Light" and "Darkness" the first concept "Light" has being, while the second "darkness" is the absence of light, and, accordingly, being.[11]

There are also different positions on the nature of the interaction of alternatives. From the standpoint of dialectics, the dialectical nature of the unity and struggle of opposites indicates that one cannot exist without the other, and, at the same time, opposites are in a struggle, that is, in interaction aimed at mutual destruction.

If we evaluate the nature of the interaction of opposites from the standpoint of the noospheric approach (Vladimir Vernadsky[12] and others), then this is a complementary and interpenetrating interaction within the framework of a single whole. The ancient Greek mentality would describe it as a constant effort to balance the two opposite forces, knowing that if one of the forces overcomes the other, this world will collapse.[13]

In this journal, the issue that concerns the Ethics of War, the justification of war (not as its approval, but as an explanation of the nature of war and to propose possible solutions), has recently already been raised.[14] In continuation of the discussion, we will consider how the problem of the ethics of war and peace is posed in Russian philosophy and practice and what potential it contains that is relevant for contemporavity.

II. Comparative analysis of different positions in relation to the ethics of war and peace

The ethical contradictions of war gave rise to discussions about it in the philosophy of various periods, from ancient to modern thinkers.[15]

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[11] On being as deprivation, see Nikolaos Psarros, "The Nature of War," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 457-475.

[12] Vladimir I. Vernadsky, *Biosphere and Noosphere* (Moskva: Nauka, 1989) [in Russian].

[13] See Mirjana Stefanovski and Kosta Čavoški, "Polis, Loimos, Stasis: Thucydides about Disintegration of the Political System," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 629-656.

[14] Jovan Babic, "Ethics of War and Ethics in War," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 4, no. 1 (2019): 9-30. Also Jovan Babić, "War Ethics and War Morality: An Introduction," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 11-63.

[15] For a very insightful analysis see Jan Narveson, "War: Its Morality and Significance," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 445-456.

As early as the 6th century BC, Sun Tzu singled out three main forms of war: 1) the ideal is waged according to the principle "to subdue the enemy army without a fight" and is the pinnacle of military art; 2) less advantageous: destruction of the enemy's relations with his allies, weakening him by non-military means so that he prefers concessions to armed struggle; 3) the worst, severe and risky: the use of armed force; however, victory is not guaranteed and the risk of damage is high.

> To fight a hundred times and win a hundred times is not the best of the best; the best of the best is to subdue another's army without fighting. Therefore, the best war is to smash the enemy's plans; in the next place - to break his alliances; in the next place – to break his troops. The worst thing is to besiege fortresses.[16]

However, in the 20th century, despite all the achievements of civilization, "the worst" continues. In this paper, we will focus on philosophical discussions regarding the concepts of the ethics of war and peace, but I would like to mention two books that present the experience of the "field ethics" of the participants in the Great Patriotic War who managed to remain human in an inhuman situation – this is the hard trench truth of Nikolay N. Nikulin's *Memories of the War*,[17] as well as the female experience of the war in Svetlana Alexievich's "War does not have a woman's face."[18]

The main criterion for the moral choice of people in a situation of war in response to the above question: how to remain human in an inhuman situation? Such a formulation of the question has a philosophical and anthropological character, differing from the normative approaches common in the Anglo-American analytical tradition, which offer one or another justification for war (the theory of just war) and impose regulation of the behavior of combatants based on abstractly understood human rights.

This paper provides a brief comparative analysis of the positions formulated in Russian religious philosophy at the turn of the 19th-20th

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[16] Sun Tzu and Wu Tzu, *Treatises on the Art of War*, trans. N. I. Konrad (Moskva: Sankt-Peterburg, 2002), 20 [in Russan]. For a comparative analysis of the way war ethics have been developed in Europe and Asia, see Panagiotis Kallinikos, "Political Realism in the Chinese Warring States Period and the European Renaissance: Han Fei and Machiavelli," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2023), 127-166, especially 143ff.

[17] Nikolay N. Nikulin, *Memories of the War* (Sankt-Peterburg: AST, 2008) [in Russian].

[18] Svetlana Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War* (London: Penguin, 2018); see, also, Darija Rupčić Kelam, "Militarization of Everyday Life: Girls in Armed Conflicts," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 487-519.

century, as well as their implementation in world practice and the philosophical ideas of some modern thinkers at the turn of the 20th-21st century.

More specifically, we are talking about the controversy between the ethics of non-violence of Leo Tolstoy and his followers, for example, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., which is the basis of pacifism and anti-militarism on the one hand, and a wide range of positions that criticize non-resistance to evil and the denial of war in the teachings of Vladimir Solovyov, Ivan Ilyin, Nikolay Berdyaev, Anton Kersnovsky, Nikolay Lossky, Lev Shestov, Sergey Bulgakov, Vasily Rozanov, and other thinkers.

The central idea should be credited to Leo Tolstoy – the philosophy of non-violence. Tolstoy gradually formulated the principle of "non-resistance to evil by violence," relying on the ideas of the ancient sages and prophets Lao Tzu, Confucius, Buddha, Christ and others about the powerlessness of evil and the wisdom of non-violence. Tolstoy finds the true foundations of the philosophy of non-violence in the teachings of Christ:

> The provision on non-resistance to evil is the position that binds the teachings of Christ into one whole, but only when it is not a saying, but there is a rule that is obligatory for execution when it is a law.[19]

In order to reveal this provision as a practical norm elevated to law, Tolstoy rethinks the essence of the gospel commandment of non-resistance to evil. Opponents of Tolstoy argue, based on the Russian translation of the Bible, that even Jesus, the earthly embodiment of absolute goodness, is forced to say: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Luke 12:49-50). But if we turn to the Greek text, it says something else: Jesus is a cause of division:

> Πῦρ ἦλθον βαλεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ τί θέλω εἰ ἤδη ἀνήφθη. βάπτισμα δὲ ἔχω βαπτισθῆναι, καὶ πῶς συνέχομαι ἕως ὅτου τελεσθῇ. δοκεῖτε ὅτι εἰρήνην παρεγενόμην δοῦναι ἐν τῇ γῇ; οὐχί, λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀλλ᾽ ἢ διαμερισμόν.[20]

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[19] Leo N. Tolstoy, *What Is My Faith* (Moskva, 1913), 63 [in Russian].

[20] "I came to put fire on the earth and what else do I want if it is already kindled! But I have a test to go through, and I can't wait until I get it! Do you think that I have come to impose forced unity among people? Everything else; I assure you that my coming will bring divisions." Luke, 12: 49-51.

According to Luke, Jesus said that he came to set fire on earth and that he has already done this, but he is talking about fire in the hearts of people, enthusiasm and light (because if he had set fire literally, there would be fires around…!). He is also saying that he hasn't come to bring peace on earth, but division. Why? Because he knows that the earth is not a place for peace. And more of that, he declares that he came to pick up his own sheep, so he has come only for the ones that originate from Heaven (and that's the division).

There are several stages in the development of the idea of non-violence by Tolstoy from substantiating the commandment of non-resistance as a key principle of the entire Christian doctrine, in the work "What is my faith?," the principle of personal behavior, and as the law of social life "The Kingdom of God is within us, or Christianity is not a mystical teaching, but a new understanding of life" to systematization and popularization of the philosophy of non-resistance "Circle of reading," "For every day: the doctrine of life, outlined in sayings," "The way of life," "The Law of Violence and the Law of Love." The main manifestations of evil on earth Tolstoy considers violence and death.

Although the Christian doctrine of the "maliciousness of retribution" and non-resistance to evil by violence was clearly expressed and established, it did not become the norm of life, a false concept of the justice of retribution took root in people, and they continued to live according to the law of violence. Ultimately, the failure to fulfil the law of mutual service and the commandment of non-resistance led to the fact that the essence of Christianity was "more and more hidden," and many Christian peoples began to oppose each other, arm and fight against each other, which resulted in a complete denial of "not only Christianity but of any higher law."[21]

The leading categories, inextricably linked with the philosophy of non-resistance of Tolstoy, are the concepts of freedom and love. The thinker is convinced that repaying evil for evil increases it and a person who enters the fight against violence deprives himself of freedom.

Tolstoy turns to the Gospel, to the Sermon on the Mount. To be free, one must fulfil the highest law common to all mankind – the Christian law of non-violence: submissive, without struggle, enduring any kind of violence. If, however, violence concerns an entire people, for example, on the part of the state, then it is necessary not to resist the consequences of this violence, but to deal with its roots, that is,

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[21] *Christian Ethics. Systematic Essays on the Worldview of L.N. Tolstoy* (Yekaterinburg: Al'fa, 1994), 78 [in Russian].

with the false attitude of the people to human power. If the people recognize human power above God and his laws, then he will always be in a slave state and be subjected to violence. "Only that people can be free, for which the law of God is the single highest law, to which all others must be subject."[22]

Love is the most common concept in the works of Tolstoy. It is the power of life, its core. "Love is the rule for the fulfillment of all rules."[23] "It is worth understanding this, and all the evil of human life is immediately destroyed, and its meaning becomes clear and joyful."[24] Departure from the law "love your enemy" given by Christ, and other interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount, he believes the result of a compromise between church and state. Tolstoy becomes an ardent opponent of all war and all violence, relying on Christian teaching, primarily on the New Testament.

But in February 1901 Tolstoy was excommunicated from the Orthodox Church[25] and the opponents of his concept are becoming more and more. The modern Russian Orthodox Church also declares the incompatibility of pacifism with Orthodox teaching and applies this argument in courts that punish priests, recalling the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" and the words of the Gospel of Matthew (5:9) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God," for example:

> Pacifism, with which priest Burdin is trying to hide behind accusations against him, is not compatible with the actual teaching of the Orthodox Church, in particular, set forth in the 'Basics of the social concept of the Russian Orthodox Church'[26] pacifism, that is, the principled refusal for Christians to participate in wars, is usually an element of heretical, sectarian doctrines."[27]

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[22] Ibid., 82.

[23] Leo N. Tolstoy, *Complete Works in 90 Volumes*, Volume 42 (Moskva, 1956), 546.

[24] Ibid., 329

[25] "The Resolution of Their Holiness Synod in Regards to Leo Tolstoy, February 20-22, 1901," in *Tserkovye Vedomosti*, published under the Holy Governing Synod. No. 8 (February 24, 1901), 45-47 [in Russian].

[26] Russian Orthodox Church, "The Basics of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church," June 9, 2008, http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/419128.html.

[27] Kommersant, "The Russian Orthodox Church recalled the Incompatibility of Pacifism with Orthodox Teaching," June 11, 2023, https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6042113.

However, not all priests share the official position of the Russian Orthodox Church on the issue of war and peace. On March 1, 2022, the "Appeal of the Clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church with a Call for Reconciliation and an End to the War" was published.[28]

The Appeal speaks of the pricelessness of every human life and calls to peace. The priests also drew attention to the mass detentions of Russians at anti-war actions: "No non-violent call for peace and an end to the war should be forcibly suppressed and considered as a violation of the law, for such is the divine commandment: 'Blessed are the peacemakers.'"

Despite the large number of opponents, the ideas of Tolstoy had a huge impact on the worldview of people and their development had a successful practical implementation. Let us note the most significant examples of the implementation of the idea of Tolstoy in world practice.

The qualitative difference between the activities of M. Gandhi in comparison with his predecessors in the history of non-violent movements of the 20th century lies in giving the principle of non-violence a broad social character. Gandhi replaced Tolstoy's non-resistance to evil with non-violent resistance. His approach is incomparably more effective, it is not humility, but an active protest. He is not aimed at personally being innocent of evil, refraining from evil deeds, or protecting his autonomy, as was the case with Tolstoy, but at putting an end to evil, and re-persuade the bearers of evil.

The key concepts in Mahatma Gandhi's concept of non-violence are "Ahimsa" and "Satyagraha." "Ahimsa" is "the avoidance of killing and harming by action, word and thought to all living beings,"[29] "Satyagraha" – "firmness in truth."[30] In fact, "Satyagraha" is an original technique of political struggle, the purpose of which is to improve relations with the enemy, to achieve harmony in the relations of various people and groups. With the help of well-thought-out non-violent actions of Gandhi and his supporters, and the organization of non-participation in the invaders' businesses, the Indian people managed to gain independence from the colonialists.

The experience of the movement organized by Gandhi proves the effectiveness of the theory of Tolstoy, that it is the principle of non-vi-

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[28] Tsarkva i palitychny kryzis u Belarusi, "Appeal of the Clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church with a Call for Reconciliation and an End to the War," March 1, 2022, https://belarus2020.churchby.info/appeal-of-clergy-of-the-russian-orthodox-church-for-reconciliation-and-ending-the-war/.

[29] *Ethics. Encyclopedic Dictionary* (Moskva: Gardariki, 2001), 30 [in Russian].

[30] Ibid., 309.

olence that should be used in resolving complex political conflicts. At the same time, after the death of Gandhi, there is an increase in inter-religious conflicts in India and Pakistan.

The fact that Gandhi brought non-violence to a new, social level is its strength and inconsistency. On the one hand, it has been clearly shown that nonviolent resistance can be a powerful means of social transformation. On the other hand, by introducing the principle of non-violence into politics, Gandhi brought it out of that context when it was considered exclusively in the context of morality, as was the case with Tolstoy. The logical harmony of Tolstoyism is explained by the unity of its initial principles. This is ethical teaching. The ideas of Gandhi developed in two planes – as an ethical doctrine and as a social, political movement, and Gandhi himself had to bifurcate, and act simultaneously as a political leader and as a religious prophet.

One should consider the differences between the theoretical teachings of Gandhi and their implementation in practice – politics with deviations from the ideal and a compromise with social and political forces that are far from the ethical principles of Gandhi.[31]

The same differences are manifested in the implementation of the method of non-violent resistance – Satyagraha. Non-violence for Gandhi is not just a political tactic, but the fundamental principle of a holistic worldview, teaching about the meaning of life and ways of moral self-improvement. This doctrine covers the attitude of a person to himself, to other people, to the environment. In addition to all-pervading ethical requirements, it includes the rules of diet (vegetarianism) and hygiene, closeness to nature, physical labor, and social ideals. Instead of the European type of state (an instrument of violence of the ruling class), Gandhi proposes the ideal of Sarvodaya – a federation of self-governing communities that does not need an army and police. This is a "non-violent state." Sarvodaya is a variant of utopian peasant socialism with signs of non-violent anarchism.[32]

In the concept of non-violence (ahimsa), Gandhi saw "the key to all social problems."[33] Violence as an alternative to the principle of ahimsa is not limited to deprivation of life, physical coercion, or infliction of physical suffering, it also includes various forms of exploitation, and even inaction, when it turns into passive connivance. Malevolence,

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[31] Dhawan Gopi, *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1951), 47.

[32] Mahatma Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj, or Indian Home Rule* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1933).

[33] Pyarelal Nayyar, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Fast Phase*, Volume 2 (Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1958), 142.

malice, cruelty, rudeness, oppression of the weak and deprivation of their self-esteem are also violations of Ahimsa.

The concept of another active supporter of the principle of non-violence, M. L. King, is based on the ideas of L. N. Tolstoy and M. Gandhi. What distinguishes him from his predecessors is his special attention to the practical side of non-violent methods. King, as a Christian priest, advocated the protection of civil rights through non-violence and civil disobedience, methods determined by his Christian beliefs and the non-violent practices of Gandhi. In his sermons, he spoke of the human need for God's love and criticized manifestations of racial injustice in Western civilization,[34] which included his sermon "What is Man?" and "The Dimensions of a Complete Life."

An important role was played by his oral presentations, which are still considered classics of oratory, as well as a clear and consistent algorithm of actions, which he describes in detail in his works. references "Letter from Birmingham Prison," "I Have a Dream," "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence." He called for achieving equality by peaceful means – with the help of marches, economic boycotts, mass exoduses into prisons and so on.

Due to the large number of protests led by King in 1964, the "Civil rights Act of 1964" and the "Voting Rights Act of 1965" were issued. In a short time, the situation of black people in the United States has rapidly improved. However, M. L. King, like M. Gandhi, died a violent death. After his death, numerous clashes between the black and white population in America become more frequent. During the life of M. L. King, as also after his death, black citizens not only sought equality but also received benefits in various areas. However, after a few decades, it becomes clear that benefits often turn the "other side of the coin," sometimes leading to the opposite phenomenon – black racism.[35] These facts give rise to dilemmas in assessing the success of the principle of non-violence. The reasons for the sharp increase in aggression after the death of the ideologues of nonviolence and their violent deaths require a separate study.

Let us turn to positions alternative to pacifism in Russian philosophy. A new quality of reflection on the war by Russian thinkers (many of whom were forced to emigrate) in the context of the Orthodox faith was formed with the end of the World War I and the beginning of a new period in the history of Russia when it was necessary to comprehend

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[34] Martin Luther King, Jr, *Measure of a Man* (Tauranga: Papamoa Press, 2017).

[35] Eduard L. Nitoburg, "On Some Aspects of the Racial Problem In The United States At The Turn Of The 20th - 21st Centuries," *New and Contemporary History* 1 (2008), 78 [in Russian].

the events of the Revolution and the Civil War. At the same time, moral justification is given not to war as such (it remains evil), but to the need to participate in it and the way it is waged.

> In the minds of many people, the former worldview and ideological system, on which more than one generation of citizens of our country was brought up, turned out to be dismantled, and a new, clear, accessible and understandable to everyone has not yet been created.[36]

The principle of non-resistance to evil by force is criticized by V. S. Solovyov, N. A. Berdyaev, A. A. Kersnovsky, I. A. Ilyin, N. O. Lossky, L. Shestov, S. N. Bulgakov, V. V. Rozanov, and others. Of these, the most profound is the position of Solovyov.[37] He sees the true view of the philosophy of Good and Evil in Christian teaching and the Orthodox religion, while he does not believe that the true religious view of war lies in non-resistance and pacifism. Everything Good is from God, and Evil is from the Devil, and is characteristic of weak human nature. Evil strikes a person from the inside, but this does not mean at all that it is useless to fight it. Evil is contrary to God, therefore, it is not only allowed, but even necessary to use defense and self-defense against an evil person. According to Solovyov, there are times when you need to use protection and self-defense, and even harshly respond to the enemy.

The philosopher, although he recognizes evil in war, since war involves murder, nevertheless he believes that war can be just. Solovyov consistently reveals the shortcomings of the teachings of L.N. Tolstoy. In religion, Goodness is inextricably linked with the person of Christ. Tolstoy refers to the Sermon on the Mount and absolutizes the principle of non-resistance to evil by force. The person of Jesus Christ not only fades into the background but is also denied by him. This means that the foundations of the Christian faith itself are denied, and as a result, an incorrect understanding of Good and Evil in his teaching. If, nevertheless, they want to refer to any figure from religious history, then the honest choice for Tolstoy and his followers would be not Christ, but Buddha.[38]

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[36] Yuri O. Rostislavsky, "Views of the Russian Emigration on Patriotism and Modernity," *Proceedings of the Russian State Pedagogical University named after A. I. Herzen* 119 (2009), 176 [in Russian].

[37] Vladimir S. Solovyov, "Three Conversations About War, Progress And The End Of World History," in *Works: In 2 Volumes*, Volume 2 (Moskva: Mysl', 1990), 635-761[in Russian].

[38] Vladimir S. Solovyov, "Three Conversations on War, Progress, and the End of World History,

Tolstoy's idea of non-resistance to evil by violence, according to Solovyov, in practice means the failure to provide effective assistance to the victims of evil.[39] Evil manifests itself not only on the individual or social level, but also on the physical. And salvation from this evil is possible only with the help of higher powers, namely resurrection. Without a true resurrection, goodness is such only in appearance, but not in essence.

Berdyaev saw war and revolution as spiritual trials: "judges of people and peoples living in a rupture of divine-human ties." Berdyaev noted that in a situation of war, the power of the collective prevails over the individual since only when personal consciousness is weakened and group consciousness is strengthened, people can fight.[40] The thinker writes that "the world war, in the bloody cycle of which all parts of the world and all races are already involved, should in bloody torments give birth to a firm consciousness of universal unity."[41] It should lead to a renewal of the spirit of states, peoples, as well as a person who recognizes himself as part of a community, where he is united in his spiritual impulses with other Christians striving to end violence.

Although there is evil in every person, the task of a Christian is to fight this evil, thereby realizing his nature. War is a test of man's free will, which is given to him by God. The acceptance of war is the acceptance of tragic horror: "The whole horror of life is lived out by a Christian, like a cross and atonement for guilt."[42]

The dual nature of war is manifested in the fact that it can simultaneously lead to the loss of spirituality, but at the same time, it is the war that can become the beginning for universal love. In a situation of war, according to Berdyaev, a person may for the first time have to realize his freedom of choice: either give up freedom, or, despite all the hardships, follow the path of a Christian, accepting this freedom and correlating it with the will of God. Only the second path is right for the believer, and by following this path, you can save your soul and find God.

Including a Short Story on the Antichrist and with Appendices," in *The Meaning of Love. Selected Works*, ed. N. Tsimbaev, 293-427 (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 296 [in Russian].

[39] Ibid., 326.

[40] Nikolay A. Berdyaev, *Existential Dialectics of the Divine and the Human* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1952), 126.

[41] Nikolay A. Berdyaev, "The Soul of Russia," in *Russian Philosophers about War*, ed. I. Danilenko, 269-285 (Moskva: Kuchkovo Pole, 2005), 271 [in Russian].

[42] Nikolay A. Berdyaev, "Thoughts on the Nature of War," in *Russian Philosophers about War*, ed. I. Danilenko, 286-294 (Moskva: Kuchkovo Pole, 2005), 291 [in Russian].

Unlike N.A. Berdyaev, who did not participate in revolutionary movements and the Civil War, Kersnovsky analyzes the essence of war also on the basis of Christian ethics, but as a result of his own experience of participating in hostilities. The thinker defines war as a means:

> War is waged not to kill, but to win. The main goal of war is victory, the ultimate goal is peace, the restoration of harmony, which is the natural state of human society. Everything else is excesses, and excesses are harmful. When dictating peace to a defeated enemy, one should be guided by strict moderation, not drive him to despair with excessive demands that only breed hatred, and therefore, sooner or later, new wars. To force the enemy to respect the winner, and for this [...] to respect the national and simply human dignity of the vanquished.[43]

Considering war as a "disease" of society, and peace as a healthy state, to which a normal society strives, Kersnovsky opposes pacifism, since it is dangerous for the state:

> By strengthening our state organism with an appropriate regime, external and internal, and by prevention, we will increase its resistance as pacifist utopias outside, and Marxist false teachings from within, therefore, we will reduce the risk of war, both external and civil.[44]

Kersnovsky distinguishes three types of war. The first is the wars that are waged in defense of the highest spiritual values and are just. The second, more frequent type is wars unleashed in the name of the interests of the state and the nation. The third type is wars that do not meet the interests and needs of the state and nation.[45]

In contrast to Tolstoy's principle of "non-resistance to evil by force," he offers a different understanding:

> The mistake of the 'non-resistors to evil' is that they seek to give a public character to the personal teachings of Christ. Christ did not say that those who took up the sword would

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[43] Anton A. Kersnovsky, "On the Nature of War," in *Military Thought in Exile: Creativity of Russian Military Emigration*, ed. I. Domnin, 16-29 (Moskva: Russkiy put', 1999), 22 [in Russian].

[44] Ibid., 28.

[45] Ibid., 19

perish from leprosy, an earthquake, or fire from heaven. They can only die by the sword. However, for this you need to fight with a sword and resort to a just war. Therefore, a true Christian believer can justify his participation in the war, if this war is just.[46]

Ilyin in his work *On Resistance to Evil by Force* criticizes the teachings of Tolstoy for the absolute denial of violence and war. Considering the main thing in the war is its moral inconsistency, Ilyin begins the spiritual understanding of the war from the main question: "Is it permissible to kill a person? Can a person conscientiously allow himself to kill another person?"[47] For Ilyin, the inadmissibility of killing one person by another is a moral axiom, it is not the business of a person to encroach on what only God has the right to do. But the worst thing is that murder destroys the human soul. Therefore, there can be no moral justification for murder. Ilyin writes that the side that must defend itself is forced to turn to evil and use murder to counteract evil. This is precisely the main contradiction of war when conscience focuses on avoiding violence, and reality requires killing to achieve peace.

> Can a person striving for moral perfection resist evil with force and sword? Can a person who believes in God, who accepts His universe and his place in the world, not resist evil with a sword and strength? Here is a two-pronged question that now requires a new formulation and a new resolution.[48]

Not every war has a spiritual justification, but every war is a shock and a test for the people who participate in it. It can be justified only when the motives that prompted people to direct their weapons against another people are right.[49] War can both harden a person and awaken evil, and lead to "cleansing love and spiritual insight," thereby raising a person above evil.[50]

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[46] Ibid., 19

[47] Ivan A. Ilyin, "The Main Moral Contradiction of War," in *Collected Works in 10 Volumes*, Volume 5 (Moskva: Russkaya kniga, 1996), 14 [in Russian].

[48] Ivan A. Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil By Force* (Moskva: Dar', 2005), 3 [in Russian].

[49] Ivan A. Ilyin, *Spiritual Meaning of War*, https://azbyka.ru/otechnik/Ivan_Ilin/duhovnyj-smysl-vojny, [in Russian].

[50] For the unexpected role of emotions that emerge in the face or during the war, see Bernhard Koch, "Anger and Reconciliation," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 279-298.

> The very resistance to evil as such always remains a good, righteous and proper deed. The more difficult this resistance, the greater the dangers and sufferings it involves, the greater the feat and merit of the resister.[51]

Ilyin speaks of the special moral value of masculinity and heroism, emphasizing that these virtues are key not only in the value system of secular and military ethics, but also in the Orthodox one. The thinker emphasizes that many Christian saints were warriors. Despite these compelling arguments, Berdyaev does not agree with Ilyin, nor with Tolstoy: "L. Tolstoy was also suffocated with good, the inverse similarity of which is I. Ilyin [...]."[52] As Berdyaev notes, the mistake of Tolstoy and Ilyin lies in the wrong approach to the philosophy of good and evil. He reveals his idea of the meaning of war in the work *The Fate of Russia: Experiments on the Psychology of War and Nationality*. Berdyaev considers it necessary to respect the enemy but does not speak out either "for" or "against" war – in his opinion, war is a grave necessity. Hence Berdyaev's negative attitude towards pacifism. However, in his opinion, pacifist and Tolstoy "moods" played a role in the preparation of the people's consciousness before the war.[53] The experience of war leads Berdyaev, Kersnovsky, and Ilyin to rethink the essence of war in the context of Christian ethics, in which faith can become a guide to the moral renewal of a person, accepting personal responsibility for violence and murders and justifying acts of evil.

As for modern researchers of the ethics of war and peace, the idea of non-violence in the understanding of L.N. Tolstoy does not lose its relevance in the modern world, including outside of Russia. But there are other approaches as well. S. D. Khaitun substantiates the autogenetic concept of evolution, the idea of "catastrophic noise," which stimulates evolutionary self-assembly and therefore is always present in the life of societies. War, the market, and science are special mechanisms created by civilization to generate "catastrophic noise," which ensure its survival and which at the same time threaten its death due to the fatal imperfection in controlling the level of "catastrophic

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[51] Ivan A. Ilyin, "On Resistance to Evil by Force," in *Why Do We Believe in Russia. Works*, 375-576 (Moskva: Eksmo, 2007), 549 [in Russian].

[52] Nikolay A. Berdyaev, "Nightmare of Evil Goodness," *The Way* 4 (1926): 103 [in Russian].

[53] Nikolay A. Berdyaev, *The Fate of Russia. Experiments on the Psychology of War and Nationality* (Moskva: Filosofskoye obshchestvo SSSR, 1990), 162 [in Russian].

noise."[54] A. P. Nazaretyan, exploring the non-linear relationship between the growth of the technological potential of society and the improvement of the mechanisms developed by it to deter aggression. formulates the law of techno-humanitarian balance, or the law of evolutionary correlations: the higher the power of production and combat technologies, the more qualitative means of self-restraint are necessary for the survival of society.[55] It is noted that in proportion to the power of technology, the price of violence has increased dramatically: local events are more fraught with far-reaching consequences than ever, including the threat of a global catastrophe.[56] A. G. Dugin draws attention to the deep ontological roots of war:

> It is rooted in being itself. Moreover, war is even in something deeper than being, since it precedes it. Being is born out of war. This was stated by the ancient philosopher Heraclitus, who called war the father of things. He defines the world as 'the cosmic community of being without war' or 'the cosmos of human community,' but 'the state, people, culture are always forced to fight in order to remain themselves, to survive.'[57]

As for the relationship between "cold" and "hot" wars in the modern era, even at the end of the 20th century there were statements that bloody wars were being replaced by "bloodless," "non-painful," "civilized" wars, in which goals are not achieved through direct armed intervention, but through the use of other forms of violence (economic, diplomatic, informational, psychological, etc.).[58]

Thus, the military strategy is radically changing: the predominance of indirect actions associated with political, economic and moral-psychological influence on the enemy, methods of disinformation and undermining from within. However, two decades later, we see a different picture. The formation and development of modern concepts of war was greatly influenced by K. Clausewitz, who revealed the connection

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[54] Sergey D. Khaitun, *Socium Against Man: The Laws of Social Evolution* (Moskva: KomKniga, 2006) [in Russian].

[55] Akop P. Nazaretyan, *Aggression, Morality and Crises in the Development of World Culture* (Moskva: Nasledie, 1996) [in Russian].

[56] Akop P. Nazaretyan, *Civilizational Crises in the Context of Universal History: Synergetics, Psychology and Futurology* (Moskva, Saratov: PER SE, IP Er Media, 2001) [in Russian].

[57] Alexander G. Dugin, *Russian War* (Moskva: Rodina, 2015) [in Russian].

[58] V. P. Gulin, "On the New Concept of War," *Military Thought* 2 (1997): 15 [in Russian].

between politics and armed struggle. The outcome of the war, according to his thought, depends on three components: the armed forces, the territory and the will of the enemy.[59] In the description of modern warfare, the term "post-non-classical" is used. The classification of development stages into classical, non-classical and post-non-classical periods is highlighted in the Philosophy of Science by V. S. Stepin.[60]

Post-non-classical warfare (modern low-intensity military conflicts, irregular warfare, hybrid warfare, conventional warfare, etc.) can be defined as a "culturally determined activity"[61] and to a lesser extent depends on the production and economic sphere. In contrast to the position of K. Clausewitz, the German philosopher H. Hofmeister defended the idea that modern war is no longer a means of politics, but its negation, since the impotence of politics gives rise to war. Powerlessness here is understood not as anarchy, but as the inability of the elite to use power as a political means. Given that H. Hofmeister limited politics to the possibilities of words, it is legitimate to consider the war as violence that replaced verbal arguments.[62]

One of the essential reasons for the transformation of war is related to the fact that modern wars are changing their tasks. If in the New Age wars were largely a tool for creating nation-states, then the post-non-classical war is waged not so much by nation-states as it is carried out through complex and shadow multi-movements of the main players, such as multinational corporations, commercial military organizations, security services, mobile brigades without state markers, etc. e. instead of the primary goal of defeating and capturing enemy territory, the goal is now to create zones of tension in order to manipulate in order to obtain economic benefits and the shadow capture of the enemy's resource base.

The above concepts, which, of course, do not exhaust the existing points of view on the nature of war and peace, can be classified as follows. War can be just. It is acceptable, although it is a sad necessity. Therefore, one must always remember about military virtue, and educate those who must defend the Fatherland, for the military protection

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[59] Carl von Clausewitz, *On the War*, trans. A.K. Rachinsky (Moskva; Nauka, 1998), 75 [in Russian].

[60] Vyacheslav S. Stepin, "Classics, Non-classics, Post-non-classics: Criteria For Difference," in *Post-non-classics: Philosophy, Science, Culture*, ed. L. P. Kiyaschenko and V. S. Stepin, 249-295 (Sankt-Petersburg: Mir, 2009) [in Russian].

[61] Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War: The Most Radical Reinterpretation of Armed Conflict Since Clausewitz* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 274.

[62] Heimo von Hofmeister, *Der Wille zum Krieg oder die Ohnmacht der Politik: Ein Philosophisch-politiscner Traktat* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2001).

of the state is a guarantee of strong peace and valiant victories.[63] So Ilyin, Berdyaev, Kersnovsky, and others.

War is permissible only as a last resort, although it can be just. Therefore, the advantage in resolving various issues, especially political ones, should be given to diplomatic methods, education of high morality, as well as strengthening the strength of faith and spirit. Supporters of these views "gently reject violence, allowing for exceptions."[64] Among them, we include the points of view of Solovyov and his supporters. War is an absolute evil, it must be completely abandoned. The position of non-violence features Tolstoy, Gandhi, King, Schweitzer, Huseynov, and others. Violence and wars are a factor of social development; periods of increased and maximally reduced aggression alternate in the world. This is the view of Nazaretyan, Khaitun, Dugin, and others.

In general, in the history of Russian philosophy, in addition to absolute ethical assessments of war and peace, there were also relative ones. So, for example, N. G. Chernyshevsky, relying on the Hegelian principle of the concreteness of truth, believed that the question "Is war harmful or beneficial?" is impossible to answer unambiguously: "You need to know what kind of war the case is about, everything depends on the circumstances, time and place."[65] Similar views in "Three Conversations" are held by V. S. Solovyov: "Yes… war is not unconditional evil and that peace is not unconditional good. Or, to put it simply, that a good war is possible and happens, a bad peace is possible and happens."[66] However, as shown above, the majority of Russian philosophers in the moral aspect considered war as an unconditional evil, and peace as good.

III. The impact of modern changes in Russian law and law enforcement practice on the moral state of society

This part of the study presents the dual impact on the moral state of society of the most high-profile criminal cases related to the army and

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[63] On the significance of military ethics education, see David Whetham, "Military Ethics Education – What Is It, How Should It Be Done, and Why Is It Important?" *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 759-774.

[64] *Ethics: Encyclopedic dictionary* (Moskva: Gardariki, 2001), 304 [in Russian].

[65] Nikolay G. Chernyshevsky, "Essays on the Gogol period of Russian Literature," in *Selected Philosophical Writings*, ed. M. M. Grigoryan, 408-796 (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoy literatury, 1950), 669 [in Russian].

[66] Vladimir S. Solovyov, "Three Conversations about War, Progress and the End of World History," *Works: In 2 vols*, Vol. 2 (Moskva: Mysl', 1990), 651 [in Russian].

war – on the one hand, this is a corrupting impact, and on the other, an impact that unites and consolidates the efforts of opponents of corruption, violence, etc.

Legal precedents can be divided into several groups; criminal cases of the last 3 decades concerning the highest officials of the Russian Defense Ministry, cases arising from the adoption of recent repressive laws, as well as the release from criminal liability of participants in the so-called "Special Military Operation." After the collapse of the USSR, hundreds of senior officials of the Ministry of Defense committed misconduct, falling under the articles of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, however, only a few were convicted. This has never happened in the entire 300-year history of the Russian Armed Forces. The main reasons for avoiding criminal liability are the closing of criminal cases due to influential connections; dependence of judges and prosecutors, military law enforcement agencies on higher military leaders; and amnesty.[67]

For example, in 1994, a criminal case was initiated and soon closed on the purchase by the Minister of Defense P. Grachev (1992-1996) of a Mercedes at the expense of the army. Journalist V. Poegli, who wrote the article "Pasha-Mercedes. A thief should be in prison [...] and not be the Minister of Defense" became the first journalist in the history of Russian justice convicted of insulting him. During Grachev's work as Minister of Defense, the withdrawal of troops from the countries participating in the Warsaw Pact Organization and the republics of the former USSR to the territory of the Russian Federation was organized, the reform of the Russian army and navy began, which led to a decrease in the combat readiness of units and subunits.[68]

The morale and fighting spirit of not only the army, but also a significant part of society began to decline. In 2012, A. Serdyukov (2007-2012) was dismissed after a high-profile corruption scandal about embezzlement in the Oboronservis company subordinate to the Ministry of Defense. At first, Serdyukov was a witness in a corruption case. In 2013, a criminal case was initiated against ex-Minister of Defense A. Serdyukov for damage to the state in the amount of more than 56 million rubles. Already at the beginning of 2014, Serdyukov fell under amnesty in connection with the 20th anniversary of the constitution.[69]

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[67] Komsomolskaya Pravda, "Non-judicial Generals," July 14, 2003, https://www.kp.ru/daily/23071/4970/.

[68] Tass, "Ministers of Defense of Russia since 1991. Dossier," May 18, 2018, https://tass.ru/info/5212992.

[69] Ibid.

Under A. Serdyukov (who did not have a military education), large-scale reforms began in the Russian Federation Armed Forces: changing the organizational structure of the army and the procurement system, halving the number of military personnel, reducing the number of military universities from 65 to 10, closing a number of military hospitals in the regions, disbanding the Main Directorate of Combat Training. The decline in the level of education, corruption scandals in the army, and the avoidance of responsibility by senior military officials certainly affected the degradation of the moral component of military training and service, which had an impact on the degradation of morality in society as a whole.

On the other hand, there are precedents for the "untimely death" of generals and admirals who were highly respected in the troops (for example, one of the most active opposition leaders is General L. Rokhlin (1998),[70] General A. Lebed (2002),[71] Vice Admiral Yu. Shumanin (1993)[72], who in 1991 opposed the coup d'etat in the country and the seizure of power by Yeltsin. They stopped military operations and criticized the actions of the authorities. The official versions of their deaths raise many questions and doubts.

In terms of legislative change, since 2018, the legislature has passed more than 50 repressive laws restricting the rights and freedoms of civil society, depriving independent media of the right to vote, tightening restrictions on "foreign agents" and "undesirable organizations," and eliminating the right to peaceful protest.

In 2022, the State Duma of the Russian Federation adopted 653 laws. This is a record number in the history of the Russian parliament. The new reality is reflected in the Russian legal field. Among other things, laws were passed regulating the mobilization and a ban on expressing one's disagreement with what is happening in connection with the war in Ukraine, and the introduction of new "subjects" into the Russian Federation. In particular, in 2022, the following laws were adopted regarding the authorities and the armed forces:

- The introduction of military censorship to "discredit the army:" No. 31-FZ "On Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation."[73]

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[70] Andrey Antipov, *Lev Rokhlin: The Life and Death of a General* (Moskva: EKSMO-Press, 1998) [in Russian].

[71] Redaktsiia, "The Life and Fate of General Lebed, Who Stopped Two Wars," February 23, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fxhTn05OVY&t=1085s.

[72] Shumanin Vladimir, "The Death of my Father ıs not an Accident," April 22, 2008, https://kamchatka.aif.ru/archive/1780710.

[73] "No. 31-FZ On Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Fed-

- The introduction of military censorship on "fakes about the army:" No. 32-FZ "On Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and Articles 31 and 151 of the Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian Federation."[74]
- The introduction of military censorship to "discredit the Russian authorities:" No. 62-FZ "On Amending Articles 8.32 and 20.3.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation."[75]
- The introduction of military censorship of "fakes about the Russian authorities:" No. 63-FZ "On Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and Articles 150 and 151 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Federation."[76]
- Prohibition on execution of ECHR decisions. No. 180-FZ "On Amending the Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian Federation."[77]
- Updating the legislation on "foreign agents:" No. 255-FZ "On control over the activities of persons under foreign influence."[78]

The law introduces vague concepts of "foreign influence" and "support" and expands the concept of "political activity." Now "political" can be recognized as activities in the field of charity, culture, sports, and environmental protection. The law also excludes "foreign agents" from key aspects of civilian life.

In 2023, laws were passed to prohibit discrediting and defamation of participants in the so-called "Special Military Operation" (next – SMO), including volunteer units, organizations or individuals: No. 58-FZ "On Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federa-

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eration," March 2022, http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202203040006.

[74] "No. 32-FZ On Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and Articles 31 and 151 of the Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian Federation," March 2022, http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202203040007.

[75] "No. 62-FZ On Amending Articles 8.32 and 20.3.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation," March 2022, http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202203250069.

[76] "No. 63-FZ On Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and Articles 150 and 151 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Federation," March 2022, http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202203250068.

[77] "No. 180-FZ On Amending the Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian Federation," June 2022, http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202206110031.

[78] "No. 255-FZ On Control Over the Activities of Persons Under Foreign Influence," December 2022, http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202212050039.

tion"[79] and No. 57-FZ On Amendments to Articles 13.15 and 20.3-3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation.[80] The maximum term of imprisonment is up to 15 years, and fines are up to 5 million rubles.

Another group of cases involves accusations of evading participation in SMO. As for the consequences of the Decree on mobilization, which entered into force on September 21, 2022, if hundreds of such cases were brought to the Russian courts at the end of December 2022,[81] by mid-2023, there were already thousands of cases against military personnel under articles toughened after the start of mobilization. The cases concern contract servicemen and those mobilized due to unauthorized abandonment of a unit, refusal to comply with orders to be sent to Ukraine or desertion from the front. But it is quite difficult to find out the details of the case and what kind of punishment the court imposed. Many military courts close the processes, explaining this by a decree of the Ministry of Defense on secrecy.

Since the announcement of partial mobilization, contracts with the Ministry of Defense have become indefinite. It's impossible to quit. Only death, mutilation or prison. The very first and most resonant, directly related to freedom of conscience and ethics, was the case of Dmitry Vasilets' conscious refusal to participate in the war in Ukraine.[82] He participated in the hostilities in Ukraine from February 2022 for five months, and lost two close friends there; after their death he converted to Buddhism and became a pacifist: "I made a conscious decision based on my principles and the philosophy of Buddhism. [...] We need to help each other more and protect in such difficult times. I realized that there is light in every person, and I cannot afford to take the life of another person, this the line, the red line that I can't cross." It is better to go to prison than to betray yourself, than to step over humanity. I won't be able to say to myself later: "I was ordered to do this" – this

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[79] "No. 58-FZ On Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation," March, 2023, http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202303180006.

[80] "No. 57-FZ On Amendments to Articles 13.15 and 20.3-3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation," March 2023, http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202303180005.

[81] Anna Pavlova, "When Soldiers Say No. Hundreds of Russian Servicemen Face Trial in Defiance of Ukraine Deployment, Mediazona Study Reveals," April 11, 2023, https://en.zona.media/article/2023/04/11/500.

[82] Tatiana Britskaia, "First of All, I Must Be a Person, and Then a Citizen," June 2, 2023, https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2023/06/02/v-pervuiu-ochered-ia-dolzhen-byt-chelovekom-a-potom-uzhe-grazhdaninom.

will not be an excuse. My soul is in my hands."[83] In this case, we see a significant difference between a conscious choice and the position voiced in another well-known court after World War II, when the Nazi criminal Eichmann (a good friend, family man and at the same time an executor of criminal orders) speaks of the absence of personal responsibility and the obligation to execute orders.[84] From the last word at the court of Dmitry Vasilets:

> Being human is not an easy task. Maintaining humanity in combat conditions is very difficult. The main victory: over the main enemy – hatred and anger – I have already won, I am a happy person. I will not stop loving my Motherland, regardless of the decision of the court. Happy is he who can live without hatred among people filled with hatred. If justice in my country has lost its significance for many, this does not mean that I should act unfairly.[85]

Another group of cases involves former prisoners who were released early due to participation in hostilities and were detained on charges of new crimes. Forensic psychiatric expert doubts that ex-prisoners who re-offend after returning from a military operation are affected by post-traumatic stress disorder. If a person has previously had a tendency to kill, military operations are not stressful for him. What is happening is not the correction of the criminal, but a return to the usual incarnation, but now with the status of a "hero," which has an extremely negative effect on the moral health of society.[86]

The secret decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated 07/06/2022 on pardoning those convicted of robbery and murder in exchange for 6 months of participation as a mercenary of the Wagner illegal armed group in the war against Ukraine became the legal basis for attracting prisoners to participate in hostilities.[87] On June 24,

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[83] Novaya Media, "I Know That They Will Put Me in Jail. I Had a Choice and I Made It," December 2022, https://novaya-media.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/novaya.media/amp/articles/2022/12/26/znaiu-chto-posadiat-u-menia-byl-vybor-i-ia-ego-sdelal.

[84] Arendt.

[85] Tatiana Britskaia, "I Have Already Won the Main Victory," April 8, 2023, https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2023/04/08/glavnuiu-pobedu-ia-uzhe-oderzhal.

[86] RTVI, "High-profile Crimes of Former Prisoners After Returning from Ukraine. And What do Experts say about This," May 2023, https://rtvi.com/news/gromkie-prestupleniya-byvshih-zaklyuchennyh-after-vozvrashheniya-iz-ukrainy-i-chto-ob-etom-govoryat-eksperty/.

[87] Gulagu.net, "How Putin Pardoned Convicts in Advance," February 17, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6NYpP-O7do.

2023, a new law was adopted on the exemption from criminal liability of participants in the SMO.[88] According to this law, citizens called up for mobilization service or who have entered into a contract with the Russian Armed Forces will be exempted from criminal liability for crimes of small and medium gravity.

The law has a significant drawback – the interests of the victims are not protected in any way, and the work of the bodies that solved the crime is also levelled. According to the law, without the consent of the victim to reconcile the parties, it is impossible to terminate the criminal case. The issue of compensation for material and/or moral damage to the victim has not been disclosed either.

Thus, changes in legislation and law enforcement practice show that the process of turning Russia into an increasingly authoritarian state with elements of totalitarianism has changed (significantly accelerated). There has been a significant transformation of public policy, through the use of the law trying to form ethical values that are contrary to the Constitution, bring the "laws of war" into the civil life of society. Regarding the influence of changes in legislation and practice on the moral state of society, we see dual trends – moral degradation occurs in part of society, while another part of society, including the military, comes to a more conscious and moral worldview.

IV. Conclusions and prospects

Based on the study, the following conclusions can be drawn. We postulate that the phenomenon of the ethics of war has an ontological status because war is built according to certain laws, including moral ones, at the same time, the ethos and ethics of war are not universal, since moral dilemmas are associated with various types of wars and the statuses of participants. The current situation is characterized by an increase in the anthropological catastrophe, a withdrawal into the imitation of being, aggravated by the rapid development of virtual reality and digitalization. At the same time, the crisis of civilization contains both the possibility of its death and the possibility of transforming the world into a harmonious and multi-level integrity. And the potential of the ethics of the positive force of creation and development of culture is the core of this system, along with the key principle of responsible and conscious freedom of outlook. An analysis of philosophical discussions concerning the concepts of the Ethics of War and Peace for-

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[88] "No. 270-FZ On the Peculiarities of Criminal Liability of Persons Involved in a Special Military Operation," June 2023, http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202306240008.

mulated in Russian philosophy and the development of these concepts in world thought and practice allows us to single out the following leading positions:

- The position of pacifism and non-violence, defining war as an absolute evil that must be abandoned (L.N. Tolstoy, M. Gandhi, M. L. King, A. Schweitzer, A.A. Huseynov).
- War is permissible only as a last resort, although it can be just. Therefore, the advantage in resolving various issues, especially political ones, should be given to diplomatic methods, education of high morality, as well as strengthening the strength of faith and spirit. (V.S. Solovyov and his followers).
- War can be just. It is acceptable, although it is a sad necessity. Therefore, one must always remember military virtue, educate those who must protect the Fatherland, for the military protection of the state is the key to strong peace and valiant victories (I.A. Ilyin, N.A. Berdyaev, A. A. Kersnovsky and others).
- Violence and wars are a factor of social development; periods of increased and maximally reduced aggression alternate in the world (A.P. Nazaretyan, S.D. Khaitun, A.G. Dugin and others).

An analysis of trends in legislation and law enforcement practice allows us to conclude that since the collapse of the USSR, there has been a gradual destruction of the military potential and military (including military medical) education in Russia.

In addition, since 2018, there has been a gradual tightening of legislation, a trend towards the formation of a new approach to assessing crimes: a ban on peaceful protests against the war, long sentences for "discrediting," the removal of a conviction by a pardon from persons who have committed serious crimes, exemption from criminal liability of persons involved in the so-called SMO as a whole encourages criminal behavior, overturns ethical norms.

A comparison of cases of imposing unreasonably long sentences for peaceful protests and exemption from liability of those guilty of crimes indicates the destruction of ethical coordinates. At the same time, the consequences of changing ethical coordinates are not unambiguous and do not relieve specific people of responsibility for the formation of objective and conscious thinking and appropriate ethical behavior. In general, in most of our so-called advanced civilization, and often at the very top, where key decisions are made, there has been and still is a misunderstanding of the very nature of war. If this

misunderstanding (and with it defeat) persists, the very viability of this civilization will be in question.[89] Thus, the security of society and the state in the modern world depends on the understanding that politics and war have changed; the urgent need for such reflection is related to the need to formulate productive responses to the challenges and risks of the transformation of violence and war.

People with old thinking use the latest technical achievements to destroy civilizational foundations, and not to form a noosphere, the condition of which is a peaceful happy life in accordance with the laws of nature. The position of considering the antinomy of Good and Evil in the context of the general universe is closer to the author, a holistic approach is expressed even in the teachings of antiquity and is relevant to the present.[90]

In Russian philosophy, it is reflected in the philosophy of Cosmism, in the philosophy of the All-Unity of Vl. Solovyov, Living Ethics by E. and N. Roerichs, the concept of the Noosphere by V. Vernadsky, the concept of sociocultural dynamics by P. Sorokin and others.[91] The conditions for the formation of the Noosphere and the laws of socio-cultural dynamics are already indicated in the Russian philosophy of the 20th century.[92] The main problems of contemporaneity – anthropological and ethical – who and for what purposes will apply new technologies: "Will a person be able to use this power, direct it to good, and not to self-destruction? Has he matured to the ability to use the power that science must inevitably give him?"[93]

Vernadsky notes that the most important condition for the realization of the Noosphere is the complete exclusion of wars from the life of humankind. Philosopher considered military conflicts and especially world wars to be "surpluses of barbarism:" "Obviously, there can be no

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[89] Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War: The Most Radical Reinterpretation of Armed Conflict Since Clausewitz* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 14.

[90] Tatiana P. Minchenko, ed., *The Influence of Hellenism on Contemporary Science, Culture and Education: Collective Monograph* (Tomsk: STT, 2016) [in Russian]. For a quite similar outlook, see Nancy Sherman, "Stoic Consolations," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 565-587.

[91] For a similar view on the organic unity of the universe, see 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. George Arabatzis, 173-195 (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2009).

[92] Sorokin Pitirim, *Social and Cultural Dynamics. A Study of Change in Major Systems of Art, Truth, Ethics, Law and Social Relationships* (New York: Routledge, 1985); Vladimir I. Vernadsky, *Scientific Thought as a Planetary Phenomenon* (Moskva: Nauka, 1991) [in Russian]; Vladimir I. Vernadsky, *Philosophical Thoughts of a Naturalist* (Moskva: Nauka, 1988) [in Russian].

[93] Vernadsky, *Philosophical Thoughts*, 395.

wars in the Noosphere – massacres, and other, more intelligible ways of resolving misunderstandings must be created."[94] In his opinion, the reasonable will of humankind must inevitably follow the path of eradicating military conflicts from the life of mankind, since noospheric civilization and murderous wars are incompatible.

The rational energy that forms the Noosphere is understood as the harmony of the mind and morality. These two halves of a person's spiritual power must be in balance. If the intellect begins to prevail over morality, we get the flowering of naked pragmatism and technocracy, leading to the death of civilization. Evolution to a noospheric civilization is not a utopia, but a strategy for the survival of society and should be accepted as a general vector for the development of humankind.

> The only war that can be justified is the war against ignorance. Any other war is an expression of barbarism, namely, wild ignorance. So, let the slogan of the future war be 'Struggle against ignorance' and let the Banner be – 'Peace through Culture.'[95]

The foundation of a healthy society is a healthy family. In Russia, there are successful practices of implementing a happy healthy life in a large family, in an ecologically clean place, with the ability to generate and educate a new generation in accordance with the laws of nature, fundamental knowledge, developing a full-fledged person, which is a productive response to the challenges of an anthropological catastrophe.[96]

A thorough theoretical analysis of the new reality and the practical implementation of positive ethical standards are needed. The main confrontation lies in the ideological field, the anthropological perspective. Spiritual development associated with the formation of objective thinking, the holistic development of a person's organic abilities, and health at the physical, mental and spiritual levels, is the basis for a way out of the deep crisis of contemporaneity.

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[94] Vernadsky, *Biospere*, 55.

[95] "E. Roerich about the War," https://www.found-helenaroerich.ru/heritage/about-war/.

[96] Diana and Valery Divo, *A Wonderful Family Is The Path To Happiness* (Simferopol: Business-Inform: 2015) [in Russian].

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Visualization as an Intuitive Process in Mathematical Practice

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Abstract

In the field of the philosophy of mathematics, in recent years, there has been a resurgence of two processes: intuition and visualization. History has shown us that great mathematicians in their inventions have used these processes to arrive at their most brilliant proofs, theories and concepts. In this article, we want to defend that both intuition and visualization can be understood as processes that contribute to the development of mathematical knowledge as evidenced in the history of mathematics. Like intuition, visualization does not have a definition, and its role has become more prominent both in pure mathematics and in educational research. For us, both visualization and intuition are processes that start from the real world of those who "intuit" or "visualize," require experience and knowledge of concepts and theories (the more expertise in the subject, the more profound the results will be) and must, in the end, be validated by the specialized academic community. In this article, we defend the importance of visualization in mathematical practice and its role in the advances of great scientists (Euclid, Euler, Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Maxwell, Riemann, Einstein, Feynman, among others) as an alternative and valuable way to symbolic thinking, which has "reigned" in the academic and scientific community.

Keywords: *visualization; intuition; dynamic process; mathematical practice*

I. Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a pressing need to extend the theory of mathematical knowledge that addresses epistemological issues, including "conceptual fecundity, evidence, visualization, diagrammatic reasoning, understanding, explanation, and other aspects of the

theory of mathematical knowledge that are orthogonal to the problem of access to 'abstract objects.'"[1] The renewal of the philosophy of mathematics must include a fundamental aspect such as mathematical practice. Some philosophical problems become relevant only when a certain area of mathematics is taken into consideration: "for example, geometry, node theory, and algebraic topology are sure to arouse interest (and philosophical bewilderment) on the subject of diagrammatic reasoning and visualization."[2] And precisely the issue of visualization, the subject of this article, seems to be useful to address important problems in the philosophy of mathematics.

Visualization processes have become a central topic of interest thanks to the development of computer images in differential geometry, chaos theory, topology, geometry, and complex analysis. In recent research we find arguments that indicate that mathematical visualization has played an epistemic role, since visual resources are fundamental in the cognitive grasp of structures.[3] In recent discussions on the philosophy of mathematics, the topic of visualization and schematic reasoning has become relevant.

Now, the first objective of this article is to present arguments that support one of the theses that we want to defend, namely that visualization, as well as intuition, can be understood as fundamental processes in the development of the epistemology of mathematics.[4] We are particularly interested in affirming that visualization is a process that allows the mathematician (or student) to build and expand their knowledge system in mathematics. Thus, we will take the following definition as a starting point:

> Intuition is a process, where the real world and the individual's prior knowledge play an important role; and in the course of this process, the need for logic to formalize the findings obtained by intuition cannot be ignored.[5]

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[1] Paolo Mancosu, "Algunas Observaciones Sobre La Filosofía de La Práctica Matemática," *Disputatio Philosophical Research Bulletin* 5, no. 6 (2016): 131-156.

[2] Ibid., 132.

[3] Zachary Hawes et al., "Relations between Numerical, Spatial, and Executive Function Skills and Mathematics Achievement: A Latent-Variable Approach," *Cognitive Psychology* 109 (2019): 68-90.

[4] Robert James Brown, "Naturalism, Pictures and Platonic Intuitions," in *Visualization, Explanation and Reasoning Styles in Mathematics*, eds. Paolo Mancosu, Klaus Frovin Jørgensen, and Stig Andur Pedersen, 57-73 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).

[5] Lina María Peña-Páez, "Consideraciones Sobre La Intuición Matemática," *Agora-Papeles de Filosofía* 39, no. 2 (2020): 127-141.

And the following:

> Visualization is the capacity, process and product of the creation, interpretation, use and reflection on figures, images, diagrams, in our mind, on paper or with technological tools with the purpose of representing and communicating information, thinking and developing ideas and advance understanding.[6]

We also consider that both visualization and intuition are dynamic processes that require individual experience (particularly in the mathematical context) that cannot be ignored in any of the stages of this process. That is, whoever is not familiar with the concepts, the statements, the diagrams, in general, with mathematical or visual thinking, will have certain difficulties in inventing theories, analyzing a graph or building new mathematical knowledge. Thus, intuition, like visualization, requires experience, practice, and solid mathematical knowledge.

Both intuition and visualization have enabled mathematicians during their practice to deduce and "discover" advanced properties and concepts. As well as intuition, visualization in mathematics has had a resurgence in recent decades, due to the development of different areas such as computer science, mathematics education, science itself, psychology and philosophy.[7]

Great mathematicians have used mathematical intuition to "arrive" at their great ideas, as they themselves have evidenced in their works.[8] However, his ideas regarding definition and intuition are different. Something similar happens with the idea of visualization:

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[6] Abraham Arcavi, "The Role of Visual Representations in the Learning of Mathematics," *Educational Studies in Mathematics* 52, no. 3 (2003): 215-241.

[7] George Polya, *Mathematical Discovery: On Understanding, Learning and Teaching Problem Solving* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1980); Richard Tieszen, *Mathematical Intuition: Phenomenology and Mathematical Knowledge* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989); Philip Kitcher, *The Nature of Mathematical Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Efraim Fischbein, *Intuition in Science and Mathematics: An Educational Approach* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 2002); and Paolo Mancosu, Klaus Frovin Jørgensen, and Stig Andur Pedersen., eds., *Visualization, Explanation and Reasoning Styles in Mathematics* (Netherlands: Springer, 2023).

[8] Kurt Gödel, *Obras Completas,* trans. Jesús Mosterín (Madrid: Alianza, 2006); Henri Poincaré, "La Intuición y La Lógica En Las Matemáticas," in *El Valor de La Ciencia*, trans. Carlos S. Chinea (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1964), 1-9; Jacques Hadamard, *The Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Field* (New York: Donver, 1954).

> In the end, the term visualization certainly does not have a "usual meaning." It was used in the literature as a noun to describe a graphic representation, as a verb to describe the process of creating a graphic representation, and commonly as a synonym for visual image.[9]

The history of mathematics has shown the importance of visualization and its predominant role in many of the advances of great scientists (Euclid, Euler, Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Maxwell, Riemann, Einstein, Feynman, among others). However, verbal thought and symbolic language have prevailed as the "best options" to present the results to the scientific and academic community.

Visualization is a complex process that implies the organization of all the available information and the reconfiguration of the previous information, thus, new points of view will be generated to address problems that, in the end, could be solved or not. Fischbein states that when visualization is incorporated into cognitive activity, it becomes an essential factor contributing to intuitive understanding. Likewise, visual representations allow the organization of information in synoptic representations, which entail an important factor of globalization.[10]

In the second part of this article, we will focus on visualization and its role in the practice of well-known mathematicians, showing how visual thinking has allowed significant advances in mathematics (which does not imply ignoring that symbolic language and its demonstrations have also allowed great advances). Since the 90s, program design has involved formal reasoning systems that use diagrams to establish their validity. Indeed, there are reasons to avoid becoming formal: in a formalized version of a proof, the original intuitive train of thought may be obscured by a multitude of painstaking steps.[11]

Trying to give visualization the rigorous and dogmatic character of formalization "seems to deprive visualization of its effectiveness and simplicity, which are, on the contrary, its most interesting aspects from a cognitive point of view."[12] The "visual tests" also have a step by step like the language tests. Likewise, in the process of "discovery" we are

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[9] Linda M. Phillips, Stephen P. Norris, and John S. Macnab, *Visualization in Mathematics, Reading and Science Education* (New York: Springer, 2010), 18.

[10] Fischbein.

[11] Paolo Mancosu, *The Philosophy of Mathematical Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[12] Valeria Giardino and Gian Carlo Rota, "Intuition and Visualization in Mathematical Problem Solving," *Topoi* 29, no.1 (2010): 29-39.

finding a justification for what we want to prove. Cases in history show examples of this and "demonstrate how intuitive thinking or visualizations are adequate elements in the process of finding a solution to a problem or feeling justified in our beliefs."[13] Therefore, we can reject the premise that leads to an opposition between visual, intuitive and linguistic processes in mathematical reasoning.[14]

Mathematics is a complex phenomenon and goes beyond the proof or the dogma of logic. If the case of teaching and research is taken, there is no need (for example, in Poincaré or Gödel) of having to choose between modern logic (formalization, rigor) and multimodal merit (practical reasoning). It is important to recognize that display objects are elements that can lead to mathematical proofs. Any mathematics teacher can confirm that explaining a full proof is not useful for the immediate understanding of the student, "In fact, often images or informal arguments will play an 'ideal' explanatory role, whereas a full proof will be no explanation at all in that context."[15]

When the dogma of logic is not left, priority is given to the activity of "proving" belittling the idea of "looking for reasons." The development of mathematics seems to show that the need for a theorem is found after digging deep and focusing attention on the possibilities that that theorem offers. In this same sense, many mathematicians are not only interested in proving their conjectures but in finding the reasons why the conjecture is true. Proving a proposition does not provide reasons why it "works."

II. Visualization and intuition

Relating vision with intuition is an idea that we have found since Plato with his "intellectual eyes,"[16] going through Kant, who used "visual imagination as a means to obtain intuitive awareness of abstract objects,"[17] even mathematicians like Gödel[18] for whom intuition is

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[13] Ibid., 33.

[14] Henri Poincaré, "La Intuición y La Lógica En Las Matemáticas," in *El Valor de La Ciencia*, trans. Carlos S. Chinea (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1964), 1-9.

[15] Giardino and Rota, 32.

[16] Karl Popper and John Eccles, *El Yo y Su Cerebro*, trans. Carlos Solís Santos (Barcelona: Labor, 1993), 51.

[17] Elijah Chudnoff, "Intuition in Mathematics," in *Rational Intuition: Philosophical Roots, Scientific Investigations*, eds. Lisa M. Osbeck and Barbara S. Held, 174-191 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[18] Gödel, *Obras Completas*.

"a guide or global vision, which does not grant immediate or fallible knowledge."[19] The philosophy of science does not escape this relationship either: "we feel the fundamental need to 'see' with our mind, as we see with our eyes."[20] Therefore, "an alternative way of describing mathematical intuition would be to define it as the ability to perpetuate the function of vision, but by means other than the eyes."[21]

Reviewing the literature regarding the notion of mathematical intuition, we find that it does not have a definition in which both mathematicians, philosophers and even educators fully agree. For example, some have assumed it as "the third eye" that only prodigious mathematicians like Ramanujan have. Others have used it to represent "informal, or loose, or visual, or holistic, or incomplete, or perhaps even convincing despite lack of evidence."[22]

One of the characteristics of intuition is its apparent immediacy, which refers to the fact that after reviewing a theory several times when we see some of its results it seems obvious to us, but it is because of all the mathematical experience behind this theory. In this context, Fischbein[23] suggests that the main factor contributing to this immediacy effect is visualization. And although it seems trivial, it is still true "that one naturally tends to think in terms of visual images and that what one cannot visually imagine is difficult to achieve mentally."[24] So much so that mathematicians like Poincaré called geometers those who for him had a more intuitive thought and "Hilbert, when escryibing the ways in which a mathematician thinks, reminds us of the fundamental role of images."[25]

Hence, some authors strongly associate intuition with vision: "mathematical practice reveals that intuitions play an indispensable role and that visualizations are important tools for generating strong intuitions." This occurs not only in geometry, but also in algebraic theories.[26] In special cases, it is possible to infer correct mathematical theories or propositions from images, in the same way that after an

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[19] Lina María Peña-Páez, "Filosofía de La Matemática: La Intuición En El Pensamiento de Kurt Gödel," *Filosofia Unisinos* 22, no. 2 (2021): 1-13.

[20] Fischbein, 7.

[21] Giardino and Rota, 30.

[22] Tieszen, 11.

[23] Fischbein, 7.

[24] Ibid., 103.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Leon Horsten and Irina Starikova, "Mathematical Knowledge: Intuition, Visualization, and Understanding," *Topoi* 29, no. 1 (2010): 2.

intuitive process we could reach true conclusions. Visual representations have a role in knowledge, they allow us to recognize and identify properties, make inferences and, why not, make mistakes. Hence, we can conceive visual objects as devices that contribute to the process of mathematical intuition.

For Fischbein, it is not possible to think of geometric points or lines without visualizing them, and we are "trapped" in intuitive representations, since it seems impossible to think of time without spatializing it. The point is that these representations are not possible to manipulate conceptually.[27] For Bergson, spatialized time is different from the time of consciousness, which he calls duration[28] and only intuition is capable of grasping this duration: "we consider that the spatialized representation of time is also a matter of intuitive elaboration."[29] The individual is constantly translating the operations into spatial representations that are then converted into images (into visual representations, for the subject of this chapter). So:

> Visualizations can be realistic or schematic and can represent the directly visualizable or the non-visualizable. Furthermore, the effectiveness of visual representations is related to the contexts in which they are used; there is no direct path from visualization to understanding.[30]

A visual representation could be one of those ways that intuition shows its conclusions and generalities. Assuming that neither intuition nor visualization are forms of immediate knowledge of mathematical facts, we will understand mathematical activity as "the result of the interconnections between acquired knowledge and unstable beliefs: the mathematical knowledge system is dynamic and always open to reconfiguration." In fact, the results of mathematical practice show that "intuition and visualization are interrelated parts of a vast network of knowledge."[31]

Thanks to the intuitive process, the interconnections are preserved, allowing us to reach generalities, conclusions and the stability of certain beliefs. It can be stated that:

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[27] Henri Bergson, *Ensayo Sobre Los Datos Inmediatos de La Conciencia*, trans. Juan Miguel Palacios (Salamanca: Ediciones Síguema, 1999).

[28] Henri Bergson, *Introducción a La Metafísica y La Intuición Filosófica*, trans. M. Hector Alberti (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Leviatan, 1956).

[29] Fischbein, 8.

[30] Phillips, Norris, and Macnab, 9.

[31] Giardino and Rota, 39.

> Intuitive processes and visualization appear as something profoundly natural, both in the birth of geometric thought and in the discovery of new relationships between mathematical objects and also, naturally, in the transmission and communication typical of mathematical activity.[32]

Visualization research suggests that in mathematical practice images are necessary for the development of intuition.[33] Although somewhat relegated to them, recent studies also show that graphs provide something additional and important to mathematical knowledge and proofs.[34]

Historically, visualization and intuition have been given greater importance in geometry. However, Cayley's graphs are a good example of how to expand their importance to algebra and real analysis to understand the notion of a group: "the evolution of geometric group theory strongly suggests that mathematical intuition, in certain cases, such as a matter of empirical fact, it has depended on pictorial representations for its growth and development."[35] Here the idea of intuition is being used "as something that is capable of development through systematic theoretical reasoning and an increasingly deep and variable understanding of concepts."[36]

Therefore, we are not assuming that, when observing a graphical representation, the concept will be evident to us or we will immediately understand a theory. Like intuition, a good graph requires some preconceptions, a knowledge of what you want to exemplify or demonstrate with said visual representation. If we do not have an idea, for example, of what a group means, or an educated intuition in this field of study, it will not be easy to understand Cayley's graphs. If a student who has never looked at something like the definition of a group is pre-

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[32] Inés Gómez-Chacón, *Visualización Matemática: Intuición y Razonamiento* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 2012), 203.

[33] Horsten and Starikova, "Mathematical Knowledge," 1-2; Giuseppe Longo and Arnaud Viarouge, "Mathematical Intuition and The Cognitive Roots of Mathematical Concepts," *Topoi* 29, no. 1 (2010): 15-27; and Luciano Boi, "The Role of Intuition and Formal Thinking in Kant, Riemann, Husserl, Poincare, Weyl, and in Current Mathematics and Physics," *Kairos – Journal of Philosophy & Science* 22, no. 1 (2019): 1-53.

[34] Johanna Pejlare, *On Axioms and Images in The History of Mathematics* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2007).

[35] Irina Starikova, "Why Do Mathematicians Need Different Ways of Presenting Mathematical Objects? The Case of Cayley Graphs," *Topoi* 29, no. 1 (2010): 41.

[36] Ibid., 41-42.

sented with a Cayley graph, can they figure out what that graph means? Can you understand its construction? The answer is no. As in intuition, knowledge is produced after a process, it is not immediate knowledge,

> Let us consider a representation of groups as symmetries of geometric objects. It is easy to understand how the group acts when it is determined by some (geometric) object. The medium for this insight could be a picture or paper model of an equilateral triangle, on which twists and rotations can be performed. This gives a physical or geometric intuition of the group operation: the composition of the movements; the axiom of the existence of an inverse element would be intuited as performing a backward transformation: if we rotate a triangle 120 degrees clockwise we can rotate it backwards and obtain the initial state.[37]

That is, the graph is the result of an intuition process. Many of the "visual discoveries" have implicit mathematical considerations. And precisely the discovery is reached because all the concepts, theorems, propositions and other elements available to the mathematician are activated when making said discovery: "what triggers the activation of these dispositions is the conscious, in fact, attentive visual experience; but the presence and functioning of these dispositions is hidden from the subject." [38] And while the visual identification process seems easy or immediate, a sense of obviousness occurs. This sensation of the obvious is also present in intuition and is the result "from the exercise of [the] conceptual skills that we have acquired [...]. Or perhaps it derives from the indoctrination that we received in our mathematical youth."[39] Intuitions are introduced by epistemology and there is no reason to believe that a brilliant mathematician (including Gödel) has a "special" ability to have intuitions. Now, neither visualization nor intuition are obvious or immediate processes; only those who have been familiar with "hidden" mathematical concepts could understand what you are trying to prove. Visualization also allows us to understand a problem globally:

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[37] Ibid., 46.

[38] Marcus Giaquinto, "From Symmetry Perception to Basic Geometry," in *Visualization, Explanation and Reasoning Styles in Mathematics*, eds. Paolo Mancosu, Klaus Frovin Jørgensen, and Stig Andur Pedersen, 31-55 (Netherlands: Springer, 2005).

[39] Kitcher, 61.

> One of the main functions of pictorial representations in reasoning processes is to produce a global, simultaneous and panoramic account of what is actually a process, a succession of events. Globalization does not necessarily lead to intuitive acceptance, but it can help produce or enhance intuitive acceptance. It can be assumed that the effects of various globalization mechanisms are often combined.[40]

When the visual images materialize, a sensation of evidence or immediacy appears in the individual, or perhaps, as has often been believed, intuition. What is behind the visualization, however, is an organization of the available data into structures that are already meaningful to the mathematician or student. The graphs can serve as a guide – just like one of Gödel's interpretations of intuition – to develop a solution.[41] In the words of Fischbein: "visual representations are an essential anticipatory device."[42] In this sense, we can understand immediacy not as "something" that is perceived directly, but rather that involves the individual, from his emotionality or his mathematical reality and his experiences in other areas.

> Intuition, as we have often stressed, implies a kind of empathy, a type of cognition through direct internal identification with a phenomenon. A visual representation with its rich and concrete details mediates such a personal participation, usually much better than a concept or a formal description [...]. Visual representations and, in general, mental images play a considerable role in creative activity.[43]

So we have that "intuition, as well as visualization, are not a kind of direct access to mathematical facts, but are mediated by knowledge and experience."[44] That is, the experience and mathematical knowledge of the individual are required both for intuition and for the proper analysis of the visual process.

When a problem is posed and it wants to be represented with a figure, the mathematician must be clear about several concepts that will

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[40] Fischbein, 120.

[41] Gödel, *Obras Completas*; Kurt Gödel, *Ensayos Inéditos*, trans. and ed. Fransisco Rodríguez Consuegra (Barcelona: Mondadori, 1994).

[42] Fischbein, 104.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Giardino and Rota, 33.

intervene in the solution. The figure is not a simple isolated fact but is an element of a vast system of knowledge. This does not mean that errors do not occur, let's remember that both intuition and visualization are processes that can be fallible. However, by being intertwined with the rest of the shared system of knowledge, practices and procedures, there is a certain guarantee of reliability.

However, it will always be necessary to verify that "(i) the hypotheses introduced are correct and coherent with the knowledge system that is assumed (checking of pre-visual errors), and that (ii) the visual medium does not introduce its own restrictions on the representation of the target area (checking for post-visual errors)."[45] Checking (i) and (ii) can be done in the course of practice. Furthermore, this is precisely what mathematicians have done in their daily work.

As this visualization process is fallible, errors can occur in the deductions, one could be by raising a wrong hypothesis about how to draw a figure or the wrong hypothesis about the properties of the figure. Haven't false properties been deduced using symbolic language? The history of mathematics has also shown us that it is not necessarily true that knowing the definitions implies visualizing the correct path, what is needed is knowing how to use said definitions and propositions to visualize properly.

The stigma of not allowing the advancement of science could be attributed to visualization (for example, the case of Ptolemy and Copernicus), however, the "backwardness" of scientific advances is not necessarily linked to the way in which the mathematician "comes to his theories" or how he presents them to the academic community (with symbolic or graphic language), in many cases, and in particular, in that of Copernicus it is also due to "non-mathematical" beliefs (religion, politics, philosophy, economics), and others to "errors" in mathematics that influence their own development. We cannot forget that it was precisely a diagram, in the book *De Revolutionibus Orbium Caelestium Libri VI* that "revolutionized" science and the world.

Regarding the experience for mathematical knowledge, presenting concrete objects to study abstract objects allows greater familiarization with the latter and more significant interpretations:

> The absorption of the techniques, as well as the more intuitive practices, such as visualization, are controlled by experience. There is nothing like ex nihilo mathematical intuition: it all depends on how familiar we are with the relationships

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[45] Ibid., 38.

in our mathematical knowledge network, as well as how experienced we are with mathematical manipulations.[46]

In this sense, Fischbein[47] reminds us that visual representations are not knowledge in themselves: "visual images are an important factor in immediacy, but immediacy is not a sufficient condition to produce the specific structure of a cognition. Intuitive."[48] Even if the schematic of an electronic device is perceived, a deep understanding of its operation is not guaranteed, this will only be possible if special training has been received. That is, mathematical experience or the "real world" is required to understand how it works.

We will understand visual images as that device that facilitates the process of intuition. Hence, we can establish a connection between sensory experience and observation in mathematics which, in Gödel's terms, is analogous to mathematical intuition: "they are connected in another sense: one sees a diagram (sensory perception) which induces an intuition (mathematical perception) of something very different. This is what happens when an image is not simply a heuristic aid, but a real proof."[49]

Visualization and intuition should not be considered solely as automated reaction systems. They seem automatic because the mind is educated in concepts and theories, because there is a previous mathematical experience, and the internalization of mathematical statements leads to an apparently obvious and immediate reaction. In reality, they are belief systems with autonomous expectations where experience plays a fundamental role

> because, in certain circumstances, it configures stable expectations. Such expectations become so stable, so firmly attached to certain circumstances that their empirical origin can apparently disappear from the subject's consciousness.[50]

Thus, experience can generate stable visual insights and organized and seemingly autonomous belief systems.

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[46] Ibid., 39.

[47] Fischbein.

[48] Ibid., 103.

[49] Brown, 66.

[50] Fischbein, 88.

As we have mentioned, some given situations in mathematical practice are not generated in a natural and direct way from scientific or mathematical notions, sometimes a visual representation could be a "bridge" for understanding or be itself a generator of knowledge. This last point can be evidenced with the aforementioned example of the Cayley's graphs. These graphs have been considered as mathematical objects, not only as useful tools for visualizing groups.

> The richness and variety of insights from Cayley's graphs produce a link to other areas of mathematics, such as graph theory, but they also produce a fruitful link between algebra and geometry. The most important and intriguing impact of GCs on algebra is the new geometry: they are related to the notion of "group."[51]

In addition to the idea of group structure, thanks to these graphs, we can demonstrate in practice how geometric elements/diagrams are combined with algebraic concepts and the same idea of group.

> The main function of intuition in this case highlights the structure of mathematical objects. This was achieved by introducing a "new presentation" of abstract mathematical objects, groups that are not easily intuited, through objects from other areas of mathematics (in our case, graphics).[52]

This is a great example of how diagrams are powerful tools that can facilitate the intuitive process and that in turn can be a good start for new insights that will eventually lead "to advanced conceptual links with geometry and the introduction of a wide arsenal for geometric algebra."[53] Furthermore, it is also clear that the use and understanding of these graphs implies a baggage, a mathematical experience of the individual who is faced with this new knowledge.

We will end this article by describing some examples of how mathematicians have used visualization in their practice.

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[51] Starikova, 47.

[52] Ibid., 51.

[53] Ibid.

III. Visualization and mathematical practice

The focus of the philosophy of mathematics is centered on theory. Many philosophers are interested, for example, in checking if a system is consistent, if theorems are true in the nature of objects under a certain theory, among others. And although in recent years there has been a growing interest in claiming the mathematical practice,[54] "when philosophers of mathematics are asked to consider the activity Mathematics, as opposed to bodies of established mathematics, tend to think of the investigative activity of professional mathematicians, typically proving theorems."[55] It seems that this is the only activity they can do. They ignore a whole field of other possibilities, such as creativity, applications, new knowledge, partially true justifications, and the explanation about the understanding of the objects of mathematics, among others.

In this range of possibilities, Mancosu,[56] in the introduction to his book The Philosophy of Mathematical Practice, states that:

> Visualization processes (for example, by means of mental images) are fundamental to our mathematical activity and recently this has once again become a central issue due to the influence of computer images on differential geometry and chaos theory. and the call for visual approaches to geometry, topology, and complex analysis.[57]

For the author, the heuristic use of visual representations is increasingly significant, and it cannot continue to be an ignored topic when mathematical thought is studied. Its importance is clear: "even the algorithms that we are taught in secondary school for the calculation of several digits are visuo-spatial in nature."[58] Let us remember that the visual thought that contributes to the "discovery" is essential for the development of the epistemology of mathematics and, despite this, it is a path that still has a lot to explore.

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[54] Jessica Carter, "Philosophy of Mathematical Practice: Motivations, Themes and Prospects," *Philosophia Mathematica* 27, no. 1 (2019): 1-32.

[55] Marcus Giaquinto, "Mathematical Activity," in *Visualization, Explanation and Reasoning Styles in Mathematics*, eds. Paolo Mancosu, Klaus Frovin Jørgensen, and Stig Andur Pedersen, 75-87 (Netherlands: Springer, 2005), 75.

[56] Mancosu, "The Philosophy of Mathematical Practice."

[57] Ibid., 14.

[58] Ibid., 39.

Thanks to the incursion of computerized systems for the visualization of complex graphs, it was possible to have a guide to arrive at mathematical demonstrations of very complex statements. Recent decades have seen a "revolution" against purely symbolic mathematics, calling attention to visual methods: "its call for a return to intuition and visualization runs deeper and is rooted in an appreciation of the importance of visual intuition in areas such as geometry, topology and complex analysis."[59]

However, visual demonstrations are also becoming more relevant, not only in the field of mathematics itself but also in education.[60] A demonstration based on images or diagrams, that is, without words, can help to "understand why a mathematical statement is true; They vividly show us why a property is true, and sometimes even suggest how to prove it in a formal way."[61] These types of demonstrations have been forgotten thanks to the impetus and almost obsession of modern mathematics for rigor, "for a few decades, first rescued by didactics and now vindicated from computer computing and experimental mathematics, occupy their deserved space."[62]

Visualization in the history of science has a long history from Euclid's geometry, through the idea of perspective, cartesian geometry, eulerian graph theory. and computer graphics today. Scientists such as Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Maxwell, Riemann, Einstein, Feynman, among others have used visualization expanding its scope thanks to attempts to represent certain natural phenomena that, in many cases, are almost impossible to observe directly:

> So why do scientists bother with visualization? The empirical nature of science means that scientists are often busy making sense of the data they have collected and communicating with other scientists about it. Visualization can

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[59] Paolo Mancosu, "Visualization in Logic And Mathematics," in *Visualization, Explanation and Reasoning Styles in Mathematics*, eds. Paolo Mancosu, Klaus Frovin Jørgensen, and Stig Andur Pedersen, 13-30 (Netherlands: Springer, 2005), 20.

[60] Demetrios Sampson, J. Michael Spector, and Dirk Ifenthaler, eds., *Learning Technologies Learning, and Large-Scale Teaching, for Transforming Assessment* (Netherlands: Springer, 2019); Zehavit Kohen et al., "Self-Efficacy and Problem-Solving Skills in Mathematics: The Effect of Instruction-Based Dynamic Versus Static Visualization," *Interactive Learning Environments* 4, no. 30 (2022): 759-778; and Sevinç Mert Uyangör, "Investigation of the Mathematical Thinking Processes of Students in Mathematics Education Supported with Graph Theory," *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 7, no. 1 (2019): 1-9.

[61] Bartolo Luque, "Demostraciones Visuales," *Investigación y Ciencia* 445 (2013): 89.

[62] Ibid., 89.

> facilitate these processes by presenting the data in a more accessible way than, say, a table of numbers or a verbal account.[63]

Perhaps it is not a nuisance but a long tradition in which verbal and linguistic thinking has been accepted as the "best" way of presenting the results of science. Now, in contrast to this tradition, the history of science is full of examples where great thinkers have used images to illustrate their findings, even though the demonstrations of their theories included only symbolic language.

For example, Galileo embodied in his drawings the principles of perspective and his interpretation of certain physical phenomena. Descartes and his illustrations on magnetic force and human optics, Newton and his rigorous way of presenting the specific physical states of phenomena. We can continue with Maxwell's drawings of the distribution of magnetic forces in space (a good way to understand that tradition of graphically representing data that is not observed through the senses). We also have Riemann and his complex analysis graphs. Then there is Feynman and the set of diagrams of his representing the interaction between particles (diagrams representing probability functions geometrically), which was an important departure from previous visualization ideas, to the extent that they tried to represent invisible phenomena. Next, we will present some significant facts of history for our study.

Let's start with Descartes and Newton.[64] They made use of visualization to represent the structure and relationships between the scientific phenomena examined, considering them of great interest for their advances in the field of mathematics and physics. When scientists use images they are not only interested in showing what the world looks like, but how it works:

> Descartes and Newton are two scientists who used numerous illustrations in their scientific work. While most of his scientific theories have long since been superseded, many of his discoveries and achievements are still referenced in contemporary science education. This is certainly the case

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[63] John Braga, Linda M. Phillips, and Stephen P. Norris, "Visualizations and Visualization in Science Education," in *Reading for Evidence and Interpreting Visualizations in Mathematics and Science Education*, ed. Stephen P. Norris, 123-145 (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2012), 126.

[64] Jesús Alcolea, "On Mathematical Language: Characteristics, Semiosis and Indispensability," in *Language and Scientific Research*, ed. Wenceslao J. Gonzalez, 223-245 (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 234-237.

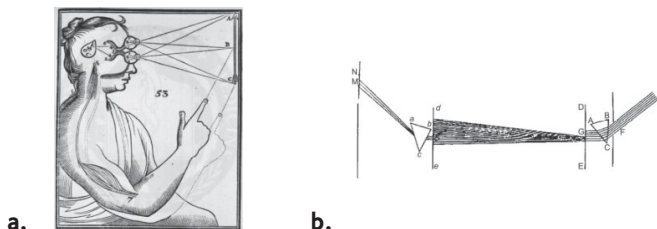in optics where his works, and occasionally his display objects, are still found.[65]

Fig. 1. a. Descartes' illustration of the optical process. **b.** Newton's illustration of the optical process. Both figures appear in Braga, Phillips, and Norris.[66]

From figure 1, we note that in addition to its realism, it literally focuses on the phenomenon of vision. Descartes's illustrations had another purpose as well; convincing not only scientists, but laymen about how the world worked, his intention was to help change the concept. In this illustration, emphasis must be placed on the interpretative demands that are sought, that is, it must identify which elements are important and which are irrelevant for human vision. This implies the need for a textual complement, that is, knowledge of optics is required to better understand the image. For example, it should be understood that the lines that penetrate the eyes are vitally important because they show the path of light rays from the arrow to your eyes. Finally, we recognize that the analogy in the illustration is more direct (although more distractions appear) and, in turn, requires less cognitive demand.

In contrast to the figure of the French philosopher, we now find figure 2. Here we note that Newton's style is more diagrammatic. For the English physicist, the important thing is to concentrate on the phenomenon that the vision describes. Here, the illustrations were aimed at scientists, whose intention was to help them figure out how to reproduce their experiments, as a way of solving problems. Furthermore, he himself established his own conventions: "since Newton's conventions are the direct ancestors of ours, his image may seem less strange despite being much less realistic than Descartes's image."[67]

Newton's figure is completely schematic, the correspondence between its elements and reality is not very precise. It is evident that the interpretive demands of this figure are more challenging than those of

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[65] Braga, Phillips, and Norris, "Visualizations," 136.

[66] Ibid., 137-138.

[67] Ibid., 137.

the Descartes figure. Newton managed to eliminate the distractions, although the cognitive interpretation is much more demanding.

In general, the advancement of science has led scientists to focus their efforts on aspects of reality that are far from the visual experience. Mathematicians have had to search for a "language" to describe unobservable objects, which has given mathematics its function of being the language of science, but, in addition, it has been given another task: to visualize the mathematical expressions that appear in the use of scientific graphics.

Many scientific graphs show a high degree of abstraction, moving further and further away from reality, which entails the difficulty of connecting the elements of the graph with the physical phenomena they represent. We recently found that "theorists and researchers now use 'visualization' as a label for strikingly different processes within the learning of mathematics."[68]

For great mathematicians like Dedekind, Hilbert, and Russell, visual intuitions were unreliable.[69] Furthermore, they affirmed that in a good book there should be no figures. However, at the end of the 20th century there was a shift in favor of visualization, which can be evidenced by the titles of some books such as "visual geometry and topology" or "complex visual analysis." A special pedagogical attention to visualization begins and computer- generated images begin to bear fruit in research. What we do not yet have an agreement on is the role of visual thinking in the epistemology of mathematics.

Now, sometimes, even if the proof of a mathematical statement is correct, it does not necessarily imply that we are convinced that we understand said argument, it seems that something more is needed. "One of the many reasons accepted in practice for preferring one formulation over another is that one way of framing and approaching an issue may be more fruitful than another."[70] For some, that one argument is more fruitful than another, is something that is assumed as a "natural" matter that seems to lead to "easier" understanding.

Under this framework, we have the example of Riemann and the use of visual devices to represent complex functions. At the beginning

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[68] Elaine Simmt et al., "Curriculum Development to Promote Visualization and Mathematical Reasoning: Radicals," in *Reading for Evidence and Interpreting Visualizations in Mathematics and Science Education*, ed. Stephen P. Norris, 147-163 (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2012), 148.

[69] Roy Cook and Geoffrey Hellman, eds., *Hilary Putnam on Logic and Mathematics* (Cham: Springer, 2018); Mancosu, Frovin, and Pedersen.

[70] Jamie Tappenden, "Proof Style and Understanding in Mathematics I: Visualization, Unification and Axiom Choice," in *Visualization, Explanation and Reasoning Styles in Mathematics*, eds. Paolo Mancosu, Klaus Frovin Jørgensen, and Stig Andur Pedersen, 147-214 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), 152.

of the 20th century, a division arose regarding the test methods in complex analysis. The two "currents" were led by Weierstrass and Riemann, the first with a purely algorithmic approach focused on finding explicit representations of functions, and the second, focused on the conceptual: "it aimed to describe functions in terms of general properties and demonstrate results of existence of indirect functions that need not be linked to explicit representations."[71]

The Riemannian approach involves the use of surfaces that allow easy visualization of complex functions,[72] his reference to visualization contributed to the fecundity of the connections as the examples became more elementary and manageable. Thus, a difficult case like complex analysis, on a smaller scale, is exemplified in the application of classical projective geometry in graphical statics. Here we find a possibility to visualize the arguments and the analysis of the theoretical framework.

Riemann surfaces were not only very useful for being consistent, but have consistently continued to facilitate understanding and discovery. His visual devices gave novel and unexpected results, which is why the academic community accepted them as an adequate context to study functions of interest in complex analysis, turning them into "an indispensable essential component of the theory; not a supplement, more or less artificially distilled from the functions, but their native soil, the only soil in which the functions grow and thrive."[73]

For the case that we are addressing, the fact that Riemann's methodology is more natural and that its results are fruitful has nothing to do with the subjectivity of the individual, moreover, new interesting knowledge has been built on its results. When the "more natural" formulations are studied, it is done in the context of discovery and for some mathematicians this is part of psychology and not of methodology or mathematical practice. But these judgments need to be broader: "the advantages and shortcomings of the Riemannian approach to complex analysis compared to the Weierstrass approach is just one of many concrete examples that illustrate and anchor the point."[74]

Visualization is part of mathematical practice and can be a good way to formulate a problem or a theory. For example, the intuitive geometric aspect has influenced topology and although we cannot say

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[71] Ibid., 149.

[72] Boi, "The Role of Intuition and Formal Thinking," 1-53.

[73] Tappenden, 152.

[74] Ibid., 154.

that it was its main impulse, it is the result of visualizing other problems such as complex analysis with Riemann, mechanics with Poincaré and group theory with Denh. It is possible to describe the importance of visualization in mathematical reasoning, leaving aside the nature of visualization itself and recognizing its usefulness and effectiveness in mathematical practice.

With visualization often happens what happens with mathematical intuition, some philosophers have ignored it and find it uninteresting because they assume that they are accidental, pragmatic, subjective or psychological "phenomena."[75] Some only give visualization the place of support to remember some "complicated" propositions. What is interesting in the case of Riemann is not only to recognize that the "connection with the vision is an interesting and useful advantage, [but] that the issues raised by the Riemann-Weierstrass opposition are of interest independently."[76]

An important point that has been observed in the advance of the most outstanding physical and mathematical theories of the last centuries is due to the idea of unification. We have, for example, Newton and the unification of the celestial theory with the terrestrial, Maxwell and the unification of optical, magnetic and electrical phenomena and the current physical theories that try to unify quantum mechanics and gravitation. Under this idea of unification, we find Riemann's approach to the theory of complex functions, in which "a variety of points of view is admitted, in part because he effected the unification of the theory of complex functions with the theory of curves and complex surfaces."[77] Likewise, one of the hallmarks that identified the german mathematician's proposal was the appropriate choice of definitions and basic unifying principles. Riemann's example is an invitation to improve the idea "of how this kind of indirect connection with vision can inform our choice of theoretical frameworks."[78]

Although in some cases, the visualization of a representation that occurs in the mathematician's mind does not lead directly to a rigorous proof, it does lead to an outline, or in Poincaré's words: to a "sort of moral certainty." An example of this case is found with Klein, who, when studying abstract questions in the theory of functions, replaces his Riemann surface with a metallic surface whose electrical conductiv-

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[75] Mario Bunge, *La Ciencia, Su Método y Su Filosofía* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Promotora Colombiana, 2002)

[76] Tappenden, 157.

[77] Ibid., 159.

[78] Ibid., 180.

ity varies according to certain laws. In addition, he connects two points with two batteries: "the signal, he says, must pass, and the distribution of this current on the surface will define a function whose singularities will be precisely those requested by the statement of the problema."[79] For Klein, this situation is not only a passive representation of reality, but that representation that he had visualized in his mind contributed to a solution that could be global, which was preliminary, which was still unfinished but which in turn would show the way. of the final solution.

> The visual representation was more than an image; it was the intuitive solution to a problem in which the sensory-mental structure played a fundamental role. In fact, it is not just visual images that help structure intuitions - although they are certainly the most common form of imaginary support. Sounds, in the case of musicians; muscular, motor and tactile representations, in the case of sculptors, etc. They play a fundamental role in artistic creative activity. In a discussion with Max Wertheimer, one of the founders of Gestalt psychology, Einstein once stated referring to the creation of the theory of relativity: "These thoughts did not come in any verbal formulation. I rarely think in words. A thought comes, and then I can try to put it into words" (Wertheimer, 1961, p. 228). Mental images are, in fact, part of a more complex psychological domain [...], namely, the domain of mental models.[80]

We can deduce that he is trying to defend that the idea of visualization, as well as that of intuition, are constructive processes, which have meanings in themselves. What is interesting is the role that these processes can play at the time of a philosophical explanation of mathematical knowledge or in mathematics education.[81]

The history of mathematics has shown us some episodes in which visual reasoning has led to errors that have later been corrected symbolically. These situations have led great mathematicians to emphasize symbolic proofs over visual ones.

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[79] Poincaré, "La Intuición y La Lógica," 2.

[80] Fischbein, 105-106.

[81] Yacin Hamami and Rebecca Lea Morris, "Philosophy of Mathematical Practice: A Primer for Mathematics Educators," *ZDM – Mathematics Education* 52, no. 6 (2020): 1113-1126.

> The existence of the delusions of the senses is not an ob-stacle to our knowledge of physics; it is an obstacle to the thesis that the sensory processes that actually guarantee our beliefs could continue to do so, no matter what ex-perience we were to have. Similarly, the paradoxes of set theory do not challenge the possibility of mathematical knowledge, but rather threaten apriorism.[82]

Despite these "deceptions," recent research results show benefits of visualization in the learning and application of mathematical knowl-edge, namely, they generate structure to explore visual operations, they serve as reference points to derive theorems, they allow visual generalizations, provide a way to trace cases and alternatives and help expand spatial pattern memory.[83]

The visual nature of geometry, the use of graphs in group theory, the graphs of functions comprise all those mental skills related to un-derstanding and visually reorganizing relationships. The drawings or graphs are close, in many cases to real objects, which allow highlight-ing some aspect of them, but they can also symbolically represent a process:

> Using geometric shapes to represent real objects or events, diagrams can show the relationship between objects or events or represent the process of an activity. In such cases, they may not present the entire object; instead, they can focus the reading's attention on a particular aspect, part, or relationship.[84]

Though for years the use of diagrams and images was left for a heu-ristic level of mathematics and not for the formal, the appearance and increase of visualization techniques in computing and its subsequent impact on mathematics, has made visualization as a more complex thought process gain relevance. Computer graphics or tables are a way to have a quick visual comprehension. But "the epistemic function of visualization in mathematics can go beyond merely heuristics and ac-

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[82] Kitcher, 63.

[83] Norris, *Reading for Evidence.*

[84] Rhonda D. L. Booth and Michael O. J. Thomas, "Visualization in Mathematics Learning: Arithmetic Problem-Solving and Student Difficulties," *Journal of Mathematical Behavior* 18, no. 2 (1999): 169-190.

tually be a means of discovery."[85] That is, graphical representations help to visualize complex objects and thus capture their properties. But about the influence of technology in the philosophy of science there will be much more to investigate in future studies.

IV. Conclusions

Keeping in mind the history of mathematics and the definition of mathematical intuition as a dynamic process that starts from the real context of the individual (in terms of their mathematical and even personal experience), whose results must be validated by the mechanisms of mathematics and that finally it will be the scientific community that will determine their immersion in the formal system of mathematics; we have shown how visualization can also be understood as a process that requires the visual experience of the person who draws or interprets a graph. And whose results must be validated by the scientific community.

The examples presented show that visual thinking has been essential for great mathematicians during their practice. The visualization contributes to the understanding of formulas, algorithms, but it also contributes to the decision of whether a test method is correct or not. However, history is also full of examples where the pre-eminence has been in symbolic language, as the means par excellence to present both scientific and academic results.

On this subject of visualization, much remains to be said, computational advances open a new field that should be of interest to the philosophy of mathematics, likewise, it is our interest to continue investigating the close relationship between mathematical practice and its impact on practice of mathematics education. Can classes be developed from activities that "educate" intuition? How to develop in students skills beyond the techniques of computer management? What should be the approach to the philosophy of mathematics for future educators or mathematicians to improve their practice?

It is not a secret that currently modeling tools and visualization mediated by technological resources have made great contributions to research in both the scientific and educational fields and their influence is increasing. These tools "help to understand and illustrate problems, since phenomena in applied fields can be described by quite complex mathematical models."[86] Thanks to the incursion of technology in the

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[85] Mancosu, "Visualization in Logic and Mathematics," 22.

[86] János Karsai et al., "Visualization and Art in the Mathematics Classroom," *ZDM – Interna-*

classroom, our students can explore, experiment and visualize complex concepts, and they can strengthen their knowledge and put it into practice. Of course, this will perhaps bring other types of challenges and difficulties to education, which opens up a new topic of interest: the influence of technology on educational processes, bearing in mind what the philosophy of science has to say about.

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The Communicative Dimension of Personal Autonomy

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Abstract

Paul Benson and Andrea C. Westlund have proposed conceptualising personal autonomy in terms of the readiness to respond to criticism that targets the agent's actions and intentions (Benson) or commitments (Westlund). While incorporating this dialogical facet into a theory of personal autonomy is a step in the right direction, a theory of personal autonomy that is exclusively construed in terms of this facet and that posits discursive accountability as the sole criterion against which actions, choices, and commitments can be judged as autonomous or not is too restrictive and entails counterintuitive ideas. In this article, an alternative conceptualisation is proposed, one that avoids reductively construing personal autonomy exclusively in terms of the discursive and communicative facet and that conceptualises this facet in terms of communicative spaces which agents can claim authority over and in which and through which they can take ownership of claims, actions, and commitments. This alternative conceptualisation is initially formulated – by way of analogy – in terms of the normative requirement to respect the physical space of individuals. The article also outlines a set of conditions which indicate when one should claim authority over communicative spaces and the manner in which one takes ownership of claims, actions, and commitments in order to be autonomous.

Keywords: *personal autonomy; claiming authority; taking ownership; dialogical answerability; communicative dimension; communicative action; Jürgen Habermas*

I. Introduction

Paul Benson and Andrea C. Westlund have proposed accounts of personal autonomy that place the discursive capacity and process of justifying one's actions, choices, and commitments in the face

of criticism at the centre.[1] While I find their proposals to incorporate this capacity and process into a theory of autonomy a move in the right direction, I consider their accounts to be inadequate for a number of reasons. In this article – by also drawing from their accounts – I propose a different model of the communicative dimension of personal autonomy. Specifically, I argue three things. Firstly, I contend that the inclusion of the communicative dimension in a theory of autonomy is warranted by the fact that autonomy is an inescapable presupposition of linguistic communication. Secondly, I argue that a theory of personal autonomy cannot be reduced to just this dimension, and thus while a theory of personal autonomy should include the communicative dimension, it should be broader in order to include other dimensions as well. Thirdly, I contend that the communicative dimension of personal autonomy needs to be broadened and recalibrated to avoid the problems encountered by the accounts of Benson and Westlund.

The article is structured as follows. In the first part, I will present an overview of the accounts of Benson and Westlund and identify what I consider to be their major problems. In the second part, I will offer an argument for why the communicative dimension should be included in a theory of personal autonomy. While the argument I pose overlaps with some of the reasons Benson and Westlund give to support their positions, my argument attempts to show the inescapable intertwinement between our human capacity to communicate and personal autonomy. In the third part, I will suggest a different conceptualisation of the communicative dimension of personal autonomy that avoids the objections I present in the first section. Finally, in the fourth part, I will propose a number of conditions that have to be satisfied for a person to be said to be acting autonomously in the communicative dimension.

II. Personal autonomy as dialogical answerability and its limitations

Benson and Westlund are motivated partly,[2] by what they perceive as the inadequacy of previous theories of autonomy to satisfactorily explain how actions and choices can be said to be properly one's own.[3]

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[1] Paul Benson, "Taking Ownership: Authority and Voice in Autonomous Agency," in *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism: New Essays*, eds. John Christman and Joel Anderson, 101-126 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Andrea C. Westlund, "Rethinking Relational Autonomy," *Hypatia* 24, no. 4 (2009): 26-49.

[2] I say 'partly' since Westlund is also interested in developing an account of autonomy that does not posit any substantive commitments as conditions of personal autonomy; Westlund, 28-30; 36-37.

[3] Benson, 101; Westlund, 27.

Benson targets a large family of theories he labels "identity-based theories,"[4] which, he claims, are theories that consider actions to be autonomous if and only if "they are appropriately related to my *identity* as a caring, reflectively willing creature."[5] Westlund's target is narrower, criticising a family of theories that take a structural approach to autonomy, in which actions and choices are deemed autonomous if and only if the highest-order criterion against which they are evaluated can claim agential authority.[6] Benson presents his model of personal autonomy as complete, asserting that autonomy should be understood exclusively in terms of the dimension of dialogical answerability (even though he claims that his proposed model needs to be developed further).[7] Conversely, Westlund claims that her account should be regarded as a "necessary and key component of autonomy"[8] and that she remains neutral as to whether it is sufficient.[9] In this section, I argue that the accounts of both Benson and Westlund are problematic, especially if taken as exclusivist[10] accounts of autonomy.

Benson's account is meant to deal with the question of autonomous actions and intentions, as well as the capabilities needed to act autonomously; his account is thus concerned with local (concerning autonomy or lack thereof in particular actions and decisions) rather than global autonomy (concerning autonomy or lack thereof over the course of one's life).[11] He begins with a generic characterisation of what it means to act autonomously, defining it both as taking ownership of one's actions and as having the ability to do so and exercising such ability regularly.[12] This initial characterisation seems ambiguous as it is unclear whether an action qualifies as autonomous if the agent takes ownership of it or whether it suffices for the agent to have the ability to do so and exercise this ability regularly. Furthermore, it is

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[4] Benson, 102. For his criticism of this family of theories: Benson, 102-106.

[5] Ibid., 103.

[6] Westlund, 30-33.

[7] Benson, 118.

[8] Westlund, 28.

[9] See endnote 27 of Westlund, 46.

[10] As used in this article, the term "exclusivist account" refers to conceptualising personal autonomy exclusively in terms of the dialogical or communicative dimension. On the other hand, "inclusivist account" refers to conceptualising personal autonomy in terms of the dialogical or communicative dimension *and* other dimensions.

[11] See endnote 1 of Benson, 120.

[12] Ibid., 101.

also unclear whether Benson thinks that the agent needs to regularly take ownership of actions in general or regularly take ownership of actions of the same kind. Benson then defines what he means by taking ownership: to take ownership, that is, to make actions one's own, consists in "claiming authority to speak for their [i.e. actions'] intentions and conduct."[13] Claiming authority is further characterised as being in a position to answer for one's actions "in the face of potential criticisms."[14]

Benson further contends that taking ownership by claiming authority involves authorising oneself to do so. He explains that such authorisation can be implicit, akin to authorising one's partner to act on one's behalf simply by treating them as having such authority.[15] In this regard, authorising oneself may involve performing actions that grant authority only indirectly such as adopting an attitudinal stance that implicitly grants authority.[16] Authorisation can also be conscious and deliberate.[17] Benson also maintains that self-regard is central to self-authorisation; by self-regard, he means treating oneself as worthy of having the authority to speak on one's behalf. Indeed, he argues that one cannot claim authority unless one treats oneself as having it.[18]

Benson's exclusivist account is susceptible to the objection that his model of autonomy is both reactive and retroactive. If autonomy is reduced to taking ownership of one's actions by responding to criticism or simply having the ability and disposition to do so, what happens if one never faces criticism? It is entirely plausible to imagine a situation in which specific actions, even actions that might be life-informing, are never challenged by others. If autonomy is understood as responding to criticism, then actions that are never challenged are never appropriated as one's own. Similarly, if autonomy is understood as possessing the ability and disposition to respond to criticism, then actions that are never challenged are also never really appropriated as one's own. Taking ownership is necessarily an active process, and if something more than merely performing the action is required to make an action one's own, then this additional element cannot be merely an ability and a disposition. Abilities and dispositions do not make actions one's own;

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[13] Ibid., 102.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 114.

[16] Ibid., 115.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., 115-116.

at best, they are powers that, if exercised and actualised, allow one to make an action one's own. Benson's account renders autonomy reactive, but autonomy understood as involving self-direction or self-governance is, by definition, proactive.

Benson's account is also susceptible to the objection of retroactivity. By retroactivity, I mean that a person can transform a past action into an autonomous one (i.e. one that they own) even if the original action would be a paradigmatically heteronomous action; such an action becomes autonomous retroactively. Benson acknowledges this and does not find it problematic. He asserts that ownership of an action is not dependent on whether the original action, which one then goes on to take ownership of, expressed one's "values" or whether one would have performed it upon "informed reflection."[19] This view implies that a person who, for example, succumbed to the pressure of a religious leader to do something they did not genuinely want to do, or would not have done in the absence of such pressure, would be acting autonomously if they later took ownership of such an action by responding to criticism. While I think that a theory of autonomy should allow for future appropriation of past actions – even of actions that would have been performed non-autonomously in the first instance – claiming that autonomy would be obtained retrospectively if one responded to criticism is counterintuitive and contradicts the core meaning of the notion of autonomy.

Westlund proposes a model similar to Benson's, which she defines as consisting of "a disposition for dialogical answerability."[20] Like Benson, she is concerned with local autonomy. She claims that for one to choose and act autonomously, "one must be open to engage with the critical perspectives of others."[21] Westlund expands dialogical answerability to include inner dialogue, wherein the person also responds to critics inhabiting "one's own moral imagination."[22] Such a disposition to answer critics shows, Westlund continues, that the person takes responsibility for one's commitments and does not endorse them passively.[23]

Westlund, unlike Benson, does not claim that an action performed in a "heteronomous" manner (think of a paradigmatically heterono-

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[19] Ibid., 109.

[20] Westlund, 35.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 36.

[23] Ibid., 24.

mous action) becomes an autonomous one if it is eventually appropriated dialogically. On the one hand, she seems to understand autonomy more as a particular posture towards one's commitments, a kind of openness that gives the person a certain agentic flexibility by owning their commitments while leaving them open to scrutiny. On the other hand, however, she explicitly states that her account of autonomy concerns choice and action and, therefore, local autonomy.[24] If, as she states, Westlund's account is taken as explaining and accounting for autonomous choice and action, then it becomes problematic. According to this take, an action or choice is autonomous if and only if, both at the time of the performance of the action or the making of the choice and afterwards, the person maintains a certain openness to respond to criticism. It is entirely plausible, however, to imagine that a person can make a heteronomous choice or action, say due to pressure, even when possessing the kind of openness prescribed by Westlund's account. If Westlund's account is understood to mean that a disposition to dialogical answerability generates an autonomy-inducing posture without conferring autonomy to specific actions and choices, then it avoids the problem encountered by the first interpretation. In this case, contrary to what Westlund maintains, her account of autonomy would be more akin to global than to local autonomy.[25]

If understood in an exclusivist sense, Westlund's account would also be susceptible to the charge of reactivity. If a person is never met with challenges, their commitments remain untested and are never actively appropriated (by actually responding to critics). Westlund also contends that one may engage in inner dialogue to test one's commitments; this allows the person to test one's commitments even if no real critics challenge them. Extending dialogical answerability to solitary inner dialogue seems to me to be a move in the right direction. What I find problematic with Westlund's characterisation, however, is that she depicts what is commonly considered reflection as dialogue. Inner dialogue is a form of reflection, one that models itself on real dialoguing, but it certainly cannot be characterised as dialogue. No one in their right mind would say to an interlocutor: "I have conversed with you on this important issue in my imagination and have concluded the following." Doing so would be tantamount to depriving the interlocutor of their freedom to say what they wish in a real conversation, debasing the process of dialoguing. Construing reflection as dialogue also dilutes the crucial differences that distinguish the two processes. While

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[24] Ibid., 27.

[25] Ibid., 27.

inner dialogue is autonomy-enhancing, it certainly cannot substitute real dialogue. Westlund's inclusion of inner dialogue in her account of autonomy demonstrates the need for a broader, inclusivist account of autonomy that includes dialogical answerability but also other means of making something one's own such as solitary reflection.

III. Why does communication matter to personal autonomy?

Both Benson and Westlund offer compelling reasons for justifying why communicative capacities and processes are important to personal autonomy. Benson asserts that agents are the ones who should speak on their behalf because they "stand at the nodal point defined by the targeting of potential criticisms and the voicing of reasons in response."[26] In relational and communicative terms, any criticism of an action addresses the agent who performs the action. Such an address normatively requires that the agent speaks on their behalf.[27] In a similar vein, Westlund highlights the "interpersonal accountability" that commitments carry since they are assignable to the agent who holds such commitments and are not "assignable to anyone else."[28] She cites as an additional reason the fact that dialogicality characterises the sort of beings we are.[29] In this section, I present an argument that seeks to show why the dialogical or communicative facet of our way of being is central to autonomy. This argument overlaps with some of the reasons both Benson and Westlund provide, but it seeks a more radical grounding. I argue that autonomy is an inescapable presupposition of communication. To demonstrate why this is so, I use Jürgen Habermas's theory of communication.

   In his work on communication, Habermas distinguishes between two paradigmatic forms of linguistically mediated interaction: communicative action and strategic action. These two forms of interaction share the characteristics of being conducted through the employment of the medium of language and involving two or more participants. The difference between the two hinges on the attitude adopted by the participants involved in the communicative process. Habermas defines communicative action as linguistically mediated interaction in which all participants' attitudes are oriented towards understanding.[30] In this

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[26] Benson, 109.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Westlund, 35.

[29] Ibid., 34.

[30] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984), 286.

mode of communication, participants show a readiness to understand the point of view of other participants and an openness to be persuaded by the force of reason. Conversely, Habermas defines strategic action as a linguistically mediated interaction in which participants adopt a success-oriented attitude.[31] In this mode of communication, participants act instrumentally, aiming to influence the behaviour of others, possibly even of others who participate only as listeners.[32]

Habermas argues that communicative action is "the *original mode* of language use," with strategic action being parasitic in nature.[33] To show the fundamentality of communicative action and the parasitic character of strategic action, Habermas uses John L. Austin's speech-act theory and his distinction between illocution and perlocution. Illocution refers to the manner in which an utterance is to be taken, what Austin terms the "force" of a speech-act, which determines whether an act is an assertion, a question, a request, and so on.[34] Perlocutions, on the other hand, refer to the effects of the speech-act.[35] For instance, asking a question may be aimed at eliciting information but could also serve to ridicule, make an indirect assertion, and so forth.[36] Habermas links the act of reaching understanding to the illocutionary act: reaching an understanding consists, firstly, in the hearer *understanding* the illocution of the speaker; secondly, in the hearer *accepting* the offer made by the speaker through the utterance; and lastly, in the hearer *acting* in accordance with the conventional linguistic obligations that arise from the acceptance of the offer (such

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[31] Ibid.

[32] In a more detailed taxonomy of action types, Habermas divides strategic action into openly strategic action and latently strategic action. In case of the former, actors do not hide their intention to engage in strategic action, whereas in case of the latter, they do. Latently strategic action is then divided into manipulation and systemically distorted communication. Manipulation involves the deception of another communicative partner, whereas systemically distorted communication involves self-deception. Communicative action is then divided into action oriented toward reaching understanding and consensual action. The former refers to communicative action in which participants have to come to an understanding about the situation in which interaction takes place and the raised validity claims. In contrast, the former refers to action in which situation defining and raised validity claims are not problematised; Jürgen Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?" in *On the Pragmatics of Communication*, ed. Maeve Cooke, trans. Thomas McCarthy, 21-103 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 93.

[33] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1*, 288. For another argument on why communication cannot be construed in purely instrumental terms: Jürgen Habermas, "Actions, Speech Acts, Linguistically Mediated Interactions, and the Lifeworld," in *On the Pragmatics of Communication*, ed. Maeve Cooke, trans. Thomas McCarthy, 215-255 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 218-219.

[34] John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 99.

[35] Ibid., 101.

[36] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1*, 288-289.

as answering a question).[37] Consequently, reaching understanding, which is the goal of communicative action, is directly and internally connected to the communicative success of illocutions. Conversely, strategic action is concerned with goals that are external to speech, generalised as influencing the behaviour of others through linguistic means, corresponding to Austin's perlocutions. Habermas argues that such goals can be achieved through linguistic means only because utterances can fulfil illocutionary goals.[38] For example, asking a question can serve to elicit information from a participant in a conversation, but also to influence the behaviour of other participants, as in the case of a question intended to belittle a political rival. The latter perlocutionary aim can be accomplished only because questions are primarily illocutionary devices meant to fulfil, above all, illocutionary aims. The dependence of perlocutions on illocutions shows, Habermas argues, that strategic action is parasitic on communicative action.

Building on the claim that communicative action is the fundamental form of communicative interaction, Habermas reconstructs the presuppositions of communicative action. He argues that when engaging in communicative processes aimed at achieving understanding, participants necessarily accept a number of presuppositions.[39] A central and crucial presupposition is accountability, which, he maintains, stems from the structure of linguistic communication.[40] Participants who intend to come to an understanding about something necessarily present themselves as accountable agents who are ready to justify such claims if required.[41] At the same time,

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[37] Ibid., 297.

[38] Ibid., 293.

[39] Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?" 21.

[40] Habermas's view is discussed at length and partially contested by Joseph Heath who argues that while Habermas is right in concluding that linguistic communication cannot be adequately construed in exclusively instrumental terms, he is wrong in positing communicative action as the fundamental form of social action. Particularly, he argues that, in the case of norms, social actors are not committed to be held accountable as soon as they engage in communication but rather tend to engage in the practice of justifying norms in the case of disagreement because such practice is resourceful and "enjoys significant pragmatic advantages over the alternatives." I do not have the space to discuss Heath's criticism here. However, I contend that the inescapability of accountability in communication is oriented to understanding, at least in the case of truth, that claims cannot be dismissed without complications. A speaker who makes a truth claim and whose truth claim is challenged must bind themselves to justify their claim if they want to continue engaging in communication dedicated to understanding. It is hard to imagine how communication dedicated to understanding is possible without such commitment; Joseph Heath, *Communicative Action and Rational Choice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 161-171.

[41] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 2: Lifeworld and System, A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 100.

apart from presenting themselves as accountable agents, participants are ascribed the capacity to justify their claims by other participants in a conversation. By being addressed through speech-acts, such as being asked a question, or criticised, one is recognised as an accountable agent who can, and is expected to, justify their claims, answer questions, respond to objections, and so on. Underlying this presupposed accountability is the fact that in communicative action participants raise three validity claims that are, by their very nature, potentially contestable. The three validity claims are the claim to truth, the claim to normative rightness, and the claim to sincerity.[42] When a speaker utters a speech-act, they are, directly or indirectly, claiming that what they are saying is true, normatively appropriate, and that they sincerely reflect their own intentions. Consequently, every speech-act can be contested on any of these three grounds: a hearer can retort by claiming that the content of the speaker's speech-act is false or doubtful, that the speech-act is normatively inappropriate, or that the intention purported to be expressed by the speech-act is insincere.

I want to argue that the presupposition of accountability must, in turn, presuppose something even more fundamental: the presupposition of having the authority to speak on one's behalf. A person who ascribes accountability to themselves and is ascribed such accountability by others is a person who at the same time is ascribed—both by oneself and others—the authority to decide on what to say and not to say, the authority to take ownership of claims, actions, and commitments through linguistic means, and the authority to retract and modify their claims as they see fit. The presupposition of the authority to speak on one's behalf projects the person who has such authority as the agent who has rightful control over when such authority is exercised, how it is exercised, and the subject matter over which it is exercised. This presupposed authority is nothing other than the presupposition of the right to exercise self-direction and self-governance within conversational contexts.[43]

The authority to speak on one's behalf is presupposed and ascribed in processes of communicative action even when the possibility of being held accountable is remote or practically non-existent. For instance, in a conversation where X asks Y if they prefer coffee or tea, Y is presupposed

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[42] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1*, 310.

[43] It is worth noting here that Maeve Cooke uses the work of Habermas to derive a notion of autonomy as rational accountability in a similar vein to how it's depicted above. However, the conception of autonomy she develops remains narrow because it only concerns rational accountability. The argument I am making here points to something more fundamental: the presupposition and the ascription by both self and others of having the authority to speak on one's behalf; Maeve Cooke, "Habermas, Autonomy and the Identity of the Self," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 18, nos. 3-4 (1992): 269-291.

to have the authority to speak on their behalf even if their simple responses ("coffee" or "tea") are only remotely related, if at all, to the possibility of holding Y accountable. This is because the presupposition of possessing the authority to speak on one's behalf is not dependent on the presupposition of accountability (even if the latter presupposes the former) and is instead presupposed by the general use of speech in communicative action processes. Another example further reinforces this point. In a conversational context where participants are asked about their feelings regarding a proposed policy change, the speakers who express their feelings are ascribed the authority to speak on their behalf *in the first instance* independently of any ascription of accountability. Therefore, while accountability necessarily presupposes the authority to speak on one's behalf, the latter presupposition is not dependent on the presupposition of accountability.

Accountability and the authority to speak on one's behalf are only presuppositions, albeit inescapable ones in communicative action and discourses that might ensue from communicative action.[44] Whether one lives up to these ascriptions is a different matter. One might find oneself in a conversation where others afford one accountability and authority but fails to act in a way that actualises such ascriptions in practice. One might be asked a question and is too timid to speak or lacks the kind of self-regard Benson speaks about. Or one might utter a claim but, because of a lack of self-confidence, retract it immediately as soon as others object to it. One might also, for example due to shame, fail to present one's views and oneself as a partner in conversation who can carry out a conversation with others. Similarly, if one is ignored and therefore not ascribed accountability and authority, one can hardly actualise them in conversational contexts. One might attempt to express one's view but receive a close-ended reply meant to stop the conversation from developing, or one might be shut up by others. One might even be systematically ignored. These considerations suggest that even though accountability and the authority to speak on one's behalf are presuppositions of communicative action, their actualisation in practice in conversational settings depends both on the person having certain capacities (broadly construed), such as self-confidence and self-regard, and on others being willing to recognise such qualities.

Understanding autonomy narrowly as accountability or answerability, even if autonomy is understood inclusively (i.e. not exclusively in terms of a dialogical dimension), fails to account for some of the situations mentioned above. Some of the situations mentioned above concern not an

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[44] In the work of Habermas, the term "discourse" refers to argumentation that seeks to resolve disagreements about truth claims (theoretical discourse) or norms of actions (practical discourse); Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1*, 19.

inability or lack of willingness to be held accountable, but rather an ina-
bility or lack of willingness to claim authority to speak on one's behalf. In
his account of autonomy, Benson does consider cases that fall under this
latter category. He contends that a person can become socially invisible
by being treated as invisible by others and by internalising such invisibility.
He also asserts that a person can internalise such social invisibility even
when one is not systematically treated as invisible.[45] The only issue I have
with Benson's account on this specific point is that he has conceptualised
autonomy as answerability as being fundamentally reactive (one's auton-
omy is understood as being ready to speak for oneself "in the face of po-
tential criticisms"),[46] while social invisibility is an issue—as his treatment
of the issue seems to suggest—that goes beyond merely being ready to
face the potential criticisms of others (i.e. accountability). The autonomy
of the socially invisible person—whether such invisibility stems from a lack
of self-regard, is somehow imposed on them by others, or some combina-
tion of both—suffers mostly not because they are unable to face potential
criticisms, but rather because by failing to make good of the authority as-
cribed to them, they are unable to assert their own selfhood in public (here
public is to be understood loosely encompassing even a conversation with
just one other person) through self-direction in conversational contexts.
Social invisibility renders the person selfless in public and there can be no
autonomy without the *autos* or self. The "self" in the idea of the invisible
self should not be understood in some deep metaphysical sense but in the
more ordinary sense of an individual, person, or agent who can be ignored
or treated as non-existing. These considerations suggest that while the is-
sue of accountability is essential for theorising the communicative dimen-
sion of autonomy, the theorisation of autonomy in the communicative
dimension must be broadened to include more than just answerability.

IV. Communicative spaces, claiming authority, and taking ownership

In the previous section, I maintained that the presupposition and as-
cription of having the authority to speak on one's behalf is at the same
time the presupposition and ascription of self-direction and self-gov-
ernment in communicative processes. In this section I want to offer a
conceptualisation of linguistic communicative processes that can ac-
count not only for the possibility of communicative subjects being held
accountability but also, and more importantly, for the inescapable pre-
supposition that communicative subjects have the authority to speak

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[45] Benson, 111-114.

[46] Benson, 102.

on their behalf. While accountability remains an important notion for conceptualising personal autonomy in this dimension, the authority to speak on one's behalf takes centre stage and becomes the foundational notion in this dimension. By placing the ascription of authority at the centre, I broaden the conceptualisation of this dimension to include communicative interactions that are not immediately related to accountability and avoid the objection of reactivity that I have levelled against the accounts of Benson and Westlund. The terms "claiming authority" and "taking ownership" are adopted from Benson's account but are reconfigured to serve the conception developed below.

In the conceptualisation I develop in this section, the communicative dimension is conceived in terms of communicative spaces that allow persons to assert themselves as competent and authoritative subjects who speak on their behalf and take ownership of claims, actions, and commitments. In order to explain what these communicative spaces are, I want to characterise them analogously to the physical distance persons feel they need to have between themselves and others when in the presence of others or when interacting with others. The latter is the field of study generally called proxemics.[47] This characterisation of the communicative dimension in terms of the spatial metaphor of physical distance persons feel they need to have between themselves and others foregrounds a number of characteristics that are useful for the conceptualisation of the communicative dimension of personal autonomy.[48]

The space people feel they need to have between themselves is affected by culture, situational context, and the nature of the relationship amongst the people concerned. In some sense, people feel that the physical space surrounding them belongs to them. They also generally feel they have authority over such space, and such authority prescribes that they ought to be the ones to determine who enters such space, when, and in what manner. While the physical space surrounding the person is always present, it starts having any manifest normative bearing as soon as one is in the presence of others, and it

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[47] Edward T. Hall, who coined the term proxemics, defined it as "the interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialised elaboration of culture." In his seminal work, *The Hidden Dimension*, Hall distinguishes between types of distances: intimate distance, personal distance, social distance, and public distance; Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), 1; 113-129.

[48] Like any other metaphor, this has limitations and remains only a vehicle through which specific features of the communicative dimension are pictured and made explicit. To use another metaphor about the metaphor of physical distance, the metaphor of physical distance is like a ladder that helps one reach a certain point, beyond which it isn't possible to reach points higher than the ladder itself.

becomes phenomenologically visible once it is near-invaded or invaded by others. When a person's personal space is near-invaded, they can claim authority implicitly or explicitly through bodily cues and movements. When such space is invaded, the person can also, implicitly or explicitly, reclaim such space by moving backwards to leave what one deems an appropriate distance between oneself and others. Finally, the person's authority over personal space exists because the person accepts it as existing and is recognised as existing by others. For example, the persistently bullied child whose space might have been repeatedly breached by others might come to believe that they have no authority over their surrounding space. Personal space is therefore characterised by five features: first, it starts having any normative bearing as soon as one is in the presence of others; second, it belongs to the person who has authority over it; third, it can be invaded; fourth, it can be claimed and reclaimed; and, finally, its existence depends on the person and others recognising it as existing.

The five features characterising physical space also, analogously, characterise communication between persons and the communicative spaces generated by linguistic communication. In a simple communicative interaction between two persons, A and B, the interaction generates communicative spaces that belong conjointly and separately to A and B. I say "conjointly" because the generation of communicative spaces requires the cooperative participation of at least two persons, and "separately" because, notwithstanding the joint ownership of the communicative process, within this process, A and B possess separate communicative spaces over which each participant has normative authority. Thus, for example, if A asks a question to B and B replies, B would be accepting the invitation of A to initiate a joint communicative process. By answering the question, B would also be occupying the communicative space afforded to them by the cooperative, communicative process.

Communicative spaces always exist potentially for persons capable of communicating, but they start having normative bearing as soon as at least two persons are in a position to initiate a conversation and in a more pronounced manner as soon as the communicative process is initiated. The norms governing a communicative interaction can be numerous and vary according to the nature of the conversation. Norms relevant to the filling in of communicative spaces in communication oriented to understanding include allowing the partner in communication to speak for themselves, allowing them to express their views, and giving them a fair share of time to express what they would like to ex-

press.[49] These norms are tied to autonomous acting in that, if respected, they allow the participant in conversation to exercise self-direction in the communicative interaction.

The norms mentioned above indicate that in communicative interactions persons involved in the interaction have authority over their respective communicative spaces. Unlike in the case of personal space, communicative spaces cannot be delineated and measured with precision; this is so since communicative spaces cannot be measured quantitatively. However, violations of certain norms clearly show that such communicative spaces do indeed emerge in communication (particularly, in communicative action). The existence of such norms becomes manifest, for example, when person A asks a question to B and then goes on to answer the question instead of B, and when B, in answering a question, gives an excessively long-winded answer without allowing the partner in conversation to have a say in turn. These violations can be met with interjections and protests, such as when B points out that they are not allowed to answer the question that was addressed to them in the first place, or such as when A makes it clear that they would like to have another say in the conversation. These violations and their responses show not only that such communicative spaces exist, and that they belong to different persons engaged in the conversation, but also that, like personal space, communicative spaces can be invaded, claimed, and reclaimed.

Finally, communicative spaces which are owned by persons engaged in a conversation only exist if they are recognised as existing both by the person who potentially possesses ownership over such spaces and by others who are ready to engage in conversation with the said person. If B feels uncomfortable answering the question posed by A and pretends they did not hear what A said, or if B thinks that it is not worth answering the question of A, then communicative spaces fail to emerge or they are brought into existence for a very short period. In extreme cases, when a person is systematically ignored, they may even fail to have a chance to have a say, to express their view, and, therefore, to claim authority over any communicative spaces as such spaces are never recognised as theirs by other potential communicators.

Autonomy in the communicative dimension can be conceptualised in terms of two types of acts: the claiming of authority over communicative spaces that normatively belong to the communicators and the

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[49] The norms I have in mind are procedural in character. The idea of procedural norms is, of course, Habermasian in spirit; Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 89.

taking ownership of claims, actions, and commitments in the ensuing communicative processes. Understood in this way, autonomy in the communicative dimension involves performing two acts—claiming authority and taking ownership – which generally can only be distinguished analytically. When a person claims authority over a communicative space, the person would be presenting themselves as an agent who can speak for oneself, stand for oneself, and speak one's mind. In doing so, the person would be disclosing themselves to others as a competent and self-governing person with a unique perspective who owns this unique perspective and who is authorised to speak for it. Timidness, shame, and lack of self-worth generally make their toll felt by making claiming authority burdensome or even impossible to execute. Once a person starts engaging in a communicative process, they can then, through the production of utterances, actualise in practice what the claiming of authority presented only abstractly: that one speaks for oneself, that one expresses one's perspective, and so on. Communicative processes allow the person to take ownership of their claims, actions, and commitments, not just by defending them against criticisms but also by merely articulating them in linguistic form. A person who asserts their gay identity to their friends is already taking ownership of such an identity even without thinking about potential criticisms or positioning themselves as ready to answer criticisms. Of course, the ideal of personal autonomy also demands that one is ready to answer criticisms but, in certain situations, merely expressing one's views qualifies as acting autonomously.

Conceptualising autonomy in the communicative dimension in terms of the act of claiming authority over communicative spaces can account for situations of state-generated oppression that accounts of autonomy as a disposition to face criticisms cannot. In a state in which citizens have limited or no freedom of speech and are not allowed to engage in real discussions about matters of collective interest, accounts of autonomy as mere dialogical answerability are incapable of explaining protests and resistance as acts of claiming and reclaiming authority. In such oppressive scenarios, persons can have the disposition to respond to potential criticisms without actually being allowed to engage in real dialogue. Conceptualising the communicative dimension as claiming authority over communicative spaces could explain protests and resistance as acts intended to claim authority over communicative spaces that normatively belong to protestors. Therefore, the conceptualisation I am proposing also has the potential of explaining political acts of the kind just mentioned as autonomous acts intended to claim and reclaim autonomy.

The act of claiming authority over communicative spaces concerns both local and global autonomy. Claiming authority can function as an instantiation of local autonomy, but more importantly, being disposed to and actually claiming authority in various situations means adopting an autonomous and autonomy-inducing posture in social interaction. Similarly, taking ownership of claims, actions, and commitments through communicative processes concerns both local and global autonomy. Like the disposition to claim authority over communicative spaces, taking ownership of claims, actions, and commitments can also develop into an autonomy-conducive posture. The person who has global autonomy in this dimension develops a general readiness to take ownership of claims, actions, and commitments in conversational contexts. Moreover, taking ownership in communicative processes allows the person to target specific claims, actions, and commitments, some of which have local ramifications, some of which have global relevance. One can take ownership of a claim that is not life-informing and concerns a specific situation, but one can also take ownership of a commitment which asserts one's identity in public. Therefore, contrary to Benson and Westlund, I assert that the communicative dimension of autonomy concerns both local and global autonomy.

Taking ownership of claims, actions, and commitments in communicative processes can be retroactive, but not in the sense Benson advocates. Through speech-acts, persons can appropriate past claims, actions, and commitments; however, such appropriation does not make them autonomous retrospectively. Past claims, actions, and commitments may become autonomously held through appropriation, but this does not mean that the present absolves the past. A person might decide to pursue a particular career out of pressure from one's father, but then in the future appropriates such career as one's own. In my view, while the original choice would have been heteronomous, its appropriation might now make holding to the career autonomous. Claiming authority and taking ownership can also be reactive, but they need not be. Competent communicators can claim authority by initiating conversations, such as when a gay person discloses their identity to friends. This way of viewing the communicative dimension of autonomy avoids the objections of retroactivity and reactivity I discussed above.

The question that follows from this rendition of the communicative dimension of autonomy is: what conditions must be satisfied for claiming authority and taking ownership through speech to be autonomous? The act of claiming authority is self-satisfying and self-referential; one claims authority over a communicative space by speaking and, when

one speaks, one claims such authority. No other higher-order criteria must be satisfied for one to claim authority and there is no heterono- mous claiming authority; one either claims authority or one does not. The question that must be answered with regard to claiming authority is: when is one required to claim authority; in other words, when is one required to speak to be said to be autonomous? I will return to this question in the next section.

The act of taking ownership is more complex. First of all, it must be made clear that the act of taking ownership through utterances in dialogical settings is just one way among various which persons use to make actions, claims, and commitments one's own. Claiming that this is the only way (and thus endorse an exclusivist conception) persons use to make actions, claims, and commitments their own leaves out other important means persons use to take ownership. Solitary reflec- tion coupled with intrapersonal assent is another way.[50] One can, for example, reflect on an issue and, as a result of such reflection, endorse a particular view. Even non-linguistic actions can function as means of taking ownership. Actively working for a particular cause can function as making the cause one's own. Indeed, persons take ownership through these three means: speech and its use in dialogical settings, solitary reflection and intrapersonal assent, and non-linguistic actions. These three means can of course function in a coordinated fashion and, some- times, taking ownership requires that one means complements another. A person who endorses a cause through the expression of external (in dialogue) or internal (in solitary reflection) assent would be expect- ed—obviously depending on the nature of what is endorsed—to follow through by performing certain actions. For example, taking ownership of the commitment to save a particular species requires that one fol- low through by performing actions intended to promote the well-being of the species; sometimes, in the absence of such following through, doubts can be raised as to whether an agent has actually made such commitment one's own. Situations which call for complementarity and coordination between the various means of taking ownership further show the shortcomings of exclusivist accounts.

The above considerations show that giving a complete account of what is involved in taking ownership of claims, actions, and com- mitments through utterances necessitates that one gives a broader

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[50] Maeve Cooke makes the important point that autonomy requires that one has a "solitary space" to which one can retreat to in order to reflect on one's actions and commitments. The acceptance of this view further shows the inadequacy of conceptualising personal autonomy exclusively in dialogical and communicative terms; Maeve Cooke, "A Space of One's Own: Autonomy, Privacy, Liberty," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 25, no. 1 (1999): 31.

account of autonomy. The kind of broader account I have in mind is one that posits various dimensions of autonomy which can at times function independently, but which can also at times require interdimensional coordination.[51] Due to the complex nature of the issue and the limitation of space, I cannot go into the broader issue of a general theory of autonomy. I will, in the next section, offer a general characterisation of how taking ownership through utterances can be said to be autonomous.

V. The "when" of claiming authority and the "how" of taking ownership

In this section, I deal with the two questions raised above. The first concerns claiming authority over communicative spaces and can be formulated as follows: when is one required to claim authority over communicative spaces? Surely, a theory of the communicative dimension of personal autonomy cannot prescribe that one ought to speak whenever one has the possibility of speaking. There are instances when autonomous persons can, and sometimes should, retreat from a conversation or not engage in one in the first place. The second concerns taking ownership and can be formulated as follows: how does one take ownership through speech autonomously? Autonomous actions and conduct do not ensue simply because one takes ownership of actions, claims, and commitments in speech – the manner of such taking ownership is crucial for a theory of autonomy. I will tackle these two questions in this order.

I want to propose that there are four types of situations in which the ideal of autonomy demands that a person claim authority over a communicative space. This means that failure to claim authority over communicative spaces in these types of situations would typically be a heteronomous failure to claim authority. The assessment of whether a failure to claim authority over a communicative space should count as a heteronomous act or conduct requires that one view such failure and assess one's autonomy, or lack thereof, over time.

The first type of situation is when the possibility of claiming authority over communicative spaces in the present and future is systematically threatened or circumscribed. This parallels what happens in re-

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[51] The account presented in this article is compatible with various theories of personal autonomy. Compatibility rests on the theory satisfying two conditions: first, it must include or have space for a communicative dimension, and second, it must not define autonomy exclusively in terms of the communicative dimension. The multidimensional theory of personal autonomy I have in mind is one comprised of three dimensions: the communicative dimension, the evaluative dimension, and the self-definition dimension.

claiming personal space when it is near-invaded or invaded. When one's authority over the physical space one owns is threatened or invaded, one protects such authority by reclaiming such space as one's own. In the case of the communicative dimension of personal autonomy, the threat or systematic circumscription of the possibility of claiming authority over communicative spaces can generally be preserved, though neither exclusively nor invariantly so,[52] by claiming authority over present communicative spaces in general or in particular (depending on the situation). Protests against restrictions on freedom of speech, protests against being systematically ignored, and protests against being repeatedly prevented from having a say are concrete illustrations of when one claims authority over a communicative space to preserve present and future opportunities to claim authority over communicative spaces.

The second type of situation is when the possibility of being autonomous in a general sense is being threatened (note: I argued above for an inclusivist theory of personal autonomy). Situations that fall under this type include when the range of options one can choose from in one's life is drastically reduced[53] and when one's freedom is being unjustifiably diminished. The content of this criterion also depends on the general theory of autonomy within which the theory of the communicative dimension of autonomy is embedded.

The third type of situation is when one's dignity is threatened. As I understand it, "dignity" refers to a collection of characteristics, conditions, and capacities that are generally thought to be necessary for potentially attaining material, emotional, and social well-being. This third type of situation generally overlaps with the second type; such threats to one's dignity generally impact one's autonomy directly or indirectly. Mistreatments that fall under the former category include having one's freedom restricted unjustifiably and the withholding of pertinent information on one's personal or collective affairs unjustifiably. In the latter's case, mistreatments do not directly impact the possibility of being autonomous but might do, and generally do so, indirectly. Mistreatments that fall under this latter category include systematic prejudices against oneself as being a possessor of a charac-

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[52] I said "neither exclusively nor invariantly so" because sometimes systematic circumscription calls for more drastic measures, such as systematic civil disobedience and active and violent resistance.

[53] As Joseph Raz argues, autonomy requires an adequate range of options. While a reduction of options is not in itself autonomy-inhibiting, when this is drastically reduced it becomes an issue for the actualisation of personal autonomy; Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 373-376.

teristic that makes one a member of a mistreated category. Characteristics of this kind include being black, gay, a woman, and the like. Such mistreatments impact the social standing of oneself as a competent and autonomous person. When one suffers such mistreatments, one's ability to conduct oneself autonomously is generally diminished.

The fourth type of situation is when one is faced with criticism on actions one has performed, claims one has assented to, or commitments one has endorsed. The ideal of autonomy does not demand that one is expected to answer to any criticism, but as Westlund argues, one is expected to respond only to legitimate challenges. According to her, for a challenge to be legitimate, it must at least satisfy two conditions. The first condition is termed by Westlund "relational situatedness." What she means by this is that the offer to engage in dialogue must make sense within the relationship between the involved persons. The legitimacy of the intervention is derived from the nature of the relationship. While it might make sense to discuss a particular issue with one's spouse, it might not make sense to discuss it with a stranger. In this sense, relationships become "sense-giving relationships," and different relationships vary in the sense they impart to issues.[54] Sense-giving relationships can be broad, such as being a citizen of a state, or narrow, such as the relationship between a mother and a daughter. The second condition given by Westlund is termed "context-sensitivity." What Westlund means by this is that the person raising the challenge must be open to a variety of responses that take into consideration the ability and experience of the person expected to provide an answer to a challenge.[55] Thus, a person may respond by indicating that she will think about the matter, by explaining how the issue makes sense within her life narrative, or even by "tell[ing] parables or other stories."[56]

Westlund's two conditions are reasonable; they need, however, to be developed further. Concerning the condition of relational situatedness, I argue that one must add that a sense-giving relationship cannot render an invitation illegitimate if the grounds that make the invitation illegitimate are themselves autonomy-inhibiting. Sense-giving in relationships is grounded in accepted norms and social expectations, but such norms and expectations can themselves be heteronomy-conducive. For example, a relationship between a religious leader and a religious follower might proscribe questioning the authority of the religious leader; the norms and expectations governing the relationship

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[54] Westlund, 39.

[55] Ibid., 40.

[56] Ibid.

might prescribe that one ought to follow the authority of the religious leader blindly. In such a case, questioning the authority of the religious leader would not "make sense." Such norms and expectations contradict the very idea of autonomy. Thus, while challenges or invitations need to derive their legitimacy from the relationship between potential interlocutors, grounds that may withhold legitimation cannot themselves be autonomy-inhibiting, such as blindly accepting authority. Regarding context-sensitivity, the variety of responses tolerated must be within specific rational parameters that respect certain inescapable rational criteria. Thus, while a legitimate challenge needs to be sensitive to the ability and experience of the individual, such openness to variation in responses cannot extend to include responses that violate basic rational criteria. Telling parables or referring to one's experience might be legitimate responses, but if, for example, a parable obscures the matter under discussion or an appeal to one's experience turns out to be characterised by confirmation bias, they no longer remain legitimate responses.

As claimed above, communication also provides one with the possibility to take ownership of claims, actions, and commitments through the use of speech. In essence, taking ownership means expressing assent, but this ranges from simple assent to a more complex defence of an action, claim, or commitment. As argued above, taking ownership through speech is only one way of making something one's own. The "when" of taking ownership is subject to the "when" of claiming authority; the ideal of autonomy demands that one takes ownership when one of the four types of situations described above subsists. What needs to be explained now is how one takes ownership autonomously. The distinction between taking ownership autonomously and taking ownership non-autonomously is required since it is entirely plausible to imagine taking ownership of a claim, action, or commitment, being heteronomous.

On the assumption that one has the necessary linguistic-communicative competence to take ownership of claims, actions, and commitments through the use of language, and on the assumption that one has exercised such competence correctly (e.g. one utters words like "yes" or "I agree" or any functionally equivalent word or words to express assent), taking ownership through the use of language requires fulfilling three conditions. These conditions are intra-dimensional conditions and, as I explained above, a complete account requires also looking at interdimensional conditions when interdimensional coordination is required.

The first condition is having a basic understanding of what one is taking ownership of. This condition implies that accepting claims without understanding the content of what one accepts is a heteronomous form of taking ownership. While a person who expresses assent in ignorance would be, in a superficial sense, taking ownership of a claim, such taking ownership does not qualify as taking ownership in the deeper sense of truly making a claim one's own. A paradigmatic case of such assenting in ignorance is accepting terms of service and data policies without reading them.[57]

The second condition is that the possibility of not taking ownership of what one takes ownership of is considered as a possibility by the person taking ownership. This does not entail that one must have experienced indecision in the process that led one to take ownership of something, nor that taking ownership and not taking ownership must have been given equal weight, but only that the person considers not taking ownership of what one took ownership of as possible in a practical sense. This condition allows for distinguishing between inescapable belonging, mere acceptance, and taking ownership in the deeper sense of making something truly one's own. Features (broadly construed) that are truly inescapable are outside the province of taking ownership. These generally include gender, sexual orientation, and the native language. This is not to say that these features, which are generally identity-forming and life-informing, are heteronomy-conducive but only that their inescapability makes their possession outside the reach of agency. However, a person can take ownership at a second-order level by taking ownership of the *fact* that one is of a particular gender or the *fact* that one has a particular sexual-orientation. The need for these second-order taking ownership becomes important for one's autonomy when such characteristics are grounds for mistreating a person. Mere acceptance subsists when a person takes ownership of something, such as a religious claim – without having ever considered the possibility of not owning it.

The third condition is openness to reasons, which includes readiness to face criticism, and the attitudinal ability to give up what one takes ownership of. This condition is important since it highlights that taking ownership is not a one-time affair but a commitment that can be tested and retested after the initial taking ownership. Having

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[57] As one notable study demonstrates, this mode of taking ownership of commitments is widespread on the internet; Jonathan A. Obar and Anne Oeldorf-Hirsch, "The Biggest Lie on the Internet: Ignoring the Privacy Policies and Terms of Service Policies of Social Networking Services," *Information, Communication & Society* 23, no. 1 (2018): 128-147.

openness to reasons, readiness to face criticism, and the attitudinal ability to give something up generates a certain agentic flexibility that allows the person to renew the ownership. This condition does not mean that persons must reduce themselves to perfect rational automata constantly changing their views in view of what appears to be the best available evidence and arguments. Even having a hunch can count as a good reason to hold to a belief. What this condition entails is that persons, if they are to take ownership autonomously, cannot avoid testing their views out of, say, a misplaced emotional commitment to a truth claim, or out of fear of being shamed (this being always subject to the four criteria of claiming authority outlined above).

VI. Conclusion

In this article, I argued that a theory of personal autonomy must account for what I have referred to as the communicative dimension. I also argued that, while a theory of personal autonomy must account for the communicative dimension, it cannot be reduced to this dimension. The inclusion of this dimension is necessitated by the fact that communicative processes necessarily presuppose that communicators have the authority to speak on their behalf; to speak on one's behalf, I contended, means to exercise self-direction in communicative processes. While drawing from the accounts of Benson and Westlund, the model I proposed avoids the charges of retrospectivity (levelled against Benson) and reactivity (levelled against both Benson and Westlund). In my account, the communicative dimension is conceptualised in terms of claiming authority over communicative spaces and taking ownership of actions, claims, and commitments in communicative processes. Unlike the accounts of Benson and Westlund, my account concerns both local and global autonomy and has the potential of being applied to political acts. Claiming authority and taking ownership, I also argued, must fulfil specific conditions: in the case of claiming authority, these conditions concern the "when" of when a person must claim authority to retain or reclaim autonomy and the "how" of taking ownership so that the latter is conducted autonomously.

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Werner Marx and Martin Heidegger: What "Measure" for a Post-metaphysical Ethics?

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Abstract

German philosopher Martin Heidegger's later thought is significant because of his attention to the meaning of "truth" (alētheia) and its connection to Protagoras's thesis of anthrōpon metron ("of all things man is the measure..."), which Heidegger elevates to the "highest principle" of philosophy. Philosopher Werner Marx concurs with Heidegger that our time faces the "age of technology" as the completion of the Western tradition of metaphysics. With the "end of philosophy" in this sense, we stand to inaugurate "a new beginning" in thinking without reliance on the principles and standards that have their provenance in the tradition from ancient Greek philosophy onward to late European modernity. For Marx, this elicits the possibility of a non-metaphysical ethics, hence the question of "measure" that he engages in connection with Heidegger's later thinking. However, it is problematic that Marx engages Schelling's reflections on the essence of human freedom to articulate a possibility of measure. Here Marx's reflections are engaged by considering his motivation and the thought of Schelling, Nietzsche, Heidegger, as well as the historical context of the twentieth century, all of which constrain Marx's normative objective. Heidegger's engagement of Schelling and Kant to elucidate the problem of human freedom raises questions whether Marx's proposal for a measure "on this earth" can achieve the goal of a foundation for a post-metaphysical ethics.

Keywords: *Werner Marx; Martin Heidegger; ethics; measure; thinking*

Where have the days of Tobias gone,' Rainer Maria Rilke asks sorrowfully in the Second Duino Elegy. Are those days forever gone, the poet wonders, when man was blessed with the immediacy and simplicity of speech that were the marks of Tobias, the simple one? Can we latecomers in a long cultural process ever hope to find our way back to such an immediacy and simplicity and thereby become again truly creative, or as the Greeks said *poietic*?
Werner Marx, "Heidegger's New Conception of Philosophy" (Winter, 1955)

I. Introduction: Heidegger's elevation of Protagoras's anthropon metron ("measure")

"Of all things the measure is man: of those that are, that they are; and of those that are not, that they are not."[1] It is well known among students of philosophy – especially those engaged in disputations concerning the legitimacy of moral relativism and moral skepticism – that the sophist Protagoras (c. 490-420 BCE) championed this ostensibly relativist and conventionalist "thesis," "theorem," or "doctrine" of "measure" – called for short the *anthropon metron* or *homo mensura* (measure with reference to the human being) – in a work on "Truth" (*Alētheia*) that is no longer extant. Both Plato (in the *Theaetetus* and *Protagoras*) and Aristotle (in *Metaphysics*, Γ5) subjected this thesis to critique.[2] The thesis is said to be "a striking and allusive claim" of truth uttered in the context of intellectual or specifically rhetorical debate, insofar as Protagoras is situated (polemically) among the sophists of that time, the philosophical validity of the thesis thereby depreciated and rendered dubious.[3] As a thesis uttered in a setting of public performance and display of rhetorical skill in argumentation (where the task is to win the argument irrespective of truth – i.e., "making the weaker argument the stronger"[4]), the statement is perhaps intentionally ambiguous and provocative. Its meaning is by no means immediately clear and, therefore, subject to philosophical interrogation since Plato's time.

If engaged as a matter of epistemology (as represented in Plato's *Theaetetus*, 152a), as Mauro Bonazzi reminds, the thesis seems to ex-

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[1] Plato, *Theaetetus*, 152a.

[2] See, e.g., Jan Woleński, "Aletheia in Greek thought until Aristotle," *Annals of Pure and Applied Logic* 127 (2004): 339-360.

[3] Mauro Bonazzi, "Protagoras," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (Fall 2023 Edition), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2023/entries/protagoras/.

[4] See, e.g., Alexander Sesonske, "To Make the Weaker Argument Defeat the Stronger," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 6, no. 3 (1968): 217-231.

press an empiricist postulate (thus epistemological relativism) that makes each individual the judge of truth, such that one's sensuous intuition, i.e., sensory perception, measures the truth of reality (what is real, what is "being," what is not real, what is "not being") in contrast to falsehood, i.e., being mistaken about that reality and thereby having a false opinion (*pseudodoxos*) rather than knowledge (*epistemē*). If engaged as a matter of ethics, similarly, the thesis seems to express an individualist approach to moral or value judgment (thus moral relativism) and, thereby, issues a moral relativist postulate that each individual is the judge of right and wrong, good and bad, action. Thus, each individual is presumed capable of "good judgment" (*euboulia*) in practical matters that concern human conduct.

Many who believe in the possibility of a universally valid truth (thus moral universalism) readily challenge the validity of Protagoras's thesis. Jako M. Lozar, e.g., observes that it has the "notoriety" of being a "relativistic threat to philosophical endeavor,"[5] given philosophy's quest for universally valid truth. Thus, Lozar observes, "what Socrates/Plato reads from the *anthropon metron* in Protagoras, is his grounding of knowledge of perception."[6] Given an epistemological relativist reading, then, at *Theaetetus* 161d "Plato claims that Protagoras' perception-based knowledge is and remains in the clutches of *doxa* [opinion]: 'Well, I was delighted with his general statement of the theory that a thing is for any individual what it seems to him to be.'" Plato's concern here, of course, is with the criterion of knowledge (*epistemē*), since for him knowledge is infallible, and opinion (possibly fallible) cannot be knowledge *per se*. But, there is for Plato a further problem with Protagoras's thesis:

> Probably the most important aspect of Plato's Protagoras interpretation, far more important than the grudge against perception and *doxa* as the building blocks of knowledge, is the ontological exposition of the core insight of Protagoras' statement, namely the primacy of becoming [over being].[7]

Thus, on the foregoing lines of reasoning, the philosophical challenge of Protagoras's thesis broadens from one of only epistemology to one

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[5] Jako M. Lozar, "A Short History of Protagoras' Philosophy," *Synthesis Philosophica* 65 (2018): 251-262.

[6] Ibid., 254. See here Plato, *Theaetetus*, 160d.

[7] Lozar, 254.

of epistemology and ontology, i.e., on the possibility of knowledge of being. This is the focus of Aristotle's subsequent critique of the doctrine of *anthropon metron*.

In his lectures from the summer semester of 1931 at the University of Freiburg, Martin Heidegger accounted for the early Greek philosophical confrontation with Protagoras's "theorem" (*Satz*). For Heidegger, Protagoras's theorem is of great importance inasmuch as it occupies an outstanding place in the debates about the fundamental questions of ancient philosophy.[8] In fact, Heidegger emphasizes that one must be careful to distinguish (difficult though it be) between what is Protagoras's own opinion and what Plato adds and develops in his interpretation of the *anthropon metron*. Protagoras's meaning is by no means immediately clear. In particular, Heidegger questions the approach to the theorem that places Protagoras in an epistemological school (thus Protagoras supposedly an advocate of epistemological relativism or epistemological skepticism). Interpreting Protagoras in this way presupposes a prior and questionable philosophical comportment: "because if only what and how it [something] appears *to everyone* is true, then of course a universally valid, objective truth is not possible."[9]

This leads to Aristotle, whose engagement with Protagoras's thesis concerns what it implies in view of the principle of non-contradiction. As Aristotle puts it in *Metaphysics*,

> [...] if all contradictory predications of the same subject at the same time are true, clearly all things will be one. For if it is equally possible either to affirm or deny anything of anything, the same thing will be a trireme and a wall and a man; which is what necessarily follows for those who hold the theory of Protagoras.[10]

At 1008a Aristotle goes further, asserting much more controversially that, "it is not necessary to affirm or to deny a statement," and this

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[8] Martin Heidegger, "§20. Die Wirklichkeit des Wahrnehmbaren und der Wahrnehmungsvermögens," a) Das Problem des Wahrnehmbaren und der Satz des Protagoras," *Aristoteles, Metaphyik θ 1-5: Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft*, Gesamtausgabe Band 33 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1981).

[9] Heidegger, 198; emphasis added.

[10] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Γ5, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard University Press & London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1933/1989), 1007b19ff.

applies to all terms [...] [Again,] either (a) the negation will
be true wherever the affirmation is true, and the affirmation
will be true wherever the negation is true, or (b) the nega-
tion will be true wherever the assertion is true, but the as-
sertion will not always be true where the negation is true.[11]

Aristotle is concerned that Protagoras's thesis permits contradiction
of *opinions* and does not provide a way to distinguish true from false
propositions, thus eliminating the possibility of knowledge. Presum-
ably, Aristotle is concerned philosophically to make room for a univer-
sally valid, objective truth, while also allowing for the apodictic truth
of individual propositions without contradiction.

Heidegger finds the foregoing complaints about Protagoras's the-
orem something of "a cheap argument" (*ein billiges Argumentation*).
The assumption – that only what and how something appears *to every-
one* is true – Heidegger says, is not justified at all:

One forgets to ask whether the real essence of truth does
not consist in the fact that it does not apply to everyone
– and that truths for everyone are the most insignificant
thing that can be found in the field of truth.[12]

Accordingly, Heidegger continues, "But if you think about it and ask
questions like this, then the possibility arises that the much-derided
sentence of Protagoras [...] contains a great truth, and ultimately one
of the most fundamental truths [...]."[13] Heidegger's assessment thus
counters that of both Plato and Aristotle. Concerning Aristotle's inter-
pretive stance, Heidegger remarks,

the Aristotelian discussion in *Metaphysics* Γ5 clearly reveals
that there was something more and more essential behind
this teaching, something that is all too easily put aside in
the general judgment due to the outstanding importance
of Plato and Aristotle.[14]

Critical of both philosophers, Heidegger nonetheless concludes:

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[11] Ibid., 1008a.

[12] Heidegger, 198.

[13] Ibid., 198.

[14] Ibid.; italics added.

> Understood in this way, Protagoras' sentence takes on a completely new meaning, namely the one that elevates it to the highest principle of all philosophizing. 'The measure of all things is man, of those [things] that exist, that they are [real, have being], of those [things] that do not exist, that they are not [real, not being].' A principle [*Ein Grundsatz*] – not as a cheap statement that can be used at will, but as the approach and application of the question in which *man finds himself the foundation* [*den Grund*] *of his being* [*seienes Wesen*]. But this questioning is the basic act of all philosophizing" [*die Grundhandlung alles Philosophieren*].[15]

Heidegger also engages Protagoras's theorem in his confrontation with Nietzsche, and there he accounts for Aristotle's position in particular insofar as it references the principle of non-contradiction as cited above.[16] He reminds,

> If we recall here that in Greek philosophy before Plato another thinker, namely Protagoras, was teaching that man was the measure of all things, it appears as if all metaphysics – not just modern metaphysics – is in fact built on the standard-giving role of man within beings as a whole.[17]

He eventually expresses a caveat to this historical fact:

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[15] Heidegger, 203. It is noteworthy that Casadebaig, "Heidegger and Protagoras," opines that Heidegger's interpretation "could be used against him, in order to question his thought as a modern kind of sophistry." For a more comprehensive discussion of Protagoras's thought, see Edward Schiappa, *Protagoras and Logos: A Study in Greek Philosophy and Rhetoric* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), especially Chapter 7, "The 'Human-Measure' Fragment," 117ff. Schiappa (on page 119) comments that, "The weight of the evidence suggests [...] that Protagoras was fundamentally concerned with the *judgments* of humans, in which perception plays only a part." He adds further (on page 120) that Protagoras may have been contending either or both of two judgments: "that humans are the measure of 'how' things are (essence)" or "that humans are the measure that determines 'that' they are (existence)" – although he reminds (pages 120-121), "A clear conceptualization of essence cannot be documented prior to Plato's notion of the Forms [...]."

[16] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume Three: The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics; Volume Four: Nihilism*, ed. David Ferrel Krell (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982/1987).

[17] Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 86. See Anthony Chimankpan Ojimba, "Nietzsche's Intellectual Integrity and Metaphysical Comfort," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy,* 9, no. 1 (2024): 109-130, https://doi.org/10.12681/cjp.34391.

> If metaphysics is the truth concerning beings as a whole, certainly man too belongs within them. It will then be admitted that man assumes a special role in metaphysics inasmuch as he seeks, develops, grounds, defends, and passes on metaphysical knowledge – and also distorts it. But that still does not give us the right to consider him the measure of all things as well, to characterize him as the center of all being, and establish him as master of all beings.[18]

Heidegger then references the connection among Protagoras, Descartes, and Nietzsche with regard to metaphysical positions, since there are those who would make the three equivalent in some manner. But, he comments, "Nevertheless, Protagoras' fragment says something very different from the import of Descartes' principle" even as it says something different from "Nietzsche's doctrine of man as lawgiver of the world..."[19] He then provides his own "translation" of Protagoras's theorem, thus:

> Of all 'things' [of those 'things,' namely, which man has about him for us, customarily and even continually – *chrēmata, chrēsthai*], the [respective] man is the measure, of things that are present, that they are *thus* present as they come to presence, but of those things to which coming to presence is denied, that they do not come to presence.[20]

For Heidegger, Protagoras is concerned with the *being* of things, what "comes to presence of itself in the purview of man," man (*anthropos*) understood as "the respective man" – "I and you and he and she, respectively." But, Heidegger cautions against reading here the Cartesian "ego," against "unwittingly inserting representations of man as 'subject' into it," for this would be "a fatal illusion."[21] Setting aside this reference to the Cartesian concept of 'ego,' Heidegger clarifies that Protagoras is saying that,

> Man perceives what is present within the radius of his perception. What is present is from the outset maintained as

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[18] Ibid., 86.

[19] Ibid., 90.

[20] Ibid., 91. Heidegger cites the text as received from Sextus Empiricus, thus: *Pantōn chrēmatōn metron estin anthrōpos, tōn men ontōn hōs esti, tōn de mē ontōn hōs ouk estin.*

[21] Ibid., 92-93.

such in a realm of accessibility, because it is a realm of un-
concealment. The perception of what is present is ground-
ed on its lingering within the realm of unconcealment.[22]

Protagoras's *anthropon metron* thus is essential as the highest principle
insofar as it discloses the fact that the human being has access to this
realm of unconcealment, i.e., *alētheia*, and thus participates in the pro-
cess of unconcealment of beings in their manner of being.

Protagoras is saying something fundamental that neither Plato nor
Aristotle recalled (though presumably Aristotle saw that Protagoras's
theorem involved something more important) and that even modern
philosophy has neglected in its metaphysical positions:

We today, and many generations before us, have long
forgotten the realm of the unconcealment of beings, al-
though we continually take it for granted. We actually
think that a being becomes accessible when an 'I' as subject
represents an object. As if the open region within whose
openness something is made accessible as object *for* a sub-
ject, and accessibility itself, which can be penetrated and
experienced, did not already have to reign here as well! The
Greeks, although their knowledge of it was indeterminate
enough, nonetheless knew about the unconcealment in
which the being comes to presence and which the being
brings in tow, as it were... By lingering in the realm of the
unconcealed, man belongs in a fixed radius of things pres-
ent to him. His belonging in this radius at the same time
assumes a barrier against what is not present. Thus, here is
where the self of man is defined as the respective 'I'; name-
ly, by its *restriction* to the surrounding unconcealed.[23]

Unconcealment, *alētheia/Unverborgenheit*, is for Heidegger the essen-
tial meaning of "truth" such as Protagoras had insight in writing his
Alētheia, thus *alētheia* as *a-lētheia* (*a-* here being privative). Uncon-
cealment and concealment (*Verborgenheit*) are both involved in the
human recognition of the manner in which things are present or not
present; and, this recognition is what enables the human as one who
"measures" being and not being (the latter in the two senses of *me on,*
"relative non-being," and *ouk on,* "absolute non-being").

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[22] Ibid., 93.

[23] Ibid., 93.

For Protagoras to say 'the man is the measure' is also to imply, Heidegger remarks, that one recognizes "a concealment of being" and admits to "an inability to decide about presence and absence, about the outward aspect of beings pure and simple." The respective man "faces" what is unconcealed and in that sense "knows" what he claims to know; and, in the case of what remains concealed, Protagoras can say, "περὶ μὲν θεῶν οὐκ ἔχω εἰδέναι, οὔθ᾽ ὡς εἰσὶν οὔθ᾽ ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν οὔθ᾽ ὁποῖοί τινες ἰδέαν" – which Heidegger offers in translation as: "To know [in a Greek sense this means to 'face' what is unconcealed] something about the gods I am of course unable, neither that they are, nor that they are not, nor how they are in their outward aspect."[24] Why so? This seems a misplaced and errant claim in view of Greek ancestral custom with its mythology of the gods. But, Protagoras explains: "πολλὰ γὰρ τὰ κωλύοντα εἰδέναι ἥ τ᾽ ἀδηλότης καὶ βραχὺς ὢν ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου" – "for many are the things which prevent beings as such from being perceived; both the not-openness [that is, the concealment] of beings and also the brevity of the history of man."

This, for Heidegger, is "a prudent remark" that shows Protagoras's thoughtfulness, that he is a serious thinker, and not someone to be depreciated in the way Plato disparages the sophists, hence Socrates (*Theaetetus*, 152b) saying (as Heidegger quotes), "εἰκὸς μέντοι σοφὸν ἄνδρα μὴ ληρεῖν;" – "It is to be presumed that he [Protagoras], as a thoughtful man [in his words involving man as *metron pantōn chrēmatōn*], was not simply talking foolishly." Thus, Heidegger adopts a positive comportment towards Protagoras's theorem insofar as it contains "a great truth, and ultimately one of the most fundamental truths" that is accessible to "one who philosophizes." One who philosophizes has to question about the meaning of truth (*alētheia*) as unconcealment first and foremost, since this seems to be the focus of Protagoras's theorem. It is a concern more primordial than the subsequent metaphysically determined understanding of truth as *homoiōsis*, *adaequatio*, correspondence.

Heidegger concludes his discussion of Protagoras's thesis to allow for "a completely new meaning" (*eine ganz neue Bedeutung*), indeed "one that elevates it to the highest principle of all philosophizing" (*die ihn zum obersten Grundsatz alles Philosophieren*).[25] Read differently from the way Plato and Aristotle interpreted it, Protagoras's thesis points to the essential truth that "man finds himself the foundation of his being" (*der Mensch auf den Grund seines Wesens geht*) by himself,

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[24] Ibid., 94, citing Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Protagoras B4.

[25] Heidegger, *Aristoteles, Metaphysik θ 1-5*, 203.

in his manner of being positioned as the site, the *topos*, of unconcealment. In short, Protagoras speaks to contemporary philosophy and the effort to find a measure not only for ontology, but also for practical philosophy and normative reasoning in our post-metaphysical setting.

While there is significant philosophical disputation about Protagoras's meaning, the point here is not to rehearse that corpus of philosophical efforts to understand Protagoras's meaning, but rather to observe that classical Greek antiquity debated the idea of "measure" (*metron*) and sought to clarify its locus. That locus could be, as with Protagoras, in the individual human being, or, as with Plato, only in the infallible knowledge (*epistemé*) of the philosopher and not in variable opinion (*doxa*) of "the many" (*hoi polloi*), or, as with the poets, in "the law of the gods" (*theon nomoi*) of the Greek pantheon that superintended human affairs, even as Protagoras conceded he had no knowledge of the gods.

II. From Nietzsche's Fürsprache to Heidegger's call for thinking

The problem of measure for both knowledge and morality continued to be conceptualized variously over the course of the Western philosophical tradition. Consistent with one or another commitment to theory (*theoria*) and practical reason (*praxis*), ranking philosophers from Greek antiquity onward to late modernity have articulated what Heidegger called "standard metaphysical positions" (metaphysics *qua* "first philosophy," *proté philosophia*) and a derivative or systematically dependent "special metaphysics" (*metaphusica specialis*), i.e., political philosophy and ethics. Throughout this historical presentation of positions, the foundationalist enterprise has included appeal to principles or standards to ground practical rationality or moral philosophy.

The problem of measure, especially for normative ethics in its quest for foundational principles of morality, reached its highest *problematique* in the nineteenth century with Friedrich Nietzsche's "anti-metaphysical" pronouncement that 'God is dead' ('*Gott ist tot*').[26] Accounting for his "pronouncement" in the sense of a "fore-speaking" (*Fürsprache*) or "heralding" of what is coming in our day, we find Nietzsche telling us in Book Three of *The Gay Science* (*Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*) that ours is a time, as it were, of "the madman" who utters frantic and desperate words as he seeks "God" but cannot find him:

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[26] Nietzsche declares both that 'God is dead' and that 'we [humans] have killed him.' (See Book Three, 108, 125; Book V, 343, of Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josephine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 109, 119, & 199-200).

"Haven't you heard of that madman who in the bright morning lit a lantern and ran around the marketplace crying incessantly, 'I'm looking for God! I'm looking for God!'" And, after hearing him, amused non-believers asked apparently rhetorical questions, laughing at his ridiculous queries. But then,

> The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. 'Where is God?' he cried; 'I'll tell you! We have killed him – you and I! We are all his murderers [...]. Do we still hear nothing of the noise of the grave-diggers who are burying God? Do we still smell nothing of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose! God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!'

The point here is not merely with concern for the Christian God, but with all gods; for, as Nietzsche says in *The Antichrist* (19), "Two thousand years have come and gone – and not a single new god!" Then, in Book Five of *The Gay Science*, titled "We Fearless Ones" (343), we who are witnesses to our plight such as Nietzsche describes it are placed into some puzzlement; for, it seems that if 'God is dead' is a true proposition, then we should be *cheerful* in the face of this incomparable feat. The logic is palpable: The proposition is indeed *true*, in which case, assuming some unspoken principle of morality that is normatively guiding here, we *should* be cheerful rather than remorseful about the great and incomparable deed of deicide. Specifically, Nietzsche would have us understand that, in the Western context of religious belief, we who are witnesses to "the greatest recent event" are to understand that, "the belief in the Christian God has become unbelievable," and that, from his historical position in the late nineteenth century, this event "is already starting to cast its first shadow over Europe." Even so, he remarks,

> Even less may one suppose many to know at all *what* this event really means – and, now that this faith has been undermined, how much must collapse because it was built on this faith, leaned on it, had grown into it – for example, our entire European morality.[27]

This collapse of superstructure and foundation may not be a matter of cheer, however; for, Nietzsche declares,

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[27] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, "Book Five: We Fearless Ones, No. 343," 199.

> This long, dense succession of demolition, destruction, downfall, upheaval that now stands ahead: who would guess enough of it today to play the teacher and herald of this monstrous logic of horror, the prophet of deep darkness and an eclipse of the sun the like of which has probably never before existed on earth?[28]

This event stands ahead, he says, as a contradiction between yesterday and tomorrow – the yesterday of religious faiths and the tomorrow of total negation of foundation and superstructure. Yet, there is anticipation here, for (to follow the metaphor) an eclipse will pass to yet again disclose "the sun" that was hidden for a time, in which case there is yet a promise of a new god, despite the flight of the gods.

The question, of course, is: For whom does this "tomorrow" present a logic of horror? For those who are believers in the Christian God and all other gods? Yes. For those such as Nietzsche, who heralds this event, or for those who identify as "free spirits" in consequence of the death of God? No. Nietzsche is clear: "Indeed, at hearing the news that 'the old god is dead', we philosophers and 'free spirits' feel illuminated by a new dawn.'"[29] Nietzsche as herald of the death of God (understood as the demise of the epistemological and normative authority of all that has been "transcendent" and "foundational" *measures* in the history of the Western tradition) leads us into the twentieth century faced with the task of thinking at the end of philosophy, as Heidegger put it.[30] Heidegger asked two related questions that are essentially connected, pertinent to our present inquiry, and responsive to Western humanity's plight:

> a. What does it mean that philosophy in the present age has entered its final stage?
> b. What task is reserved for thinking at the end of philosophy?[31]

Heidegger clarifies that, "The end of philosophy is the place, that place in which the whole of philosophy's history is gathered in its most ex-

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[28] Ibid., 199

[29] Ibid., 199.

[30] Heidegger delivered a lecture in 1964 with the title "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking." See Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

[31] Ibid., 55.

treme possibility."[32] This most extreme possibility, Heidegger tells us, is accomplished in Nietzsche's thought (as well as that of Karl Marx), i.e., in Nietzsche's reversal of metaphysics as well as in the dissolution of philosophy in the twentieth century into "the technologized sciences." Thus our "today" is situated in a tension between the final epoch of metaphysics and its reversal as Nietzsche articulates it. This historical situation Heidegger characterizes thus:

> The end of philosophy proves to be the triumph of the manipulable arrangement of a scientific-technological world and of the social order proper to this world. The end of philosophy means: the beginning of the world civilization based upon Western European thinking.[33]

Said otherwise, the processes of European colonialism and subsequent globalization have assured the Westernization – the "technologization" – of "the Orient" despite the modes of thought indigenous to these peoples (Confucianism in China; Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, in South Asia; Islam in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia).

This opens up a task for "thinking" (*Denken*, not to say 'philosophy') that neither metaphysics nor the technologized sciences may undertake, even while granting that this thinking is "preparatory" and not foundational. Specifically, Heidegger continues: "We are thinking of the possibility that the world civilization which is just now beginning might one day overcome the technological-scientific-industrial character as the sole criterion of man's world sojourn."[34] This is a palpably indicative statement. Referencing Heidegger's "end of philosophy" proposition, the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy captured the sense of the present situation: "the West is the sunset. It is therefore both an achievement and an anguish. The West will have been such a powerful machine of accomplishment [...] [but] It will have been just as much the anguish of an entire world delivered to its own destruction."[35] Nancy adds, seeking to realize itself Western philosophy has become "the fulfillment of its knowledge *as technoscience*, the fulfillment of its duty *as humanism*

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[32] Ibid., 57.

[33] Ibid., 59.

[34] Ibid., 60.

[35] Jean-LucNancy, "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," trans. Benedetta Todaro, *Philosophy World Democracy*, July 29, 2021, https://www.philosophy-world-democracy.org/other-beginning/the-end-of-philosophyNancy.

and the fulfillment of its desire *as globalization*."[36] Conspicuous in its absence from this representation of the Western project is all reference to the divine, whether in the Western or Oriental conception of religious thought, hence technoscience, humanism, and globalization are all evidence for Nietzsche's anticipation of the character of our time.

III. From Heidegger to Werner Marx: The problem of a post-metaphysical measure

Werner Marx (following Heidegger and the poet Friedrich Hölderlin, whom Heidegger cites for his insight into this "destitute time" in which humanity experiences "the flight of the gods"[37]), is concerned to find "the saving power" that is salvific of humanity by confronting the loss of measure in the age of nihilism and planetary technology – "a result of the increasing estrangement and loss of meaning in the Western world."[38] He accounts for Heidegger's concern for the "highest danger" confronting humanity today "in the essence ruling in technology," hence the need to find a way to "dwell poetically on the earth."[39] He opines:

> A 'rescue' from the danger predominant today seems conceivable only if there is a possibility for even those who are no longer able to derive their concept of measure from a heavenly realm to be capable of an experience that would afford them some kind of measure here on earth.[40]

He expresses his hope:

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[36] Ibid., italics added.

[37] Martin Heidegger, "III: What are Poets For?" *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). Heidegger cites Hölderlin's Elegy, "Bread and Wine," Heidegger commenting (p. 89) that, "For Hölderlin's historical experience, the appearance and sacrificial death of Christ mark the beginning of the end of the day of the gods. Night is falling... The world's night is spreading its darkness. The era is defined by the god's failure to arrive, by the 'default of God.'...The default of God means that no god any longer gathers men and things unto himself, visibly and unequivocally, and by such gathering disposes the world's history and man's sojourn in it. The default of God forebodes something even grimmer, however. Not only have the gods and the god fled, but the divine radiance has become extinguished in the world's history." Hölderlin and Nietzsche are in this way consonant.

[38] Werner Marx, *Is There a Measure on Earth? Foundations for a Nonmetaphysical Ethics*, trans. Thomas J. Nenon and Reginald Lilly (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Marx, *Is There a Measure on Earth?*, 13.

[39] Werner Marx, "Ethos and Mortality: Reflections on Nonrational Elements in the Formation of Personal Virtues," *Dialectica* 39, no. 4 (1985): 329-338.

[40] Marx, *Is There a Measure*, 4.

> [...] the historical situation of the philosophers of today
> is characterized by the fact that they are 'condemned' to
> think in a space between 'tradition' and 'another begin-
> ning.' Perhaps a reflection on this domain of movement of
> our present philosophical endeavors may inaugurate a med-
> itation on the possibility of a 'non-metaphysical' ethics.[41]

Marx's quest for a measure to be found "here on earth" is thereby al-
ready oriented to the *post*-metaphysical.

The question of measure has its provenance in Hölderlin's poem
"*In lieblicher Bläue*." Therein Hölderlin himself answered that there is
no measure on earth ("*Es gibt keines*"). In contrast to Hölderlin, Marx
answers in the affirmative that there is a measure to be found on earth,
once we have thought further what it is that concerned the later Heide-
gger, even as he himself accounted for the early Heidegger's phenome-
nological concern for the phenomenon of death and its significance for
normative ethics. It is with his attention to the fact of human mortality,
that humans are first and foremost mortal beings, that Marx hopes for
a normatively grounding experience to motivate human conduct even
as he does not articulate a system of ethics or issue principles in the
usual sense given in moral philosophy.

Taking his cue from Heidegger,[42] whose *Being and Time* addressed
the question of the finitude of human knowledge as well as the fact of
death as the uttermost possibility that belongs to each human being,
Marx seeks a measure that speaks to us in light of the inevitability of
human mortality. He asks, "What are the essential characteristics of
a measure as such, if it is no longer tied to 'heavenly beings' as the

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[41] Werner Marx, *Towards a Phenomenological Ethics: Ethos and the Life-World* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992).

[42] See here also Werner Marx, "Heidegger's New Conception of Philosophy: The Second Phase of 'Existentialism,'" *Social Research* 22, no. 4 (1955): 451-474. As Thomas Nenon, "Ethics between Tradition and a New Beginning," *Research in Phenomenology* 27 (1997): 199-207, has opined, Marx discloses a sense of "nostalgia" for what has been lost to us in our day, consequent to the dominance of technoscience. He recalls the pre-Socratic "*Philomythoi*" of the ancient Greek world of human engagements (as characterized by Aristotle in the first book of the *Metaphysics*), with "thinking" in that time "simple, immediate, and creative" in "philoso-phizing poems," with attention to "divine presence" and "the deeds of the gods." Heidegger's thought is thereby significant and guiding for Marx insofar as he sees Heidegger's thinking linked to that of the *Philomythoi* so as to articulate not only a new "Essence of Man" along with the new "Essence of Being" but also to work to overcome the age of technology. Marx (p. 469) opines that it is through his turn to Hölderlin that Heidegger's "thinking and speaking assumed a character akin to that of poetic composing."

absolute sources of normative measures?"[43] Given Heidegger's effort in thinking to deconstruct the Western philosophical tradition, to overcome its dispensations or epochs of metaphysics and retrieve an "originary" (*ursprüngliche, anfängliche*) thinking from Greek antiquity that yet speaks to our present, Marx directs his question to Heidegger. This is a reasonable move, given Heidegger's assurance that there yet remains a task for thinking despite the end of philosophy *qua* metaphysics.[44]

While concerned with the possibility of a measure to be found here on earth, Marx is not intent upon the task of articulating a full-fledged normative ethics.[45] He is asking only about "foundations," notwithstanding the post-metaphysical displacement of foundational and systematic discourse *per se*.[46] Rather than seek a foundation in the sense pursued in practical rationality, i.e., in deliberative reason, Marx turns to human experience (*Erfahrung*) to ask, "whether the experience of an encounter with one's own mortality could not so transform a person's ethos that the virtues of justice, compassion and neighborly love [*la dignité humaine*] could ensue." Such an encounter is "non-rational" (not an appeal to deliberative reason) and instead one of what he calls *intuitive* reason. The way to such experience is for him through the mood (*Gestimmtheit*) of dread (*l'angoisse, der Angst*).

Marx asserts that dread is both empowering and transformative by first destroying "the mood of indifference" and moving an individual to experience other moods that are self-transforming, especially and most importantly that of compassion (*Mitleidenkönnen*). His reference to the virtues recalls Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* and considers the possibility of arriving at a new *ethos* that is neither a "purposive rationality" (e.g., such as that articulated by Max Weber) nor a practical reason that prescribes rules (principles, maxims) of conduct (e.g., such as that of Kant and deontological ethics). Marx's central question is posed thus:

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[43] Marx, *Is There a Measue*, 6.

[44] See Werner Marx, "Thought and Issue in Heidegger," *Research in Phenomenology* 77 (1977): 12-30.

[45] Thomas Nenon comments that in his final two books Marx "presents neither a normative ethics as a set of prescribed or forbidden actions, nor does he concern himself with a metaethical analysis of the necessary conditions for normative ethics." Like Heidegger who did not write an "ethics" in the sense of a systematic moral philosophy, Marx preferred to use the word '*ethos*' rather than 'ethics' and in that way try to distinguish himself from the tradition's articulation of normative ethics. See here Nenon.

[46] See, e.g., from a neo-Hegelian context, Richard D. Winfield, *Overcoming Foundations: Studies in Systematic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989) and his "The Route to Foundation-Free Systematic Philosophy," *The Philosophical Forum* 15, no. 3 (1984): 323-343.

> How can a person who lives in an indifferent mood with
> regard to his fellow man become a virtuous person, i.e.,
> a just and compassionate person or even one moved by
> neighborly love?[47]

An answer to this question is a function of phenomenological descrip-
tion initially, in which case Marx recalls Heidegger's elucidation of this
phenomenon. But, he seeks to advance beyond Heidegger inasmuch as
dread may disclose "our ethical comportment" – a question Heidegger
did not engage directly.

Problematic for Marx is that in our time "the mood of indifference
usually determines all of man's actions." Differentiating his concep-
tion of the mood of dread from that of Heidegger,[48] Marx claims that
the mood of dread can (1) "disclose to man his own mortality," (2)
"destroy that mood of indifference," and (3) "send him on a pathway
of self-transforming moods" – moods that enable nearness to others
(thus awareness of the other as neighbor) and "the emotional attitude
of solidarity," both conducive to the production and exercise of virtues
such as justice and compassion.[49] Indifference as a mood is problematic
for ethical existence insofar as it lacks "attunement" to the good and
the bad (combining here "state of mind," *die Stimmung*, and "being in
the mood," *die Befindlichkeit*).[50] The task for a new *ethos*, then, is to
"unsettle" this everyday indifference. This can happen, Marx opines,
when an individual "suddenly becomes aware of his own mortality" –
not in the biological sense of cessation of bodily function (i.e., clinical
death), but in the phenomenological sense that understands the world
of human engagements as a life-world (*Lebenswelt*), thus death a loss
of the individual person's "being-in-the-world."

Dread is disclosive of one's existential situation in this way. It affects
one's emotional disposition and discloses both one's *isolation* and *help-*

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[47] Marx, "Ethos and Mortality," 330.

[48] Marx seems to think that dread as Heidegger understands is a mood essential for the possi-
bility of authentic (*eigentlich*) existence and that such authentic existence does not conduce to
regard for "one's fellow man." I find this claim problematic in view of Heidegger's attention
to what *ethos* is to be drawn from one such as Sophocles. See here my "The Poetic Task of
'Becoming Homely: Heidegger Reading Hölderlin Reading Sophocles," *Janus Head: Journal
of Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature, Continental Philosophy, Phenomenological Psychology*
19, no. 1 (2021): 93-108, and "Preserving the Ethos: Heidegger and Sophocles' *Antigone*,"
Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy 10, no. 2 (2006): 441-471.

[49] Marx, "Ethos and Mortality," 331-332.

[50] See here Bruce Baugh, "Heidegger on *Befindlichkeit*," *Journal of the British Society for Phe-
nomenology* 20, no. 2 (1989/2014): 124-135.

lessness in the face of one's own mortality, which is always "mine" alone to experience. Thereby, an engagement with dread draws one towards other humans with an attunement of compassion and concern for the *difference* between the good/right and the bad/wrong in human conduct, thus with *inclination* to choose the good/right over the bad/wrong. Of course, Marx assumes it is possible to take up the thinking of "the later Heidegger" to articulate a "new determination of the essence of measure as well as the measure itself." He assumes further that any formulation of a measure involves "a set of standards" concerned with "responsible action" such as one may find in a normative ethics. One must ask: What does this entail, given that Heidegger himself did not articulate either a normative ethics or a metaethics (even though he commented on Kant's practical reason and Kant's concern for the metaphysics of morals in relation to the essence of human freedom)?

To answer in short: Following Heidegger in his formally indicative manner of thinking, one must consider what is the task of thinking in view of a new beginning. But, surprisingly, Marx turns to the thought of Friedrich Schelling for his conceptualization of the essence of measure. This is a move Heidegger himself would likely not take, especially in view of his engagement of Schelling's treatise on the essence of human freedom and his own discussion of the essence of human freedom with explicit reference to *Kant's* thinking.[51] Marx recognizes that this turn to Schelling involves a conceptual connection to the metaphysical tradition, even as he attempts to think non-metaphysically. Schelling's thinking, he admits, retains "Christological tendencies," in which case

> *God's character as absolute* in his 'absolute freedom', his 'absolute reason', and, above all, his 'absolute will' taken as 'the willing of divine love', *is the decisive measure for man*, for it serves as a point of orientation for man throughout the ongoing history of redemption, shows him the difference between good and evil, and provides a motivation for preferring good to evil.[52]

Clearly, for Heidegger, such an appeal for the elucidation of a measure "on this earth" will not meet the challenge that follows from the

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[51] Martin Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom,* trans. Joan Stambaugh (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1985). Also see Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom: An Introduction to Philosophy,* trans. Ted Sadler (New York: Continuum Publishing, 2002).

[52] Marx, *Is There a Measure*, 18; italics added.

flight of the gods, including the demotion of the Christian God from transcendent authority for law and morality. Heidegger reminds that Schelling's "treatise" is in fact a set of "inquiries" – "not a presentation and communication of results and assertions or simply the characterization of a standpoint."[53] From this vantage of interpretation, then, it would be incorrect to find in Schelling's appeal to absolute freedom, absolute reason, or absolute will – all with their Christological tendencies – the basis of a measure "on this earth." Heidegger would have us understand that for Schelling the

> nature of man is in question; that is, one is *questioning beyond man to that which is more essential and powerful than he himself*: freedom, not as an addition and attribute of the human will, but rather as the nature of true Being, as the nature of the ground for beings as a whole.[54]

Schelling, in short, remains metaphysical in his inquiry even as he seeks to step beyond, even as his inquiry legitimates pantheism rather than Christological theism, this pantheism at the center of Schelling's deliberation about the origin of good and evil.

In speaking of "nature," Schelling accounts for the strife between the universal and the individual, thus between "the universal will" and "self-will" present even in the animal – which "is bound to the universal of the species." Thus, Heidegger remarks,

> We know that the project of the movement of becoming of creating creatures is oriented to the ongoing task of explicating the metaphysical possibility of man. This possibility in its turn is to show in what the conditions of the inner possibility of evil consist.[55]

Thus, Schelling asserts, "In man there exists the whole power of the principle of darkness and, in him, too, the whole force of light. In him there are both centers – the deepest pit and the highest heaven." This is an expression of the human being's metaphysical becoming. For the human being in its freedom, in Schelling's view, "freedom is the faculty of good and evil. Accordingly, evil proclaims itself as a position of will of its own, indeed as *a way of being free* in the sense of *being a self in*

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[53] Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise*, 9; italics added.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., 140.

terms of its own essential law" (emphasis added). This "ownmost" essential law is capable of a negation of the universal will and of "placing itself in dominance."[56] In other words, one can say that it is through this essential law of the particular will, of the self-will in strife with the universal will, that the human finds him/herself expressing in conduct that which is called evil, but understood metaphysically as this strife of universal and particular.

What is the consequence of this strife? Heidegger opines: "Negation now transposes all forces in such a way that they turn against nature and creatures. The consequence of this is the ruin of beings." The jointure of being (inclusive of all reality) can be turned into the ruin of beings through the negation of the universal will that the human chooses. Heidegger observes,

> Thus, the dubious advantage is reserved for man of sinking beneath the animal, whereas the animal is not capable of reversing the principles [of light and darkness]. And [the animal] is not able to do this since the striving of the ground never attains the illumination of self-knowledge because in the animal the ground never reaches either the innermost depth of longing or the highest scope of spirit.[57]

Thus, the animal is not "self-knowing," whereas *the human is self-knowing*, having self-consciousness, this self-knowledge involving the particularity of will that positions the human being to contend with the universal will. The plight of humanity in the twenty-first century is thus, on this view, due to a negation that the human self-will positions into dominance over the universal will of "the Spirit" (in Schelling's terms).

How, and from where, then, one may ask, is one to find a measure "on the earth" that somehow is clarified with regard to the thinking of Schelling? Where is there a measure to be found if, as part of human metaphysical becoming, the human "can turn his own essential constituency around, turn the jointure of Being of his existence into dis-jointure" and participate in the ruination of beings? Marx recognizes that, in Schelling's account, the human is not placed before the possibility of choosing between *either* good *or* evil but instead has the "'real' freedom for *both* good *and* evil."[58] He, therefore, asks:

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[56] Ibid., 143.

[57] Ibid., 144.

[58] Marx, *Is There a Measure*, 19.

> What meaning can the normative measure that provides an absolute orientation for man have if there is a 'principle of darkness' in God's essence? How can human freedom as the universal will imitate this divine love if evil essentially enters into this dimension of freedom and can determine it?[59]

It seems, on Marx's reading of Schelling, that if the human is "cognizant of the final purpose in the history of salvation," then s/he can free him/herself "for goodness by taking up the struggle against evil within the 'moral dimension' of freedom."[60] Yet, in all of this, there remains a fundamental ambiguity of what counts as freedom for goodness and struggle against evil, since precisely here the measure is missing – except insofar as one moves from pantheism with the presence of light and dark principles to theism with the absolute goodness of God and, hence, the absence of any dark principle whatsoever in God's creative acts.

Notwithstanding, and despite his concern for a non-metaphysical ethics, Marx sees the value of Schelling's onto-theo-logy for a formulation of the essence of measure, thus:

> A measure is a 'normative standard' that as such contains the demand of an 'ought'. As something already valid prior to any derivation of measure, its mode of Being is one of 'transcendence'. At the same time, it has the 'power' to determine man as 'immanently', and herein lies the decisive significance of a measure, its 'binding obligation'. It also has the power to endure as 'self-same' in various situations and thus has the traits of being 'manifest' and 'univocal.'[61]

Thus stated, Marx's conceptualization of the essence of measure is hardly innovative, since it includes the traditional elements – a standard that, *qua* normative, involves the assertion of a binding obligation (thus the formulation including the 'ought,' whether in the affirmative mode of 'ought to do' or the negative mode of 'ought not to do') – and has univocal (rather than plurivocal) meaning, its provenance that of a transcendent authority that thereby obligates a human being to conduct him/herself accordingly (thus immanently). In this respect, the definition is by no means controversial. But, of course, the definition is entirely for-

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[59] Ibid., 19.

[60] Ibid., 19.

[61] Ibid., 20.

mal – it does not stipulate the precise principle of action in the way in which Aristotle's relative mean between excess and deficiency does, or in the way in which Mill's principle of utility, Kant's categorical imperative, or Rawls's difference principles do. Hence, Marx has to ask, as he does, "whether the traditional essential traits of measure [...] can still hold for us?" In particular, Marx asks whether there are "secularized versions" that include love of neighbor, compassion, and justice.[62]

By 'love' Marx means not only the Judeo-Christian love of neighbor (*agape*) but also "fraternity, friendship, and social solidarity." This, for him, is a matter of lived experience with reference to attunements (*Gestimmtheiten*). Having raised the question of a 'secularized' possibility of measure, Marx once more turns to Heidegger, though asserting that the elements of measure that originate in the onto-theo-logical tradition "still seem to be valid." But, clearly, if the tradition of metaphysics has arrived at its completion – which proposition he accepts – then the dependent and derivative standards of practical rationality likewise are at an end, i.e., defunct in their normative authority, despite their continuing presence in moral and religious discourse. Marx thus wavers between finding these elements of measure "seemingly valid" and acknowledging that they have "lost much of their effectiveness today; they have fallen into ruin." Presumably, in this time of waning standards of practice, we may yet rely on the traditional definition of the essence of measure while finding a way to express and appropriate the standards of practice without appeal to the element of transcendence in particular. As a Jew himself, of course, Marx is aware of the force of the post-World War II question: "Where was God in Auschwitz?" – a question that has all the force of Nietzsche's lament at the death of God.

Heidegger's later thinking presents us with a manifest constraint on Marx's aspiration for a normative measure. Even though Heidegger engaged Schelling's treatise on the essence of human freedom in 1936, one cannot consider this commentary without accounting for his reflections on the essence of human freedom with reference to Kant in a lecture course in the summer semester of 1930 at the University of Freiburg. There, from the outset, Heidegger acknowledges the "hopeless fragility" of the human being, insofar as humanity is faced with "history with its fates," "the ineluctable powerlessness" of "fortunes," and the "inexorable transitoriness" of human history. Yet, he accounts for the historical conceptualization of both *negative* freedom and *positive* freedom.

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[62] Ibid., 20-21.

The former is understood as autonomy in the sense of "independence from world (nature and history) and God," i.e., "world and God as what *do not bind* the one who is free."[63] This negative concept is, for Heidegger, inadequate without accounting for positive freedom, since "it is just this *positive concept of freedom* which *in the first instance* marks out the domain of the problem of freedom..."[64] Notwithstanding, both together elicit the question of the *essence* of human freedom, in which case Heidegger offers three elements of what he means by 'essence': "1. what-being, what it (freedom) as such is. 2. how this what-being is in itself possible. 3. where the ground of this possibility lies."[65] Accordingly, Heidegger clarifies further what is salient to the problem of essence in relation to the problem of freedom:

> If we proceed according to the negative concept, then with the question concerning the essence of human freedom we are inquiring into the essence of man's independence from world and God. We do not want to decide whether this or that individual is independent of this or that world, of this or that God, but we seek the essence of the independence of man as such from world and God as such. If we wish to grasp the essence of this relationship, of this independence, we must inquire into the essence of man, and also into the essence of world and God.[66]

This moves the question from the particular – the problem of human freedom – to the general/universal, viz., "the totality of what is," which is inclusive of "world" (nature and history) and "God" (the totality of divinity and not this or that God/god of a given religious tradition), and, given the totality of what is, to the problem of being in general.

For Heidegger, the "first breakthrough" to the problem of human freedom is to be found in Kant's practical philosophy; for, here the problem of freedom – which concerns the totality of what is – is connected to "the fundamental problems of metaphysics," i.e., to the problems of ontology, theology, onto-theo-logy, fundamental ontology, and, thus, the problem of the meaning of being in general. It is here, then, *and not with Schelling*, that the breakthrough is compel-

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[63] Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 6.

[64] Ibid., 7.

[65] Ibid., 8.

[66] Ibid., 9.

ling.[67] Marx would have had to engage Heidegger's thought in this context of encounter with Kant if he hoped to find a non-metaphysical – or better said, *post*-metaphysical – measure for the differentiation of good/evil and right/wrong. Marx, however, does not appreciate the significance of Heidegger's assessment of Kant's "breakthrough." His search for a measure on this earth has no substantive discussion of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* or the *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*. In fact, given his preference for Schelling's conception of the essence of human freedom, Marx's reference to Heidegger's 1930 lecture course on the essence of human freedom is wholly dismissive.[68] Yet, for Heidegger, it is Kant rather than Schelling who provides the guiding orientation to interrogate the problem of human freedom.

Kant breaks through the problem by linking metaphysics and morals and thus the problem of being and human freedom. Thus, Heidegger writes, "if we hold to Kant's perspective, this means inquiring into the essence of human freedom, after what freedom is in its inner possibility and ground."[69] For Kant, this means linking *transcendental* freedom and *practical* freedom, in which case Heidegger clarifies:

> The self-determination of action as self-legislation is a self-origination of a state in the specific domain of the human activity of a rational being. Autonomy [practical freedom] is a kind of absolute spontaneity [transcendental freedom], i.e., the latter delimits the universal essence of the former. Only on the basis of this essence as absolute spontaneity is autonomy possible.[70]

Indeed,

> if we really inquire into the essence of freedom, we stand within this question concerning beings as such. According-

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[67] Heidegger, ibid., 21, does say: "But we do not regard Kant as the absolute truth, only as the occasion and impetus for the full unfolding of the problem."

[68] Marx, *Is There a Measure*, 161, writes: "This whole lecture exhibits a general tendency to deal with freedom as an 'ontological problem' [...]. The 'miracle of freedom' (Kant) is not what moves Heidegger there, but rather the 'unfathomable or wondrous' fact that man exists as that being 'in whose Being and essential ground the understanding of Being takes place'. Since for Heidegger the understanding of the Being of beings implies an understanding of the truth of beings in their Being and of the truth of the Being of beings as a whole, the question concerning the essence of freedom turns into a question concerning the essence of truth [...]."

[69] Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 22.

[70] Ibid., 18.

ly, the question concerning the essence of human freedom is necessarily built into the question of what beings as such properly are.[71]

In short, Marx, to be coordinate with Heidegger's interrogation of the problem of measure, would have to accept, rather than dismiss, the urgency of questioning concerning the meaning of being in general, without which one cannot comprehend human freedom in its "inner possibility" and "ground."

IV. National socialist ideology contra Marx's hope for attunement

Again, notable in Marx's approach is the lack of appeal to deliberative reason for the possibility of a transformative *ethos*. But, if intuitive reason is the pathway to a non-metaphysical ethics that deliberative reason could not achieve, then Marx's appeal to the positive goal of attunement to neighborly love and compassion may not suffice for the intended transformation. As Thomas Nenon reminds,

> appeals to Christian compassion, human reason, the digni-
> ty of each autonomous individual, or the necessary prog-
> ress of history, of community as *Sittlichkeit* had not proven
> powerful enough to prevent the brutal barbarism [of Na-
> tional Socialism] that was the result of that other, darker
> side of modernity, technology without reason or the rec-
> ognition of human freedom and dignity.[72]

It seems, then, that the task of thinking of a measure "on this earth" returns us to Heidegger's elevation of Protagoras's theorem and to the acknowledgement of what Heidegger does – to denominate it "the highest principle" (*obersten Grundsatz*) of all philosophizing and to ask what must ensue from appropriating this principle for a *post*-metaphysical *ethos*.

But, in doing so, following Edward Schiappa here, one cannot ignore the work of those such as Eric A. Havelock who sees the pre-Socratics involved in a "conflict between two contrasting ways of thinking about and understanding the world" – a "conflict between the common sense of the general populace," i.e., "the mythic-poetic tradition" and, on the other hand, "the more rationalistic tradition represented

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[71] Ibid., 23.

[72] Nenon, 205.

by certain Sophists and philosophers."[73] The former was "situational," even "empathetic," Schiappa suggests, while the latter was "abstract," with critique of the mythic-poetic because of its error: "The world described by the poets and perpetuated by the general populace was one of constant change and contradiction where people and things were constantly 'becoming' something different."[74] If such was the concern of Parmenides in his day, then it makes sense to say Protagoras's thesis was contraposed to the Eleatic doctrine to allow for the "truth" to be found in ways in which the general populace encountered and described their individuated and individually measured reality. Thus, Shiappa opines, "Protagoras' clash with Parmenides struck at the very heart of the Eleatics' monism and distrust of common sense."[75]

Common sense allows for the relativity of individual sensory perception, such that the propositional truth of a judgment becomes determinate in the moment of individual sensory perception and is, one may say, indeterminate prior to that moment. Thus, the wind may "be" *neither* warm *nor* cool in and of itself (one may say, it is *indeterminate* in its flow). But, it may *feel* warm to one person and cool to another (in both cases, the perception is made *determinate* in the individual respective sensory perception), in which case the one person asserts the proposition 'the wind is warm today' while the other person asserts the proposition 'the wind is cool today', both propositions being "true" (*qua homoiosis, adaequatio*, correspondence) with reference to the respective sensory perception. In this sense, Protagoras's *anthropon metron* allows for the relativity of individual sensory perception and the truth of individual judgment of perception consistent with the given subjective determination. Empirically this is not problematic, since there is any number of factors and variables that can and do influence a perception that involves sensory intuition. However, the more important question here is whether the same relativity applies in the case of *moral judgment* – i.e., that, a proposition that asserts a moral judgment is "true" for this or that person notwithstanding a contradictory assertion of moral judgment on the same matter from another person.

Recall that Marx is concerned to identify a non-metaphysical *ethos* that allows for the virtues of justice, compassion, and neighborly love (including friendship, fraternity, and solidarity) as a corrective to indifference, and do so with reference to awareness of a common human

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[73] Schiappa, 123. See here Eric A. Havelock, "The Linguistic Task of the Presocratics," *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy,* ed. Kevin Robb (La Salle: Hegeler Institute, 1983), 7-82.

[74] Schiappa, 124.

[75] Ibid., 125.

mortality. But, in the modern era of sovereign nation-states, as Marx himself understood given his Jewish heritage and experience with the rise of National Socialism in Germany, the fact is that an individual can manifest compassion, neighborly love, fraternity, and solidarity in a way that is restricted to his or her understanding of lawful citizenship in a given nation-state and, therefore, limiting the domain of care or solicitude for others. Even Nazis expressed these "virtues" among themselves while excluding others who did not subscribe to their Aryan master race ideology. Nazis made what they considered moral or legal judgments and considered them to be "true" vis-à-vis (relative to) the *Führerprinzip*[76] that governed their thoughts, words, and deeds. This, too, can be explained as a function of their intuitive reason – no deliberative reason involved at all – even granting that this intuitive reason was "infused with a sadistic passion" (to use Raphael Gross's words here to emphasize the degree of sentiment at work in the expression of Nazi morality).

Gross, e.g., argues that the law in Nazi Germany had both a "moral foundation" and an "underlying Nazi moral agenda."[77] "Nazi ideology," he opines, "was based on 'moral' notions such as honor, loyalty, comradeship, and decency" as essential to the racial purity of "the German *Volk*" – "the Aryan community of blood," the *Volksgemeinschaft* as *Blutsgemeinschaft*. Wolfgang Bialas similarly argues that the Nazis maintained an "'ethnic conscience' which restricted moral obligations to members of their own race community [...]. The universal ethics of humanism got turned upside down and replaced with the particularistic selective racial ethics."[78] Nazi "ethics" expressed "moral feelings" or moral sentiments, without appealing to principles or maxims such as obtain in deliberative reason. Obvious to anyone reading these terms, in the Nazi context "the moral feelings at play here – the shared sentiments about what constitutes vice and virtue – are drastically different [from] [...] one adhering to more traditional values commonly tied to Western, Judeo-Christian tradition."[79]

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[76] See George Boutlas, "Führerprinzip or 'I Was Following Orders' in Jus in Bello Era," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 77-93.

[77] Raphael Gross, "Guilt, Shame, Anger, Indignation," trans. Joel Golb, in *The Law in Nazi Germany*, ed. Alan E. Steinweis and Robert D. Rachlin (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 89-103. Gross developed his thoughts earlier in his *Anständig geblieben: Nationalsozialistische Moral* (Frankfurt, 2010). See here also Raphael Gross, "'Loyalty' in National Socialism: A Contribution to the Moral History of the National Socialist Period," *History of European Ideas* 33, no. 4 (2007): 488-503.

[78] Wolfgang Bialas, "Nazi Ethics: Perpetrators with a Clear Conscience," *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 27, no. 1 (2013): 3-25.

[79] Gross, "Guilt, Shame, Anger, Indignation," 90.

In fact, it is reasonable to argue that the whole of Nazi Germany's "anti-Semitic legal corpus," inclusive of the Nuremberg laws, had its normative provenance in the typology of moral sentiments Gross identifies. Those sentiments formed a populist solidarity of "enthusiastic devotion" to Hitler and "a wish to enjoy Aryan sociability free from Jewish contact,"[80] thus what was construed as an "existential struggle" for racial and ethnic purification.[81] But, it was more than this. As Berel Lang put it, there was also the element of imagination involved, to the detriment of the European Jews:

> *Should* a human imagination be able to conceive of the possibility that it is being willed out of existence, not for something it has done or been, but only because of its existence? An imagination which fully anticipated this possibility would, it seems, be that of the agent, not of the victim [...].[82]

Such was the consciousness of the Nazi agent. Lang reminds,

> The sense of individual agency or identity that is a condition of moral consciousness cannot be imposed from the outside; still more pertinently, no one acts or speaks in moral terms as a universal consciousness. If the history of ethics has any single lesson to teach, it is that the status of moral agents is determined by their own places in space and time: they act always, if not only, as individuals and always and only in a context.[83]

In this reflection, we may say, Lang returns us to Protagoras, i.e., to the principle that acknowledges the individuality of judgment, and recalls the task of having to discern where, and with whom, the truth of moral judgment resides. In short, for the devoted Nazi, there could be no compassion, no neighborliness, no recognition of the human dignity of the Jew *qua* Jew, no "racial defilement" (*Rassenschande*) permissible within the Third Reich; for, the shared sentiments of Nazis prohibited that, not as a prescribed rule (until the expression of positive law in the Nuremberg laws) but as an ideologically motivated *moral sentiment*

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[80] Ibid., 93-94.

[81] See Asaf Kedar, *National Socialism Before Nazism: Friedrich Naumann and Theodor Fritsch, 1890-1914* (PhD diss., University of California at Berkeley, 2010).

[82] Berel Lang, *Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

[83] Ibid., xx.

first and foremost, even if one grants as motivation a warranted fear of reprisal from Nazi authorities. This led inevitably to the overwhelming majority of the German people appealing to ignorance of the death camps and Nazi genocide, hence their denial of personal responsibility. As Holocaust survivor Primo Levi put it,

> Shutting his mouth, his eyes and his ears, he built for himself the illusion of not knowing, hence not being an accomplice to the things taking place in front of his very door.[84]

Levi's acute observation links essentially to the effort since Kant and the Enlightenment to articulate a universalist (as opposed to a relativist) ethics. For, as Lang put it, the Enlightenment posited an "abstract, ahistorical self" as "an ideal of humanity," which, he argues, "entails in its converse appearance the implication that historical difference (and all the more, an historical definition of identity) will be suspect."[85] But, more than that suspicion,

> the principle of universal reason or judgment implies that the grounds on which such distinctions are based may be – should be – challenged: not only can everyone be judged by one criterion, but the consequences of being included or excluded by it are, in terms of the principle of universalizability, without limits.[86]

Accordingly, Lang concludes,

> The 'difference' of the Jews was judged by the Nazis to be fundamental – and with this decision, there was nothing to inhibit the decision subsequently made about what followed from that judgment; there was no 'reason' *not* to destroy the difference.[87]

Universalist reason, the appeal to a universal principle of morality, was no obstacle to Nazi genocide of the Jew as Jew, in his difference as Jew irrespective of any claim of humanity and the dignity due.

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[84] Primo Levi, *The Reawakening* (New York: Collier, 1965).

[85] Lang, *Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide*, 194-195.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

V. Concluding reflections: Between Hölderlin and Marx

Hölderlin wrote that there is no measure to be found on this earth after the flight of the gods. Marx believed otherwise, holding out hope for a measure to be found relative to Schelling's onto-theo-logy and his conceptualization of the divine ground of human freedom. Heidegger engaged Schelling's treatise on the essence of human freedom, but ultimately found the first breakthrough to an understanding of the essence of human freedom in Kant's practical philosophy, in the concept of autonomy *qua* self-legislation linked to transcendental freedom *qua* absolute spontaneity. Even so, Heidegger left for others the task of elucidating an ethics that would be potentially efficacious in the human confrontation with the planetary rule of technology. Heidegger could merely point ahead and work to prepare the ground and till the soil, hence the notion of his "formally indicative" thinking that leaves to us the task of thinking a post-metaphysical *ethos*.

The task is to listen to Hölderlin as well as Sophocles if we are to discern that *ethos* and to disclose what it means to dwell poetically on this earth.[88] A post-metaphysical ethics cannot be found in the calculative thinking (*rechnendes Denken*) that Heidegger finds contributing to planetary danger and an existential crisis for global humanity. Ours is not a time for "technological fixes" but a time for a reorientation in our thinking, for what Heidegger finds in Hölderlin's poetic thinking (*Dichtung*) to be a "thoughtful reflection" (*Nachdenken*). As Heidegger put it, "What threatens man in his very nature is the view that technological production puts the world in order [...]."[89] On the contrary, it puts the whole of the life-world in disorder due to the inherent contradictions of technoscience and the existential threats that arise therefrom, including transformation of the essence of being human. It will not do, during the time of the flight of the gods, for humanity to be in flight from the thinking that is necessary but that is other than that of calculative thinking. Hölderlin as poet is essential to the task of thinking. Hence, if there is a measure to be found "on this earth," a measure to be made efficacious for both thinking and human conduct, it cannot be disclosed without examining what this poet of rank has to say, even though he himself said "*Es gibt keine*." It is to Hölderlin, then, and not to Schelling, that Marx

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[88] Norman Kenneth Swazo, "The Poetic Task of 'Becoming Homely': Heidegger Reading Hölderlin Reading Sophocles," *Janus Head: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature, Continental Philosophy, Phenomenological Psychology* 19, no. 1 (2021): 91-108.

[89] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language Thought*, 14.

should have turned for that measure that is at once a measure for thinking and doing.

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Four Important Characteristics of Women in Confucianism and Its Contribution to the Implementation of Gender Equality in Vietnam

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Abstract

Four important virtues of a woman in the Confucian perspective include Works (being chaste, monogamous, and a virgin when married), Comportment (beauty), Speech, and Conduct (morality, Ethics). These virtues have profoundly influenced the conception of the role of women in traditional Vietnamese culture. Excessive focus on family roles and traditional values limits women's opportunities and rights in the public, political and economic spheres. However, in recent years, Vietnam has made significant progress in realizing gender equality. Investments in education, legal rights, and economic and social development have opened up many opportunities for women to participate in the public sector and contribute to the country's development. In this article, we will focus on clarifying issues such as: Presenting and analyzing four important women's virtues from the point of view of Confucianism in the pre-Qin period; Finding answers to the questions raised and pointing out the contribution of four important women's virtues from a Confucian point of view in realizing gender equality in Vietnam.

Keywords: *four virtues; Confucianism in pre-Qin period; gender equality; Vietnam*

I. Introduction

Confucianism, a long-standing philosophical system that originated in China, has profoundly influenced the social and cultural life of many Asian countries, including Vietnam. In Confucian philosophy, women are mentioned through four important virtues:

merit, tolerance, language, and conduct. These virtues are not only basic principles of Confucian ethics but also make great contributions to building a gender-equal social environment in Vietnam today. In this study, we are interested in the importance of the role of women in society from a Confucian point of view and clarify how the four virtues of a woman contribute to the construction of gender equality in Vietnam's diverse culture. The study and clarification of the four important virtues of women in Confucian philosophy and its contribution in realizing gender equality will help improve awareness and promote social measures to create favorable conditions for the all-round development of women and build a gender-equal, developed and prosperous society in Vietnam.

The research objective is to clarify the four important virtues of women in Confucian philosophy such as *Works, Comportment, Speech*, and *Conduct* in order to understand the meaning, principles and expression of each virtue in thinking and ethics of Confucianism. Analyze the position and role of women in Confucian philosophy, as well as how it affects the family and society. Evaluate how important women's virtues are encouraged and expressed in everyday life. Assess the contribution of the four virtues of women in building gender equality in Vietnam. Evaluate how these virtues support women to demonstrate confidence, courage, and participate in the political, economic, and social spheres. Based on the results of research and analysis, the work will be a scientific basis for social managers to propose specific measures, policies and programs to create favorable conditions for women to express and express themselves. promote their important virtues in society. The building of virtues will contribute to promoting and sustainably developing the progress of Vietnam.

To achieve the goal above, the article will focus on clarifying issues such as: Researching and analyzing the basic ideas of Confucianism related to the role and status of women in society and the family, finding how Confucianism evaluates important women's virtues including *Works, Comportment, Speech*, and *Conduct*. Analyzing the role of women in the family and in society based on Confucian philosophy. Identifying the characteristics and behaviors of women that are encouraged and respected in this philosophy. Learning the important virtues that are expressed and developed in the lives of women in Vietnamese society. Evaluating the importance of these virtues in building a gender-equal environment. Considering the positive effects of these virtues on women's participation in the political, economic and social spheres. This research result is also a condition to open up the next re-

search direction to propose specific measures and policies to promote awareness and honor the role of women according to Confucian philosophy and propose education and communication programs to raise awareness of gender equality and encourage women to develop their confidence and potential in society.

II. Theoretical background

It can be said that the study of four important women's virtues in general and from the point of view of Confucianism has attracted the attention of many researchers. In the following, the authors will point out some theoretical bases that have been discussed by the studies.

Confucianism is an old philosophical system in which humanism[1] and compassion[2] are core values. Like any previous views when studying Confucianism, we also believe that humanism and compassion are some of the core values that from Kung-Tzu to Meng-Tzu all refer to in the system. Studies suggest that humanism and compassion in Confucianism are rooted in respect and dignity for people.[3] However, in a certain aspect, we believe that the doctrine of Confucianism was formed in a certain historical condition. It was a period in which Chinese society fell into a protracted civil war. To overcome that situation, philosophical schools have begun to solve the problem of human nature. Confucian schools of philosophy believe that human nature is inherent-

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[1] Kang Sun, "Flowers in a Mirror: Critique of 'Confucianization of Law,'" *Asian Philosophy* 32, no. 3 (2022): 289-311; Ady van den Stock, "Liang Shuming's China: The Country of Reason (1967-1970): Revolution, Religion, and Ethnicity in the Reinvention of the Confucian Tradition," *International Communication of Chinese Culture* 7 (2020): 603-620; Shuchen Xiang, "The Symbolic Construction of Reality: The Xici and Ernst Cassirer's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms," *Journal of Chinese Humanities* 4, no. 2 (2019): 197-224; William Puck Brecher, *Japan's Private Spheres: Autonomy in Japanese History, 1600-1930* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 167-190. See also, Georgios Steiris, "Confucius' Ontological Ethics," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2023): 303-321.

[2] Kar-Wai Tong, "Confucianism, Compassion (Ren) and Higher Education: A Perspective from the *Analects* of Confucius," in *The Pedagogy of Compassion at the Heart of Higher Education*, ed. Paul Gibbs, 113-126 (New York: Springer, 2017); Jin Yutang, "Tongdong Bai: Against Political Equality: The Confucian Case: Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 2019, 315 pp.," *Res Publica* 27, no. 4 (2021): 675-680; Russell Arben Fox, "Bai's Confucianism and the Problem of Urban Modernity-Tongdong Bai, Against Political Equality: The Confucian Case (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020. pp. 344.)," *The Review of Politics* 83, no. 2 (2021): 270-273.

[3] Huaiyu Wang, "Ren and Gantong: Openness of Heart and the Root of Confucianism," *Philosophy East and West* 62, no. 4 (2012): 463-504; Xiao Qu, "Confucianism and Human Rights: Exploring the Philosophical Base for Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in China," *Disability & Society* 39, no. 6 (2022): 1-22; Yong Li, "Confucian Philosophy of Family: Interpretation or Justification?" *Asian Philosophy* 32, no. 2 (2022): 152-163.

ly good, so they uphold morality, whose core content is humanism and compassion. Confucianism emphasizes the importance of humanism and compassion and considers these basic values necessary to maintain a stable and peaceful society. Compassion encourages people to help each other, share and live in harmony.[4] Confucianism focuses not only on outward actions but also on the human soul and emotions. To build a united, orderly and happy society, building personal morality is extremely important. When humanism and compassion exist in each individual and society, it is the basis for creating a peaceful, stable and respectful society. Confucianism emphasizes on four essential virtues of a woman: *Works, Comportment, Speech*, and *Conduct*.

The role of women in Confucian philosophy. There have been many researchers who believe that not only does Confucianism not promote the role of women in society, but that it also stigmatizes them.[5] However, we think that not all Confucian thought reflects that. The theory of four essential qualities of a woman is an example of the above statement. We need to understand that, when studying any thought, it is necessary to put it in the historical context in which it was born. From 551 BC to 221 BC in China is a historical period associated with an agricultural and livestock economy. The gender division of labor appeared and the principle of that division was based on the theory of *yin* (female) *yang* (male). The inner, weak and soft works belong to the yin element, and the outer, strong, and hard things belong to the yang element. The gender division of labor was the first division of labor in the history of society in China. When people have not been able to explain natural phenomena and they live depending on it, this division is very appropriate. And in accordance with that assignment, Confucianism has built the necessary virtues for women and considers this a framework for them to follow. Women are positioned and valued

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[4] Robin Stanley Snell, Crystal Xinru Wu, and Hong Weng Lei, "Junzi Virtues: A Confucian Foundation for Harmony within Organizations," *Asian Journal of Business Ethics* 11, no. 1 (2022): 183-226; Zimo Wang, Danrui Zhang, and Zikai Zheng, "Cross-Cultural Differences in Empathy and Relevant Factors," *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences* 10 (2023): 197-202; Zhuran You and A. G. Rud, "Humility and Competition in Confucianism and Daoism: Lessons for Today's Education," *Journal of Moral Education* 53, no. 3 (2023): 1-15.

[5] Wenjian Xu, Yuxia Huang, Wanjie Tang, and Michelle R. Kaufman, "Heterosexual Marital Intention: The Influences of Confucianism and Stigma among Chinese Sexual Minority Women and Men," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 51, no. 7 (2022): 3529-3540; Hwa Yeong Wang, "Women Who Know Ritual," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 49, no. 2 (2022): 113-124; Yixin Ling, "Implicit Gender Inequality in Secondary School Textbooks Under a Confucianism Educational Idea Value," in *2nd International Conference on Education, Language and Art (ICELA 2022)*, 475-485 (Amsterdam: Atlantis Press, 2023); Sabrina Ardizzoni, *Hakka Women in Tulou Villages* (Amsterdam: Brill, 2022), 131-155.

as mothers, wives, children and key to maintaining family balance. The Important Qualities of Women in Confucian philosophy help women display good qualities and contribute to harmony in society.

Research on the importance of gender equality.[6] If we want to build progressive society,[7] we must start with the advancement of women.[8] Researchers assert this because they have recognized the important role and position of women. The advancement of women in access to education and personal development will help build a community of wisdom and support the overall development of society. Ensuring equity and advancement for women in the workforce will increase productivity and competition, and create a diverse and open working environment. The participation of women in management and leadership positions ensures diversity of perspectives and opinions in decision-making, helping to create innovative and adaptive solutions to modern challenges. Women often take on an important role in taking care of the family and society. Women's progress in recognizing and promoting the values of humanism, gender equality and compassion

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[6] Regina Veckalne and Tatjana Tambovceva, "The Importance of Gender Equality in Promoting Entrepreneurship and Innovation," *Marketing i Menedžment Innovacij* 14, no. 1 (2023): 158-168; Delfina Fatihayah and Marudut Bernadtua Simanjuntak, "Analysis of the Importance Gender Equality in the 'Kartini' Movie by Hanung Bramantyo," *LITERACY: International Scientific Journals of Social, Education, Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2022): 83-93; Beniamino Cislaghi, Asha L. Abeyasekera, Amiya Bhatia, and Jessica K. Backman-Levy, "The Next Generation of Gender Equality Work: Reflective Action for Health and Justice," *Frontiers in Sociology* 7 (2023): 1-3; Faniya Avzalovna, "Generation Equality: A Global Plan to Accelerate the Pace of Gender Equality," *Mental Enlightenment Scientific-Methodological Journal* 1 (2022): 1-7; Chen Luo and Songyu Jiang, "The Knowledge Map of Gender Equality in Cross-Cultural Communication: A Bibliometric Approach," *Heliyon* 9, no. 6 (2023); Muhammad Shahid Riaz Moazzam, "Impact of Gender Equality on Social Development," *Journal of Policy Research* 9, no. 1 (2023): 257-263; Uswatun Khasanah and Hadi Sasana, "The Significance of Gender Equality in Economic Growth," *Research Horizon* 2, no. 2 (2022): 374-380.

[7] Veerabhadram Bhukya, "Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in the Top Ten Indian Companies and Its Impact on Community Development," *International Journal of Humanities, Management and Social Science (IJ-HuMaSS)* 6, no. 1 (2023): 33-48; Lily Zubaidah Rahim, "The Gordian Knot of Ethno-Religious Nationalism: Unsettled National Questions and Contested Visions," *Muslim Politics Review* 1, no. 1 (2022): 79-106; Vitalina Babenko, Liudmyla Yemchuk, Larysa Dzhulii, and Hanna Tsymbaliuk, "Information and Communication Technologies in the Product Quality Management System of Industrial Enterprise," *Journal of Information Technology Management* 14 (2022): 104-120.

[8] Katie Olsen and Danielle LaGree, "Taking Action in the First Five Years to Increase Career Equality: The Impact of Professional Relationships on Young Women's Advancement," *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 38, no. 7 (2023): 925-941; Ifeanyi Mbukanma and Kariena Strydom, "Challenges to and Enablers of Women's Advancement in Academic Careers at a Selected South African University," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 21, no. 12 (2022): 44-64; Aki Lida, "How Do Women 'Shine?' Exploring Professional Women's Perceptions of 'Women's Advancement' in Japan," *East Asia* 41, no. 1 (2023): 1-24.

can pervade society as a whole and promote common development and progress. The advancement of women has a great positive impact on many aspects of society and creates favorable conditions for building a progressive, just and sustainable society. The promotion of gender equality and women's rights is not only a moral goal but also an opportunity and benefit for society as a whole.

From the recognition that the role and position of women is very large from family to society, the research on equality is carried out in many different fields. Labor and employment: research on gender equality in labor and employment[9] focuses on the disparity between men and women in wages, career opportunities, and labor rights. Research on gender equality in education[10] studies the disparities between men and women in accessing and completing education, the preferred fields of study by each gender, the educational deficit between men and women, and the status of training and development.

Research on gender equality in politics[11] focuses on women's participation and representation in government and decision positions, disparities between men and women in power and political influence. Gender equality researchers in politics are interested in the extent of women's participation in political activities, including voting participation, participation in political organizations, and participation in political activism. The researchers also fo-

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[9] D. Svitovenko, "Normativna osnova principu gendernoï rivnosti u zakonodavstvi Ukraïni pro pracyu ta zajnyatist'," *Naukovij visnik Uzhgorods'kogo nacional'nogo universitetu. Seriya: Pravo* 2, no. 72 (2022): 286-290.

[10] Jana Lindner, Elena Makarova, Deborah Bernhard, and Dorothee Brovelli, "Toward Gender Equality in Education: Teachers' Beliefs about Gender and Math," *Education Sciences* 12, no. 6 (2022): 373; Elaine Unterhalter, "An Answer to Everything? Four Framings of Girls' Schooling and Gender Equality in Education," *Comparative Education* 59, no. 2 (2023): 145-168; Gunay Babayeva, "Gender Equality in the Education System of Azerbaijan Republic," *Collection of Scientific Papers ΛΟΓΟΣ*, 261-263 (Paris: 2022); Olga A. Rorintulus, Imelda Lolowang, April-lya Alwien Suoth, Pritania Mokalu, Devilito Tatipang, Blessy Wilar, and Geral Pratasik, "Women's Struggle to Achieve their Gender Equality in Pride and Prejudice and Jurnal Ph. D Mama: A Comparative Study," *Klasikal: Journal of Education, Language Teaching and Science* 4, no. 2 (2022): 197-208; Sriharini Sriharini, "Gender Equality in Education," *The Journal of Inventions Pedagogical and Practices* 1, no. 1 (2022): 15-20.

[11] Petra Ahrens, Phillip M. Ayoub, and Sabine Lang, "Leading from Behind? Gender Equality in Germany during the Merkel Era," *German Politics* 31, no. 1 (2022): 1-19; Rebecca Tildesley, Emanuela Lombardo, and Tània Verge, "Power Struggles in the Implementation of Gender Equality Policies: The Politics of Resistance and Counter-Resistance in Universities," *Politics & Gender* 18, no. 4 (2022): 879-910; Ayşe Güneş and Çağlar Ezikoğlu, "Legal and Political Challenges of Gender Equality and Crimes against Women in Turkey: The Question of Istanbul Convention," *Women & Criminal Justice* 33, no. 1 (2023): 14-27; Gefjon Off, "Gender Equality Salience, Backlash and Radical Right Voting in the Gender-Equal Context of Sweden," *West European Politics* 46, no. 3 (2023): 451-476.

cused on the proportion of women in parliament,[12] other governing bodies and political decisions, as well as the distribution of political power between men and women. Studies suggest that, in the current state of affairs, there are still gender disparities in politics, including disparities in participation, representation, and advancement opportunities between men and women. We do not refute this view of the studies, but perhaps a more comprehensive view of it will be possible if we put gender in the correlations when researching. In recent years, studies have also assessed the effectiveness of policies and laws related to gender equality, including measures to encourage women's political participation, limit discrimination and other policies aimed at increasing the role and representation of women in politics. Studies also confirm that stereotypes against women's leadership ability in some countries have been removed. However, studies have not shown that gender regulation is one of the factors that limit their capacity. In Vietnam, studies related to gender equality also show that the government has recognized its role and importance. The government considers the emancipation of women as one of the key tasks for a sustainable development of the country.

Research on the qualities of a good woman.[13] This study argues that women need to be educated in the necessary virtues through practice so that they can master themselves. Women with good qualities will be shown through family and work.[14] Research into the virtues of women helps identify the positive traits that are essential to building a stable and progressive society. The study of the essential qualities of women helps us to recognize the qualities and competencies necessary for women to thrive and thrive in the social environment. This can promote women's personal and professional development and facilitate their entry into different fields.

The development of criteria for the required virtues of women will be an important condition in realizing gender equality. This helps

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[12] Chang-ling Huang, "Substantive Representation of Women in Taiwan: Why Is 42% Not Enough?" in *Substantive Representation of Women in Asian Parliaments*, eds. Devin K. Joshi and Christian Echle, 70-89 (Abington and New York: Routledge, 2022); Ruwanthi Jayasekara, "Toward Advancing Substantive Representation of Women in Parliament: Case Study of Sri Lanka," in *Substantive Representation of Women in Asian Parliaments*, eds. Devin K. Joshi and Christian Echle, 226-245 (Abington and New York: Routledge, 2022); S. Nysanova, Venera Nauryzova, and Zhadyra Zhagypar, "The Main Priorities of State Policy in Relation to Women," *Bulletin of the Khalel Dosmukhamedov Atyrau University* 65, no. 2 (2022): 112-120.

[13] P. Suganya and Kavitha Prabhakaran, "Imposing of Womanhood on Indian Women in Githa Hariharan's Novel 'The Thousand Faces of Night,'" *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education* 14, no. 3 (2022): 1675-1678.

[14] Bobbi Thomason, "Ideal or Idiosyncratic? How Women Manage Work-Family Role Conflict with Focal and Peripheral Role Senders," *Organization Science* 33, no. 3 (2022): 901-925.

promote gender equity and encourages society to value and respect women's contributions. It is also a scientific basis for formulating policies and measures to promote gender equality, ensure equal rights and opportunities for women, and create favorable conditions for women to participate in key fields. political, economic and social. Recognition and appreciation of the positive qualities of women play an important role in creating a diverse and harmonious society. Four important female virtues from a Confucian perspective can assist women in demonstrating confidence, courage, and participation in social, economic, and political activities. Assess how these virtues contribute to building a gender-equal environment and promoting the inclusive development of Vietnamese society. Based on the theoretical bases presented above, we will conduct research on Confucian philosophy and the role of women in it, thereby recognizing and evaluating the role of four important virtues of the Confucianism. women and their contribution to achieving gender equality in Vietnam.

III. Research method

The article aims to clarify four important virtues of women from the point of view of Confucianism in the pre-Qin period and its contribution to the realization of gender equality in Vietnam. This. In order to well implement the research objectives and tasks, the article must implement historical rigor, comprehensiveness and multi-dimensionality, considering it in the development process of Confucianism as well as Vietnamese history.

When studying the four important virtues of women from the point of view of Confucianism in the pre-Qin period and its contribution to the realization of gender equality in Vietnam, the authors approach the research problem from a different angle. *dialectical philosophy; philosophy in politics; Philosophical history* to analyze and interpret the contents. Also use the following specific methods:

Historical-logical method: This article uses this method to examine and evaluate four important virtues of a woman from the point of view of Confucianism in the pre-Qin period in the era in which it was born. On the basis of historical data to draw the regularity of its movement and development.

Methods of collecting information and documents: The author collects documents such as books, newspapers, magazines in Vietnam and other countries about four important virtues of women from a Confucian point of view. pre-Qin period and its contribution to the implementation of gender equality in Vietnam to prove its statements.

Analytical and synthesis method: This article uses this method to analyze the four important virtues of women from the point of view of Confucianism in the pre-Qin period and its contribution to the realization of gender equality. In Vietnam. On that basis, generalize and synthesize the evaluations.

IV. Research questions

To study the topic of four important women's virtues from a Confucian point of view and its contribution to the realization of gender equality in Vietnam, the article poses three questions as follows: a. What are the four important virtues of women in Confucian philosophy and how are they evaluated in traditional Vietnamese culture? b. How do the four essential virtues of a woman contribute to building a gender-equal social environment in Vietnam? c. How to combine Confucian philosophy with contemporary principles to ensure sustainable development and gender equality in Vietnamese society?

V. Research results

The four virtues of a woman from a Confucian point of view are *Works, Comportment, Speech*, and *Conduct*, also known as the four virtues. These four virtues have been adjusted over time, but here we only focus on the pre-Qin period (before 2021 BC). As we have mentioned above, the first division of labor in China was done by gender and took the theory of yin and yang as the criterion for identification. In order to fulfill these criteria well, it is necessary to propose four important virtues that are recorded in the Classic of Rites.[15] The four virtues of a woman were born during the Zhou dynasty and were later recorded by Confucius in the Classic of Rites. A woman should have four virtues: merit, tolerance, speech, and conduct.

Work is the work of the *yin*, these jobs require softness, ingenuity, and lightness. According to this assignment, things like: housework, work that requires meticulousness, this job has the purpose of providing nutrition and regenerating labor for family members. To prepare for housework, it is necessary to carry out tasks such as selecting food, preparing, cooking and arranging meals. The work of cleaning and cleaning the areas in the home space and the items requires the

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[15] Guojie Luo, *Traditional Ethics and Contemporary Society of China* (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2023), 267-294; Zhiping Liang, *A Study of Legal Tradition of China from a Culture Perspective: Searching for Harmony in the Natural Order* (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2023).

ingenuity and assurance of women in organizing family life. First of all, women know how to stay at home, skillfully arrange household chores and raise children. Not stopping there, women's work is also shown in sewing and embroidery skills.

Comportment is the face and appearance of a woman. Dung is a harmonious combination between the inner beauty of a woman's soul, affection and tolerance. Goodwill, compassion, patience, and a supportive spirit are the elements that make up a woman's inner beauty. Furthermore, Dung is also the beauty expressed in the outward appearance, with a lovely and cute face and body. It is also the manners shown in behavior, laughter and in daily activities. A woman's dress is neat, discreet, dignified, her hair is neat. A woman who meets the standards of using dill is a woman with a serene appearance, gentle, shy, reserved, dignified appearance. Clearly content for women is the beauty of the harmony between content and form, in which content determines form.

Speech is communication. According to Confucianism, women's words play an important role in building a peaceful, harmonious and humanism family and social environment. In Confucian philosophy, *speech* is valued and appreciated, because it can have a strong impact on the spirit and emotions of the people around, and at the same time create great influences on the social environment. festival. Women's words have an impact on communication and interaction in the family. It can help create a supportive and harmonious communication environment in the family, helping members feel loved and cared for. Women often have the role of role models and inspiration for the next generation in the family. By using positive and righteous speech, they are able to convey the values of humanism, compassion, and compassion to their children and those around them. Women's words can play an important role in mediating conflicts in the family and society. It can help promote understanding and understanding between the parties and act as a mediator to resolve difficult issues.

Confucianism is not only limited to the positive aspects of speech but also believes that words can also bring about bad consequences if not used correctly and responsibly. Therefore, in Confucian philosophy, humanism and compassion are important virtues that are encouraged to use words in a thoughtful and positive way, providing support and creating a harmonious environment for the family and society.

Conduct is morality. According to the Confucian point of view, women need to have certain virtues and virtues to show their role such as compassion, tolerance towards those around them, showing sharing

and caring for them. Empathy and concern for the difficulties and needs of family members. Truthfulness and honesty in behavior and communication, not hiding or deceiving others. Patience helps women face and overcome difficulties and challenges in daily life. Responsibility is a virtue that helps women realize and properly perform their roles and duties in the family. Consistency and determination will help them overcome difficulties and complete the household chores. *Conduct* shows the basic moral qualities of women, first of all, loyalty to her husband, make sacrifices for her children, and compassion for everyone around her. A virtuous woman from the Confucian point of view is someone who is always patient, diligently takes on her husband's household responsibilities, and is faithful to her husband.

Among the four important virtues of a woman from a Confucian point of view, *Conduct* is the most important. *Conduct* is a basic requirement, a must for women. From an early age, girls are seriously trained to practice these four virtues. A virtuous woman must be filial to her parents and kind to her brothers. Confucianism believes that "filial piety" to parents must be based on "love" and "respect." Caring for your parents should come with respect; without respect, it cannot be considered filial. The four essential virtues of a woman from a Confucian point of view have a close relationship with each other, serving as a premise for each other to create an ideal female role model.

The influence of the four essential virtues of a woman in Confucian philosophy on Vietnamese women. Confucianism was introduced into Vietnam quite early, according to Dai Viet historical records, the Western Han Dynasty around 110 BC to 39 AD. The content of Confucianism introduced and propagated into Vietnam during this period was the thought of Thien Manh, the thought of respecting the army for great unification, promoting the authority of the king and the theory of four virtues. The process of introduction and development of Confucianism in Vietnam is the process of being modified to suit the national culture and the consciousness of the authorities. In order to maintain its dominant position, the Vietnamese feudal state used Confucianism as the dominant ideology, as a tool to educate the people, and to build people to serve the Vietnamese feudal society. For women, the four main virtues are the standards for them to follow. However, in Vietnam, this concept is creatively absorbed and applied, not stereotyped as in China.

In Vietnam, morality is always a value that is honored by everyone. Moral quality is a value that belongs to human nature and is prioritized over other values. It is placed in the highest position. Those

cultural traditions have regulated the reception and at the same time changed the doctrines imported into Vietnam from outside. Most of the doctrines, ideologies and religions in the process of existence and development in Vietnam had to change some of their contents. This modification aims to align with Vietnamese cultural traditions, where values like gratitude, respect for origins, and honoring meaningful connections are central. However, Vietnamese women throughout history have been strongly influenced by the theory of four virtues. This impact is one of the causes leading to gender inequality in feudal society.

In-depth study of the four essential qualities of women in Confucianism has shown us that these virtues are very necessary and meet the social needs at the time of their birth. However, the process of development and the purpose of the government's manipulation made it transform. This change is not due to the movement of doctrine but to the will of the authorities. Four important virtues of a woman from a Confucian point of view have strongly influenced Vietnamese women both in the past and in the present.

Gender equality is based on four important Confucian virtues in Vietnam. Global Gender Gap Report 2023, Viet Nam, with a score of 71.1% and a global rank of 72nd, continues its gradual progress towards gender parity. With scores of 0.749 for Economic Participation and Opportunity, 0.985 for Educational Attainment, 0.946 for Health and Survival, and 0.166 for Political Empowerment. Vietnam's Global Gender Gap Index increased from 0.705 score in 2022 to 0.711 score in 2023, up 11 places, ranking 72nd in the world.[16] To reach this achievement, the government has proactively guided ministries, sectors, and localities to implement gender equality strategies and programs. The system of legal documents and policies is completed in the direction of ensuring the principle of gender equality. The National Assembly promotes the review and integration of gender equality considerations in proposals for the annual Law and Ordinance Development Program, as well as in law and ordinance projects submitted for approval, ensuring feasibility, clear responsibilities, and proper resource allocation. Many legal documents related to gender equality have been developed, revised, and contributed to ensuring and promoting gender equality. The Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (amended) has made an important contribution to perfecting the legal system, creating a legal corridor for domestic violence prevention and control and supporting victims, ensure human rights and promote gender equality. The mainstreaming of gender equality issues in the formulation and

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[16] World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2023* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2023).

implementation of policies, laws, programs, plans, schemes, etc. has been seriously implemented. Communication on gender equality has been enhanced with active participation from central to local levels, contributing to raising awareness and actions of authorities at all levels, among cadres, civil servants and people. on gender equality.

In 2022, the female employment rate is expected to reach 49.04%, reflecting a 5.64% increase compared to 2021. However, employment in industrial zones is projected to decrease by 0.18%, while the percentage of female business owners in the industry is on the rise. The fact that women have stable jobs has led to a shortening of the average number of hours a day of unpaid housework and care for women compared to men (women work 2.35 hours/day, men work 1.32 hours/day). Domestic violence in 2022 has 3,921 victims of domestic violence, of which 12.27% are men, 87.73% are women, gender violence is detected and support services are sought. increasing day by day. At Vietnamese government agencies in 2022, there are key female leaders, accounting for 15/30 agencies, an increase of 3.4% compared to 2021. The government has female key leaders at 25%, and there are 3 ministers, 12 deputy ministers and equivalent.

To build a gender-equal society, the Vietnamese government has included the content of gender and gender equality in the curriculum in the national education system. To have a beautiful mind, one must start with learning. Currently, in Vietnam, there are regulations, children have the right to study. Children who attend primary school in public educational institutions do not have to pay school fees. The percentage of female students who are newly recruited at colleges and universities next year is higher than the previous year, specifically in 2021, women will account for 34.5%, up 2.9% compared to 2020. Trend of female participation in universities Courses to improve qualifications are increasing, in 2019 the proportion of women with a master's degree among master's degrees holders accounted for 44.2%, and doctoral degrees among doctoral degree holders accounted for 28%. It is estimated that this proportion will change in 2023 with the proportion of women holding a master's degree among those with a master's degree at 50%, with a doctoral degree among those with a doctorate degree at 30% (data provided by the 2023 government report). Health care for maintaining a beautiful body is also gaining attention; according to a report from the Ministry of Health, the percentage of women seeking health and beauty services is steadily increasing.

Language is a means of communication to perform functions such as: information function; the function of creating relationships; enter-

tainment function; self-expression function. In order to have a good medium and convey these functions, besides studying in class, women also look to centers to develop language skills to increase verbal persuasion. The sending of women to attend missions, study, survey, exchange of experiences and seminars abroad in recent years has also been focused. Taking classes to train women's soft language skills not only helps them to convince those around them, but also opens up opportunities in finding the right job for them. With the rate of 41.85% female cadres working in foreign affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, it has confirmed the very important role of women in all activities.

Women have a great role in organizing the family, they are also the ones who have a great influence on their children. In daily communication activities, the woman plays the role of a counselor, who is responsible for the psychological atmosphere of the family. Communication visits, educational communication takes place every day by the experience of grandmothers, mothers, and wives are definitely indispensable. In particular, the more these communication activities take place in traditional Vietnamese families, the more meaningful they are. Vietnamese women have clearly demonstrated their gender roles in children's education, formation and personality development. Mothers have a great influence on the growth of their children. Building virtue for women has become one of the core tasks for the Vietnamese government.

It is clear that the four important virtues of women from a Confucian point of view have made certain contributions to the realization of gender equality in Vietnam. These four virtues have been applied flexibly, in accordance with the historical, cultural and human conditions of Vietnam. In recent years, Vietnam has made significant progress in realizing gender equality. This progress is not only thanks to the efforts of the government but also the contribution of women through their activities.

VI. Discussion

Assessing the Four Important Virtues of a Woman from a Confucian point of view including *Works, Comportment, Speech,* and *Conduct* requires a specific historical perspective. We believe that the birth of the theory of four virtues is associated with the division of labor by gender. This division of labor was the first to appear in Chinese history. From the point of view of Confucianism of the pre-Qin period, here are four important virtues that a woman should cultivate and adhere to in order

to be a good person. These qualities are especially important for the family, community and society as a woman is seen as the foundation of the family, with the important responsibility of taking care of her husband, children and family.

Contribution of the Four Important Virtues to the realization of gender equality in Vietnam. In the past, views from Confucianism may have created limitations and injustices for women in Vietnamese society. This injustice did not have many causes, including the government in feudal dynasties. During the feudal period in Vietnam, women were often viewed as subservient to men, and their role was often limited in participating in social, economic and political decisions. This injustice and limitation have contributed to limiting the potential and contribution of women in society.

Today, investment in education has helped raise the level of education and knowledge of women. More and more women are entering higher education and professional careers, enabling them to participate in the public, economic and political spheres. Policies and laws have been established to protect women's rights and ensure gender equality. Legal protection has helped reduce restrictions and discrimination against women in work, family and society. Economic and industrial development has also opened up many employment opportunities for women, helping them to enter the workforce and contribute to the development of the country. The awareness of gender equality has been increasingly raised in society, and many people have realized the importance of women's role in promoting the comprehensive development of the country.

Four Important Women's Virtues from a Confucian point of view have had a profound influence on social thought about the role of women in the past. However, to realize gender equality in Vietnam, there needs to be a change and progress in social awareness, while ensuring the rights and opportunities for women in all areas of life.

VII. Conclusion

The four important virtues of a woman from the Confucian point of view of the pre-Qin period represent the characteristics of traditional Chinese culture and are one of the great cultural heritages of mankind. These four virtues have had a profound influence on the conception of the role and status of women in the traditional culture of Vietnam. *Works, Comportment, Speech*, and *Conduct* are valuable virtues, contributing to the formation of women's character and capacity in taking care of their families, building a harmonious family environment and contributing to the development of so-

ciety. festival. However, as mentioned in the presentation, this view created some limitations and injustices for women in the feudal period. The focus on the peculiarities of family roles and traditional values has limited the power and freedom of women in society, limited their opportunities and rights to participate in various fields. public, political and economic sectors.

In recent years, Vietnam has made significant progress in realizing gender equality. Investments in education, legal rights, economic and social development have opened up many opportunities for women to participate in the public sector and contribute to the development of the country. The awareness of gender equality is also increasing in society, helping to change old and limited notions about the role of women. To achieve gender equality in Vietnam, it is essential to foster a fair social environment that embraces and respects diverse values while ensuring rights and opportunities for women. Efforts to improve education, sustainable economic development and ensure the legal rights of women are important for creating an equitable and thriving society. Ensuring equal opportunities and quality education for women, along with promoting awareness of gender equality and the value of diversity, will help build an inclusive society where women can freely express their potential and make maximum contribution to the development of the country.

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discussion

Proofs for the Existence of God: A Discussion with Richard Swinburne

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Abstract

Over the last 50 years, the English philosopher Richard Swinburne (b. 1934) has been a very influential proponent of philosophical arguments for the existence of God (natural theology). His major philosophical contributions lie in the areas of philosophy of science and philosophy of religion. From a general philosophical point of view, Swinburne stimulated much discussion with his early work in the philosophy of religion. He has also played a role (a) in the recent debate over the mind-body problem, and (b) in the debate on libertarian free will. Swinburne is also noted as one of the foremost current Christian apologists, arguing that faith in Christian God is rational and coherent in a rigorous philosophical sense. My discussion with Richard Swinburne revisits the analytic and non-analytic philosophy of religion. Above all, however, it aims at shedding light on Swinburne's thought regarding some important philosophical issues, such as the Kantian arguments on the existence of God, the relationship between ratio and one's immediate experience of God (empireia), "strong possibilities" the problem of the existence of evil in the world, but also the theological significance and value of Orthodoxy in contrast to other Christian creeds or even religions.

Keywords: *analytical philosophy; analytical theology, philosophy of religion; rational element in faith; immediate experience of God; mysticism, strong possibilities; evil; free will; Orthodox theology*

Vasileios Meichanetsidis: Dear Esteemed Prof. Dr. Swinburne, thank you very much for accepting this interview. It is truly an exceptional honour to be able to share with our readers across the world this truly exceptional conversation with you. To begin with, which are the basic

foundations (premises) of analytic philosophy and analytic philosophy of religion at this moment across the world?

Richard Swinburne: "Analytic philosophy" is the name given to the kind of philosophy practised by most philosophers in the anglophone world since the 1940s. That name was appropriate to the philosophy of 1940 – 1970 since it was concerned then initially with "analysing" concepts (breaking them down into their observable components, as in logical positivism), and then with analysing the meanings of words (as in the "ordinary language" programme of, for example, J. L. Austin and the later Wittgenstein). But since 1970, analytic philosophy (now practiced much more widely than merely in the anglophone world) has taken a very different direction, although it is still described by the (now inappropriate) name "analytic philosophy." Now, what distinguishes "analytic philosophy" is very rigorous argument, sensitive to the latest discoveries of the sciences, seeking to establish the most general truths about the world (metaphysics) and the extent to which we can know about them (epistemology).

Analytic philosophy of religion since 1970, was concerned initially with whether claims that God exists or that God does not exist, were meaningful at all. Then it sought to explicate what precisely is meant by "God," and after that it turned its attention to the strength of arguments for and against the existence of God, and whether we need arguments in order justifiably to believe that there is a God. Then it began to investigate the meaning of particular Christian doctrines (and subsequently to a limited extent the meaning of the doctrines of other religions), and now it considers the extent to which such doctrines can be justified by arguments. It uses the purported results of other branches of philosophy – for example, it relies on views in philosophy of science for the criteria for a hypothesis being "probable," views in epistemology of what it is for a belief to be "justified," and views from moral philosophy about what it is for an action to be "good." It then applies such purported results to claims that it is "probable" that there is a God, that we are "justified" in believing that there is a God, and that God is perfectly "good." Most analytic philosophers of religion come from a basically philosophical background, the majority of whom are religious believers; but there are a significant number of atheist philosophers of religion, determined to prove the incoherence of the concept of God, or the non-existence of God.

Vasileios Meichanetsidis: Which are the basic tendencies of the non-analytic philosophy of religion at this moment across the world?

Richard Swinburne: The most prominent Western non-analytic philosophy of religion is that of the "continental" post-Kantian post-modernist tradition of philosophy, and so the philosophy of religion derived from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. I have enjoyed reading these two writers who bring to life extreme positions about religion. Kierkegaard expresses the extreme view that the sincere practice of religion requires total faith, and no reliance on rational argument at all. Nietzsche expresses the extreme view that "God is dead" and so therefore is all traditional morality. But, like many analytic philosophers, I have read very little of subsequent continental philosophy, because – it seems to me – writers such as Heidegger, and – on philosophy of religion – Levinas and Marion, simply express a certain (often incomprehensible) attitude to religion, without providing any rational arguments which might appeal to atheists as well as to hesitant religious believers, as to why committing oneself to religion is a rational attitude. In this respect they put themselves outside the tradition of Western philosophy deriving from Plato and Aristotle, through the Arabic philosophers, the mediaeval Christian philosophers, and modern philosophers such as Locke and Hume, Leibniz and Kant, who all sought to provide arguments for the existence of some sort of God, or (in the case of Kant), arguments for why no arguments for the existence or non-existence of God could be sound. As one who believes that human life should be guided by reason in all-important matters, I and most analytic philosophers oppose post-modernism. Now, of course, since I and most analytic philosophers have read very little of "continental" philosophy of religion, we may be missing something important, but that is the typical attitude of analytic philosophy to post-Kantian continental philosophy, and so of analytic philosophy of religion to the post-Kantian type. And I, like most analytic philosophers, know virtually nothing about Eastern philosophy, and so about Buddhist (or even Indian) philosophy.

Vasileios Meichanetsidis: Do you believe that we could now speak of a "transcendence," elimination of the Kantian arguments concerning the existence of God?

Richard Swinburne: Very few analytic philosophers (including philosophers of religion) believe that Kant's arguments against the possibility of reaching big metaphysical conclusions, including conclusions about whether or not there is a God, are cogent. A major problem with Kant (and almost all pre-Kantian philosophers) is that they are concerned only with the soundness of deductive arguments; they have no precise understanding of how inductive (in the sense of probabilistic) arguments work. They thought of induction as used by scientists, simply as

generalising from observations – for example, arguing from "all bodies of a certain kind attract each other in accordance with the law of gravity" to "all bodies of all kinds attract each other in accordance with the law of gravity." But almost everyone now realises that fundamental science consists in postulating a hypothesis which makes probable the evidence, and that may be either a hypothesis generalizing observations or a hypothesis postulating unobservable entities and properties; and that there are certain inductive criteria for which hypotheses are most probable on the evidence. It is interesting that the first scientific hypothesis (in effect, using these criteria) which postulated unobservable entities (such as atoms) in order to explain the behaviour of observable entities, was Dalton's atomic theory of chemistry put forward in 1803. Kant died in 1804. He had a deep respect for empirical science, and if he had lived long enough to appreciate the probabilistic justification for this and subsequent theories of chemistry, he might well have changed his views about the nature of science, and so more generally about the possibility of serious philosophical hypotheses about the nature of an unobservable metaphysical reality, being rendered probable (but not certain) by observable evidence. In particular, he might well have recognised that the teleological argument for the existence of God, which he considered more worthy of respect than other arguments, is a sound probabilistic argument.[1]

Vasileios Meichanetsidis: All your contribution has been a defence (an apology) of the "rational element in faith" without denying the significance of "one's immediate experience of God." Are after all rationalism and mysticism "equally" accepted within the frames of Orthodox philosophical theology and doctrinal teaching?[2]

Richard Swinburne: It is rational to believe in anything at all on the basis of one's own apparent experience of it, or on the basis of what an apparently reliable informant tells you about it, or on the basis of some argument – always in the absence of counter-evidence from other experiences, different apparently reliable informants, or counter-arguments. This applies to one's belief in God, just as much as to one's belief in any-

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[1] Swinburne's paper, "Why Hume and Kant Were Mistaken in Rejecting Natural Theology," in *Gottesbeweise als Herausforderung fur die Moderne Vernunft*, eds. Thomas Buchheim, Friedrich Hermanni, Axel Hutter, and Christoph Schwöbel, 317-334 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), develops the argument that he has just presented in this part.

[2] For a nuanced discussion on non-rational beliefs that have been transformed in a Christian context, see Marina Savelieva, "Mythological Aspects of Supreme Power Concept by Eusebius Pamphilus," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 9, no. 1 (2024): 157-171; for a discussion on metaphysical realism and monotheism see Åke Gafvelin, "No God, no God's Eye: A Quasi-Putnamian Argument for Monotheism," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (2021): 83-100.

thing else. If it seems to you that you have seen your friend John on the other side of the road, it is rational to believe that you have seen him. Likewise, if on the basis of your "mystical" or other religious experience, it seems to you very strongly that you are aware of the presence of God, it is rational to believe that you are thus aware. Almost all of our beliefs about geography and history are beliefs which we acquire on the basis of what we have been told by (as far as we can judge) reliable sources of information. So likewise, if the one source available to you which you trust, are your parents or the local priest, and they tell you that there is a God, it is rational to believe them. All this – in the absence of counter-evidence. But relatively few people have very deep religious experiences, strong enough to outweigh the influence of the modern world; and, while in a mediaeval village one's parents and the local priest may indeed be the most reliable source of information, in the modern world many of us are well aware of the testimony and arguments of many atheists. For this reason, many more people need rational arguments for the existence of God, and rational arguments against atheistic arguments, to persuade them of the existence of God. Some opposition to natural theology (which consists of arguments for the existence of God) has been characteristic of Orthodox teaching of very recent centuries. But this is totally out of line with the teaching of the Eastern church of the first Christian millennium; many of the great theologians much revered in the Orthodox Church gave arguments of natural theology in defence of Christian theism, as tools for convincing atheists. David Bradshaw and I recently co-edited a book of essays on this topic, *Natural Theology in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition*.[3] Humans are different from each other and may come to God in different ways, but in the modern world, many atheists and also hesitant believers need rational arguments.[4]

Vasileios Meichanetsidis: All your philosophical reflection is based on the concept of "strong possibilities," if I may use this expression. Could you explain the central points of your philosophical thought?[5]

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[3] For the history of natural theology in the Orthodox Church, see *Natural Theology in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition*, eds. David Bradshaw and Richard Swinburne (St. Paul, MN: IOTA Publications, 2021).

[4] For a simple account of the importance of one's own experience and the testimony of others in reaching justified belief, see pages 1-4 of his paper "The Existence of God," https://users.ox.ac.uk/%7Eorie0087/pdf_files/General%20untechnical%20papers/The%20Existence%20of%20God.pdf. For a more thorough justification of the importance of experience and testimony, and so of the criteria for justified belief, which Swinburne calls "the principle of credulity" and "the principle of testimony," see Richard Swinburne, *Mind, Brain, and Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 42-44, and 56-57.

[5] On the foundation of Descartes' 'strong hypothesis' for the existence of God see Justin

Richard Swinburne: My arguments are designed to show that it is significantly more probable than not that there is a God, and that the central doctrines of the creed are true. Arguments of science and history (and in particular forensic enquiry) try to show that certain evidence (the scientist's data and the detective's clues) make some hypothesis probable to different degrees. I analyse the structure of such arguments as follows. Evidence E makes a hypothesis H probable insofar as

> a. H makes E probable (that is, if H is true, you would expect to find E),
> b. not-H does not make E probable (that is, unless H is true, you would not expect to find E),
> c. H is a simple hypothesis, and
> d. H "fits in" with the rest of our knowledge about how the world works.

d. is not however relevant to very big theories purporting to explain almost everything in the world, such as quantum theory or – above all – the hypothesis that there is a God. In my writing I give various examples from science and history, to show that these are the criteria which scientists and historians use. I emphasise the crucial importance of the criterion of simplicity, because there are always an infinite number of theories which are such that if they were true, you would expect the evidence, and if they were false you would not expect the evidence. For example, any scientist will only have a small finite collection of evidence. In formulating his theory of gravitation in the late 17th century, Newton had the evidence of a relatively small number of observations on the behaviour of a few heavy bodies on Earth, a few observations of the positions of the moon and the planets relative to the Earth, and of the moons of Jupiter and Saturn relative to those planets at different moments of time during the preceding few years. On the basis of this he formed a theory of gravity, purporting to explain the behaviour of all bodies everywhere at all times, consisting of four very simple laws, the most complicated of which was the law of gravitational attraction, which asserts that all bodies attract each other with forces proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of their distance apart. But innumerable other laws could have been devised which satisfy the first two criteria equally well; what made Newton's theory by far the most probable theory was that it was

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Humphreys, "Nature's Perfection: Aristotle and Descartes on Motion and Purpose," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 6, no. 2 (2021):87-106.

a very simple one. I apply the criteria I have analysed to arguments for the existence of God. My evidence for the hypothesis of the existence of God is the existence of our physical universe, its conformity to simple laws comprehensible by humans, those laws being such as to lead to the evolution of human bodies, and humans being conscious beings. Both theists and atheists have no doubt about the occurrence of this evidence. The hypothesis of theism is a very simple hypothesis, because it postulates only one entity (God), possessing only one essential property of being everlastingly omnipotent, from which property I claim that all the other traditional essential divine properties can be deduced. I argue that if there is a God, in virtue of that one property, it is fairly probable that he would create humans and a universe fitted for us to inhabit; but that, if there is no God, it would be immensely improbable that there would be such a universe. Hence the evidence which I have stated is such as to make the hypothesis of theism significantly probable. I apply these criteria also to the evidence about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and argue that – given also the evidence for the existence of a God – the former evidence makes it probable that the central doctrines of the Christian creed are true.[6]

Vasileios Meichanetsidis: As you have written much on the problem of evil, why does a good God allow humans to suffer so much?[7]

Richard Swinburne: God entrusts our world to humans, and so gives us free will. If the only way in which we could exercise our free will was to choose between alternative good actions, we wouldn't be really responsible for the world; God would have made all the significant choices for us. Really to entrust the world to us, God must allow us (within limits) to choose to make ourselves, our families and others with whom we interact, and the wider world better or worse. Hence, he allows humans to benefit *or* hurt each other. Since each time we make a good choice of some kind, that makes it easier for us to make a good choice of that kind next time, and each time we make a bad choice of some kind, that

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[6] For the details of his arguments for the existence of God, see the simple book *Is There a God?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), and the more detailed and more thoroughly argued book *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). For the details of his arguments for Jesus Christ being God incarnate who rose from the dead, and so for his arguments for the truth of the Christian revelation see his short book *Was Jesus God?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), and *The Resurrection of God Incarnate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[7] For a (rather pessimistic) discussion of the universe as a violent arena, and life as a constant struggle, see Purissima Emelda Egbekpalu, Paschal Onyi Oguno, and Princewill Iheanyi Alozie, "Dialectics of War as a Natural Phenomenon: Existential Perspective," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2023): 129-145.

makes it harder for us to make a good choice of that kind next time. The free choices of each of us move the range within which it is possible or easy for us to make choices. And so we can   gradually form either a good character or a bad character. Those who are harmed by the actions of others, and by the natural forces of disease, drought, earthquake, and so on, themselves also have choices of how to deal with their suffering. If I get ill, I have a choice of whether to deal with my illness by being patient, not complaining, not expecting everyone to be sorry for me, and doing what I still do to help others, or to be sorry and complaining; and those whose suffering is caused by other humans, can choose whether or not to be angry with their persecutors, or to try to understand why they have done this, and be ready to forgive them. So each of us can in the course of time by our choices make ourselves either very good people or very bad people. It is by our choices when we suffer a lot that (with God's help) we can make ourselves saints, suited to enjoy the life of heaven. Although God may take to heaven others who have not freely formed their own saintly character, he will be especially glad to take those (including above all the martyrs who have been killed for their beliefs) who have deliberately made the choices which formed that character. And it is also by our free choices when we choose to impose terrible suffering on others, that we can make ourselves really bad people, who eventually eliminate any sensitivity to moral considerations, and so reject everything that God stands for. God will surely not let that happen to ordinary bad people without giving them many opportunities to do some small good action, and so begin a journey back to goodness and to God, but in the end he will respect their choices. So God would not take them to heaven – since they would not enjoy the life of heaven. While I think that talk about the damned suffering everlastingly in the fires of Hell is to be understood metaphorically, the "damned" will by their own deliberate conscious free choices have made themselves alienated from the good of heaven.[8]

Vasileios Meichanetsidis: In what sense Orthodoxy may be considered as "outweighing" other Christian denominations and even other religions? Do you believe that the analytic philosophy of the Ortho-

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[8] Swinburne discusses this issue, both in chapters 10 and 11 of his book, *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); and in his book, *Providence and the Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). But readers will find a more developed view of this problem in his contribution to a "debate book" with James Sterba, *Could a Good God Permit so Much Suffering?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024). The debate book takes the form of an argument between himself and James Sterba, who is an American atheist philosopher. His contribution to it is partly devoted to rejecting Sterba's argument, but also in greater part devoted to developing his own view on this topic.

dox faith can be a "deictic instrument" (*instrumentum deicticum*) of the pre-eminence of Orthodoxy against religious pluralism in the contemporary world? Can we speak with rational criteria of the uniqueness and then exclusivity of the Orthodox faith?

Richard Swinburne: Jesus founded a church to continue his work of converting and sanctifying humans; and to be a Christian, one must belong to that church. So, all baptised Christians are its members (even though some of them deny Christianity). But, alas, the Church is (temporarily) divided, and so Christians must choose to which part of the church they should belong. I argue that a society is the same society as some original society to the extent to which it preserves with the original society continuity of organisation and continuity of aim. The Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church both preserve continuity of organisation with the Church of the apostles, in that their successions of canonical bishops date back to the time of the apostles. For a church, continuity of aim consists in continuity of doctrine. I believe the traditional Orthodox view, that the Roman Catholic Church has less continuity of doctrine with the Church of the apostles because it has added doctrines which are not implicit in doctrines taught by the apostolic church. (Particular examples of such new Roman Catholic doctrines are the doctrines of papal infallibility, the Immaculate Conception of Mary, and the bodily Assumption of Mary – although most Orthodox believe the latter, it is not an item of doctrine binding on all Orthodox). I believe also the traditional Orthodox view that Protestants have taken away doctrines which were implicit in doctrines taught by the apostolic church – in particular, doctrines about the nature of the church and the sacraments – and, in the recent years, some of the moral teaching of the apostolic church about the sanctity of marriage. For these reasons I believe that in its organisation and doctrine Orthodoxy "outweighs" other Christian denominations. But all Christians must strive to reconstitute one Christian church, as its founder intended; and the Orthodox church is well placed between the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant denominations, to help in drawing them together with the Orthodox Church, into one Church. And of course, Orthodoxy outweighs "other religions," since the central Christian doctrine is that God became incarnate in Jesus Christ, and other religions do not hold that essential item of good news, to be taught to all humans.[9]

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[9] Swinburne analyses the criteria for a revelation being a true revelation in Richard Swinburne, *Revelation from Metaphor to Analogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Although he does not explicitly draw the conclusion that the Orthodox Church preserves continuity with the church of the Apostles better than any other part of the Christian church, readers will probably see that this follows from the main arguments of the book.

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