

Vulnerable Integrity – Theological-Ethical Reflections on Human Integrity and Integrity Violations

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This paper presents a social-theologically informed interpretation of the term integrity, as it occurs in fundamental law. It explores the manifestations of integrity violations and proceeds to draw an inference: an integrity violation can directly emanate from a misconception regarding integrity itself, as well as the implementation of protective measures that follow it. Integrity in its wholeness dimension is understood as open-endedness and non-seclusion rather than as a substantial, clearly definable characteristic of a person. This open-endedness and non-seclusion results from the relational constitution of an individual. Consequently, it follows that a violation of integrity occurs when the open-endedness and non-seclusion of a person and their relational Becoming is hindered. The new definition of integrity is particularly important when it comes to the governance of new health technologies, especially Digital Twins that can become representatives of a person. Human integrity is non-violated only when it is understood as open to relational Becoming and this Becoming shows its expression in the mutual enabling and support of self-articulation.

1. Integrity – a category in question

“Everyone has the right to respect for his or her physical and mental integrity” states Chapter 1, Article 3.1 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU). This chapter contains regulations on human dignity. The protection of physical and mental integrity appears as a basic condition for the protection of human dignity. Article 3.2 of the CFREU specifically relates the right to integrity to biological and medical fields of research. It lays down the claim for free and informed consent and the prohibition of eugenic practices, the economization of bodies, and the reproductive cloning of human beings. The protection of physical integrity is also reflected in the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (Grundgesetz). In Article 2.2 it states that “Every person shall have the right to life and physical integrity. Freedom of the person shall be inviolable. These rights may be interfered with only pursuant to a law.” Here, integrity appears as a fundamental good that is to be maintained or regained, closely connected to a person’s dignity and well-being and therefore something worthy of comprehensive protection. However, integrity is elusive and not easy to grasp. Often, it is defined ex negativo,

becoming relevant only when it is already compromised. The United Nations Population Fund's (UNPFA) report on the state of the world population 2021 asserts that many people, particularly women and girls, experience losses of bodily integrity and autonomy during their lives.¹ According to the report, losses of bodily integrity result, i.a., from a lack of agency in decision-making. This suggests that bodily integrity is not limited to the physical body but includes corporeal elements and the individual's self-relation and relation to others.²

The German Federal Constitutional Court (BVerfG, Bundesverfassungsgericht) has referred to the integrity of the person in various decisions. For example, integrity can be found in cases concerning defamation in social networks or the cyber space. This often involves statements made by oneself or others that have implications for "personal integrity" (BVerfG 19.12.2021 - 1 BvR 1073/20 -, Rn. 1-53). Furthermore, several cases refer to the need to protect physical integrity, especially in the context of judgements on abortion (BVerfG 26.02.2020 - 2 BvR 2347/15).

This overview of the use of the term integrity in legal texts shows that integrity can have several reference points. Sometimes physical integrity is referenced, sometimes mental or psychological integrity, and sometimes personal integrity. Moreover, integrity is presented as a category that appears fragile and can easily be violated. Depending on how integrity is defined, an integrity violation will also be determined differently. Given the pressing need for effective governance of the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in medicine and beyond, which is oriented towards the aforementioned fundamental and supranational rights, it is crucial to specify the concept of integrity more precisely. This specification influenced by postmodern feminists and theology is necessary to formulate actionable guidelines and to name and prosecute violations of integrity. The creation of data assemblages or so-called Digital Twins through the aggregation of diverse data from all areas of life makes the question of integrity urgent anew. Mark Poster cautions that data assemblages produce individuals with "dispersed identities". According to him, databases act like a cultural force. They disperse, multiply, decentre, disintegrate and reclassify the subject into grids of specification. He claims: "Since our bodies are hooked into the networks [...] they no longer provide a refuge from observation or a bastion around which one can draw a line of resistance."³ With his evaluation, he suggests that a specific integrated area of the body is not sufficient to determine a person's space in which integrity violations are easily detected. Whether or not this claim is justified, data assemblages must be questioned on how they relate to the person about whom they are making statements. This is especially important when considering the use of Digital Twins in health care. Typically, Digital Twins in health care are digital real-time representations of a human's body.⁴ With their help it should be possible to improve human health through better

¹ Cf. Arthur Erken, "My Body is My Own: Claiming the Right to Autonomy and Self-Determination" (state of the world population, 2021).

² Therefore, the violation of bodily integrity occurs when individuals with deviating or non-conforming sexual orientations or gender identities are at risk of assault or humiliation on the street.

³ Mark Poster, *The Second Media Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 93.

⁴ Cf. Paulan Korenhof, Else Giesbers, and Janita Sanderse, "Contextualizing Realism: An Analysis of Acts of Seeing and Recording in Digital Twin Datafication", *Big Data & Society* 10, no. 1 (2023): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517231155061>; Hendrik van der Valk et al., "Archetypes of Digital Twins", *Business & Information Systems Engineering* 64, no. 3 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12599-021-00727-7>. Van der Valk et al. distinguish between Digital Twins and Digital Model, Digital Shadow, or Digital Thread: A Digital Model does not provide a bi-directional data linkage between virtual and physical entity per se, cf. p. 377 (van der Valk et al. 2022).

prediction, research possibilities, and human enhancement. Do they complement a human and as such are part of their integrity? Do the data assemblages intend to map integrity and as such recreate a holistic human model? Or: are they per se anticipated as a threat to human integrity, in that data extraction and/or interpretation are already seen as a violation of, or at least an interference with integrity? In any case, it is clear that Digital Twins and data assemblages influence the subject's view of reality.⁵ The data collection and representation run the risk of solely being based on a naturalistic view from nowhere that leaves bias and prejudice unconsidered.⁶ The concept of integrity is affected when it comes to deciding which information should be combined in what way until the Digital Twin or data assemblage is considered "complete", i.e. until the Digital Twin is viewed to be expressive of a particular matter regarding a (not only) physical person. This is all the more the case, as in modern healthcare it is no longer only physical data that can be used to assess a person's state of health, but also other personal and lifestyle data. As a result, digital assemblages increasingly appear complete and thus obscure the view of other approaches to reality that cannot or are not converted into data.

To ensure that integrity as a normative and legal category does not end up as a toothless tiger, this paper aims to present a (socio-)phenomenological and theological grounded definition of integrity. Based on this definition, integrity violations can be identified as violations of a person's relational Becoming and open-endedness. At the same time, the paper marks the danger of understanding integrity as seclusion which, under certain circumstances, can constitute a violation of human dignity itself.

2. Approaching Integrity

Integrity derives from the Latin *integritas*, which translates to intactness or purity. The word also relates to the Latin word *integer*, meaning flawless, honest, righteous, and untouched. To delve deeper into the meaning of the term integrity, three key observations must be noted.

First, integrity can be attributed to humans and non-humans, such as data, documents, or ecosystems. Despite the similarities in meaning, the focus of this paper is on human integrity.

Secondly, when considering human integrity, it can be distinguished between an external and an internal attribution of integrity. Is it someone else who attributes integrity to me, or do I claim to have integrity? According to philosopher Arnd Pollmann, the internal perspective on self-integrity correlates with the external perspective.⁷ He states that the precondition for the personal attribution of integrity is the external attribution of integrity.⁸ However, this paper argues that the correlation between internal and external attribution is not quite so clear-cut. A person may feel that she has integrity, while others

⁵ Cf. Korenhof, Giesbers and Sanderse, "Contextualizing realism: An analysis of acts of seeing and recording in Digital Twin datafication", 5; Sheila Jasanoff, "Virtual, Visible, and Actionable: Data Assemblages and the Sightlines of Justice", *Big Data & Society* 4, no. 2 (2017): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951717724477>.

⁶ Cf. Korenhof, Giesbers and Sanderse, "Contextualizing realism: An analysis of acts of seeing and recording in Digital Twin datafication", 10.

⁷ Cf. Arnd Pollmann, *Integrität: Aufnahme einer sozialphilosophischen Personalie*, 2nd ed., Edition Moderne Postmoderne (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2018), 119.

⁸ Cf. Pollmann, *Integrität*, 119.

would insinuate that his or her integrity is violated.⁹ Vice versa, a person may claim that her integrity is violated while there is no public awareness of this violation.¹⁰ Nevertheless, integrity is neither an ascription nor a self-reflexive interpretation. To maintain integrity, the Self is not detached from social recognition practices. The Self's integrity somehow depends on an Other, on social norms, institutions as well as individual experience.

Thirdly, integrity has multiple dimensions. Integrity does not appear anywhere in the series of our experiences and empirically secured conceptions.¹¹ The Merriam-Webster dictionary and the Digital Dictionary of German Language (DWDS) reflect this multi-dimensionality by multi-part definitions. For example, the Merriam-Webster dictionary gives a tripartite clarification: Integrity could stand for (1) incorruptibility, the firm adherence to a code of especially moral values, (2) soundness, an unimpaired condition, and (3) completeness, the quality or state of being complete or undivided. Likewise, the DWDS distinguishes between integrity as (A) purity, uprightness, and blamelessness and integrity as (B) wholeness, completeness, soundness (Ganzheit, Vollständigkeit, Unversehrtheit). Similar to those, Pollmann identifies four dimensions of integrity (cf. Figure 1, [authors own illustration]): Faithfulness to the Self or Incorruptibility (I), righteousness (II), integration (III), and wholeness or intactness (IV). Although these dimensions are not distinct in each case and mutually influence each other, they can be used to trace different tendencies. The first (I) and second dimension (II), correlate with the first dimension (1) of the Merriam-Webster dictionary and the dimension (A) of the DWDS.

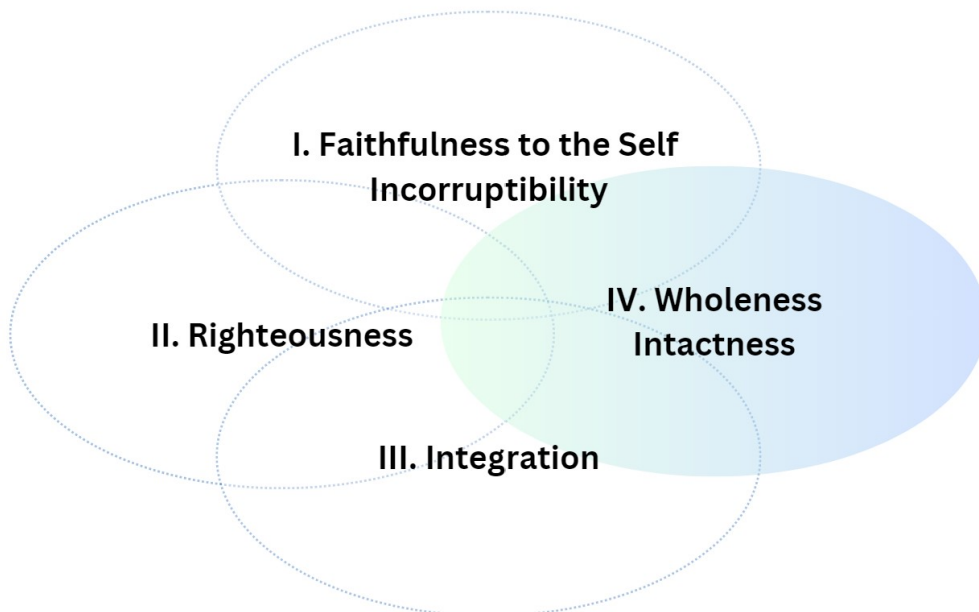


Figure 1.

⁹ For example, when it comes to deviating sexual practices or body image disorders such as the body integrity disorder.

¹⁰ For example, physical touch can be individually perceived as a violation of integrity depending on context and person while there is no place to express what has been experienced.

¹¹ Cf. Pollmann, *Integrität*, 9.

The paper proposes to summarize these dimensions (I + II + (1)) as *virtue dimension*. This is the most often referred to dimension of integrity.¹² Stuart Rosenbaum, Cécile Laborde, Bernard Williams, Cheshire Calhoun and others mainly address this form of integrity in their writings. The virtue dimension of integrity refers to a person's morally good acting or consistency with commitments often made according to social norms, self-judgment, or social deliberations.¹³ This definition cluster concerns the moral or ethical status of a person and is often associated with the functional role or the job one has in a community.¹⁴ Usually, this definition is ascriptive or externally attributed. However, the third dimension of integrity (III), integration, places the focus on the internal consistency of a person. This is, for instance, famously addressed by Harry Frankfurt and others who write about the self-integration view of integrity. Finally, the last dimension, the wholeness dimension (cf. Figure 1) (Merriam-Webster (2)+(3), DWDS (B), and Pollmann (IV)), is the main focus of this paper. Pollmann labels it as the social-philosophical dimension, which is in a certain sense the foundation for dimensions I, II and III. Integrity in this sense is, on the one hand, the result of an intact life.¹⁵ On the other hand, it is the precondition or existential foundation for a life in integrity.¹⁶ Thus it bears conceptual difficulties.

To approach the scope of integrity as wholeness, it can first be stated that integrity as wholeness is concerned with the person as a unity – or as Pollmann states “a unity of the ethical-existential nexus of life to be established in processes of self-understanding” (*eine in Selbstverständigungsprozessen herzustellende [...] Einheit des ethisch-existenziellen Lebenszusammenhangs*).¹⁷

This dimension comprises the psychophysical organism or the bodymind, the body but also the *Leib*¹⁸, as well as the subjective experience and, in addition, the reflected attitude or framing of the experience – that is: the self-consciousness.¹⁹ Lastly, Pollmann states that integrity must be considered in the context of an indispensable, unreplaceable and responsible individual.²⁰ While the virtue dimension is widely used in everyday language, it is the wholeness dimension that underlies the legal texts, especially in the CFREU and the Grundgesetz, and is established as a normative ideal.

As shown, in this sense, integrity is closely intertwined with vulnerability (see above). While vulnerability marks the person's potential to be harmed, her precariousness²¹, integrity can function as a prescriptive (counterfactual) and ideal marker to indicate where an actual violation, precarity, is occurring or has occurred. Integrity can

¹² Cf. Damian Cox, Caze La Marguerite, and Michael Levine, “*Integrity*”, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/integrity/>.

¹³ Of course, the conflict between conformity to social norms and conformity to one's own attitudes is often referred to here.

¹⁴ Interestingly, the need for integrity is assigned to professional groups, e. g. physicians or judges, that bear high responsibility and whose professional practice is associated with social trust.

¹⁵ Cf. Pollmann, *Integrität*, 117.

¹⁶ Cf. Pollmann, *Integrität*, 117.

¹⁷ Cf. Pollmann, *Integrität*, 115.

¹⁸ *Leib* describes following Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Helmuth Plessner, and Bernhard Waldenfels, the social experience and perception of the body, as perceived and perceiving as well as socially interpreted. The phenomenon *Leib* shows the self-deprivation and relatedness of being in a particularly haunting way.

¹⁹ Cf. Pollmann, *Integrität*, 120.

²⁰ Cf. Pollmann, *Integrität*, 120.

²¹ Cf. Judith Butler, *Frames of War* (London, New York: Verso, 2009).

be easily violated by others and must be preserved and respected at all costs.²² However, this still does not make it clear *what* is actually to be respected. And: what is violated when integrity is impaired.

In her capabilities approach Martha Nussbaum asserts that bodily integrity is a fundamental human capability. She defines bodily integrity as encompassing the ability to move freely, the recognition of one's bodily boundaries as sovereign, and the availability of options for sexual satisfaction and reproduction.²³ However, Jonathan Herring and Jesse Wall have noted that the concept of physical boundaries can be challenging to pin down in certain situations.²⁴ They argue that the determination of whether a bodily component falls under the umbrella of bodily integrity is contingent upon its integration with a person's subjectivity and objectivity, rather than on objective and physiological facts.²⁵

This definitional difficulty is especially pronounced in medical cases where palpation is central to diagnosis and treatment, and new technological developments can alter the ways in which patients' bodies are perceived, potentially blurring boundaries. Additionally, the ideal of bodily integrity, while ostensibly protective of individuals, may have negative consequences and turn into its opposite. Postmodern and poststructuralist feminist and disability theories increasingly question the implications that notions of integrity may entail. This is, for instance, when they question the "unity of the self" as something that people should care about at all.²⁶ They draw attention to the difficulties of defining integrity in a way that accounts for diverse experiences and perspectives. The following provides a brief introduction to the possible critical inquiries regarding the use of the term integrity in relation to various aspects of being human. Feminist and disability scholars have raised concerns when it comes to ideally defining when a person's body is whole, or affirming the category of bodily integrity as a "general value".²⁷ Too easily, a fixation and orientation towards an ideal leads to an androcentric norm and as a result to discriminatory behaviour towards individuals who deviate from this norm. Judith Butler has critiqued the normative implications of ontological integrity as something that can be restrictive stereotyping. She contends this with the example of gender.²⁸ When she writes that gender is performative she withdraws from the idea of gender as a substantive category.²⁹ In consequence, she claims that what institutes integrity is public regulation and "surface politics of the body".³⁰ In doing so, she challenges the notion that the

²² As the collocations of the DWDS illustrate: to respect, acknowledge, honour, guarantee the integrity of [someone, something], Integrity and sovereignty, non-interference, independence, inviolability.

²³ Cf. Martha C. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*, The Seeley Lectures (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511841286>, 78.

²⁴ Cf. Jonathan Herring and Jesse Wall, "The Nature and the Significance of the Right to Bodily Integrity", *The Cambridge Law Journal* 76, no. 3 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008197317000605>.

²⁵ Cf. Herring and Wall, "The Nature and the Significance of the Right to Bodily Integrity", 586.

²⁶ Stuart Sim, *Ljotard and the Inhuman*, Postmodern Encounters (Cambridge: Icon Books UK, 2001), 52–53.

²⁷ Cf. Herring and Wall, "The Nature and the Significance of the Right to Bodily Integrity"; Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*, 41; John Swinton, "Who Is the God We Worship? Theologies of Disability; Challenges and New Possibilities", *International Journal of Practical Theology* 14 (2011): 283.

²⁸ Cf. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge classics (New York, London: Routledge, 2007).

²⁹ Cf. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 33–34.

³⁰ Cf. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 136; 184–185.

individual possesses an ontological integrity of the subject before the law.³¹ Rather, she claims that the status of the person before the law is fabricated to create the fictitious basis of its claim to legitimacy.³²

Likewise, Drucilla Cornell opposes an essentialist understanding of personhood.³³ She proposes that the subject is not a coherent and integrated unity “but an ongoing project that develops over time in which the fragility and complex nature of the person is emphasized”³⁴. For her, bodily integrity must be understood from a psychoanalytical perspective, recognizing that body and mind are intertwined. Thus, bodily integrity includes an individual’s perceptions and imaginings of their body.³⁵ In this view, the body does not appear only as a predefined hull to be preserved, but as an ongoing process or rather project that involves imagination and self-imagining.³⁶ This process is characterized by an interplay of self-attribution and attribution by others. However, the process is not a foregone conclusion. As Cornell states, the body as a process requires protection and recognition from others, including the state and the legal system.³⁷

Finally, the poststructuralist work of Donna Haraway and her writings on Science and Technology stimulates the debate on human fragmentarity. She rejects clear distinctions – most notably the distinction between organism and machine when she claims that all humans are cyborgs. Haraway’s view of humans as cyborgs calls into question cultural norms, e. g. the assumption “that achieving a unity of the self is what we should be concerned with as individuals”³⁸. She writes: “The cyborg is a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self”³⁹. Accordingly, humans are encouraged to actively seek new forms and ways of being by viewing themselves as open-ended rather than static entities.

The examples show that integrity in the wholeness dimension faces serious challenges. Based on this observation, a theological analysis of the concept of integrity is intended to open up the complexity of the term in greater depth. In the following, it will be shown that defining the person as whole or complete implies seclusion. If someone is whole, then there is nothing more to add to him or her. It bears the risk to postulate an ideal that generates conformity pressure, which itself becomes a hurtful instrument of power. Thus, the appeal for integrity and complete coherence at all times can be an act of violence.⁴⁰

3. Integrity – a theological (-Lutheran) exploration

Subsequent to the feminist reservations towards integrity, a theological analysis of the concept of integrity facilitates a nuanced view of the term. A theological analysis of human

³¹ Cf. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 4.

³² Cf. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 44.

³³ Cf. Charlotte Witt, “Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Theory”, *Philosophical Topics* 23, no. 2 (1995).

³⁴ Mervi Patosalmi, “Bodily Integrity and Conceptions of Subjectivity”, *Hypatia* 24, no. 2 (2009): 126.

³⁵ Cf. Patosalmi, “Bodily Integrity and Conceptions of Subjectivity”, 126.

³⁶ Cf. Drucilla Cornell, *The Imaginary Domain: Abortion, Pornography, and Sexual Harassment* (New York, London: Routledge, 1995), 5.

³⁷ Cf. Patosalmi, “Bodily Integrity and Conceptions of Subjectivity”, 126. Similar in Axel Honneth, “Integrität Und Mißachtung”, *MERKUR* 44, no. 501 (1990).

³⁸ Sim, *Lyotard and the Inhuman*, 52–53; Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York, 1991), 161.

³⁹ Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, 163.

⁴⁰ Cf. Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 42.

integrity shows that integrity can be defined as non-fixedness or non-seclusion or rather positively said “the possibility of Becoming in relation”. It allows a more inclusive and non-static perception of integrity.

In *Disputatio de Homine* Luther describes the relationship between the philosophical and theological definition of the human. Luther claims that the theological definition of the human defines them *totum et perfectum*.⁴¹ He speaks of *totus homo*, not because he has human completion or perfectibility in mind. Rather, he states that the biblical distinction between *spiritus* and *caro* always refers to the whole person.⁴² Both *spiritus* and *caro*, each understood as the judgment of God, are concerned with the whole person.⁴³ Both relate to the whole human being. The wholeness of being *caro* is characterized by its ruthless realization of the self-relation,⁴⁴ while the wholeness of the *spiritus* is constituted by the relationship to God and the resulting human relationships of the greatest possible mutual benefit.⁴⁵ In a sense the person is *duo toti homines*.⁴⁶ However, the actual salient point of Luther's remarks in *Disputatio de Homine* about the humans is their being in relation. The human is made what he is by an Other. Thus, integrity is built outside of them by an Other.⁴⁷ It is constituted by the word of God that is different from the human being and that brings them into wholeness.⁴⁸ From this it can be derived that integrity is something unfinished or open because it derives from the relationship to the Other, theologically speaking: to God, which is to be constituted in each case anew, always uncertain and at the same time quite certain.

Actually, the theological discourse of integrity takes its starting point precisely in the non-integrity, in the crisis of the human.⁴⁹ The human has failed against God and fellow humans. The Bible is concerned with the preservation or recovery of integrity. Yet, this paper is not addressing an Edenic (that is: ideal) state which must be reached again. Instead, it is concerned with the actual, real situation of the human as justified and sinner at the same time – the *simul justus et peccator*.⁵⁰ This is, to borrow from Terry Eagleton, a hopeful, not optimistic state.⁵¹ In Wilfried Joest's *Ontologie der Person bei Luther* (Ontology of the Person in Luther's works), Joest offers an explanation of the being of the self in its relation to God (*coram deo*). Even if the term integrity is not mentioned in the book, he speaks of the Whole of Life (228), the inner foundation of existence (231), finality (320), completion of being (321), becoming right (273), *fundamentum ab extra* (241) wholeness of being (345).⁵² These terms clearly correlate with the wholeness dimension of integrity

⁴¹ Cf. Martin Luther, *Band 1. Der Mensch vor Gott*, ed. Wilfried Härle, Martin Luther. Lateinisch-Deutsche Studienausgabe (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2006); Unter Mitarbeit von Michael Beyer, 666.

⁴² Cf. Gerhard Ebeling, *Disputatio De Homine. Dritter Teil.*, Lutherstudien II (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), Die theologische Definition des Menschen. Kommentar zu These 20–40, 571–72.

⁴³ Cf. Ebeling, *Disputatio De Homine*, 572.

⁴⁴ Cf. Eberhard Jüngel, *Ganz Werden* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 47.

⁴⁵ Cf. Jüngel, *Ganz werden*, 47.

⁴⁶ Cf. Jüngel, *Ganz werden*, 46.

⁴⁷ Cf. Jüngel, *Ganz werden*, 42.

⁴⁸ Cf. Jüngel, *Ganz werden*, 43.

⁴⁹ Cf. Hans G. Ulrich, *Eschatologie und Ethik* (München: CHR. Kaiser Verlag, 1988), 68; Johann B. Metz, *Frühe Schriften, Entwürfe Und Begriffe*, ed. Johann Reikerstorfer, Frühe Schriften, Entwürfe und Begriffe 2 (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2015).

⁵⁰ Cf. Wilfried Joest, *Ontologie Der Person Bei Luther* (Göttingen, 1967), 270.

⁵¹ Cf. Terry Eagleton, *Hope Without Optimism* (London: Yale University Press, 2015).

⁵² Translations by authors: Lebensganzheit (228), das innere Fundament des Daseins (231), Finalität (320), Seinsvollendung (321), Recht-Werden (273), *fundamentum ab extra* (241), Daseinsganzes (345).

previously elaborated. The analysis of Joest's work *Ontology of the Person* promises an enrichment of the definition of integrity.⁵³

Joest who then goes on to analyse Luther's works, identifies three structural aspects that are characteristic for the mode of being of the self coram Deo: eccentricity, responsiveness, and eschatology. First, being coram deo is *eccentric*. With the first definition of being as eccentric, Luther, according to Joest, opposes a substantial understanding of personhood. Human eccentricity describes the radical dependency of being, the eccentricity of being attached to the divine being and doing.⁵⁴ Thus, the substance of a person is an extrinsecum, i. e. a foundation of existence ab extra. It means a person is not self-concentric and does not rely solely on themselves. She is always *open* to respectively *reliant on* an Other. Whether a self-reference is successful is therefore dependent on the points of reference offered by the counterpart. However, the person themselves is not extinguished by being-in-the Other.

Here the second definition of being coram Deo plays an important role: Being is *responsive*. The self is called to respond to the word of God – a person's *Selbsteinsatz*⁵⁵, their self-engagement of their faith. However, the *Selbsteinsatz* is neither active nor self-effective. The preceding call causes the engagement or response. Yet it is not simply passivity, it is existence in the confession of one's own being carried in the opus dei.⁵⁶ To translate this into phenomenological (non-theological) language, one could describe it with Bernhard Waldenfels as *Prä-/Interferenz* / pre-/interference, i.e. the self-reference takes place in the external reference.⁵⁷ With this, Waldenfels seeks to describe the formation of self-relation emerging from the relation between Self and the Other. The artificial word pre/interference avoids absolutizing the preference of the Self and embeds it into interference, as the interweaving of self and external reference.

These two aspects, the eccentric and the responsive, indicate that self-constitution is a relational ongoing between the self and the other, theologically speaking: God. A person is given space to respond to something, while her self-constitution is nevertheless dependent on the other. However, these two aspects cannot necessarily be understood as a time sequence. The eccentric and the responsive are much more interwoven.

The third and last aspect, which Joest identifies as constitutive of being coram Deo, is the *eschatological* aspect. Here, Joest describes finality, from which analogies to integrity can be derived. Initially, Joest states that the finality of the person can have different senses. For all of these he gives examples. First, finality can be focused on the transcendent goal of perfection. As an example of this sense, he points to Platonism. Second, finality can be described as the self-development of our possibilities. In this second sense, finality is realized immanently, as it was propounded, for example, in Idealism. Third, finality can be described as the possibility of Becoming par excellence, as Existentialism promotes it.

Joest enfolds that Luther combines the first and the third sense. Luther integrates elements of transcendence with the possibility of Becoming: "We are only such that we are

⁵³ To make this theological and phenomenological analysis plausible it can (only stammering) be pointed out that an encounter with God can (only very vaguely) be compared to an experience of looming intensity that cannot be mastered by the individual, and that is closer to the person than she can be to herself. For some, this might be explored through art, love, music or other ecstatic experiences.

⁵⁴ Cf. Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther*, 274.

⁵⁵ Cf. Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther*, 274.

⁵⁶ Cf. Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther*, 310.

⁵⁷ Cf. Bernhard Waldenfels, *In den Netzen der Lebenswelt*, 4. Aufl., Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft 545 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2016), 205.

on the way”⁵⁸. However, Luther, according to Joest, does not say that being on the way is a continuous progression. Instead, it is a daily new beginning in which the “departure” is evoked by an Other. The aim is not the repetition of the way as such. In this regard, Luther’s position is a mixture of finality as non-fixedness or unfinishedness while striving for a transcendent goal plus the possibility of becoming. The unsurpassable situation is the movement *simul justus et peccator*. “The daily movement between sin and justification attains in a certain sense [...] already always *the whole* [...] the grace of God. But precisely with this, faith always aims beyond any Now to the final futurum of life.”⁵⁹ Similarly Johann Baptist Metz, who actually uses the term integrity, writes: “The graced human being is permanently and necessarily *on the way* to the full self-giveness of grace in that eschatologically promised integrity.”⁶⁰ In this, with Eagleton, the activity-releasing and affirmatively future-oriented hope can be glimpsed.⁶¹

To conclude, two important observations are derived. First, from a theological perspective integrity is a *praedicamento relationis*, i. e. a relational quality, rather than a *praedicamento substantiae*, i. e. a substantial quality.⁶² Integrity arises from a complex interplay of the same and the other. Whereby the other, theologically speaking: God, is an essential enabling condition for one’s own integrity. This enabling condition must then also prove its resonance in interpersonal social relations and also organizational structures. Thus, integrity builds on open-endedness and non-seclusion towards an Other. Self and external reference must be kept in balance. The I cannot constitute integrity on its own or on its own terms. Integrity is a construct between the self and the other.

Second, integrity is in flux. Integrity, paradoxically, can be described as non-fixedness, unfinishedness, non-seclusion and open-endedness, with Joest’s own words: *the possibility of (relational) Becoming or being in relational Becoming*. This understanding of integrity, which is aware of the unity of the differences between integrity and non-integrity in the temporal, substantive, and social dimension contributes to a more inclusive and more sensitive concept of integrity. Further, integrity understood this way can designate integrity violations and actual precarity in a distinct manner. It makes a difference whether wholeness is imagined as closure *or* as being in relational Becoming. A violation of the latter differs from a violation of the former. The former, closure, concentrates on a substantial view of the human that tries to conform the human being to certain standards of wholeness. Contrarily, the latter, being in relational Becoming, seems to undermine the concept of wholeness. Rather, it fosters the Becoming that appears to be individual and yet contains nameable minimum standards that are to be derived from this very claim of relational Becoming.⁶³ If integrity is understood as non-seclusive, this has consequences for how humans are treated in a digitized health care system and beyond. From this insight and in order to avoid violations of integrity, the granting and enabling of self-articulation

⁵⁸ Translation by authors, cf. Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther*, 323.

⁵⁹ Emphasis and translation by authors, cf. Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther*, 346: „Die tägliche Bewegung zwischen Sünde und Rechtfertigung erlangt in gewissem Sinne ... schon immer das Ganze ... die Gnade Gottes. Aber eben damit zielt der Glaube je immer über jedes Jetzt hinaus auf das endgültige futurum des Lebens.“

⁶⁰ Emphasis and translation by author, cf. Metz, *Frühe Schriften, Entwürfe und Begriffe*.

⁶¹ Cf. Eagleton, *Hope without Optimism*.

⁶² Cf. Jüngel, *Ganz werden*, 52.

⁶³ Cf. for the individual and subjective part the writings of Mary Daly and Drucilla Cornell: Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985); Cornell, *The imaginary domain*. Cf. for the standards: Martha Nussbaums capabilities approach: Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*.

is derived. As Eberhard Jüngel states, the intersubjectivity must lead finally to a “being at one with oneself”, that is being able to interconnect and rearrange the fragments of one’s own body and one’s own story.⁶⁴ As an example of the very opposite of articulation, Donna Haraway describes the harmful practice of representation. Representation isolates the represented subject out of its surrounding and constituting contexts which can be discursive and non-discursive.⁶⁵ However, placing the right over the fragments in the hands of the subject does not mean that there is a substance that must or can be achieved by it. Since integrity is always relationally constituted, the self-articulation is always already exercised with the help of (primary) others.⁶⁶ Thus, this right to articulation as a basic condition for integrity is dependent on recognition.⁶⁷ Conversely, this also means that others, our environment, institutions, and the community can violate integrity. Or put another way: Wherever there is disregard – of bodily constitution, rights and forms of life, and this disregard shows itself, as this paper shows, precisely in the fixing and prescribing, in the hindering of responsiveness and self-articulation, integrity is violated. Paradoxically, the disregard often occurs precisely under the pretext of protecting integrity. In conclusion, integrity is not only vulnerable but can itself be a harmful concept. Vulnerable integrity thus has a double meaning.

4. Conclusion – Integrity and Self-articulation

The analysis shows that integrity is not only a desirable condition and a source of human flourishing but is also a fundamental condition of human dignity. However, from a theological anthropological perspective, integrity cannot be viewed as fixed, static, or immutable. Instead, it includes the element of being in relational Becoming and open-endedness. In essence, integrity as wholeness embraces our human fragmentarity. Thereby, the theological perspective complements and intertwines with the mentioned feminist and poststructuralist theorists from chapter two. Further, the theological perspective emphasizes the relational dimension of integrity of the *totus homo*.

If integrity in its wholeness dimension is perceived as seclusiveness and immutability, it can potentially harm human integrity, autonomy, and ultimately identity. In drawing an immutable image of the individual, a subversive and intentional act of misrecognition takes place. In the pursuit of maintaining and restoring a static ideal, actual violations of integrity are overlooked and integrity understood as relational Becoming is hindered. Health care that aims to draw an ever more integrated picture of a person must be sensitive to what constitutes human integrity and how it can be affected by the representative use of data. In medical meaning-making processes, data are interpreted through human-machine interactions and are considered to be expressive about a person without the person interfering themselves. Even the detection of mental deviation should become possible through the acquisition and evaluation of body parameters by learning

⁶⁴ Cf. Jüngel, *Ganz werden*, 51.

⁶⁵ Cf. Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble* (Duke University Press, 2016).
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822373780>.

⁶⁶ Cf. Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*. Whereby it should be noted that the self of the self-articulation is at no point fully accessible to itself and others, that is, opaque.

⁶⁷ Cf. Honneth, “*Integrität und Mißachtung*”, 1045.

systems.⁶⁸ In the future, this could allow diagnosis and treatment without a person having to speak. These developments are associated with great hope, e.g., for the treatment of comatose persons, but they also entail the risk that data will become representatives of a person and data assemblages are treated as naturalistic, complete and insular, thereby harming human integrity. This is especially the case when data assemblages are propagated as holistic pictures or “Digital Me”. Harm is done to a person when integrity is postulated as fixed, static, substantial – and as such understood as wholeness that is transferable into data. This can lead to data advocating for a person, while the person herself cannot relate to the data. The data become detached from a person’s own narrative and self-reference and in consequence, harm human integrity. These technological advances in health care in the foreseeable pose questions: What constitutes the integrity of the human? What does it really mean to build a holistic or whole human body model? When is the picture of the digital model of the human complete?

This paper suggests that integrity is only desirable when correctly understood and appropriate consequences are drawn from the great responsibility of enabling others’ relational *Becoming*. In that vein, granting individuals the right to control the connection points of the fragments is crucial. As the commentary by Sachs and Höfling on Article 1 of the German Grundgesetz (GG) states: integrity and identity indicate a process of as much autonomous self-expression (*autonomer Selbstdarstellung*) as possible (cf. GG Art. 1 Rn. 37).⁶⁹ Therefore, to give normative-ethical corridors, this paper pleads for strengthening self-articulation when it comes to integrity in digital health care. Integrity, understood as a static ideal, incapacitates rather than enables. Self-articulation opposes static representation. Enabling self-articulation takes seriously the wholeness as open-endedness and as something that strengthens responsibility. It attempts to interlink the interpretation to a person’s own relational narrative, which is itself reflexive, unfinished, opaque, and interwoven with otherness. Thus, self-articulation includes active enabling, support and assistance, especially in complex medical or social situations. At the same time, articulation knows about its limitations: we “let the other live” when the question “Who are you?” remains open – also for the person themselves, who does not possess self-articulation.⁷⁰ To conclude, the paper’s title is equivocal: Vulnerable integrity, on the one hand, marks its possibility of damage. On the other hand, the damage can come right from within the concept of integrity when integrity is perceived as seclusion. For further use of the term, it is preferable to think of integrity as the non-seclusive fragmentary whole or open-endedness in relational articulation and responsiveness.⁷¹ As Judith Butler asserts, the truth of a person “might well become more clear in moments of interruption, stoppage, open-endedness – in enigmatic articulations that cannot easily be translated into narrative form.”⁷²

⁶⁸ Mahsa Sheikh, M. Qassem, and Panicos A. Kyriacou, “Wearable, Environmental, and Smartphone-Based Passive Sensing for Mental Health Monitoring”, *Frontiers in digital health* 3 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fdgth.2021.662811>.

⁶⁹ Michael Sachs, ed., *Grundgesetz*, 9th ed. (Beck, 2021). As an example, they claim that self-chosen participation in reality tv shows does not hinder integrity and identity. Likewise, the right to suicide can be justified by reference to personal self-determination (BeckOK GG/Lang GG Art. 2 Rn. 187–191).

⁷⁰ Cf. Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, 37–42.

⁷¹ Following Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, cf. Thomas Nail, “What Is an Assemblage?”, *SubStance* 46 (2017): 23, <https://doi.org/10.3368/ss.46.1.21>.

⁷² Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, 64.

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Funding

This work was partly funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) – SFB 1483 – Project-ID 442419336, EmpkinS and by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) through the project PRIMA-AI (01GP2202C).

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