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Special Issue: Vulnerability and Integrity – Part 1

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D E E T H I C A
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From the Editors

This issue is the first of two special issues on the topics of vulnerability and integrity. In August of 2022, Societas Ethica held its 58th annual conference. The theme of the conference was these concepts of vulnerability and integrity. As is the tradition of De Ethica, we decided to devote a special issue to the conference's theme. However, this was a particularly successful conference, giving rise to an unusual number of excellent articles. So, breaking with tradition, we will publish two issues devoted to papers coming out of the 2022 Conference.

Part of the explanation for the conference's success was indubitably due to the organizing committee's hard work. De Ethica is happy to have Prof. Dr. Michael Coors and Dr. Lea Chilian from that committee on board as guest editors. Professor Coors is Head of the Institute of Social Ethics at the University of Zürich and works, among many other things, on the topic of vulnerability in medical ethics, which, of course, is very relevant for issues like end-of-life care, reproductive medicine, and, in general, bodily integrity. Dr. Chilian is Deputy Head of the same Institute of Social Ethics. She works in medical ethics with a particular emphasis on the topic of spiritual care. In the following pages, they will introduce the topic of vulnerability and this issue's articles.

The second special issue on this theme will be published in the spring of 2024. Going forward, De Ethica will also publish further special issues. As we speak, work is progressing on both an issue of moral equality and an issue devoted to the topic of reconciliation, which was discussed at Societas Ethica's conference in Sarajevo this summer. However, De Ethica is not only focused on special issues. This spring will also see the publication of our next standard issue with papers on diverse questions, including the concept of age, the importance of human rights, and the ideal of equality. This journal is in an expanding phase, and if the reader finds that s/he has a good idea for a thematic number, feel free to contact the journal editors. And, of course, do submit articles. But now, and without further ado, let us turn to the many-faceted problems of vulnerability and integrity in ethical, theological, and philosophical theory.

Lars Lindblom, Executive Editor

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From the Guest Editors – Vulnerability & Integrity

This special issue of "De Ethica" comes in two volumes, which both contain papers presented at Societas Ethica's annual conference in 2022 in Zurich on the topic "Vulnerability & Integrity." The conference was originally scheduled for the year 2020, but it had to be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. During these years of the pandemic, we all have learned a lot about how vulnerable we as human beings are to certain viruses and how vulnerable our societies are in the situation of a pandemic, yet also how resilient they can be. Individuals and societies have shown how much they care about protecting themselves and others. Does the experience of vulnerability push us to maintain or restore integrity? Is integrity a longing of human life that is challenged by the presence of vulnerability? How do the two condition each other? In order to answer these and similar questions and examine the relationships in more detail, it is first necessary to clarify what is meant by vulnerability and integrity and how they are related.

Yet the pandemic is not what inspired the topic of this conference in the first place because the topic was already considered in 2019 when various moral dimensions of vulnerability in the wider context of medical ethics were discussed in a series of small workshops with a group of inspiring researchers from philosophy, medical ethics, and theology.[1] The field of medical ethics is still dominated by discussions on the right to individual autonomy, although there has been some change going on during the last few years.[2] Nonetheless, there are abundant discussions on why and to what extent we do have a duty to respect the autonomy of others. We have discussed these questions now for some decades – and we and those before us have done so for very good reasons! But, at once, there has been no doubt that there are also other morally relevant principles, like beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice – just to take the four principles promoted by the concept of principlism.[3] And while there are a lot of academic discussions on autonomy and justice, astonishingly little work was done on why, and in how far, we are obliged to avoid suffering, to not harm others, or why we are obliged to help others.[4] This might have to do with the fact that the Latin phrase "Neminem laedere" ("harm no one") expresses an obvious and intuitive moral claim. Arthur Schopenhauer famously claimed that this is the

[1] Results are published in Coors, Michael (Ed.). Moralische Dimension der Verletzlichkeit des Menschen: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf einen anthropologischen Grundbegriff und seine Relevanz für die Medizinethik. Berlin/ Boston: De Gruyter 2022 (https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110734522).
[2] Questions for alternative approaches tend to come up regularly, and some of them have certainly taken impact like, e.g., Care-Ethics (cf. Fn. 6).
[3] Cf. Beauchamp, Tom L. and Childress James F. Principles of Biomedical Ethics, 8th edition, New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019 (1979).
[4] Cf. first considerations on the topic in the much earlier written but only recently published paper: Coors, M. ‚The argument of "suffering" in the opinions of the German Ethics Council (2007-2016)', in: Christof Mandry (ed.) Suffering in Theology and Medical Ethics, Paderborn: Schöningh 2022, 61–74.

cornerstone of every moral rule system, which we do not need to argue for.[5] On the other hand, we all know that it very often is far from obvious what the negative duty not to harm others and the positive duty to help others really entails and how it is, e.g., to be related to questions of justice.

Searching for philosophical and theological approaches on how to reason for negative and positive duties to care, what first comes to mind in the context of healthcare ethics is the concept of the ethics of care, which famously tries to argue for caring relations being fundamental to human morality.[6] For this approach to ethics, which has gained some influence in the field of healthcare ethics in recent years, the concept of vulnerability is crucial. The intuitive connection made here is the connection between human vulnerability and an ideal to care for those who are vulnerable.[7] As every human being in a certain sense is vulnerable, the ideal is that a humane way of living relies on caring relations that enable us to live with our vulnerability. Thus, care ethics – at least a large extent of its literature – refers to the intuition that the vulnerability of the other is an argument for an ideal of caring or even for a moral duty to care for each other.

The ethics of care, though, is not the only strand of ethics referring to the concept of vulnerability. Another prominent philosopher working on vulnerability is Emanuel Levinas, whose writings have influenced the work of Judith Butler, who also refers to human vulnerability as a central moral category.[8] But also Alasdair MacIntyre needs to be named here,[9] and also feminist philosophers, who cannot simply be all subsumed under the headline of an ethics of care.

These approaches deal with the concept of vulnerability in a broad sense: They consider vulnerability to be a general trait of human nature. Thus, vulnerability here is not immediately a moral concept: there is no duty of vulnerability,[10] nor is vulnerability a good in itself or a virtue. Yet it is constantly used as a point of reference in ethical reasoning, e.g., in order to argue for certain moral duties, goods, or virtues of caring. As vulnerability is considered to be something that applies to every human being, this allows us to argue for care being a universal moral good. Yet the crucial ethical question that remains is how this connection between the anthropological concept and normative reasoning really works.

A second important ethical tradition referring to the concept of vulnerability is medical research ethics, which made a very different use of this concept. Starting with the

[5] Cf. Schopenhauer, Arthur. 'Preisschrift über die Grundlagen der Moral', in: Arthur Schopenhauer. Zürcher Ausgabe. Werke in zehn Bänden, Vol. VI, Zürich: Diogenes 1977, pp. 147–317, p. 176f.
[6] Cf. Gilligan, Carol. In a different voice. Psychological theory and women's development, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982; Nodding, Nel. Caring: A feminine approach to ethics & moral education, 2nd edition, Berkley: University of California Press, 2013 (1984); Tronto, Joan. Moral Boundaries. A political argument for the ethics of care, New York: Routledge, 1993; Held, Virginia. The Ethics of Care. Personal, Political, and Global, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
[7] Cf., e.g., Tronto, Moral Boundaries, pp. 134f.
[8] Cf. Pistrol, Florian. 'Vulnerabilität. Erläuterungen zu einem Schlüsselbegriff im Denken Judith Butlers', Zeitschrift für Praktische Philosopohie 3 (2016), pp. 233–272.
[9] Cf. MacIntyre, Alisdair. Dependent rational animals. Why Human Beings Need the Virtues, Chicago: Open Court, 1999.
[10] As was famously claimed by Rendtorff, Jacob Dahl. 'Basic Ethical Principles in European Bioethics and Biolaw. Autonomy, Dignity, Integrity and Vulnerability – Towards a Foundation of Bioethics and Biolaw', Medicine, Healthcare and Philosophy 5 (2002), pp. 235–244.

Belmont Report in 1978[11] there has been the idea of especially vulnerable groups that are entitled to special protection in the context of medical research. The "Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences" (CIOMS) and the Helsinki Declaration picked up this idea.[12] Yet, in the course of the ongoing use of this concept, the word "especially" in "especially vulnerable groups" somewhere got lost, and so we ended up with the concept of "vulnerable groups" that need to be protected in research or during a pandemic. The danger of this loss of the word "especially" is that you end up with an opposition between those who are vulnerable and those who – presumably – aren't. While originally, the concept of *especially* vulnerable groups suggests a continuity between a general vulnerability of all human beings and some human beings who are especially vulnerable due to circumstances and individual disposition, the framing of "vulnerable groups" versus the rest of the population does indeed suggest a problematic concept of vulnerability and was therefore rightly criticized.[13] None the less, the important insight of the concept of "especially vulnerable groups" or – as we would suggest – of "especially vulnerable persons"[14] remains, that vulnerability is not distributed equally within a society and therefore is also closely related to questions of justice – as Henke ten Have has rightly pointed out in his important work on vulnerability.[15]

So, we have at least two traditions of using the term vulnerability, which both notably originate in the 20th century and not before: We have, on the one hand side, an anthropological or even an ontological concept of general vulnerability, and on the other hand side the concept of "(especially) vulnerable groups." These concepts are closely related to each other: The first is about a general human condition – it is, as a matter of fact, a condition of every living being and not only humans – while the latter is about the unequal distribution of this general vulnerability in human societies. Most importantly, both concepts agree on the moral function of human vulnerability: Talking about vulnerability in both traditions is about helping and caring for those who are vulnerable.

This claim that there is a duty to help those who are wounded and protect those who are in danger of being wounded seems to be as old as ethical reasoning. It is, nonetheless, far from self-evident. We all know that there always are other options all too often made use of – options like using the vulnerability of others for one's own benefit, e.g., by attacking a presumably weaker country with large force (and then finding out that this country is much more resilient than thought before) or the option of taking advantage of persons who are vulnerable, e.g., due to illness or old age. And although we are pretty sure we all agree on this being morally bad options, the ethical question is: Why do we agree

[11] Cf. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research. The Belmont Report. Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research, Washington: DHEW Publication, 1978, 14, 17, pp. 19f.
[12] Cf. Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS). International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects, Geneve: CIOMS, 2002, p. 18.
[13] Cf., e.g., Levine, Carol et al. ‚The Limitations of "Vulnerability" as a Protection for Human Research Participants, The American Journal of Bioethics 4 (2004), pp. 44–49; Luna, Florencia. ‚Elucidating the Concept of Vulnerability',International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics 69 (2014), pp. 640–649.
[14] Cf. Coors, Michael. ‚Alte Menschen als Risikogruppe in der Corona-Pandemie. Zur ethischen Kritik des Konzepts vulnerabler Gruppen und seiner Nützlichkeit in der Pandemie', in: Öffentliche Gesundheit (Jahrbuch Sozialer Protestantimus Vol. 14), edited by Thorsten Moos and Sabine Plonz, Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt´, 2022, pp. 188-203.
[15] Cf. Ten Have, Henk. Vulnerability: Challenging Bioethics, London, New York: Routledge, p. 398.

on this? Why is it more desirable to live in a society where the vulnerable are protected than to live in a society where the strong take advantage of the vulnerability of others?

These questions are enforced by the observation, that it is far from irrational to desire overcoming one's own vulnerability. In a certain sense, the whole history of medicine is a history of overcoming vulnerability and protecting or restoring integrity. Recent movements like transhumanism are driven by the idea that human vulnerability can and should be overcome. This raises important ethical questions: It seems obvious that, in most cases, we do not desire to be wounded, but is it also self-evident to desire not to be vulnerable at all? Is the Christian hope for a world in which "death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore" (Rev 21,4) a hope for an invulnerable life, and does this hope inspire a moral desire to overcome vulnerability? Is vulnerability an evil, or is it still a – highly ambiguous – good, because without vulnerability, there would probably be no moral sense for the value of care? Is it a virtue to accept one's own vulnerability, or is the virtue rather to overcome vulnerability?

Discussing these evaluative and normative questions of human morality is always closely related to conceptually clarifying what vulnerability is about. So far, we have made use of an understanding based on the Latin etymology of the word: Vulnerability is derived from the Latin word "vulnus" for "wound." The term "vulnerability" refers to the possibility of being wounded – or, in a more general sense: the possibility of being harmed. Being harmed, though, is normally understood by reference to the concept of integrity because being wounded or harmed is defined as an infringement of someone's integrity.[16] Thus, how we understand integrity and how we understand vulnerability seems to be closely related. Do we need a concept of integrity to understand the concept of vulnerability? At first sight, this seems to be obvious – and one could argue that a large part of our metaphysical and ethical traditions relies on this prerogative of integrity before vulnerability. Yet, what if we turn this relation just around trying to understand integrity by reference to the danger of being wounded, i.e., by reference to vulnerability? Is integrity that which is desired if we desire to avoid being wounded? In how far can the desire for integrity include the reality of vulnerability, or does it necessarily result in the already-mentioned desire to overcome vulnerability? Is a non-vulnerable integrity at all thinkable, or isn't rather every integrity a vulnerable integrity?

It seems that clarifying the relation between vulnerability and integrity might help to deepen the understanding of vulnerability, not only conceptually but also from a normative perspective. Yet, clarifying what vulnerability is and how it relates to integrity does not in itself answer the question for the moral dimensions of these concepts. It is the moral dimension, though, that ethicists should be interested in: What do the anthropological or ontological concepts of vulnerability and integrity tell us about what we are obliged to do, about what is a desirable way of living and of being as a person? The papers published in this special issue deal with those questions from different perspectives, ranging from fundamental questions on defining vulnerability and integrity and better understanding their normative impact to questions of different fields of applied ethics.

Based on the above-mentioned critique of the overemphasis on autonomy in the field of medical ethics, there is a danger of normalizing vulnerability in a way that overemphasizes the positive consequences of vulnerability, e.g., sensitivity and connectedness. Hille Haker takes the Russian war of aggression as an opportunity to look

[16] Cf. Coors, Verletzlichkeit und Autonomie, pp. 96f.

critically at ethical designs of vulnerability and to examine their suitability for political ethics. The called-for openness may not be a helpful concept when one is affected. Therefore, Haker strengthens the understanding of vulnerable agency as a dialectic of vulnerability and agency. As an alternative, she develops a triadic figuration that complements the dyadic relation of self and other. The Third comes into view within the political-ethical context as the possibility of a "moral world" of nonviolence and respect. In this sense, ethicists have the moral task of bystanding and witnessing.

Cristina Traina's paper is concerned with a deeper understanding of the concepts of vulnerability and integrity. In an autobiographical manner, she illustrates an understanding of vulnerable integrity and inductively argues that human integrity involves vulnerability, which is amoral inviolable to others. Living in interdependent relationships enables us to develop or sustain our selves. Traina takes Augustine's remarks on memory, time, and the narrative self as the starting point for her reflections and complements them with considerations on an understanding of continuity through change and feminist theories of narrative, which provide theological and philosophical justifications for this vision of integrity. This leads to an assurance of its relevance in a pluralistic culture.

Turning to applied ethics, the paper by Tabea Ott and Peter Dabrock redefines integrity as an open-ended, non-isolated quality arising from an individual's relational connections. Integrity violations can result from misconceptions about integrity and the protective measures in place. This new perspective is crucial for governing emerging health technologies, such as Digital Twins. Human integrity remains intact when viewed as open to relational development, expressed through mutual support and self-expression.

In another field of applied ethics, Sarah Jäger interprets the concept of integrity in reference to Axel Honneth's considerations on recognition. Bringing up the not only in protestant sexual ethics controversial topic of sex work, she considers various forms, from coerced prostitution to self-determined sex work, and focuses on an understanding of it as labor within our economic system. Jäger suggests an understanding of sex work as care work, where integrity is seen as self-realization or autonomy.

Hansjoerg Schmid's study places a particular emphasis on the concept of vulnerability and how it relates to the interventions of Muslim chaplains in the context of refugees who have experienced the loss of their homes. Drawing from definitions in social work and anthropology, the study defines "home" as a fundamental anthropological need with multiple dimensions. By examining the practices of Muslim chaplains working with refugees, the study investigates the variations in their chaplaincy styles and assesses the impact of their interventions. These empirical findings are then integrated into a theoretical framework to explore the link between counseling and vulnerability.

How art and cultural representations can question themes such as vulnerability and integrity is shown by Stephen Bush's article. He questions the vulnerability of the anthropocentric worldview and the artistic tradition. The questioning of this superiority and the incomplete or partial representations of portrayed subjects can be seen as a form of vulnerability in anthropocentric thinking. Alice Neel's portraits, though human-focused, maintain this by being partial and unfinished. Traditional portraits often provide a complete and idealized representation of a person, whereas Neel's portraits offer an imperfect and unvarnished view of the subjects. This could be viewed as a challenge to the conventional notion of integrity as a complete and unblemished representation.

Michael Coors & Lea Chilian, guest editors

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Vulnerability in Times of War: The Necessity of the Moral Third

Hille Haker

Vulnerability as a critique of the one-sidedness of the principle of autonomy is at risk of overemphasizing the positive dimension of vulnerability. Moreover, in the discourse on vulnerability, the threat of dehumanization (or moral vulnerability) has not been scrutinized enough ethically. Therefore, the ethics of vulnerability is insufficient when faced with the force of war that requires the conceptualization of vulnerability for political-ethics. The Russian war in Ukraine demonstrates this weakness in a striking way: the called-for openness to the other as well as an active form of nonviolence, as promoted by Judith Butler, may not be an option in times of war. Continuing Jessica Benjamin's psychoanalytic approach to mutual recognition, the essay shows that the task of morality does not rest upon broadening one's vulnerability, but rather in understanding vulnerable agency as the dialectic of vulnerability and agency. For the further development of this dialectic, the triadic figuration is emphasized, complementing the dyadic relation of self and other. While the Third can take multiple figurations in the psychoanalytical setting, I understand the Third within the political-ethical context as the possibility of a "moral world" of nonviolence and respect. During war, the role of the bystander is to become a witness who, through the process of witnessing, advocacy, diplomacy, and justice, allows for the moral Third to reemerge. Among others, the ethics of vulnerability must spell out the price for the failure of taking on this responsibility, namely the eclipse of morality.

We Lived Happily during the War

> And when they bombed other people's houses, we
>
> protested
> but not enough, we opposed them but not
>
> enough. I was
> in my bed, around my bed America
>
> was falling: invisible house by invisible house by invisible house—
>
> I took a chair outside and watched the sun.
>
> In the sixth month
> of a disastrous reign in the house of money
>
> in the street of money in the city of money in the country of money,
> our great country of money, we (forgive us)
>
> lived happily during the war. [1]

1. Introduction[2]

The metaphor of war is often used for political programs, such as the war on drugs, the war on cancer, the war against terror, etc.. But for some time, a war of aggression has returned to Europe for the first time since World War II, begun and continued in its second year now by a Russian dictator who has retrieved the 19th and 20th century fantasies of empire for his own benefit and power. Russia's war in Ukraine is an attack on democracy, human rights, and the "bare lives" of millions of people in Ukraine, but also for the European security order writ large. This war did not begin in 2022, but rather in 2014, although it took a disastrous turn on February 24, 2022 when the Russian army started its full-blown invasion and shelling of Ukrainian cities from East to West, and North to South. The war that is already genocidal in several ways, may easily escalate into a global life or death issue because Russia is an atomic power and continues to threaten the use of its nuclear arsenal.

As a German-American who lives in the United States, I may have the luxury of a bystander who, for the time being, observes the atrocities from a safe distance or may well look the other way, living "happily during the war," as Ilya Kaminsky puts it. But indifference to the harm inflicted upon the citizens of Ukraine is morally wrong, and this fact challenges me as a person and as a scholar. Resisting the temptation to inattention may be the first step into one's own vulnerability: opening up to empathy and compassion with the suffering of the victims of war, listening to the testimonies of victims and survivors of brutal assaults, moving towards support, as little or as large as possible. My question in this essay is how violence affects the way vulnerability is discussed and conceptualized – or how it ought to affect the discourse on vulnerability: How does it change the discourse that has been heavily influenced over the past few decades by both American and feminist

[1] Kaminsky, Ilya, *Kaminsky, Ilya. Deaf Republic* (London: Faber and Faber, 2019), p. 4.

[2] I want to thank the Board of *Societas Ethica* for the invitation to give a keynote lecture at the 2022 conference on Vulnerability and Integrity in Zurich, the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments, and Carmen Gonzales for her help in birthing my thoughts and her editing support.

debates, most importantly in Judith Butler's writings on the topic? As is well known, Butler mostly responded to the US-initiated wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and in her most recent book, she focuses on internal conflicts and the psychological roots of human destructiveness, turning to Freud's writings and ultimately making the case for the "force of non-violence."[3] Butler's approach has been scrutinized many times;[4] here, it may suffice to say that she developed her understanding in the context of subject/self-formation, the theories of interpellation, and the desire to be recognized. Similar to Butler's approach – but from the European perspective and in view of the war in Ukraine – I will explore the ethics of vulnerability and scrutinize some of the underlying assumptions. Unlike Butler, I am not interested in the psychological roots of violence but instead will turn to the application of vulnerability within the political-ethical realm. I will proceed in four steps: first, I will focus on vulnerability as critique of autonomy as a principle of ethics; second, I will explain the importance to pay attention to moral vulnerability; third, I will examine the inner dynamics of violence in war, helped by Simone Weil's commentary on the *Iliad* during World War II. Finally, I will turn to the role of the Third, following the interpretation by feminist psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin, which I will utilize for a political ethics of vulnerability. My underlying concern is that the ethical discourse of vulnerability is as one-sided as the autonomy discourse, resulting in a normative shift that replaces rather than complements autonomy, to the effect of an unintended quietism, an idealization of the "wound" as an opening, and the undermining of the Third in favor of a focus on the dyadic relation, the encounter of self and other, sometimes even ignoring that the "encounter" entails the possibility of moral injuries.

Whereas Butler in her latest work links vulnerability to interdependency and proposes to foster the habit of nonviolence (which she depicts as an active and aggressive force of resistance), I will argue that under conditions of war, this particular concept of nonviolence becomes hollow if dissociated from other means, including military self-defense. Nonviolence in war would mean to succumb to the attacks, rapes, tortures, deportations, and/or killing of an aggressor who inflicts excessive violence and force upon soldiers and civilians alike, and who complements force with the propaganda of genocide.[5] To be sure, in an interview in March 2023, Butler commented on the ramifications of her approach for the war in Ukraine. She explained that while self-defense is necessary at times, her concern is that we ought to still aim towards a world of nonviolence. Furthermore, she states that the challenge is how to prevent that the attacked commits the same atrocities as the aggressor.[6] I share both concerns and want to take them as my point

[3] Butler's texts appear in almost all works on vulnerability, especially Butler, Judith, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005); Butler, Judith, *Frames of War. When Is Life Grievable* (London: Verso, 2010); Butler, Judith, *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence* 2004); Butler, Judith, *The Force of Nonviolence: An Ethico-Political Bind* (London: Verso, 2020).

[4] Cf. for a thorough analysis Thiem, Annika, *Unbecoming Subjects. Judith Butler, Moral Philosophy, and Critical Responsibility* (New York: Fordham, 2008). More recently, on Butler's ethics: Lloyd, Moya, *Butler and Ethics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015). A comprehensive understanding of vulnerability is offered in a chapter by Sverker, Joseph, *Human Being and Vulnerability: Beyond Constructivism and Essentialism in Judith Butler, Steven Pinker, and Colin Gunton* (Berlin, Germany: Ibidem Verlag, 2020).

[5] For the discussion of excessive violence, cf. Liebsch, Burkhard. 'Feindschaft Aus Verfeindung. Politische Koexistenz Zwischen Gastlichkeit Und Vernichtung', in *Gewalt Verstehen*, edited by Burkhard Liebsch, Mensink, Dagmar (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), pp. 225-64. Staudigl, Michael, *Phänomenologie Der Gewalt* (Berlin: Springer, 2014b).

[6] Cf. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHaO7XoPJdY&t=610s (comment on Ukraine begins at hour 1:10).

of departure. I will, however, shift the focus from the war parties to the bystanders and third parties. If nonviolence is a goal that most of us share, I want to explore how the discourse on vulnerability may be helpful for the bystanders and witnesses of war.[7] What is their responsibility in response to atrocities that they come to know about?

2. Vulnerability as Critique of Autonomy

Autonomy as an Achievement of Modern Ethics

Modern ethics is based on the subject as an agent and their freedom (or, under conditions of oppression, their liberation). The empowerment to live one's own life that is tightly connected with the summons to know oneself and to think for oneself renders moral agency more insecure, norms more volatile, and individual existence more self-conscious of its own contingency (Sartre captured this in the phrase that one is condemned to freedom). But freedom also empowers the self who is seen as an autonomous moral subject, a capable human, or *homme capable*.[8] As Paul Ricœur explains, humans have multiple capabilities that are morally relevant: they can speak, narrate, act, and remember. As moral agents, humans are responsible for their deeds. Emphasizing these capabilities, however, comes with the risk of concealing the underlying vulnerabilities of human life. Accountability, in particular, entails the judgment of one's actions by others, perhaps internalized as social norms. Turning to the unconscious and subconscious dimension of selfhood, Freud coined this the super-ego, the internalized social and/or moral norms in a person's psyche. For poststructuralist philosophers like Butler, more radically, the affectability and receptivity create heteronomy rather than autonomy as the normalizing, disciplining force of social norms to which the self must succumb in order to become a (recognized) subject.[9] The coherence of one's desired self-determination and one's morally required autonomy is an ideal of moral identity that conceals this underlying vulnerability, the susceptibility to heteronomy.[10]

In contemporary ethical theory, vulnerability is a counter-term to enlightenment's rationality concept and liberalism's individualistic understanding of autonomy as self-determination. In the continental tradition, it is closely connected to intersubjectivity, interdependence, and recognition. Rousseau emphasized that the *amour propre* – the craving for approval, affirmation, and praise by others – is a flaw of the self who in reality is not autonomous, but needs society because individuals need to be recognized in order

[7] Most literature on the "bystander" is rooted in Holocaust studies where it was discussed extensively, in medical research ethics, or in theology in connection with guilt. Cf. Barnett, Victoria J. 'The Changing View of the "Bystander" in Holocaust Scholarship: Historical, Ethical, and Political Implications', *Utah law review* 2017:4 (2017), pp. 633-47; Hilberg, Raul, *Perpetrators Victims Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945* 1992); Vasko, Elisabeth T., *Beyond Apathy: A Theology for Bystanders* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2015).

[8] Ricœur, Paul, *The Course of Recognition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[9] Cf. Butler's recent collection of essays on this topic: Butler, Judith, *Senses of the Subject* (New York: Fordham, 2015).

[10] Heteronomy is not only the premise of Kant's concept of autonomy (although in his case it is the submission to one's desires) but also several theories of moral development that have dominated the discourse on autonomy and moral identity. I only mention Habermas' works whose theory of moral consciousness builds upon Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development. Habermas, Jürgen, *Moralbewusstsein Und Kommunikatives Handeln* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983). Habermas, Jürgen, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

to belong.[11] This need often results in false conformism. Kant therefore stressed that autonomy, self-judgment or self-legislation in moral issues means the liberation from the heteronomy of one's will, including independence from the judgment of others. Autonomy in this sense is not a given, but a hard-to-achieve stance of moral reasoning. In contrast, Hegel, who was influenced by Rousseau as well as by Kant, introduced a new moral understanding of recognition that allows for personal relations of freedom and love, but also social freedom in cooperative practices, and political-legal rights. Hegel therefore elevates the fact of interdependency to a moral concept, as the experience of personal and social freedom, secured and enabled by legal rights that guarantee freedom and equality.[12] Yet, over the last 150 years, Western ethics did not follow this combination of autonomy and sociality but developed in line of liberalism. Only socialist and/or critical theory ethics approaches explored the merits of Marx' transformation of the 'idealistic' approach into a 'materialist' approach. This begins with an analysis of societal (and economic) conditions of ethical life and aims at the critique of exploitation, reification, and alienation that accompanies the modern socio-economic paradigm of capitalism.[13] Ethicists who rather embraced the Anglo-American liberalism and utilitarianism, understood autonomy as self-determination that then served as the dominant lens through which moral agency was seen. The more recent discourse on vulnerability is a reaction to this emphasis on autonomy.[14] In contrast to the American bioethics, the bioethics discourse on vulnerability in Europe begun in the late 1990s, with Peter Kemp and Jakob Rendtorff proposing it as an alternative to the principle of autonomy.[15] In philosophical circles, vulnerability became a central concept for feminist authors. Butler's critique of the liberal understanding of sovereignty and authorship resonated with many feminist thinkers, even though an alternative, existential vision of freedom had already been defended, among others, by Simone de Beauvoir and second wave feminists.[16] While I mostly agree with Butler's phenomenological reading of self-constitution, I depart from her understanding of moral identity, which has important ramifications for the ethics of vulnerability. To this I will now turn.

[11] See for the different approaches to recognition in European philosophy Honneth, Axel, *Anerkennung. Eine Europäische Ideengeschichte* (Berlin: suhrkamp, 2018); Honneth, Axel, *Recognition. A Chapter in the History of European Ideas* (Cambridge MA: Cambridge University Press, 2020).
[12] Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Phänomenologie Des Geistes* (Frankfurt (am Main): Suhrkamp, 1973 (orig. 1806)). Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: The Phenomenology of Spirit (Translated by Terry Pinkard)* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2018 (orig. 1806/07)).
[13] Following Hegel and Marx, the scholars of the Frankfurt School, from Horkheimer and Adorno to Fromm, Marcuse, Habermas, or Axel Honneth have provided multiple works that reconstruct and critique the effects of political liberalism and capitalism. They receive far too little attention in ethics, and they deserve to be included in the broader discussion of vulnerability that I cannot pursue further here. I have begun this work in Haker, Hille, *Towards a Critical Political Ethics. Catholic Ethics and Social Challenges* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2020a).
[14] For the history of the concept cf. Schneewind, J. B., *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[15] Rendtorff, Jacob Dahl, Kemp, Peter, *Basic Ethical Principles in European Bioethics and Biolaw* (Copenhagen: Center for Ethics and Law, 2000).
[16] Cf. de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (New York: Citadel Press, 1962). I have compared different concepts in Haker, Hille. 'Selbstkonzepte Aus Feministisch-Ethischer Sicht', *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 49:2 (2004), pp. 126-43.

3. The Concept of Vulnerability

Vulnerability is mostly distinguished in two basic forms, namely as disposition or potentiality on the one hand and actuality or situated vulnerability on the other.[17] But for an ethics of vulnerability, we must be concerned with three, not two basic forms:[18] *ontological vulnerability* is a disposition, as much a part of the human condition as capabilities are, and this basic form of vulnerability entails the susceptibility to illness, suffering and death. One can, of course, then turn to the sites of vulnerability, and I agree with many scholars that situations of vulnerability can become structural. Thus, *structural vulnerability* means that certain dispositions as well as social positions increase a person's or group's vulnerability, either in particular situations, in phases of life that render persons especially dependent on others, or legally (for instance, in the case of being a non-citizens in the country of residence). What I want to add, however, is the category of *moral vulnerability* that is not truly captured within the broad category of ontological vulnerability, but is also not necessarily structural. Moral vulnerability points to the susceptibility of humans to other humans' destructiveness, malevolence, the attack on their integrity or, in short, to the misrecognition in all imaginable forms as well as disrespect of one's dignity.

Why Moral Vulnerability Matters

Moral vulnerability is the reason why it does not suffice to point to the interdependence and relational freedom. Freedom entails a moral capability, a self-relation that is captured in the term moral identity that renders a person accountable for their actions. Were moral transgressions not so common, agents would not need to be held accountable for their actions. They would be praised, approved, or recognized, and not blamed, shamed, of punished. People would be sad *with* and *for* others when their goals might not come to fruition or some unintended "ontological" events occurred – a disease, a natural catastrophe, or simply age-related crises – but they would not be angry, disappointed, disgusted, or outraged when another person or group harms others (including animals, the environment, or destroys things for the sake of destruction). Were humans not capable of wounding others and themselves, they would not be ashamed and hide their deeds, sometimes even from their own consciousness. Moral vulnerability needs to be spelled out explicitly because of its inherent link to violence and other forms of moral harm.

Faced with the atrocities of World War I, Sigmund Freud introduced the death drive as the human propensity to destruction. In 1915, he called it an illusion that war could be overcome and other ways of conflict resolution might take its place.[19] A few decades later, after World War II and in view of the crimes against humanity committed under the

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[17] Cf. among others the essays in *Vulnerability: New Essays in Ethics and Feminist Philosophy,* edited by Mackenzie, Catriona, Rogers, Wendy, Dodds, Susan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. In this volume, Margaret Urban Walker focuses on moral vulnerability.

[18] Haker, Hille. 'Vulnerable Agency. Human Dignity and Gendered Violence', in *Towards a Critical Political Ethics. Catholic Ethics and Social Challenges.*, edited by Hille Haker (Basel/Berlin: Schwabe, 2020b), pp. 135-67. See also Haker, Hille. 'Verletzliche Freiheit. Zu Einem Neuen Prinzip Der Bioethik', in *Theologische Vulnerabilitätsforschung. Gesellschaftsrelevant Und Interdisziplinär*, edited by Hildegund Keul (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2021b), pp. 99-118.

[19] Freud, Sigmund. 'Zeitgemäßes Über Krieg Und Tod', *Imago. Zeitschrift für Anwendung der Psychoanalyse auf die Geisteswissenschaften IV* IV:(1915b), pp. 1-21. Freud, Sigmund. 'On War and Death', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, edited by (London: Hogarth Press, 1915a), pp. 273–300. For a discussion of this and other texts cf. Butler, Judith, *The Force of Nonviolence: An Ethico-Political Bind.*

leadership of Hitler, but also under the leadership of Stalin, Erich Fromm analyzed human destructiveness again, with the available empirical knowledge since World War II. Human destructiveness, Fromm holds, goes far beyond the aggression that humans share with animals, and he explains (without apologizing it) that sadism is a response to a felt weakness that results in the desire to destroy the other before they can destroy the self. Human destructiveness is not merely a psychological trait or disposition that cannot be controlled or overcome but, according to Fromm, it is an effect of a character trait, social circumstances, and a choice that an individual makes. In short, it is just as much a psychological, social, and a moral issue.[20] Therefore, *moral injuries are human-inflicted wounds*.[21] They differ from injuries due to health-related traumas. Moral injuries mean that someone harms someone else intentionally, whether it is an individual or a group. Moral injuries damage a person or group, sometimes irreversibly, and therefore they cannot be associated with any positive "openness" to the other, either by "dispossession," or by "relationality," terms often used by Butler and others to counter the liberal emphasis on autonomy. Instead, the susceptibility to moral transgressions must be distinguished and analyzed separately, and protections, precautions, but also penalties are necessary, either to prevent harm from happening or, post factum, to hold perpetrators accountable. Regarding moral vulnerability, judgments are necessary, and they require reasons and justifications. Postmodern ethics often shies away from moral judgments, but the judgment of actions must not be confused with judging someone for their identity – I agree with Butler that such judgments are often themselves harmful.[22]

Human Rights as Response to Vulnerability

The concept of moral vulnerability points to the fact that moral harm (defined as humiliation and misrecognition, dehumanization and attack on a person's moral status) is morally wrong.[23] It cannot be justified lest the understanding of morality itself falters. Ontological, moral, and structural vulnerabilities require legal protections and enforcement mechanisms. The task of ethics, however, is to critically reflect upon the justifications, lest the law is abused for special interests rather than the rights of everyone. Like vulnerabilities of an ontological disposition, moral vulnerabilities may increase when they become structural, at risk of discrimination and stigmatization. Though human rights are meant to protect individuals from being harmed, history shows that states often miss the mark when it comes to human rights violations. Redefined as conditions of human life, freedom and well-being are the implicit entry points for the human rights framework that was established after World War II. Human rights are claim rights to others and to the state, namely as political rights that must be respected by anyone and are protected by laws, as well as the economic, social, and cultural rights that must be protected and/or

[20] Erich Fromm saw this more clearly than Freud and emphasized that humans may, at any point, make a conscious choice about whether to follow the path of destruction of life. Cf. Fromm, Erich, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (New York: Holt, 1973).

[21] Moral injuries are mostly discussed in relation to war, but of course, they concern any harm that human inflict upon others. Cf. Brock, Rita Nakashima and Gabriella Lettini, *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012).

[22] Butler, Judith, *Giving an Account of Oneself*.

[23] Walker, Margaret Urban. 'Moral Vulnerability and the Task of Reparations', in *Vulnerability: New Essays in Ethics and Feminist Philosophy*, edited by Catriona Mackenzie, Rogers, Wendy, Dodds, Susan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 110-33.

provided so that individuals can live a decent life.[24] The moral ban on war notwithstanding, the question of the legitimacy of violent resistance as well as interventions by force have long been a part of the international political-ethical discourse. The right to security – that had dominated modern political theory together with freedom[25] – explicitly includes the right to national sovereignty, its abuses notwithstanding.[26] After the end of the Cold War, new autocrats emerged, and they were embraced far too long by the European Union, NATO, or the UN Security Council. Autocrats have no interest in democracy because it limits their power over their citizens. They defy the rule of law, human dignity and rights – and they cannot be appeased when they have made a choice to pursue a particular policy, including genocide, war, and both ecological and economic destruction.

Interestingly, even the most heinous criminals and perpetrators of crimes seek to justify their actions as morally right. For instance, in the political realm, violations of rights and dignity are often justified as counter-violence, i.e. as a means to re-establish a moral norm or moral order that has been violated. But the "wrong" – here, the violation of rights in the name of rights – comes in the semblance of "right," Hegel explains, pointing to the possibility of moral ideology and propaganda.[27] Therefore, it is not trivial to examine the beginnings of an escalating conflict, which in the case of Russia's invasion was deliberately escalated into a war. Perhaps Putin did not want Ukraine to become democratic and drift further away from Russia's sphere of influence. Perhaps he never accepted the historical reality of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Perhaps the natural and human resources were too important for Russia's economy, or the hatred of an independent opposition a threat to the dictator's weak psychic self. It will be the task of future scholars to examine the causes of the war – but what matters for the question of vulnerability is the semblance of 'good reasons' and justifications, as Hegel states, for the harm inflicted upon another country. Putin regularly invoked the internal threat that the (democratically elected) regime is for the citizens of Ukraine (whose independent existence he denies) as well as for the so-called Russian compatriots who live abroad.[28] Over the last decade, Putin tried to delegitimize democratically elected governments (the Zelinksy government in particular), which he denounces to be in the grip of Nazis. Ukraine has been left with the choice of giving in to Russia's pressure and accept the annexation of parts of the country, or to increase the use of force in self-defense. Since both parties make use of moral arguments, it is crucial to assess who is justified to make their moral claims: who inflicts harm on whom, under what circumstances, and to what end. In other words: when moral harm is

[24] For a thorough systematic discussion cf. Gewirth, Alan, *Human Rights: Essays on Justification and Applications* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). The European Union has ratified the Convention on economic, social, and cultural rights, while the United States has not.
[25] Gearty, Conor, *Liberty and Security* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).
[26] In the current case, Putin has argued that Ukraine belongs to Russia, and he has the "responsibility to protect" the "compatriots" against the "Nazis" who rule Ukraine. Every moral claim can be perverted and abused – another reason why moral judgments are crucial. Reid, John. 'Putin, Pretext, and the Dark Side of the "Responsibility to Protect"', *War on the Rocks:* May 27, 2022, online at https://warontherocks.com/2022/05/putin-pretext-and-the-dark-side-of-the-responsibility-to-protect/ (accessed at June 21, 2023).
[27] Hegel, Georg Friedrich Wilhelm, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Edited by Allen Wood, Translated by H.B. Nisbet* Cambridge University Press, 1991 [1820]). §§ 82-103.
[28] Cf. for Russia's provocations and attempt to stir the conflict among Ukrainians around the time of the Maidan Revolution, and the intermingling of Ukrainian and Russian language and Orthodox religion: Wanner, Catherine. '"Fraternal" Nations and Challenges to Sovereignty in Ukraine: The Politics of Linguistic and Religious Ties', *American ethnologist* 41:3 (2014), pp. 427-39.

involved, the refusal to judge is itself a judgment that exacerbates the moral and structural vulnerability of those who are attacked.

Vulnerability and Nonviolence

Is the moral response to vulnerability an ethics and politics of nonviolence? Butler's response to the war in Afghanistan, the "war on terror," and the US war in Iraq was apt and necessary. In her recent deliberation on nonviolence, however, she tries to escape the vicious circle of violence by arguing for an "aggressive nonviolence." She gives multiple examples of structural violence and stresses the interdependence on which human life depends.[29] Yet, contexts of vulnerability matter as much as the concept itself: the war in Ukraine exposes vulnerable individuals or groups to severe, grievous harms, and *their* suffering is left without effective responses if the vulnerability discourse follows Butler also in this constellation, most likely against her intention. Her psychoanalytical inquiry, following Freud's analysis, is but one line of thinking, at risk of overlooking the above-mentioned social, economic, and political reasons of the aggressor to escalate a conflict and to not stop it. The call for nonviolence may not only condemn one party to submit to another who aims exactly at such subjection, if not even the genocidal destruction of a collective identity;[30] it also fails to name the wrong as a wrong and the wrong-doer as subject to punishment and compensation (and then to justify exactly this claim). Thus, for those whose country has been invaded and who watched their loved ones being killed, raped, tortured, or displaced, "aggressive nonviolence" is not an effective, and therefore not a sufficient response. The call for nonviolence may be possible for those who are unaffected by the war, who, in fact, live "happily during the war." But it ignores, I will argue in a moment, the particular role that the moral Third needs to take on in view of the vicious cycle of violence and counter-violence.

As Butler is the first to admit, it matters how we define violence, but against her, I hold the hardest test case for the moral justification for using violence is indeed self-defense. Moreover, in the occasion of war, the efforts of "resistance in vulnerability" or "vulnerable resistance" do not simply lose their merit, but these tactics will need to be embedded in the overall goal of self-defense.[31] Before I can focus on the role of the Third, I need to therefore take a closer look at the violence inflicted under conditions of war. I will show that either party is indeed at risk of committing the same atrocities as the other – yet without rendering both the same.[32] Since Achilles, the Greek warrior, the violent, yet tragic hero of the Trojan War, is often taken as symbol of the impossibility of invulnerability, I will turn to Simone Weil's insightful commentary on the *Iliad*, written in view of World War II. It provides a philosophical reflection that differs from the psychological one. I read

[29] Butler, Judith, *The Force of Nonviolence: An Ethico-Political Bind.*

[30] Cf. *Gesichter Der Gewalt: BeitrăGe Aus PhăNomenologischer Sicht,* edited by Staudigl, Michael. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2014a. Liebsch describes the excess of genocidal violence in Liebsch, Burkhard. 'Feindschaft Aus Verfeindung. Politische Koexistenz Zwischen Gastlichkeit Und Vernichtung'.

[31] Cf. Butler, Judith, *The Force of Nonviolence: An Ethico-Political Bind.* Introduction and Chapter 3; *Vulnerability in Resistance,* edited by Butler, Judith, Gambetti, Zeynep, Sabsay, Leticia. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2016.

[32] In her book Eryn Gilson counters the negative side of vulnerability with the necessary openness. But this cannot mean that the susceptibility to harm is thereby undermined. Gilson, Erinn C., *The Ethics of Vulnerability. A Feminist Analysis of Social Life and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

it as a reminder of the origin of the discourse on vulnerability, namely the always-possible infliction of violence, and the excess of collective violence during war.[33]

4. Vulnerability and the Force of War

Nothing makes humans more vulnerable than brute force, and it is this intentionally inflicted brutality that seems to be ineradicable in the human psyche. In war, all forms of vulnerability are exploited, because any demonstration of power and exercise of force increases the chance to weaken the dignity, integrity, and morale of the other party. Vulnerable groups who are already more vulnerable in ordinary times are especially exposed: women, children, prisoners, homeless, foreigners, ethnic and/or religious minorities. Moral vulnerability becomes a particularly heinous threat: coerced displacement and resettlement, incarceration in labor camps (Gulags), rape and disfiguring of the body, for instance, are means to annihilate the social and personal identity of the other, the declared enemy. The threat of these crimes against humanity suffices to make one freeze; their reality is often unbearable. This is the topic of Simone Weil's commentary on the *Iliad*.

"The Iliad, Or The Poem of Force"

Whereas Sigmund Freud elaborated on the causes of human destructiveness in the middle of World War I, Simone Weil wrote a breathtaking essay on the *Iliad* during World War II, which she called "The Iliad, or, The Poem of Force."[34] First published in 1940, the English translation appeared in 1945. While presented in the form of a commentary, the text can be read as a comment on World War II particularly, as well as on war in general. Homer, Weil shows, depicts the multiple ramifications of force, which go far beyond the ordinary power that anyone may hold over another. Power, so understood, is an intrusion into the space of another person. In everyday life, the mere physical presence of another person changes how we move: making place for the other, attending to another, welcoming them – these are all themes for a phenomenology of "ordinary life":

> The human beings around us have by their very presence a power, belonging only to them, to stop, to inhibit, to alter each action our body traces; a passer-by does not deflect us from our path in the same way as a billboard; one does not rise, walk, or sit when alone in one's own room the same as when one has a visitor.[35]

In contrast, force is a particular, excessive and violent form of power. And force in war means stretching violence to its soul-and-life-taking extreme, its realm comparable only to lifeless matter or death:

> Force wielded by others dominates the soul like an excessive hunger, since it comprises an unending power of life and death. And it is a realm as cold and harsh as if it were governed by inert matter.[36]

[33] I don't mean this as a genealogical origin. Rather, violence, more than the ontological disposition to suffering writ large or the "openness" to the world and to others, is the systematic point of departure for the *ethics* of vulnerability.

[34] *Simone Weil's the Iliad, or, the Poem of Force: A Critical Edition,* edited by Holoka, James P. New York: Peter Lang, 2003.

[35] Ibid., pp. 49.

[36] Ibid., p. 50.

Comparing the force of war with the force of nature in which matter reigns, Weil asserts that life turns into social death. Force reifies a human being, transforming them into a thing, emphasized by the text's change of pronouns from 'he' to 'it': "He [sic] is living, he has a soul; he is nonetheless a thing. […] it [sic] was not created to inhabit a thing; when it compels itself to do so, it endures violence through and through."[37] Under such conditions, morality seems to be utterly absent: there is no room for reflection that would foster the development of moral virtues or resistance to social norms, as the autonomy ethics would demand of "enlightened" agents. Perversely, physical violence is not even necessary after a while, since already the threat of being slain transforms a person into a shadow, or nothingness. Weil anticipates a figuration that Primo Levi would later describe as the fate of the so-called *Muselmänner*, the living dead in the death camps of the Nazis.[38]

> Before them, others move about as if they were not there; and they for their part, in danger of being reduced to nothing in an instant, imitate nonentity. Pushed, they fall; fallen, they lie on the ground, so long as chance does not prompt someone to raise them up.[39]

Weil insists that in war, not just victims are harmed. Perpetrators, too, are harmed in the vicious circle of violence: "As pitilessly as force annihilates, equally without pity it intoxicates those who possess or believe they possess it. In reality, no one possesses it."[40] Weil uses the image of the seesaw to describe the transitory nature of force, and Homer, like Sophocles or Aeschylus, demonstrates how easily "fate" may change, turning the perpetrator into the victim, and the victim into hero. Moreover, the soul seeks to escape the reality of war, and there are "days of play, of dream, whimsical and illusory. Danger is an abstraction, and the lives one destroys are like playthings, broken by a child and just as inconsequential."[41] Yet, when war is experienced in its harsh reality, it is "infinitely too harsh to tolerate, for it embraces death." War cannot be rationalized, and when experienced, it is not even a necessary means to a higher end. War seems to attack the very concept of action that depends on setting goals and finding the means to pursue it: "It expunges every concept of a goal, even the goals of war. It expunges the idea of an end of war." Instead, war is inconceivable, irrational, and consumed by the mere reiteration of force: "The possibility of a situation so violent is unthinkable outside that situation; an end of it unthinkable within it." And: "Always among human beings, as regards slavery or warfare, insufferable agonies persist by their own inertia and appear from outside easy to bear; they persist because they sap the resources needed to escape."[42]

If we trust the stories that art and history tell us in order to understand the current war, hubris may be Putin's downfall. What we don't know: whether history follows the stories, or stories are told because we crave not only affirmation but also a happy end. Putin's trolls have long exploited the (legitimate) critique of the US and NATO wars, and used it for an international disinformation campaign. The Russian letter "Z," left on vehicles and buildings, is the acronym for war but also for the seemingly invincible hero, mocking the peace missions of the United Nations. For "death, not freedom," Russian soldiers are sent to "liberate" Ukraine, while for the time being, they shell and destroy

[37] Ibid., p. 46.
[38] See Levi, Primo, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017).
[39] Author. *Simone Weil's the Iliad, or, the Poem of Force: A Critical Edition*, pp., p. 48.
[40] Ibid., p. 51.
[41] Ibid., p. 58.
[42] Ibid., p. 59.

whole towns, bomb the national infrastructure, loot homes, rape women, men, and children, torture and execute prisoners, and kill yet uncounted innocent civilians.[43] If Weil's argument were that war creates equivalences between attacker and attacked, this would be wrong: there is no equivalence between the Russian and the Ukrainian atrocities. But if she meant that the "seesaw" of force can turn at any moment, rendering the attacked the attacker – she certainly captures the inner dynamics of a war. And this, we saw, was exactly what Judith Butler said is her concern.

Butler's politics of nonviolence implies that human rights are mostly addressing the needs of vulnerable individuals or groups (which is not true, because human rights are claim rights for everyone), and she faults laws that have impunity built into their very structure (for instance, impunity of police in particular, for crimes against certain individuals or groups).[44] She insists on the "active" dimension of vulnerability (which, I believe, is better captured in the term vulnerable agency), and she emphasizes that the "dyadic relation tells only part of the story – the part that can be exemplified by the encounter."[45] But she only transcends the dyad of self and other, I and You, by simply referring to a "sustaining world" or "social relations," determining nonviolent collective acts such as civil disobedience, critique, and solidarity.

The discourse on vulnerability, it seems to me, must be shifted again, focusing more on the function and role of the Third, which neither plays a role in Weil's commentary on Homer nor does it receive much attention in Butler's political ethics of nonviolence. However, for the further ethical conceptualization of vulnerability, I will now argue, we must reconsider that in addition to self and other, "attacker" and "attacked," there are also observers, bystanders, witnesses, and allies, and they, too, have a particular role to play – just as the narrator "Homer" is a commentator of the actions he describes, or the Chorus is the witness to the tragedies they observe as interpretative parts of the dramas. The spectator and readers, too, are witnesses of the unfolding of the tragedies, emphasized in the literature of the "ethics of reading."[46] Yet, whereas in aesthetic experiences the spectators may *enjoy* the drama, even when being moved to tears, in real life the spectator is, at the same time, an agent.[47] Agents are never neutral. They must stand by those whose lives may depend on the fact that somebody knows who is, indeed, a perpetrator (so that crimes against humanity are accounted for at some point), and who is, indeed, a victim of violence (including the dead who will otherwise be forgotten). It is therefore essential for

[43] The UN Report from March 2023 states, among many other war crimes such as attacks on essential infrastructure, hospitals, or schools, attacks on civilians using land mines: "patterns of wilful [sic] killings, unlawful confinement, torture, rape, and unlawful transfers of detainees in the areas that came under the control of Russian authorities in Ukraine. Violations were also committed against persons deported from Ukraine to the Russian Federation. […] summary executions and torture […] rapes, and sexual violence were committed in the context of house-to-house searches," etc. United Nations, Human Rights Council. Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, New York: United Nations, 2023, pp. P. 8-13 (Personal Integrity Violations).

[44] Butler, Judith, *The Force of Nonviolence: An Ethico-Political Bind.*, Postscript: Rethinking Vulnerability, Violence, Resistance, pp 185-204.

[45] Ibid., p. 200.

[46] Among others, Newton, Adam Zachary, *Narrative Ethics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995). Attridge, Derek, *Reading and Responsibility. Deconstruction's Traces* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

[47] The relationship of aesthetics and ethics is certainly important, especially for the moral formation and development of moral virtues as well as the schooling of moral judgments. It has therefore played a pivotal role in the turn to autonomy, in part spelled out as authenticity, at the turn of the 19th century. Cf. Haker, Hille, *Moralische Identität. Literarische Lebensgeschichten Als Medium Ethischer Reflexion. Mit Einer Interpretation Der "Jahrestage" Von Uwe Johnson* (Tübingen: Francke, 1999).

the interruption of the bond of violence that keeps individuals, groups, and, at times, whole populations vulnerable to humiliation, dehumanization, and social as well as physical deaths, to understand the role and function of the Third in a more specific way.

5. Breaking the Force of Violence – The Moral Third

Jessica Benjamin who will be a guide in the following reflection, has called the dichotomy between the perpetrator and the victim the "Doer and Done-To" constellation of failed recognition.[48] Put differently, misrecognition is the collapse of mutual recognition into domination and submission. Whereas in Hegel's famous master-slave narrative the plot concerns the process of self-constitution and self-consciousness that begins with a struggle against the other and ends with mutual recognition of self and other (or selfhood and otherness), Benjamin is interested in the mutuality of recognition at all stages of human life. She thereby rescues recognition theory from the social judgments that Rousseau had already emphasized as the craving that renders a person willing to assimilate and succumb to the gaze of others. Furthermore, she also separates her approach from moral development and self-constitution theories that are driven by conflict and struggle, highlighting instead the pre-reflective "attunement" between self and other as the affective beginning of mutual recognition in interactions.

Recognition as Task

In her books on relational psychoanalysis since the late 1980s, Jessica Benjamin followed feminist theory and broadened the understanding of self-constitution to an alternative vision of the resonant *and* conflictual relationships as well as nonviolent interactions.[49] The tensions between the mother-figure and infant, a constellation she thoroughly studied, are a necessary part of intersubjectivity. "Attunement" *between* self and other is therefore not a "stage" but an infinite task that requires receptiveness and action alike. Benjamin speaks of matching the other's "intentions and rhythms," as empathizing and understanding, as witnessing and acknowledging one's own vulnerability as well as the other's, granting the other's "dignity and common humanity," and making space for difference and otherness.[50] Together, these efforts define the task as well as the inner workings of mutual recognition.

The Third

In Benjamin's reading, the "Third" comes in several different figurations. In the beginning, she separated herself from Lacan who understands the "Third" as the cognitive, linguistic, symbolic intervention into the affective space of the mother and the child. For Benjamin, as I have indicated above, the Third, or Thirdness, as she also calls it, is already part of their interaction: "thirdness is created through primary affectively resonant communication and in some sense precedes the discursive thirdness in which symbolic and universal/moral

[48] Benjamin, Jessica, *Beyond Doer and Done To: Recognition Theory, Intersubjectivity and the Third* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

[49] In the following, I refer especially to Benjamin, Jessica, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988); Benjamin, Jessica, *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Benjamin, Jessica, *Beyond Doer and Done To: Recognition Theory, Intersubjectivity and the Third.*

[50] Benjamin, Jessica, *Beyond Doer and Done To: Recognition Theory, Intersubjectivity and the Third.* P. 10.

thirds predominate."[51] Thirdness is the bond between self and other, in which empathy, witnessing, understanding, or acknowledging the other occurs. Whereas Butler sees the Third with Freud or Lacan as the intervention or "no" of the norm, for Benjamin it emerges *between* the self and the other, and is a part of the interaction itself. The bond that humans have with each other is, ideally, a "bond of love." But in reality, the bond between humans can quickly transform from a bond of love to a bond of violence.[52]

In a therapeutic constellation, Benjamin holds, the Third may be the bond between the self and the other, constantly shifting between the rhythmic Third of attunement, differentiation into two separate beings, the moral bond of respect and recognition, and the reflective conversation or discourse in which the one party tries to understand the actions of the other. The acknowledgment that interactions are not always what (and how) they ought to be, renders the moral dimension of the bond necessary, captured in the phrase of the *moral* Third. It creates not only a moral sense between both agents who interact in a shared space in which they act, but it also allows for correcting and restoring the sense of moral integrity in cases of failures or collapses of recognition. Thus, what I have elsewhere called the *dialectic of vulnerability and agency* entails power as much as affectability that is shared by the agents. The seesaw could be a good metaphor for vulnerable agency, too, if only it excluded interactions of domination and submission (even if complementary), as in the struggle to death that Hegel described and Weil reiterated as the contingency of war. Benjamin, too, alludes to the seesaw metaphor and calling it the *negation* of mutuality. Mutually, in contrast, does not require submission of one party but that both parties surrender to the interaction happening *between* them. In place of a destructive and harmful bond of violence, the power that drives mutual recognition as well as mutual responsibility is constructive and aiming at the (nonviolent) sharing of a world.[53] Invoking the moral Third does not mean that the bond of violence can be easily overcome. Rather, the moral Third is a standard that is not merely extrinsic but also intrinsic to human practices and interactions, even if it may only be a transitory experience. It emerges from the differentiation of self and other without breaking the bond, it emerges "between" them.

> "This differentiating Third is also the basis of the moral third – the principle whereby we create relationships in accord with ethical values – and the symbolic thirdness which includes narration, self-reflection and observation of self and other."[54]

The dance metaphor symbolizes mutuality as practice better than the seesaw: dancing is affective and reflective at the same time, requiring attentiveness to the intrusive power (in Weil's understanding) of bodily presence but also cooperation that is, at least in part, reflective.[55] Moreover, like any therapeutic endeavor, relational psychoanalysis believes in

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[51] Benjamin, Jessica. Intersubjectivity, Thirdness, and Mutual Recognition Jessica Benjamin, Ph.D. A Talk Given at the Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis, Los Angeles, CA: 2007, pp. 1-23.23.
[52] Benjamin, Jessica. 'The Bonds of Love: Looking Backward', *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 14:1 (2013), pp. 1-15; Benjamin, Jessica, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*. Benjamin does not use this term "bond of violence," but I think it is apt as the counter-term to the "bond of love."
[53] Ricœur, like Fromm before him, argues that humans are *capable* to choose the moral standard at any point. See the discussion above. Cf. for the relation of recognition and responsibility Haker, Hille. 'Recognition and Responsibility', *Religions* 12:7 (2021a), pp. 1-18.
[54] Benjamin, Jessica, *Beyond Doer and Done To: Recognition Theory, Intersubjectivity and the Third*. PP 27-28.
[55] Heinrich von Kleist, whose drama „Penthesilea" depicts the battle between Achilles and the Amazonian leader Penthesilea who are caught in a vicious circle of desire and violence that ends with the death of both. This element adds the female gender perspective to the often male-fixated interpretation of war. Kleist often wrote about this intertwining of affect and reason, theoretically

a "second chance" after failures and moral injuries, seeking to recreate respect, if not mutual recognition. Metaphors for such repairing interactions that Benjamin uses are: "bridge-building", "creating a net," or "crossing boundaries."[56]

If humans are vulnerable to being harmed by others, they must not only be attentive to their own exposure but also to the violence they are capable of inflicting upon others. Moreover, Hegel was right to depict the conflict of the self and other, at least in part, as an internal conflict of self-consciousness: psychologically speaking, violence refers to a conflict within the self whose own otherness or alienness seems to be unbearable; in this case, it needs to be ab-jected (literally: thrown away), in Julia Kristeva's terminology that Benjamin takes up, too. Often, this unbearable "Other, within" must be projected onto another person who is then excluded from one's own consciousness (or one's rationality), moral concern, and ultimately, excluded from humanity. In the therapeutic setting, the analyst becomes a witness evoking the moral Third by taking responsibility and seeking repair:

> the moral Third—[is] reachable only through this experience of taking responsibility for bearing pain and shame. In taking such responsibility, the analyst is putting an end to the buck passing the patient has always experienced—that is, to the game of ping-pong wherein each member of the dyad tries to put the bad into the other. The analyst says, in effect, "I'll go first." In orienting to the moral Third of responsibility, the analyst is also demonstrating the route out of helplessness.[57]

But the question remains whether what may be possible in interpersonal relations is also possible on the political level. Benjamin herself asks this question at the end of her book, turning to her long experience in peacebuilding between Israel and Palestine.

The Moral Third in Political Ethics

The power to act and to act together that Hannah Arendt, using Max Weber's distinction between *Macht* and *Herrschaft*, already emphasized over against domination, reaffirms the agency of individuals beyond merely choosing the means to ends that are exclusively in their own interest. Interactions bring about the identities of self and other in a shared environment that in part determines the scope of possible actions within the socially accepted norms. On the personal level, individuals will perhaps necessarily experience a mixture of positive and negative bonds and, depending on their experiences, will develop varying degrees of trust and mistrust. On the political level, we are used to thinking of relations as driven merely by self-interest, reined in by laws. This is the Freudian perspective, translating the super-Ego's function as control over social and political relations. However, the human capabilities to speak and tell one's story, to remember, and to act together, can perhaps be utilized on the level of social and political actions, too, especially by civil society. Together, the inhabitants of a social space ordinarily build the bridges to mutual understanding and recognition. Regarding experiences of moral injury,

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reflected in his essay on the *Marionettentheater*. von Kleist, Heinrich. 'Über Das Marionettentheater', in *Sämtliche Werke*, edited by Helmut Sembdner (München: Hanser, 1965), pp. 338-45. Von Kleist, Heinrich. 'On the Marionette Theatre', *The Drama Review* 16:3 (1972), pp. 22-26.

[56] That this is possible is shown in the stories of veterans from World War II, or, for instance, in the famous handshake between Francois Mitterand and Helmut Kohl at Verdun in 1984, after three wars between France and Germany. https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/kohl-mitterand-verdun-1984/ In this gesture of the handshake, thirdness emerges between the two individuals, pointing far beyond the personal as they shake hands as the representatives of their countries.

[57] Benjamin, Jessica, *Beyond Doer and Done To: Recognition Theory, Intersubjectivity and the Third*. P. 42.

the case is slightly different: the capability of storytelling is crucial lest the victims fall silent or are silenced by those who want to rather repress the memories of their suffering – or their deeds.[58] But testimonies and narratives may be only possible to share to a third party, functioning analogous to the therapist. Memorials keep the memory of the past alive – but they are mostly one-sided.[59] Regarding the war in Ukraine, acts of solidarity are ubiquitous inside and outside of Ukraine, demonstrating the effort – and extraordinary strength – to uphold moral values and norms – yet these acts primarily address Ukrainians or residents of Ukraine. Regarding the capability to hold perpetrators legally accountable, only states or, in cases of war crimes, the International Criminal Court of Justice, have the legal right to pursue justice; for the rule of law, accountability is a necessity because it constitutes the difference between right and wrong actions, while scrutiny will concern both sides of a war. Ricœur's notion of the *homme capable* could not be more important for political ethics, but we can now see that accountability is often wrested from the silence of shame and suffering, as well as from the repression of guilt. The moral Third, "the principle whereby we create relationships in accord with ethical values," is the stance of justice done to the victims and perpetrators alike, taking into account that a war stretches in time and entails the contingent shifts of the positions. The clearest demonstration of this is that all war parties are bound by the Geneva Convention.

Despite the propaganda of war, perpetrators rarely resemble the heroes of the Greek tragedies or mythologies; rather, they may be drafted soldiers or mercenaries who are pulled into a conflict in which they have no personal stakes. In the current war, Russian soldiers must not disobey orders; resistance to the draft becomes a crime that threatens their life and well-being of anyone affected by it – but this disrespect for conscientious objection to military service seems to be true on both sides.[60] The problem is that in the dynamic of the dyadic constellation that only knows domination and submission, the killing and dying may go on for a very long time, and it is, of course, reproduced conceptually, too, in the language of 'the enemy' that has replaced the language of the fraternal nations. More and more, Ukrainians are merely seen as enemies who must be defeated, whereas Russians are more and more seen as inhuman oppressors. Despite the possibility of a reversal of positions, both parties are locked into the bond of violence from which they cannot escape. Continued over time, the inherent harm of such bond of violence is normalized and then naturalized, as if every Ukrainian were a Nazi, and every Russian an oppressor, looter, or rapist. In the current war, it seems that only the invader can break the spell, giving up on the end goal of occupying Ukraine. And as long as Russia does not move, the killing and destruction continues in a war of attrition. For many, it may seem that only an intervention of a third party may provide a way out – here, the Third is depicted more along the Freudian lines of thought than Benjamin's. Thus, the Third is often

[58] Cf. Jackson, Michael, *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression, and Intersubjectivity* Museum Tusculanum Press, 2002). For the importance to be heard cf. Fricker, Miranda, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[59] Cf., among others, the "Heavenly Hundred" memorial project that is, at the same time, used as fundraiser: https://uocofusa.org/news_190221_1 .

[60] The UN Report, for instance, reports of repression, punishment, and even torture of Ukrainian soldiers who try to desert from the army. The UN adds, however, that it could not corroborate the truth of these reports. Liebsch speaks of the responsibility for the enemy – the only way not to become like the other side. But apart from the strict obligation to refrain from human rights violations such as torture or maltreatment of soldiers, to put the burden of responsibility for the enemy on the shoulders of those who have lost their livelihood, seems to miss the point, namely that the responsibility lies with the Third.

construed as an ideal type: an impartial, just, heroic rescue figure. In contrast, in Benjamin's understanding, the Third may well reemerge between the "fraternal" states after having been lost. If a third party comes into play, then their role is often that of representing the moral Third.

An important new element of Benjamin's theory for a political ethics therefore concerns the transition of a third party from a passive bystander to an active witness who takes responsibility, allowing for the moral Third to reemerge. The failure to become a witness, Benjamin claims, continues and increases the specific moral vulnerabilities of those who are exposed to harms. Such indifference, too, contributes to the perpetuation of violence, injustice, and war, when the third party does not take on the burden of responsibility, does not opt for the "I'll go first," (which includes the trust in the moral world that a victim may have lost).[61] For witnessing to happen, the bystander must become an *involved* agent, the one who can and therefore must hold up the possibility of a "lawful world," one of justice and mutual recognition. The witness may come in different forms, be it that of individual citizens such as an ally or an advocate; in the more traditional form, it is a judge; but it may also be an institution. Together, these "figures" constitute the witnesses that may allow for the experience of the moral Third to reemerge. The insight that the third party's function, their role or task is to create (or re-create) the space for the possibility of mutual recognition and shared responsibility, may motivate them to become engaged.

The witnesses must not only acknowledge and listen to the damaged self-identity of the morally injured person. They must also acknowledge the abyss that separates the victim from all others and, overall, the world as the place of living together, or "conviviality."[62] Thus, recognizing misrecognition as a moral harm, and speaking truth in view of individual or collective trauma, is an important element of reestablishing trust in the possibility of interactions that are based on vulnerability, agency, and actualizing mutual recognition.[63] Recognition, we remember, is an intersubjective task of vulnerable agents, and it must now be seen as a task that includes the reflection on the "thirdness" of the bond itself. Focusing on the self-other relationship abstracts not only from multiple social relations but also ignores the moral Third that emerges from this bond. This Third or thirdness must not be confused with Freud's category of the super-ego or Lacan's category of the symbolic order. Instead, the Third is a moral category that is at once present as the experienced bond and as norm.

In wars, atrocities are rarely committed by figures resembling the gruesome Achilles. More often, they are committed under pressure of social groups, hierarchical relations, or under other threats associated with a group identity or group dynamic. In all crimes against humanity, there are those who succumb to pressure and commit crimes, even those that are against their moral convictions and will haunt them for the rest of their lives. The goal of the bottom-up responsibility of the witness is not only to end the conflict, or even a war, but to begin the hard work of re-building trust. In order to hold perpetrators accountable, the International Criminal Court of Justice, for instance, depends on records,

[61] Cf. Bernstein, J. M. 'Trust: On the Real but Almost Always Unnoticed, Ever-Changing Foundation of Ethical Life', *Metaphilosophy* 42:4 (2011), pp. 395-416; Bernstein, J. M., *Torture and Dignity: An Essay on Moral Injury* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).
[62] Cf. Stauffer, Jill, *Ethical Loneliness. The Injustice of Not Being Heard* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
[63] Benjamin, Jessica, *Beyond Doer and Done To: Recognition Theory, Intersubjectivity and the Third*., p. 226.

on witnesses and testimonies. Volunteers and advocates are necessary, doing the work of justice that is essential for the restoring of the moral Third.

The Third is certainly an ambiguous concept, with the overlapping of the existing bond in interactions, the moral norms of mutual recognition and mutual responsibility, and the figure of the witness bearing a heavy moral burden. Yet, mutual recognition that requires the trust to surrender to interaction with the other from a place of fearless vulnerability may seem altogether too abstract and remote when people are facing the collapse of their life, subjected to bombing, force, and fear of social and physical death (or, on the other side, being allowed and/or encouraged to commit crimes and enact multiple acts of violence). To remind victims that they transcend the world of violence already in these bottom-up acts of solidarity, in the testimonies during the war, in mutual aid, as well as in top-down diplomacy work, may be important, even though these may not expand to the "other side," the "enemy." In addition to the bottom-up solidarity in an with Ukraine, the top-down political tasks include but are not limited to: the immediate provision of military means for self-defense (together with measures to enforce the sanctions against Russian oligarchs and listed entities more strictly); preparations for the rebuilding of the destroyed infrastructure in Ukraine; continuing the struggle against corruption; accelerating the bureaucratic steps for membership in the European Union; and the provision of the means to secure all human rights of refugees, including their economic, social, and cultural rights. The collection and preservation of testimonies is the condition for legal prosecutions. Beyond these immediate tasks, the structural-political tasks require the efforts of top-down diplomacy, and they ought to aim at the reform of the UN Security Council and new policies of other international bodies, including Ukraine's membership in NATO and the support of the World Bank for the re-building of the country. The United Nations may even find a way to finally embrace the necessary changes of its bureaucracy. Everyone knows that the failure to uphold even the most basic international standards erodes the human rights framework from within. For the victims, however, such failure deprives them of the conditions to re-create trust, the only way to endure one's vulnerability in the encounter with others. Together, the interpersonal, the civic, and the political challenges require the tremendous work of those who are only indirectly affected by the war.

What is possible in the aesthetic configuration of an epic or tragedy (namely the dramatization of a conflict between good and evil, choice and fate, etc.), turns out to be impossible in real life, even though poetic stories necessarily affect the way conflicts are narrated. The perpetrator may still rationalize their behavior as a means to a just end, and the victim may be tempted to demonize the other while heroizing one's own actions. The difficulty for the witnesses, one might say, is therefore to stay as close as possible to those who are vulnerable (ontologically, morally, and structurally), while upholding the moral Third so that recognitive thirdness may be restored. From the position of the morally harmed person or groups, the fact that people are committed to holding the aggressors accountable for their crimes, may be a beginning of a return to a world in which they can be "at home."[64] Listening to the testimonies of moral injury and creating spaces for the victims to tell their stories are therefore the first and most important, but certainly not the "last" tasks of restoring a person's agency and capabilities. Over time, however, the bond

[64] For some, this may never be possible, as Jean Amery held, and they will never again be "at home in the world." Amery, Jean, *At the Mind's Limit. Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1980).

of solidarity may contribute to the formation of a new social bonds, even in the absence of the perpetrators' remorse and rectification.

6. Conclusion

From an ethical point of view, force cannot foster a relation that allows for vulnerability as openness to the other, which is in part captured by the concept of thirdness and the moral Third. In war, the aggressor's epistemic posture is the belief in their invulnerability and invincibility that takes domination and submission as the "adequate" ways of interacting with others. The emphasis on vulnerability is certainly not by coincidence so often evoked by feminist scholars and resonating with all who want to depart from the principle of the "doer and done to." The discourse on vulnerability conveys that the imagery of invulnerability and independence is a mistake and cannot end well. Politically, the assumption of excessive power, as well as the owning of nuclear weapons that may transform a whole region into an unlivable place for centuries, is dangerous and catastrophic in its ramifications for millions of people. Yet, regarding the Russian war, just like Achille's spot in his body, Putin's vulnerability must be made visible. If he were stripped of his propaganda machine that shows him one symbolic village after the other (a show reminiscent of Potemkin's villages), he would lose his power over others, including the Russian people. Myths demonstrate how this unmasking is done, namely by storytelling, pointing to the fact that that there is always a spot of vulnerability in the seemingly invulnerable bodies of the heroes, or revealing that the emperor has no clothes. The insight into the transitory nature of force, together with signs of humanness, may serve as a warning to the "doers" and allow the "done to" to persevere in their resistance. It may allow those who are regarded as "things" to survive, and those soldiers who are caught in the terrible double bind of contracts, coercion, and obedience, to resist the summons to murder, rape, and deport innocent people.

Moral witnesses are the advocates of mutual recognition. They are in the position that Walter Benjamin described as an ethical demand: "We have hope for those who have no hope."[65] Moreover, with Jessica Benjamin, I would hold that we take responsibility for those who cannot take responsibility. Still, victims of war do not lose their agency. They may themselves be witnesses for others, upholding the possibility of the moral order. They are the parents who tell their children a good-night story in the bunker. They are the doctors who help women through labor, not knowing whether their hospital will still stand in the morning and how long the babies will live. They are the soldiers who rescue people and their pets from the roofs of their houses, destroyed by the flooding of the Kakhovka dam. They are the fleeing women who do not stop teaching their children while in exile, maintaining a well-developed digital curriculum in Germany, Poland, Italy, or France. They are the artist who played the cello in the subway of Kharkiv for those who were stuck there. They are the politicians who, unflinchingly standing in solidarity with the attacked, do not call for revenge but for the end of violence. And they are the lonesome, brave

[65] Benjamin, Walter. 'Goethe's Elective Affinities', in *Walter Benjamin. Selective Writings, Vol. I, 1913-1926*, edited by Marcus Bullock, Jennings, Michael W. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 297-360; Benjamin, Walter, *Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften* (Frankfurt am Main: suhrkamp, 1991).

Russian soldier who documented the crimes his own unit had committed, who then deserted, and handed the report over to the press.[66]

It is not autonomy but rather *vulnerability* that renders morality necessary. But it is also vulnerability that shows what the moral order is about, to wit, the creation and recreation of the bond of love and mutual recognition. Moral agents fail unless they hold up a moral world that *all* can inhabit. In war, ethics, which is the reflective and discursive side of morality, cannot be neutral; ethicists are witnesses, too, and they must stand with the vulnerable and the attacked and commit to fighting for the moral Third, the principle of nonviolence. Although it is possible to live happily during the war, morality exists to not let that happen.

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[66] Roth, Andrew, Sauer, Pjotr. "I Don't See Justice in This War': Russian Soldier Exposes Rot at Core of Ukraine Invasion', *The Guardian:* August 17, 2022, online at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/17/i-dont-see-justice-in-this-war-russian-soldier-exposes-rot-at-core-of-ukraine-invasion (accessed at 28.2.2023).

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Integrity, Vulnerability, and Temporality

Cristina L. H. Traina

This paper asks how to account for vulnerable integrity in the temporal dynamism of human lives without relying on a subtractive vision of integral human nature, borrowing from presumed past or future rationality and maturity, or depending on an external attribution of dignity. Illustrating the challenges with vignettes from the author's life, it argues inductively that human integrity includes morally inviolable vulnerability to others with whom we are in interdependent relationship and without whom we cannot develop or maintain our selves. Others reside at the core of our integrity, for better and for worse, and we reside at theirs. Augustine's accounts of memory, time, and the narrative self; Whiteheadian process thought's understanding of continuity through change; and feminist theories of narrative all provide theological and philosophical justifications for this vision of integrity. John Wall's and Johan Brännmark's non-foundational approaches to integrity and human rights lead us to the same conclusion without entailing theological anthropological claims, ensuring its relevance in a pluralist culture.

Introduction

Historically, Western thinkers have understood the relationship between human integrity and human vulnerability as analogous to the relationship between essence and accident: human integrity is immune to the forces that attack vulnerability, and vulnerability affects only those dimensions of humanity that are not crucial to personhood. For example, the principles of bioethics arising out of the Barcelona process closely relate integrity to dignity and identity and assert that integrity is a prerequisite of autonomy. In one version of this view, according to Jacob Rendtorff, human integrity is a wholeness or an untouchable core.[1]

[1] Jacob Dahl Rendtorff, "Integrity, Concept of," in *Encyclopedia of Global Bioethics* (1 January 2015), (accessed 7 November 2022). Rendtorff includes character, virtue, and moral consistency; these too can be vulnerable, but they are contingent, not universal. He seems to acknowledge a fifth principle—identity—which he does not clearly distinguish from integrity. Although their relationship demands rigorous critical description, for the purposes of this paper, I take identity to include integrity. On the Barcelona principles,

As an apparent paradox, the notion that integrity itself can be vulnerable without ceasing to describe the morally inviolable core of human being poses theoretical challenges, particularly in a pluralist cultural context in which theologically robust claims must have convincing secular analogues. This paper is an initial, inductive exploration of just one of these challenges: how to account for integrity in the temporality and dynamism of individual human lives without relying on a subtractive vision of "compromised" integral human nature.[2] In particular, children, dementia patients, and traumatic brain injury (TBI) patients pose a problem for theological and philosophical anthropology: How can their integrity be described without either borrowing from their presumed future or past rationality and maturity, or depending on an arbitrary external attribution of dignity?

First, I will elaborate the problem by briefly outlining two common but inadequate responses to it. Second, beginning with individual experience, and inspired by both Augustine's discussion of time and memory and Whiteheadian process thought, I will explore interpersonal formation of memory as a fundamental element of personal integrity. Third and more briefly, I will approach the question from a non-foundational direction using childist John Wall and bioethicist Johan Brännmark to argue that human rights arguments lead us to similar conclusions about the connection between personal integrity and relationships. In other words, both personal and political approaches can resolve the challenge of describing children, persons with dementia, and TBI patients as full persons in part by insisting that the others with whom they are in relationship are elements of their integrity. Vignettes prompt and personalize (without resolving) some of the challenges I have posed.

The Problem

> Vignette 1: When my grandson was 10 days old, one of the family dogs dropped her ball beside him and waited. What established him in her perception as the sort of being who throws balls, even though he could not do so yet? What does this recognition have to do with his integrity?[3]

The two most accessible Western tropes of integrity do not provide fully satisfying answers to these questions. As described here, each is a caricature, but both operate unexamined in popular discourse. Enlightenment dualism rests integrity in the mind or spirit, particularly in

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see Jacob Dahl Rendtorff and Peter Kemp, eds. *Basic Ethical Principles in European Bioethics and Biolaw* 1 & 2 (Copenhagen and Barcelona: Centre for Ethics and Law and Institut Borja de Bioètica, 2000). The Barcelona principles—dignity, autonomy, integrity, and vulnerability—are not universally embraced in Europe; for instance, Matti Häyry sees dignity, precaution, and solidarity as central to European discussions. See Matti Häyry, "European Values in Bioethics: Why, What, and How to be Used?" *Theoretical Medicine* 24 (2003), pp. 199–214, DOI: 10.1023/A:1024814710487.

[2]For example, I have in mind both the Aristotelian-Thomistic developmental view and its liberal analogues, according to which children are not "*full* social citizens." See John Wall, "Human Rights in Light of Childhood," *International Journal of Human Rights*16 (2008), pp. 526-27.

[3] For instance, see Judith Benz-Schwarzburg, Susana Monsó and Ludwig Huber, "How Dogs Perceive Humans and How Humans Should Treat Their Pet Dogs: Linking Cognition with Ethics," *Frontiers in Psychology* (16 December 2020), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.584037. These authors argue that "why dogs attend so closely to the behavior of their caregivers can be explained by different reasons: they surely want to please them and are inclined to obey them. However, they might also understand themselves as partners in our social interactions and are part in our social game."

the independent reason, which rules over the temporal material body and is distinct from it.[4] In addition, this philosophy tends to see maturation as the gradual unfolding of a person's innate interior capacities and thus (with the possible exception of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who recognized that education and social relationships influence the shape that integrity takes in each person) evaluated the individual in relative isolation.[5] Thus, in the Enlightenment view, children, the elderly, and people with rational incapacities deserve dignified treatment in honor of the rationality and autonomous agency that they will have, that they once had, or that they would have had but for a misfortune; in other words, these groups lack inherent, *de facto* integrity and are granted it *de jure*.

The second approach is theological. It affirms either the divine infusion (within, through creation) or divine attribution (from without, through saving grace) of ontological connection with God or worthiness before God. It is not contingent on bodily health or rationality, is an essential element of the human who is in communion with God, is equally present in all phases of human life once granted (according to some, even before birth), and is a condition of integrity.[6] Because it is imputed externally, it is vulnerable only to the will of the one who imputes it—God grants it, or God withdraws it—this divinely bestowed quality has the advantages of being ineradicable by others (if perhaps susceptible to one's own sin), being independent of one's rational capacity, having a moral dimension, and persisting through time. But, like Enlightenment anthropologies it can be dualistic, locating integrity only in the soul or spirit.

Both Western approaches are admittedly more complex than these descriptions, and they overlap more than this contrast implies. The point is that neither approach passes the dog "sniff test" or satisfyingly relates vulnerable integrity to the temporality and variety of human life: one rests it on an ideal of rationality that may or may not be achieved, and can certainly be lost, and the other is essentially transcendent, nearly immune to time and change. Yet both ancient and recent Western thought honor integrity through change more promisingly. Two

[4]For Locke, integrity seems to reside primarily in continuity of consciousness. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* Book II, Chapter XXVII, paragraph 10, https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/locke-the-works-vol-1-an-essay-concerning-human-understanding-part-1; and Anna Lännström, "Locke's Account of Personal Identity: Memory as Fallible Evidence," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 24 no. 1 (January 2007), pp. 39-56.

[5] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile,* tr. Barbara Foxley (London: J.M. Dent, 1993).

[6] I have in mind the Catholic affirmation of dignity as the ineradicable qualities of human creation in the image of God and "destined for eternal beatitude" and the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith through grace which draws on Gal. 2:16: "these three things, faith, Christ, and imputation of righteousness, are to be joined together." For a very basic introduction, see *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993), paras. 1700-1706, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM; see for instance Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2nd and rev. ed. (1920), qq. 93-10, at https://www.newadvent.org/summa/ and Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians,* tr. Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), https://www.projectwittenberg.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/gal/web/gal-inx.html#cts.

examples are Augustine's exploration of the self's experience of time and memory in his classic works *Confessions* and *The Trinity*[7] and Whiteheadian process theology.[8]

Memory, Dynamism, and Narrative Integrity

Augustine

> Vignette 2: My grandson arrived with his own memories that were both sensory, or embodied, and relational. He was calmed by both his parents' voices (but not mine or his grandfather's) and by his parents' favorite music. He never startled when the family dogs barked. He felt at home because he remembered.

If memory is so basic to personhood, to integrity, that it is central even to the life of a newborn child, it makes sense to turn to Augustine's account of time and memory as interior experiences.[9] In the most basic terms, the systematic theological problem that Augustine sought to solve in the *Confessions* and *The Trinity* was how to account for distinction-amid-ontological-unity in God on the one hand and in the human mind on the other.[10] The answer was that each incorporeal dimension of God can be fully God—and each incorporeal dimension of mind can be fully mind—inasmuch as it comprehends or implies the other two.[11] But if memory is mind, and mind is, or is essential to, the integrity of personhood, then memory (with its self-presence and self-reflexivity) is at least a necessary element of human integrity.[12]

Augustine was also distracted by two familiar experiential challenges: finding order and continuity within the chaos of "multifarious distractions" and amid the "confusion"

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[7] Saint Augustine, *The Confessions,* tr. Maria Boulding, OSB. (New York: New City Press, 2019 [1997]); idem, *The Trinity,* 2nd ed., tr. Edmund Hill, O.P. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2015 [1991]).

[8] Other options are also possible; see for instance Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, tr. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984-1988). I have chosen to explore Whiteheadian thought rather than Ricoeur because of Ricoeur's focus on linguistic narrative, which, while essential to my argument, is one degree removed from the immediacy of non-linguistic experience of narrative embodiment that process thought can (but does not always) integrate. Still, a Ricoeurian account of narrative integrity, which draws upon Augustine as well as upon Aristotle, illumines the problem of alternate histories, mentioned below.

[9] See John Wall, *Ethics in Light of Childhood* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 64.

[10] See Julie B. Miller, "To Remember Self, to Remember God: Augustine on Sexuality, Relationality, and the Trinity," in *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine,* ed. Judith Chelius Stark (State College, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007), pp. 243-279; and Therese Scarpelli Cory, "Diachronically Unified Consciousness in Augustine and Aquinas," *Vivarium* 50 (2012), pp. 354-381.

[11] See Cory, "Diachronically Unified Consciousness"; Miller, "To Remember Self"; Roland B. Teske, "Augustine's Philosophy of Memory," in *Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 148-158; and Matthew G. Condon, "The Unnamed and the Defaced: The Limits of Rhetoric in Augustine's *Confessiones*," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69:1 (2001), pp. 43-63.

[12] On self-reflexivity and self -presence, see Miller, "To Remember Self," 250. In other places Augustine calls memory "the mind's storehouse," which implies a distinction between mind and memory; see Todd Breyfogle, "Memory and Imagination in Augustine's *Confessions*." *New Blackfriars* 75:881 (1994), pp. 210-223.

wrought by the "flux of time" and constant change[13]--or, as Joseph Rivera puts it, "the self's temporal streaming in the world."[14] We can experience only the present instant, which vanishes and is replaced before we can reflect on it. In addition, we are aware of past and future only through distention of the present: we experience the remembered past in present recollection, and we anticipate the future in present expectation.[15]

We would be drowning in an onslaught of present events were it not for what Sarah Stewart-Kroeker dubs Augustine's "temporal imagination." For Augustine, a narrative ending—union with God—provides a sorting mechanism. We can "link expectation to memory" by intentionally focusing on particular ideas and goods that we want to realize in the future, on the way to this fulfillment.[16] This strategy brings some of the infinite temporal moments in our memories into the foreground, links them into a coherent narrative, and shoves others into the background.[17] In other words, we bring order to the chaos of infinite present moments by deciding what future to make of our past in light of our good end in God, and this moral and spiritual decision characterizes us.[18] Thus part of human integrity is the ability to organize the past and orchestrate the present by intentionally projecting both past and present into the future according to an aim.

We must revere, nurture, and protect this ability to infuse one's life with meaning and purpose. Yet this rich account of memory and temporal imagination is not adequate to theological anthropology's charge to account for the whole person in the world. It is highly individualistic. It addresses only the self's internal experiences, intentions, and spiritual progress. It implies adult rational capacities. Finally, it can also be interpreted in a highly dualistic way: self is mind. The body senses inputs, but once they enter the memory the mind is in charge, independent of the body and of human community.[19] Whiteheadian process thought has a more holistic account.

Whiteheadian Process Thought

Process thought comes closer to describing the continuity of an embodied, socially connected person through change over time. It puts vulnerability to change from without at the center of human nature. For process thinkers—concentrating on Whitehead and his commentators

[13] Augustine, *Confessions* 11.29.39; see also Cory, "Diachronically Unified Consciousness"; and Sarah Stewart-Kroeker, " 'Scattered in Times': An Augustinian Meditation on Temporal Fragmentation, Imagination, and Climate Change," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 48:1 (2020), pp. 45-73.

[14] Joseph Rivera, "Figuring the Porous Self: St. Augustine and the Phenomenology of Temporality," *Modern Theology* 29:1 (2013), 88.

[15] Stewart-Kroeker, "Scattered in Times," 51; Augustine, *Confessions,*11.20.26.

[16] Stewart-Kroeker, "Scattered in Times," 48, 52. See also Suzanne Holland, "The Integrity Conundrum," in *Health and Human Flourishing: Religion, Medicine, and Moral Anthropology*, ed. Carol Taylor and Roberto Dell'Oro (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2006), pp.103-115; and Daniel P. Sulmasy, O.F.M., "Dignity and the Human as a Natural Kind," in Taylor and Dell'Oro, eds., *Health and Human Flourishing,* 77.

[17] See Stewart-Kroeker, "Scattered in Times," 56, 65. Notably, Stewart-Kroeker suggests that, for Augustine, the mind transcends memory because it operates on memory narratively.

[18] The alternative is choosing a life organized around a non-ultimate good; for Augustine, this would be an evil choice.

[19] See Miller, "To Remember Self," and Cory, "Diachronically Unified Consciousness."

primarily—a living, embodied person is a continuous string of "actual entities."[20] This is not merely a matter of the mind. Each momentarily existing actual entity is a concrescence of infinitely many social, physical, and other influences. Still, this does not imply randomness or incoherence, which are not compatible with integrity. Instead, the past, consisting of a bundle of those influences, has a profound impact on each successive concrescence, creating continuity amid novelty.

Like Augustine, Whiteheadian process thinkers emphasize the novelty of each moment: change happens to the person that one currently is, and then in an instant, change happens again to the already-changed person. And like Augustine, they also embrace our active self-construction. We are not entirely at the mercy of unchosen, random forces; we can make some decisions about which elements of our past to carry forward and which to deemphasize, toward what future aim. In addition, the forces our bodies encounter and the people with whom we interact become elements of our dynamic and integral being, rather than only conditions of our narration of experience.[21]

For process thinkers as for Augustine, one essential element of human integrity is the ability to freely select and deploy past and present influences toward a chosen telos, or goal.[22] Narrative tells the story of these choices, creating continuity through change. It employs memory and also intentional forgetting, leaving behind elements that do not belong to the story that the author wishes to craft.[23] It is vulnerable in the positive sense, in that experience

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[20] Robert E. Doud, "The Biblical Heart and Process Anthropology" *Horizons* 23:2 (1996), pp. 281-95; and Austin J. Roberts, "Pneumatterings: The New Materialism, Whitehead, and Theology," *Process Studies* 44.1 (2015), pp. 4-23.

[21] Where or in what integrity might reside remains a challenging question for process thought. For instance, people may be networks of traits whose relative influence shifts over time; see Scott L. Pratt, "Kathleen Wallace and the Network Self: Identity, Autonomy, and Responsibility," *Metaphilosophy* 51:5 (October 2020), pp. 657-663. They may be like ropes into which new fibers are twisted as old ones end. Their processes rather than their substance may perdure; see Daniel Robert Siakel, "The Dynamic Process of Being (a Person): Two
Process Ontological Theories of Personal Identity," *Process Studies*, 43:2 (Fall-Winter 2014), pp. 4-28. Whitehead's solution of "formless receptacles" seems magical (see Siakel, "Dynamic Process," 13-18). Or, actual entities may be so robust and so good at preserving a "core" of consistent, continuous elements that something like identity persists; see W. Welton, S.I., "The Human Being as Substance and as Actual Entity," Gregorianum 73:2 (1992), pp. 317-328. Alternatively, on identity and narrative, see Carse, "Vulnerability," and Margaret E. Mohrmann, "On Being True to Form," in *Health and Human Flourishing: Religion, Medicine, and Moral Anthropology*, edited by Carol Taylor, CFSN, and Roberto Dell'Oro (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2006), pp. 89-102.

[22] For Augustine the goal is already given, but we must still choose it.

[23] Powerful people often force others to forget their own valuable pasts, but they can also intentionally forget elements of their own past injustices. Post-colonial white feminists can purge themselves of colonial narratives that endorse their racial privilege, prematurely claiming egalitarian interdependence with women of color. See Susan Abraham, "Purifying Memory and Dispossessing the Self: Spiritual Strategies in the Postcolonial Classroom," *Spiritus* 13 (2013): pp. 56–75; and Constance FitzGerald, "From Impasse to Prophetic Hope: Crisis of Memory," *CTSA Proceedings* 64 (2009): pp. 21-42. Feminist scholars of color caution against this premature divestment of rights and responsibility. See M. Shawn Copeland, "A Response to Constance FitzGerald," *CTSA Proceedings* 64 (2009), pp. 43-46; for similar words from a white feminist, see Catherine Keller, "The Apophasis of Gender: A Fourfold Unsaying of Feminist Theology," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76:4 (2008), pp. 905-933. Condon argues that in his *Confessions* Augustine creates a narrative of his position within the church hierarchy by intentionally eliding the names

presents new influences that we can choose to take up. It is vulnerable in the negative sense as well: violence, obstacles to choosing one's path, and being forced to forget one's personal or cultural history can limit or contort narrative, complicating one's always-continuous motion from past, through present, to future; I will return to this point later. Still, although many of the potential tributaries to the stream of our narrative are social and bodily, integrity itself again seems individualistic, not social, and mental, ultimately dependent on thought and intention to the exclusion of the body. Integrity as narrative is also primarily linguistic. These three—individualism, consciousness, and verbalization—seem to compromise conscious narrative integrity for infants, young children, adults with dementia, traumatic brain injury victims, and others.

Narrative in and beyond Language

> Vignette 3: A massive brain injury left my younger brother nearly unable to communicate. We cannot know what memories and stories he still makes and holds; we can share ours verbally with him, but we are unsure whether or how he can take them up.

The ability to formulate and express one's own narrative independently simply cannot be a condition of integrity or personhood.[24] Instead we must adjust our understanding of memory and narrative. First, as the second vignette suggested, many memories are bodily and nonverbal rather than mental. Through his senses, my grandson remembers voices, music, dogs, and his parents' scents. The fragrances of eucalyptus, boxwood, and lemon trees return me instantly to the place of my birth, of which I have no other memories. Processes are also memories: tying shoes or riding a bicycle involves bodily movement. People with memory loss tend to retain the ability to perform these operations even when they are unable to recall words, people, or narratives. The past also leaves wordless impressions on our bodies and psyches; for example, the body remembers trauma at many different levels[25]; triggers retraumatize by activating nonverbal narrative expectations. Most of these memories do not

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of many important persons in his past—like his concubine—and barely mentioning Monica and Patricius by name at all; instead, he liberally sprinkles in the names of leaders in the Latin church. See Condon, "The Unnamed."

See also Jean Dericotte-Murphy, "Rituals of Restorative Resistance: Healing Cultural Trauma and Cultural Amnesia through Cultural Anamnesis and Collective Memory," *Black Women and Religious Cultures* 2020, 1:1 (2020), pp. 18-37; and Philip Gerrans and Jeanette Kennett, "Mental Time Travel, Dynamic Evaluation, and Moral Agency," *Mind,*126:501 (January 2017), pp. 259-268.

Articulating and contesting corporate memories (and forgettings) is a crucial step in creating new narratives that can conduct society to a more just future. See Susan E. Babbitt, "Collective Memory or Knowledge of the Past: 'Covering Reality with Flowers," in Sue Campbell, Letitia Meynell, and Susan Sherwin, eds., *Embodiment and Agency* (University Park, PA: Penn State, 2009), pp. 234-249; and Sue Campbell, "Inside the Frame of the Past: Memory, Diversity, and Solidarity," in Campbell et al., eds., pp. 211-233.

[24] See Catriona Mackenzie, "Personal Identity, Narrative Integration, and Embodiment," in Campbell et al., eds., *Embodiment and Agency,* p. 119.

[25] For a recent update on research into the pathways by which personal or cultural trauma affects the body, see Amy Lehrner and Rachel Yehuda, "Cultural Trauma and Epigenetic Inheritance," *Development and Psychopathology* 30 (2018), pp. 1763–1777. doi:10.1017/S0954579418001153.

operate at the level of conscious, verbal self-narrative initially. Some never do.[26] Yet these memories are truly "part of us," and so they are part of the vulnerable integrity that characterizes us.

Second, we are not born knowing how to make narrative memories. We learn to do so through social interaction, wordlessly at first. Child development specialists, philosophers of memory, and feminist theorists insist that we build narratives gradually in relationship with others. Before children can speak, adults lay the groundwork for more sophisticated narrative memory by creating routines that they can remember, use to engage the present, and employ to predict the future. Later, children form autobiographical episodic memory in interchange with adults, who model how to frame events in sequential and causal narratives.[27] Thus, adults' memories, narratives, and construction techniques shape children's habits of memory and narrative. Adults and children also create funds of socially shared memory and narrative together. Thus, our memories and our narratives have co-authors.

If our memories and narratives—both verbal and nonverbal—are shared and interdependent, not solely private and introspective, many important conclusions follow, only some of which I will develop here.[28] First, others help us to create and maintain our own narrative "core," not just in childhood but throughout life. For instance, we suffer a brutal wound to integrity when we lose those who share our memories and with whom we have created our narratives. This happens to people who live to an advanced age, but it occurs in other cases too.

> Vignette 4: When my younger sister died, many of her potential contributions to our family's common narrative died with her. Together with my brother's injury, this loss has wounded my family's integrity by leaving those of us who remain reliant on our smaller circle of memory.

Claudia Welz gives the example of Jean Améry, a Jewish writer who survived Nazi concentration camps to pursue a journalism career in Belgium. Améry's integrity suffered two disabling blows: Not only were his family and friends, absent in death, unable to help him to carry the narrative of his prewar life, but his new neighbors were uninterested in acknowledging or discussing his traumatic concentration camp experiences. This double social rupture—which cut him off from both past and present communities of narrative formation—left him unable to do what Augustine, process thinkers, and narrative theorists insist we must:

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[26] John Swinton argues that about five percent of our knowledge of the world is at the level of cognitive awareness. See "Dementia and the Memory of the Body: Moving Beyond the Autobiographical Self," *St. Mark's Review* 232:2 (2015), p. 42.

[27] See Campbell, "Inside the Frame," and Christoph Hoerl, "Episodic Memory, Autobiographical Memory, Narrative: On Three Key Notions in Current Approaches to Memory Development," *Philosophical Psychology* 20:5 (2007), pp. 621–640.

[28] See footnote 23 above. As in Augustine, as in process thought, going forward entails accounting for the past, but this is a social, not merely individual, project. Of the many possible shared narratives, some will retain and "forget" different combinations of memories, yielding communal, systematic injustice. In these cases, in the interest of justice, we might need to critically revise both memories and narratives. Remaking even personal integrity-as-narrative involves revising memories and narratives shared with others, communally restoring willfully or forcibly forgotten memories, and contesting conflicting communal memories and narratives.

move through the present into the future in continuity with the past.[29] As Welz says, Améry "was a person who could no longer say 'we' and therefore said 'I' merely out of habit, but no longer with the sense of full self-possession."[30] He eventually committed suicide.

Not all losses are this extreme. Still, when someone close to us dies, or goes to prison, or loses their ability to communicate, the chorus that sustains the refrain of our memories diminishes, and our integrity suffers a wound.[31]

A further example of the commonly held rather than private character of memory is dementia. As Richard Holton points out, in milder forms of dementia people need others to cue their memories and self-narratives. He notes that "keeping a personality going in dementia, demanding as that is, is a job for us all," not just for the person with memory loss.[32] One person cannot maintain her memory, her narrative, or her "core" of integrity alone. Others help her bear them.[33]

Yet as Welz's account of Améry shows, it is not just children, dementia patients, and people who will never or can no longer steward their own narratives who rely on others to help carry their stories; everyone does. Granted, others play larger or smaller or different roles in this task as time passes. Still, if memory and narrative are part of my integrity or "inviolable core," other people reside in that core with me, producing special sorts of vulnerability. First, to protect the core of my integrity, society must protect not just me but my relationships with the others who help me to hold my narrative. This is well known; at times governments intentionally sever these relationships specifically to destroy memories and narratives, as the United States government did in collusion with Christian churches when it removed Native American children to mostly church-sponsored, English-speaking boarding schools in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[34] Yet divorce, death, migration, imprisonment, and a thousand other circumstances stretch or break such bonds routinely. Counting these wounds to integrity multiplies the losses that violence and injustice inflict on networks of integrity-sustaining relationship.

Second, many of the narratives that powerfully express the particularities of our integrity and identity are regional, cultural, religious, or national. These too demand

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[29] Claudia Welz, "The Future of the Past: Memory, Forgetting, and Personal Identity," in *Impossible Time: Past and Future in the Philosophy of Religion*, 191-212, edited by Marius Timmann Mjaaland, Ulrik Houlind Rasmussen, and Philipp Stoellger (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013). Even in "normal" cases, the longer one lives, the more of one's past one must typically carry alone.

[30] Welz, "The Future of the Past," 208.

[31] In his *Confessions,* Augustine describes his friend's death as self-loss (4.6.11-4.7.12), a matter of loving a person as one should love only God (Miller, " To Remember Self," 271).

[32] Richard Holton, "Memory, Persons and Dementia," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 29:3 (2016): pp. 256-260.

[33] Harriet Harris adds that cognitive abilities and memories (and bodily memories as well) do not exhaust our identity and integrity. Chronicling her own experience of Alzheimer's disease, Christine Bryden, an Australian former civil servant, wrote that she experienced the disease as opening "up the treasures of what lies within [her] manifold personality" (Bryden in Harriet Harris, "Can I be Judged If I Don't Remember My Sins? Questioning What Is Significant about Life after Death," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 29:3 (2016), p. 320). What other elements of our vulnerable integrity might have room to blossom when memory and cognition recede? Nurturing these characteristics too is surely a "job for us all." From this point of view, all dimensions of integrity, not just memory and narrative, are shared social projects rather than tasks of the isolated individual.

[34] See for instance the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition website, https://boardingschoolhealing.org/education/us-indian-boarding-school-history/.

maintenance by enormous choruses of voices, who must criticize and replace as well as preserve. For example, in the United States, scholars and public figures are attempting to eradicate the Lost Cause narrative, which argues that enslavement was largely humane and beneficial to enslaved persons, and that whites' right to enslave was not the central cause of southern states' secession from the Union.[35] Similarly, Nazi racist narratives endure in the US and Europe, despite the dominant, carefully maintained North American and European narratives of democratic justice.

Finally, the people closest to me, whom I trust to help me form and carry my memories and narrative, can wound me by betraying me through intentional forgetting, contradiction, or unjust interpretation. For example, adult perpetrators of child sexual abuse purify their own histories and protect themselves from discovery by shaping narratives for their victims of special conspiratorial favors, mutual love, or extraordinary maturity. These narratives doubly wound children's integrity, adding to physical harm and moral violation the injustice of severing their narratives from their normal, wider communities of narrative integrity.

Expanding upon Augustine and Whiteheadians, I have affirmed that the memories and narratives that are essential to integrity are both verbal and nonverbal. I have also argued that we depend upon others both to learn to form memories into narratives and to help us to carry those narratives. As a consequence, being severed from this network of interdependent support wounds our integrity; being severed unjustly yields an unjust wound to integrity even when the amputation is indirect. In addition, honoring others' vulnerable integrity means being constantly on the alert for narratives that wound the integrity of individuals and even huge groups by falsifying their stories or cutting them off from their networks of narrative and memory. In other words, our integrity is vulnerable to sin: both others' and—as Augustine would aver—our own.

In this theologically informed account of continuity through change, both integrity's continuity and its vulnerability arise primarily from a person's interdependence with others, at all stages of life, to form and maintain memory and narrative, an interdependence that does not depend on that person's ability to reason, use language, or reflect critically. Yet, this approach may not succeed in a pluralist society. Some contemporary rights theorists take another tack.

Rights and Recognition

> Vignette 5: My grandson's birth certificate confirms his citizenship. Without any act on his part, without any proof of his capacities, simply because his parents are human, it grants him legal recognition as a person with rights to civil protection, provision, and participation.

The argument above worked gradually outward from strong ontological claims about mind, memory, and the human end in God to argue that embodiment and relationships are essential to vulnerable integrity. Now I turn to the opposite strategy: beginning with a political claim about human rights that eschews discussion of transcendent ends and has no ontological basis

[35] "Lost Cause Myth," *The Inclusive Historian's Handbook* (May 13, 2020), https://inclusivehistorian.com/lost-cause-myth/.

beyond genetics. Bioethicist Johan Brännmark and childist ethicist John Wall believe that this approach has the advantage of preserving a robust version of human rights without relying on singular, anti-pluralist foundational claims. They begin their ethical reflection not from the question, "what qualities of inherent human integrity must ethics honor?" but from the assumption that others have rights simply because they are members of the human species, full stop, without further specification.

Johan Brännmark

Struggling with the challenge of developing a robust framework for bioethics that truly respects global pluralism, Johan Brännmark worries that routing vulnerable integrity through memory and narrative is counterproductive. He agrees with Eva Feder Kittay that defining a "core" of personal integrity—like rational autonomy—inevitably moves some people to "the margins of personhood."[36] In contrast, human rights approaches are based "in an account of the moral and political personhood that people possess merely by being human beings."[37] Our "high and equal moral status" is simply a matter of our humanity, a claim that needs no "deeper grounding." [38] Our personhood is an empty basket waiting to be filled with a pluralistic variety of criteria based on local convictions and circumstances.[39]

Brännmark begins ethics with a political assertion of human rights for three pragmatic reasons. First, it allows him to base bioethics in universal *de facto* realities rather than hegemonically imposing his own moral framework on a pluralistic conversation. Second, "the characteristic of the human species that makes human rights relevant to us is precisely that we form societies"; thus "human rights are about how our societies and our institutions should be organized" in recognition of our common humanity.[40] If this is true, moral principles (like the four Barcelona principles of bioethics: integrity, vulnerability, dignity, and autonomy) must be understood not hierarchically, or as foundational premises from which further principles are deduced, or as ideas for which a justifying "deeper grounding" must constantly be sought.[41] They are simply values that guide care. This heuristic vision allows us to shift our energy from endless critical philosophical analysis of them to their practical institutional specification and realization. Further, because the principles are taxonomic, they are open-ended, leaving room for pluralistic variety in local and temporal fulfillment.

This implies that even integrity will be defined differently in disparate times and places. Brännmark accounts for childhood, dementia, and other conditions of human existence by also assuming that identical rights will be differently fulfilled for particular people. There is no need to worry about change over time, because whatever we are calling integrity is by definition stable during the whole life course. At minimum, Brännmark writes, integrity probably implies that human institutions must respect an "untouchable core" that has both

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[36] Johan Brännmark, "Patients as Rights Holders," *Hastings Center Report* 47:4 (2017), p. 38; idem, "Respect for Persons in Bioethics: Towards a Human Rights-Based Account," *Human Rights Review* 18 (2017), p. 181.

[37] Brännmark, "Patients," p. 35.

[38] Brännmark, "Respect," p. 172; Brännmark, "Patients," p. 37.

[39] A good example of this kind of argument is Jacob Rendtorff, "Update of European Bioethics: Basic Ethical Principles in European Bioethics and Biolaw," *Bioethics Update* 1 (2015), pp. 113-129.

[40] Brännmark, "Respect," p. 177.

[41] Brännmark, "Patient," 37.

mental and physical elements; is related to "one's sense of self and one's identity"; and also characterizes "human beings that are not capable of autonomous decision making."[42] Finally, not only are human beings relational, but we form structured societies. These are the characteristics of our vulnerable integrity that medicine must honor. Beyond them, he leaves "essences" to philosophers and theologians. Yet this anthropological agnosticism—in part designed to protect children, dementia patients, and victims of traumatic brain injury—paradoxically could leave them vulnerable to greater harm.

John Wall

Childist ethicist John Wall takes another step by insisting that because Enlightenment-inspired accounts of human rights like those underlying Brännmark's account of the European principles of bioethics "continue to be grounded in the experiences and perspectives of adults,"[43] we must "critically restructure historically engrained norms of adultism" in which they are based.[44] He argues that (thanks in part to Kant) we have a tradition of seeing children as only as objects of social respect, possessing the dignity that entitles them to protection and provision from society. Yet because in the Enlightenment tradition social rights have been based on adult rational autonomy—and children are not "rationally autonomous"—we have not consistently seen them as social subjects who have rights to participate in society.[45] Rewriting human rights from a childist perspective also means undoing the Enlightenment fiction that children are sequestered in the private sphere for their protection and on account of their rational incapacities. On the contrary, rationally autonomous or not, children have a right and a duty to participate in shaping public life and already do so as workers, consumers, students, translators, and even organizers.

Yet for Wall children's right to participate formally in shaping society is not based solely on this *de facto* engagement in the public realm. Rather, it has to do with universal human modes of relating.

> Each self is born into an already constructed circle of human relations…. Children, from this point of view, are fully members of the human moral circle….Children start out life constructed by vast networks of interpersonal, social, and historical relations which they are at once passively shaped by and actively begin to shape for themselves….Children are also increasingly responsible to the otherness of others around them, and from the day they are born.[46]

In Wall's view, even infants are engaged in "self-transforming responsibility to others" which "is the same from birth to death….a matter of degree rather than kind."[47] Barriers to social participation cut children off from this vocational responsibility to both their detriment and society's.

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[42] Brännmark, "Respect," p. 184.
[43] John Wall, "Human Rights in Light of Childhood," *International Journal of Human Rights* 16 (2008), p. 523.
[44] John Wall, "From Childhood Studies to Childism: Reconstructing the Scholarly and Social Imaginations," *Children's Geographies* 20:3 (2019), p. 4.
[45] Wall, "Human Rights," pp. 530, 532.
[46] Wall, "Human Rights," p. 538.
[47] Wall, "Human Rights," p. 538.

Thus, for Wall, children have political rights not just because they have human genes but because they are always already in social relations of interdependent responsiveness according to their capacity. Yet, because of their age, size, and time in the world, they lack the autonomy and power to express their different experiences publicly with effectiveness or to respond publicly to others.[48] If one of democracy's aims is "to expand the diversity and inclusiveness of human relations" it must respond to such differences of experience by developing structures that compensate for this inevitable and marginalizing power gradient. Only then can children truly "join with others in creating a more diversely constructed political whole" where we "live interdependently as plural others in common."[49]

For Wall, the person-with-integrity is the person-in-interdependent-responsive-relationship-with-empowering-others. This is true of children, of persons with dementia and other disabilities, but also of able adults. Everyone's integrity depends on the self-transformation that arises from vulnerable, interdependent, responsive relationship with others. Without others, there is no self. To be sure, as a theologian, Wall is not a non-foundationalist; he develops a Christian anthropology "in light of childhood."[50] However, his arguments for children's social rights do not rely on this grounding.

Whereas Brännmark is concerned to simply to leave room for pluralism among societies, Wall wishes society to honor the diversity of human subjects and experiences by developing structures of responsive interdependence that compensate for the unavoidable power differences among people in different social positions. Yet, for both, a robust vision of human rights leads eventually to an assertion that integrity is vulnerable because to be human is to be in interdependent, reciprocal networks of relationship. Once again, for better and for worse, others stand at the core of our being, and we stand at the core of theirs.

Conclusion

My aim was to approach a modest question inductively: what account of human integrity can survive childhood, dementia and other kinds of mental incapacitation, and other life changes? Inspired by puzzles from my own life, I have come at this thought experiment from two directions: philosophy and theology of time, memory, and narrative; and non-foundational human rights ethics. Both have led us to the same place: our integrity rests at least partly in our embodied, interdependent relations with others, which are vulnerable in both the positive and negative senses. Whatever else the core of our integrity includes, we do not reside there alone—a truth that, as it happens, even my daughter's dogs affirm.

This conclusion echoes Hille Haker's insistence that human integrity is embodied, social, and engaged in relations of power, vulnerable not just in the sense of being affectable or endangered but also and essentially unable to exist without other-relations at all. Ontological, moral, and structural vulnerabilities are essential elements of human being, not

[48] See for example John Wall, "Can Democracy Represent Children? Toward a Politics of Difference," *Childhood* 19:1 (2011), pp. 94-95.
[49] Wall, "Can Democracy Represent Children?", p. 95; Wall, "Human Rights," p. 541.
[50] See Wall, *Ethics in Light of Childhood*, pp. 35-58; and John Wall, "Fallen Angels: A Contemporary Christian Ethical Ontology of Childhood," *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 8:2 (2004), pp. 160–184.

accidents.[51] In addition, at each stage of life each person expresses the formal, interdependent elements that comprise integrity in a unique, individual mode. Not just the abstract, interdependent elements, but all concrete manifestations of them in individuals, are *de facto* vulnerable and yet *de jure* morally inviolable.

Yet beyond this Haker, Brännmark, and Wall invite us to the kind of existential specification that Augustine and Whiteheadians inspire. At all stages of life, including infancy, dementia, and brain injury, we are dependent on and interdependent with the people who help us to form and carry the bodily as well as verbal stories and memories that are part of our inviolable core, and that no one may justly damage, alter, manipulate, destroy, mar, or violate.[52] People honor our personal integrity in part by honoring those others, who are part of our core self; people sustain our personal integrity in part by sustaining them and by creating just communities with whom to build and preserve the narratives of all.

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[51] Hille Haker's three-dimensional account of vulnerable agency—ontological, moral, and structural—has corresponding implications for integrity in each dimension. Ontological vulnerability has to do with our organic dependence on the physical conditions of flourishing. Moral vulnerability has to do with the risk our (necessary, good) openness and responsiveness to others entails for the balance between our social identity and belonging on the one hand, and our uniqueness or singularity on the other. Being chronically disrespected and mis-recognized has an effect upon us. See Hille Haker, "Vulnerable Agency: Human Dignity and Gendered Violence," in *Towards a Critical Political Ethics: Catholic Ethics and Social Challenges* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2020), pp. 135-167. See also Alisa L. Carse, "Vulnerability, Integrity, and Human Flourishing," in *Health and Human Flourishing: Religion, Medicine, and Moral Anthropology*, edited by Carol Taylor, CFSN, and Roberto Dell'Oro (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2006), pp. 33-52. Structural vulnerability systemically locates some persons in places or social positions that have less scope for safe action than others. It harms their agency through diminishing their trust that society is a safe place for them to act. See Haker, "Vulnerable Agency," pp. 159-164.

[52] This is Rendtorff's second tentative definition of integrity; see Rendtorff, "Integrity, Concept of."

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

Tabea Ott & Peter Dabrock

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.

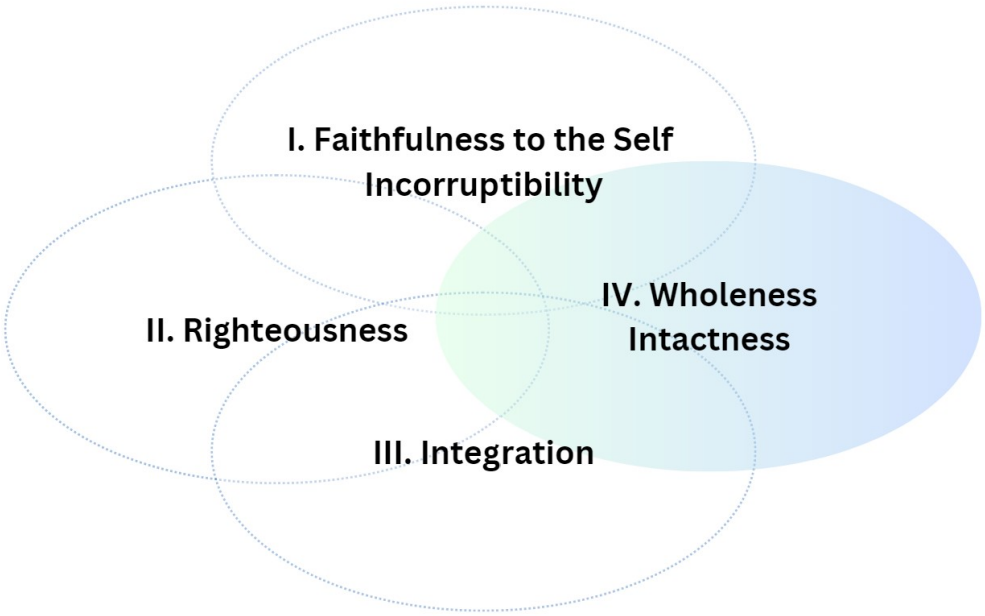

Figure 1.

[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 precariousness[21], 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, *Lyotard 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 themself. 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 themself 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

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[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-givenness 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 respons-ability. 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]

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[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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Self-determined Sex Work as Care Work Between Experiences of Integrity and Vulnerability

Sarah Jäger

Sex work or prostitution marks a controversial topic for Protestant sexual ethics. It is also a multifaceted phenomenon because it can occur in very different forms: the spectrum ranges from poverty, emergency and procurement prostitution to the self-determined and insured sex worker with all imaginable shades in between. In the current economic system, goods and services are exchanged, traded, sold, acquired and paid for, so sex work can also be understood as work. For the purposes of this article, we will therefore start from an understanding of sex work as care work. Care work can be understood as the satisfaction of needs and interests of third parties and the self. If sex work is discussed as care work, this has a variety of consequences. These include the fact that questions of vulnerability and integrity come to the fore. Integrity can be comprehended as self-realisation or autonomy and thus as potentially vulnerable, taking up Axel Honneth's early reflections on the issue of recognition. Integrity in Axel Honneth's sense can - according to a first approximation - play a role for sex work on three levels: physical or corporeal level, structural level and lifestyle or way of life level. Finally, the essay discusses the concept of negotiated or consensual morality as a contribution of Protestant ethics.

1. Introductory reflections on sex work

> "Let us fight for a free society with the right to sexuality, a deeply human need for closeness, tenderness, touch, desire - with consensual sex without taboos and legal prohibitions."[1]

This is the demand of the German activist sex worker Stephanie Klee, and this article would like to discuss what this confrontation she is talking about could look like. To this end, the article examines the thesis to what extent self-determined sex work as care work represents an experience of integrity and vulnerability. In my opinion it is important, that Protestant ethics stand up for processes of recognition of sex work. Therefore, it is necessary to

[1] Stephanie Klee, 'Care-Revolution & Prostitution – Ein anderer Blickwinkel macht's', in *Sexarbeit. Feministische Perspektiven*, edited by Jenny Künkel and Kathrin Schrader (Münster: Unrast Verlag, 2019), pp. 96-104, at p. 104, (own translation).

understand the tensions of this occupational field and its social stigmatisation and to outline the connection between integrity and vulnerability, which is particularly important for sex work. The conditions of sex work and the legal situation are very much country-dependent. The article focuses on the German situation and because of that uses mainly German-language literature. Some references to English-language titles can be found in the footnotes.

Therefore, I am first introducing the tensions in the understanding of sex work by activist sex workers on the one hand, and positions in Protestant ethics on the other hand. Some necessary definitions and description follow, in order to clarify the scope of this article. In a second step I argue why and how sex work can be understood as care work. If sex work is discussed as care work, this has a variety of consequences. These include the fact that questions of vulnerability and integrity come to the fore. I am then, thirdly, supplementing this understanding of sex wok with insights of Alex Honneth's theory of recognition, especially regarding vulnerability and integrity, which will help to understand the ethical problems in traditional negative perspectives on sex work. Finally, I draw my conclusions on an evaluation of sex work from a Protestant ethical perspective

Sex work or prostitution marks a controversial topic for Protestant sexual ethics in Germany. Protestant ethics deals with questions of human conduct of life from a theological perspective and is thereby a plural phenomenon. This diversity is also evident in questions of sexual ethics. What these approaches have in common, however, is that they understand sexuality strongly as a relational event that is lived within a monagem and binding partnership[2]. This does not apply to sex work. Moreover, tendencies of repressing or marginalising human sexuality can still be found in German- and English-language theology today.[3] Previous theological approaches have tended to aim at "rescuing" sex workers, in the sense of offering them support to give up this work. This line of thought is often strongly normatively charged and theologically underpinned.[4] Sex work is also such a multifaceted phenomenon because it can occur in very different forms: the spectrum ranges from poverty, emergency and procurement prostitution to the self-determined and insured sex worker with all imaginable shades in between. In any case, a sharp distinction must be made between sex work and human trafficking. Sex work should be understood here as a largely self-determined professional activity in the field of body-related services and thus as care work, while human trafficking is always a crime.

In the discourses, it is also important to keep in mind sex workers in the informal sector, queer sex workers, refugees, sex workers who are HIV-positive or drug users.[5] Here the question of self-determination must be discussed in a different way. Also at this point

[2] This also applies to approaches that see themselves as non-conservative, cf. Peter Dabrock, Renate Augstein, Cornelia Helfferich, Stefanie Schardien and Uwe Sielert, *Unverschämt – schön. Sexualethik: evangelisch und lebensnah* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2015).
Attempts to think about the connections between religion and sexuality in a more diverse way can also be found in the USA, for example, cf. Kelsy Burke, 'The False Dichotomy of Sex and Religion in America', *Sociology of Religion* 83:4 (2022), pp. 417-433, online at https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srab062 (accessed 2023-05-22).

[3] Thia Cooper, 'Fair Trade Sex: Reflections on God, Sex, and Economics', *Feminist Theology* 19:2 (2010), pp. 194-207.

[4] Cf. Lauren McGrow, 'Doing It (Feminist Theology and Faith-Based Outreach) With Sex Workers – Beyond Christian Rescue and the Problem-Solving Approach', *Feminist Theology* 25:2 (2017), pp. 150-169; Nadia Bolz-Weber, *Shameless: A Sexual Reformation* (New York: Convergent, 2019).

[5] Cf. Tom Fixemer and Verena Hucke, 'Queere Geflüchtete und die Diskursivierung des ‚Anderen' in Debatten um Sexarbeit, ‚Willkommenskultur' und Schutz', *Gender* 1 (2022), pp. 41-54.

the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon becomes apparent. Sex work is mostly carried out by women*[6].

The following considerations focus exclusively on voluntarily performed sex work.[7] Most self-employed sex workers operate in independently rented apartments, in studios, or in escort or BDSM. They are independently able to decide which activities they want to offer and which they refuse. They are not under the coercion and violence of a pimp. Any form of forced prostitution is to be rejected from an ethical point of view. It is inhuman and a crime and constitutes an act of violence that has nothing to do with self-determined sexuality. How to deal with such criminal acts remains to be discussed elsewhere.

Within the evangelical-theological discourse, there is now repeatedly an argumentative mixing of forced prostitution and self-determined sex work. Siit can be observed that there are strong voices within German Protestant ethics that problematise the partly positive portrayal of sex work in the media, such as Annette Noller, chairperson of the board of the Diakonisches Werk Württemberg, who states: "The misery of the women who are sexually exploited in human trafficking, their objectification as a sex object, as a commodity in this business, their subjection to violence and their experiencing of pain - also psychologically - is not shown."[8]

This quote shows particularly clearly that in ethical discourses, provisions between prostitution and trafficking in human beings repeatedly run into each other in terms of argumentation, although it is precisely here that sharp differentiations are necessary.[9] However, even the term "voluntariness" for the practice of sex work is ambivalent, since the reasons for entering sex work are manifold and factors such as poverty and the lack of other income opportunities often play a role in this context. This places sex work in the discourse on precarious work, as other jobs, such as in retail or the service sector, are done out of simple economic necessity or less with a focus on personal self-realisation. Here, sex work can also be understood as a way of securing one's personal life.

Sex work is thus a generic term for all forms of sexual and erotic work.[10] It refers to a consensual sexual or sexualised service between adult business partners in return for

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[6] The asterisk is intended to indicate that the term *Women includes women, lesbians, intersex, non-binary, trans and agender persons.

[7] Any form of forced prostitution as an illegal form of forcing people into prostitution must be rejected in the strongest possible terms. It is a violation of human rights and a criminal offence (§ 232a Forced Prostitution StGB). Forced prostitution is supplemented under criminal law by "exploitation of prostitutes" and "pimping".

[8] Norbert Schäfer, 'Württembergs Diakonie-Chefin: „Medien vermitteln verzerrtes Bild von Prostitution'" (30.05.2022), *Pro. Das christliche Medienmagazin* online at https://www.pro-medienmagazin.de/wuerttembergs-diakonie-chefin-medien-vermitteln-verzerrtes-bild-von-prostitution/ (accessed 2022-10-27) (own translation).

[9] Similar tendencies can also be found in Protestant sexual ethics in the USA. Here, the way sex-trafficking is dealt with (and the attempt to suppress it) is strongly influenced by Protestant-Christian ideas and thus prevents a differentiated perception of sex work (autonomy of the performers, etc.). Yvonne Zimmermann, for example, states that this religious grounding is problematic because it limits victims' autonomy and fails to adequately address the causes and consequences of trafficking, cf. Yvonne C. Zimmermann, *Other Dreams of Freedom: Religion, Sex, and Human Trafficking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[10] Martina Schuster, Almut Sülzle and Agnieszka Zimowska, *Disourse on prostitution and human trafficking in the context of UEFA EURO 2012. Academic study of discourse and campaigns in the run-up to the 2012 European Football Championship finals as the basis for advising decision-makers*. UEFA (December 2010), online at http://lastradainternational.org/lsidocs/Disourse%20on%20prostitution%20and%20human%20traffi

payment or other material goods. Prostitution, on the other hand, as the explicit physical practice, toleration and stimulation of sexual acts in return for payment, represents a sub-sector of sex work. It is not always possible to draw clear lines of demarcation here. In the context of sex-positive feminist politics, the term sex work is also used synonymously with prostitution in order to emphasise its service character and to promote the recognition of sex work as paid work. The term itself goes back to the sex work activist Carol Leigh.[11] With this term, sex work is a non-stigmatising term that can be used to focus on work and also care work.

In *Protestant sexual ethics* there has been a certain agreement so far "that the separation of sexuality from the personhood of a human being is to be evaluated as problematic and sexuality should therefore, if possible, be lived within a binding, monogamous relationship"[12]. All these characteristics - monagamy, commitment and exclusivity - do not apply to sex work, at least not at first glance. The Protestant ethicist Frank Surall, for example, argues with the figure of "self-sex" in Volkmar Sigusch's work, describing a one-sided focus of sexuality on the satisfaction of the needs of only one person, in the context of sex work the customer. This instrumentalisation of another human being for one's own pleasure would be ultimately inhumane and therefore not compatible with Kantian ethics and its categorical imperative.[13] Furthermore, he states: "It also seems problematic that sexuality is treated as a commodity and as an object that can be bought, as it often cannot be reduced to the body alone, while at the same time sex workers demand recognition for their work, in which they have neither experienced immaturity nor oppression".[14] From an ethical point of view, this tension must be kept in mind and further illuminated: What does this mean for dealing with the phenomenon of sex work? Can or must there be ethical and social recognition here? What forms of recognition, also as a professional activity[15], are possible and perhaps even ethically required?

What can an ethical assessment of sex work as a multi-faceted phenomenon look like that tries to avoid stigmatisation? And what can even a responsible prostitution policy look like from an Protestant perspective? Can such a policy be found at all? Nathalie Eleyth summarises the current situation of Protestant ethics and shows which positions can be found in the discourse: "It is not always easy to make clear decisions in the debate about sexuality for sale. On the one hand, it seems problematic from a Protestant perspective that sexuality is treated as a commodity and as an object that can be bought. Sexuality is fundamentally not to be reduced to the body alone, but always has something to do with the soul and personhood of a human being. On the other hand, representatives of the

cking%20in%20the%20context%20of%20UEFA%20EURO%202012.pdf (accessed 2021-03-13) and Heike Zurhold, 'Interaktionen in der Sexarbeit: Gesundheitsförderung und Empowerment für Beschaffungsprostituierte', in *Risiko mindern beim Drogengebrauch: Gesundheitsförderung, Verbrauchertipps, Beratungswissen, Praxishilfen*, edited by Jan-Hendrik Heudtlass and Heino Stöver (Frankfurt, Main: Fachhochschul-Verlag, 2002), pp. 104-119.

[11] Cf. Carolin Küppers, 'Sexarbeit', *Gender Glossar / Gender Glossary* (2016), online at http://gender-glossar.de (accessed 2022-07-04).

[12] Cf. Nathalie Eleyth, 'Prostitution – (K)ein Thema für Theologie und Kirche?', *Evangelische Theologie* 73/5 (2013), pp. 391-398, at p. 395 (own translation).

[13] Cf. Frank Surall, 'Ethik der Lebensformen', in *Handbuch der Evangelischen Ethik*, edited by Wolfgang Huber, Torsten Meireis and Hans-Richard Reuter (München: C.H. Beck, 2015), pp. 451-516, at p. 465.

[14] Cf. ibid.

[15] Beate Leopold, 'Alles ist käuflich…: Sexualität, Markt und Macht', in *Prostitution und Menschenhandel. Was hilft? Neue Bündnisse und Wege in der Arbeit. Dokumentation der Fachtagung des Diakonischen Werkes der EKD vom 14. bis 16. März 2001 in Berlin*, edited by Zentraler Vertrieb des Diakonischen Werkes der EKD (Berlin, 04/2001), pp. 9-14.

whore movement claim that it is perfectly possible to be a self-determined sex worker who experiences neither immaturity nor exploitation."[16]

In the current economic system, goods and services are exchanged, traded, sold, acquired and paid for, so sex work can also be understood as work.[17] For the purposes of this article, we will therefore start from an understanding of sex work as care work.[18] Sex work, like many other forms of care work, is a body-based service provided in one-to-one contact and involves caring for another person. Activist sex workers advocate for understanding their activity as care work in order to valorize it, to understand it as socially relevant and thus to destimate it. This understanding will be followed here.

2. Sex work as care work

Care work can be understood as the satisfaction of needs and interests of third parties and the self, as a "work of looking after the physical, psychological, emotional and developmental needs of one or more other people"[19]. The term care work, on the other hand focuses on the content of work and refers to the concrete care activities, i.e. education, nursing, caring, teaching, and the provision of care, such as care activities, i.e. bringing up, caring for, looking after, teaching, counselling.

This care work can be unpaid in families, but it can also be paid in state institutions, in institutions of social organisations or in private companies. Since care work refers to the work content of caring activities, it is also of central importance in the discussion of basic human needs and the possibility of a society that is oriented towards these needs."[20] So it is a central part of all human life, but is often socially marginalised and takes place invisibly, often being done by women*.[21] "Every person is dependent on care; what constitutes care and which forms of care are considered more important than others are questions of great political importance."[22] Thus, thinking about care work is based on an image of humanity that can only think of every human being as integrated in a relationship and thus dependent on others.

The above-mentioned definition of care work can also apply to self-determined sex work, in which the needs, in this case sexual needs, of another person are also taken care of. This work is also about offering and providing (erotic-sexual) and thus body-related services in exchange for money.[23] This work could also be understood as a body-bound caring activity. The demand to recognise sex work as care work and thus to draw attention

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[16] Eleyth, 'Prostitution – (K)ein Thema für Theologie und Kirche?', p. 397 (own translation).
[17] Cf. Renate Kirchhoff, 'Prostitution – was hat Kirche damit zu tun', in *Prostitution und Menschenhandel – (k)ein Thema in Kirche und Diakonie?! Dokumentation der Fachtagung vom 23 bis 25. Juni 1988 in Berlin*, edited by Zentraler Vertrieb des Diakonischen Werkes der EKD (Berlin, 2/1998), pp. 16-38, at p. 36.
[18] Cf. Künkel and Schrader, *Sexarbeit. Feministische Perspektiven*
This article works with the term care work. However, the related concept of care ethics is only touched on in passing.
[19] https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1059, zugegriffen: 17.05.2022.
[20] Gabriele Winker, *Care Revolution. Schritte in eine solidarische Gesellschaft* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2015), p. 17.
[21] Cf. Lea Chilian, 'Care-Ethik/Care-Ethics', *Ethik-Lexikon* (Version 1.0, 11.10.2018), online at https://www.ethik-lexikon.de/lexikon/care-ethikcare-ethics (accessed 2022-11-25).
[22] Ibid.
[23] In doing so, capitalist and structural relations of power and dependency, which can coincide with gendered attributions, are not to be obscured in any way.

to the commonalities between sex work and other forms of care work and ultimately to destigmatise sex work has so far been raised mainly by activist sex workers themselves.[24]

If one further assumes that sexuality and the experience of intimacy and eroticism are an important part of the human experience of life and the body[25], then sex work can also satisfy these needs beyond the framework of a love relationship. This is always linked to the question of whether living out sexuality with another person is a human right. Representatives of the sex-positive movement in particular argue that way.[26] Finally, sex work as care work can be interpreted as part of self-care in the Foucauldian sense and thus also as a form of (reciprocal) self-empowerment.[27]

The rejectionist attitude of Protestant sex ethics and these reflections on sex work as care work are in tension with each other. This tension becomes particularly clear when looking at sex accompaniment or sex assistance for people with disabilities. A distinction can here be made between passive and active sexual assistance. *Passive sexual assistance* includes, for example, the provision of sexual articles, sexual counselling, the establishment of sexual contacts, preparatory activities such as transport to a sexual encounter, undressing a couple for sexual contact, protection from heteronomy and structural violence. It can include acts such as stroking, hugging, holding and caressing, which makes it difficult to strictly separate from active sexual assistance. *Active sexual assistance* includes sexual massage, hand masturbation and sexual intercourse, i.e. sex work if paid. In particular, sexual assistance in general should be about helping people to help themselves, i.e. masturbation, sexual and contact counselling. Such forms of sex work often seem to be socially less provocative, so that a division into "good" (socially accepted) and "bad" (socially rejected) sex work is threatening.

Here it is particularly relevant for the ethical discourse to consider to what extent the experience of sexuality, also with another person, actually represents a human right that must also be implemented, for example, within the framework of participation.[28]

3. Axel Honneth's concept of integrity and vulnerability in the context of his recognition theory

In order to better understand self-determined sex work and thus facilitate ethical evaluation, it may be useful to consider integrity and vulnerability in this context. These

[24] Cf. Undine de Rivière and Kathrin Schrader, 'Sexarbeit ist Care-Arbeit – das spüren viele', in *Care! Zum Verhältnis von Sorge und Sozialer Arbeit*, edited by Christiane Bomert, Sandra Landhäußer, Eva Maria Lohner and Barbara Stauber (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2021), pp. 251-266.
[25] This is a central assumption of the Protestant discourse on sexual ethics, at the latest since the memorandum on sexual ethics of 1971, cf. *Denkschrift zu Fragen der Sexualethik,* edited by Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, 2nd edition (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1971).
[26] Janet W. Hardy and Dossie Eaton, *The Ethical Slut: A Practical Guide to Polyamory, Open Relationships & Other Adventures* (Emeryville, CA.: Greenery Press, 1997).
[27] Michel Foucault, 'Vom klassischen Selbst zum modernen Subjekt', in *Michel Foucault. Jenseits von Strukturalismus und Hermeneutik*, edited by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, 2nd edition (Weinheim: Beltz, 1994), pp. 281-292.
[28] There are many arguments in favour of both directions. For example, it can be stated that sexuality belongs to the creaturely reality of the human being and represents a basic need. However, should there be a right to sexuality, this right would have to be guaranteed in any case, with all the consequences, including legal ones. Particularly challenging in this context is the Incel community, in which men strongly advocate for their right to sexuality with women, cf. Amia Srinivasan, *The Right to Sex* (London et al.: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022).

points are particularly relevant to a question about recognition of self-determined sex work.

Integrity can be understood as self-realisation or autonomy[29] and thus as potentially vulnerable to other people as well as to structures, taking up Axel Honneth's early reflections[30] on the issue of recognition. His ethic of recognition is based precisely on human integrity and the fact of human beings' vulnerability. Even if self-determined and insured sex workers cannot be called victims per se - and this is crucial - they are actually more vulnerable than many other workers due to the stigmatisation, devaluation and moralisation of their work, also - if sex work is illegalised - due to assaults by the police or due to obstacles in guaranteeing basic health care. Again and again, sex workers also experience dimensions of invisibilisation and othering[31]. Many German activists further argue that the so-called law for the protection of persons working in prostitution (Prostitution Protection Act - ProstSchG) in Germany reproduces the victimisation, homogenisation and stigmatisation of sex work through the state reporting requirements and sex workers as well as the negation of agency and interpretative power along the lines of self-determination of work, body and sexuality.[32] Looking at sex work from a sex-positive perspective does not mean romanticising the conditions under which many sex workers work, but lead to a fairer and less pejorative ethical evaluation of sex work, which must then also have political consequences.

Honneth's theory is a contribution to political philosophy as well as social philosophy. Political and social philosophy can both be understood as a "critical instance of reflection"[33]. They are spaces of thought in which, "which standards for successful forms of social life are discussed"[34]. In Honneth's view, social philosophy has a bridging function between ethics and sociology. Its task is to "reconstruct developments in society and the social in general and 'pathologies of the social' in particular and to subject them to criticism".[35] This offers particular opportunities for assessing sex work.

Honneth's reflection on human vulnerability is decidedly embedded in a normatively oriented social theoretical framework, namely his theory of recognition. Here, vulnerability plays a decisive role, also in terms of theory strategy, since, in Honneth's view, it can provide decisive empirical evidence for the necessity and possibility of a critical theory of society. "It is the fact of suffering from unkindness, social deprivation, disenfranchisement, exclusion from social participation, reification, etc. that makes it necessary to critically examine historically and socially conditioned life circumstances."[36] In doing so, he is concerned not only to focus on suffering that is articulated and

[29] Cf. Charles Taylor, *Multikulturalismus und die Politik der Anerkennung* (Frankfurt, Main: Fischer, 1993), p. 13f.
[30] Cf. Axel Honneth, 'Integrität und Missachtung. Grundmotive einer Moral der Anerkennung', in *Glück und Gerechtigkeit. Moral am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts*, edited by Ruthard Stäblein (Frankfurt, Main: Insel, 1999), pp. 271-288.
[31] Cf. Lisa Duggan, 'The New Heteronormativity. The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism', in *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*, edited by Russ Castronovo and Dana D. Nelson (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. 175-194.
[32] Cf. Fixemer and Hucke, 'Queere Geflüchtete', p. 45.
[33] Markus Dederich, 'Gefährdete Integrität. Axel Honneths Theorie der Anerkennung', in *Schlüsselwerke der Vulnerabilitätsforschung*, edited by Robert Stöhr, Diana Lohwasser, Juliane Noack Napoles et al. (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2019), pp. 201-219, at p. 201.
[34] Axel Honneth, *Das Andere der Gerechtigkeit: Aufsätze zur praktischen Philosophie* (Frankfurt, Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), p. 13.
[35] Dederich, 'Gefährdete Integrität', p. 201.
[36] Ibid., p. 202.

denounced by social movements. Rather, there is a danger of not perceiving "facts of social injustice"[37] that are not publicly articulated. Honneth also endeavours to identify "such forms of institutionally caused suffering and misery [...] that also exist before and independently of all political articulation in social movements".[38]

It is primarily about such vulnerabilities from which political obligations can be derived. These are articulated in "feelings of humiliation and disrespect".[39] Furthermore, they are always bound back to society. For Honneth, recognition theory is the appropriate conceptual instrument to "categorically decode social experiences of injustice as a whole".[40] Acknowledging another person means "perceiving in him or her a value characteristic that intrinsically motivates us to no longer behave self-centredly, but according to the intentions, desires or needs of that other person".[41] Because the ethics of recognition starts with human integrity and the fact of its vulnerability, it demonstrates an explicit protective character.[42] Furthermore, he claims that only those who feel positively noted, respected and valued by the behaviour and communication of their fellow human beings also experience themselves as socially recognised in an elementary form.

4. Three levels of integrity with Axel Honneth

In the following, I show how integrity in Axel Honneth's sense can - according to a first approximation - play a role for sex work on three levels:

4.1. Physical or corporeal level

Those who perform sex work as well as those who receive it have bodily experiences of vulnerability and integrity. "On the one hand, sex work is an explicitly body-related activity; on the other hand, the body of the sex worker - and in another way also the body of the client - is produced as a body on the border of the socially normal, which repeatedly challenges hegemonic ideas of sexuality and corporeality."[43] Bodily integrity can be violated by neglect, humiliation, infliction of pain or violence.[44] Here, too, sexuality represents an intimate space of getting involved with each other and being touched, limited, however, by the permanent nature of the service. However, a one-sided and naive idealisation should be resisted just as much as a blanket condemnation of sex work as a form of sexuality outside of a partnership.[45] If sexual self-determination is further understood as integrity thus as part of personal rights, sex work can enable such experiences. At the same time, the activity of sex work means

[37] Axel Honneth, 'Umverteilung als Anerkennung. Eine Erwiderung auf Nancy Fraser', in *Umverteilung oder Anerkennung? Eine politisch-philosophische Kontroverse*, edited by Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (Frankfurt, Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), pp. 129-224, at p. 137.
[38] Ibid., p. 139.
[39] Axel Honneth, 'Die Pointe der Anerkennung. Eine Erwiderung auf die Erwiderung', in *Umverteilung oder Anerkennung?* edited by Fraser and Honneth, pp. 271-305, at p. 281.
[40] Honneth, 'Umverteilung als Anerkennung', p. 157.
[41] Axel Honneth, *Das Ich im Wir: Studien zur Anerkennungstheorie* (Frankfurt, Main: Suhrkamp, 2010), p. 118f.
[42] Cf. Dederich, 'Gefährdete Integrität', p. 204.
[43] Rebecca Mörgen and Anna Schnitzer, 'Prostitution – Körper – Soziale Arbeit: Eine einführende Verhältnisbestimmung', *SozProb* 29 (2018), pp. 89-98, at p. 91 (own translation).
[44] Cf. Axel Honneth, *Kampf um Anerkennung: Zur moralischen Grammatik sozialer Konflikte*, 2nd edition (Frankfurt, Main: Suhrkamp, 2003 [1992]).
[45] For example, Molinski argues in the TRE article Prostitution II. Ethical, in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, Vol. 27, edited by Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 1997), pp. 531-538.

a massive dimension of surrender and poses a threat to one's own vulnerability. Sex workers are threatened by experiences of violence of different dimensions: One could argue in two different directions: on the one hand, female sex workers in particular could be seen as victims in a male-dominated society. Here, prostitution is perceived as violence against women, in which human dignity is violated. On the other hand, sex work is seen as a sexual service that is legally practised and thus justified in society. Sex workers perform this activity voluntarily and in a self-determined manner. It can be assumed that the two areas merge smoothly in reality. A person working in a self-determined manner can also run the risk of experiencing violence from clients or pimps. The framework conditions of sex work and the different places of work have a considerable influence on the potential danger, as a result of which assaults and acts of violence can take place. A distinction must be made between verbal, psychological, physical and sexual violence. Physical assaults with or without injury or light/severe violence with life-threatening consequences, sexual violence and coercion to view pornographic images/films must be included in this context. Rape, e.g. with injuries or homicide, is to be considered the most severe or extreme form of sexual violence.[46] Sex workers are therefore exposed to a variety of physical hazards, even if they are self-employed and insured. There is an urgent need for different framework conditions that enable sustainable protection against violence. The realisation of such framework conditions would be much easier if the reduction of its stigmatisation assumed with an ethical reassessment of sex work penetrates the public sphere.

4.2. Structural level

Thinking about sex work as care work in the field of tension between vulnerability and integrity also offers structural approaches for an ethical assessment of sex work beyond stigmatisation. This level refers primarily to the normative self-understanding of a person and their possession of rights. "This level is violated by the structural exclusion of certain rights within a society, which others claim for themselves as a matter of course. For Honneth, rights are, in a general sense, legitimate claims of individuals that guarantee their equal participation in an institutional order as full members".[47] For example, there is an opportunity here to understand sex workers not paternalistically as victims, but rather as autonomous individuals who have a right to recognition. This requires legal and political framework conditions that actually ensure self-determination in the exercise of such an activity. Violation of integrity and thus the experience of vulnerability lie in the structural exclusion from certain rights within a society that others claim for themselves as a matter of course. This applies in many ways to people who work in sex work, for example, in matters of labour law, health insurance or taking up another professional activity after or during sex work.

4.3. Lifestyle or Way of life level

Finally, the third level concerns the way of life of individuals and groups. Here, an evaluative form of disregard for integrity is present when individuals or groups are denied social value, for instance through processes of othering: "What is meant by this is that their kind of self-realisation is not given social esteem within a given societal transmission horizon."[48] At this level, the disregard and the resulting violation occur through the denial of recognition of specific forms of self-determination and through the withdrawal of solidarity. It is precisely this experience that sex workers describe

[46] Cf. Julia Wege, 'Sexualisierte Gewalt und Prostitution', in *Handbuch Sexualisierte Gewalt und pädagogische Kontexte: Theorie, Forschung, Praxis*, edited by Alexandra Retkowski, Angelika Treibel and Elisabeth Tuider (Weinheim and Basel: Beltz Juventa, 2018), pp. 360-368.
[47] Dederich, 'Gefährdete Integrität', p. 207.
[48] Ibid.

> in a formative way, for example the activist Stephanie Klee: "Why can't they [people, note S.J.] stand in solidarity for the rights of sex workers (as well as for the rights of other discriminated groups or other workers)? Because they cannot imagine that sex work under good conditions can be a good job and that these conditions can be extended to all sex workers? Or because they are suspicious that sex workers violate everything that is generally considered decent, bourgeois and normal for women?"[49] At the same time, sex workers describe that similar violations can also affect the users of sex work.

These considerations, based on Axel Honneth, have political consequences: these concern legal equality and protection, but above all also social and ecclesiastical destigmatisation. Here, Protestant ethics can contribute perspectives of a consensus morality.

5. Consensus morality as a building block for the evaluation of sex work from the perspective of Protestant ethics

With regard to the sexual-ethical discourses as a whole in Protestantism, three things can be stated:

1. "Protestant discourses on sexual ethics have so far primarily reacted to processes of social and legal change, only rarely actively accompanying them and almost never initiating them. In doing so, they are always faced with the challenge of updating their own message of unconditional acceptance of human beings without being accused of merely falling prey to the spirit of the times. This also applies to the ethical evaluation of sex work.

2. Protestant discourses on sexual ethics are only slowly adopting a dialogical format of ethics; the temptation to speak more about people rather than with them is still too great in many places.

3. Gender role stereotypes around sexual needs and desires have changed a lot and can be largely abandoned."[50]

This is where the concept of negotiated or consensual morality can be brought in. Consensual morality can be understood here as a discursive reaching of consensus between two equal adult partners in a concrete and limited situation. In doing so, the legitimate difference of two people must also be considered, as well as the acceptance of difference and respect for the autonomy of others. In this way, each person is trusted and expected to take responsibility for his or her own needs and wishes.

In social philosophy and ethics, the question of consensus has been discussed in connection with the orientation of action to the common sense of a community. From the point of view of Protestant ethics, it was criticized here that ethical orientation is to take place by ignoring the basic convictions of people on which ethical orientations are based. This is connected to the insight of Christian ethics that human action gains its orientation from faith, which cannot be established by consensus.[51]

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[49] Klee, 'Care-Revolution & Prostitution', p. 102.

[50] Sarah Jäger, 'Norm und Abweichung. Sexualethische Diskurse im Protestantismus der Gegenwart', in *Rechte des Körpers: Juristische, philosophische und theologische Perspektiven*, edited by Christian Berger, Michael Frey and Florian Priesemuth (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2022), pp. 107-128, at p. 124 (own translation).

[51] Cf. Christoph Schwöbel, 'Konsens III. Ethisch', in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart 4 Online*, edited by Hans Dieter Betz, Don S. Browning, Bernd Janowski and Eberhard Jüngel, online at

Consensus morality is otherwise mostly debated in the context of discourse ethics.[52] On the one hand, it can be criticized that the demand for consensus orients the living conditions of society to an unattainable ideal and thus obstructs the path to realistically attainable goals.[53]

Morality in terms of sexuality has not become superfluous, but it has changed in our present.

"The focus is no longer on the evaluation of the respective sexual practice, nor on the concrete social form, whether heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual, marital or non-marital; what is decisive in the present is rather the consensus: both participants must voluntarily agree to the sexual act."[54] The law today therefore reacts extremely sensitively when this consensus is not upheld.

The concept of consensus morality has been little applied to sexual ethics issues. In my opinion, this is where the opportunities are particularly good, because at this point it is not a matter of finding a consensus of the convictions that guide a society's actions, but rather of establishing the agreement of both parties for a very concrete individual situation. Here, the argument of individual responsibility, which also has a tradition in Protestant ethics, can be made strong. Protestant sexual ethicists in particular criticise especially the negotiating ethics of the "legal consent models" and complain that sexual self-determination is becoming the decisive yardstick here. Frank Surall points out that this does not mean that acts are therefore necessarily good.[55] Sven Lewandowski critically remarks: "Morality has thus retreated from the realm of the sexual and to a position of formal consensus."[56]

In my opinion, however, voluntariness, consensus[57] and equality are also constitutive criteria for a Protestant sexual ethic,[58] because responsibility and an awareness of own needs can be exercised and the right to sexual self-determination can be strengthened in order to counteract sexist and patriarchal residual structures.

If consensus is made the decisive characteristic of assessment, this has consequences for the ethical assessment of sex work as care work. As long as it is carried out without coercion - and this is where the question of genuine voluntariness poses

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-8262_rgg4_COM_12102> (accessed 2023-05-22). Schwöbel makes reference here to Nicolas Rescher, *Pluralism: Against the Demand for Consensus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

[52] The criticism by Seyla Benhabib, for example, is worth mentioning: "[T]he difficulty with consent theories is as old as Rousseau's dictum – 'On les forcera d'être libre.' Consent alone can never be a criterion of anything, neither of truth nor of moral validity; rather, it is always the rationality of the procedure for attaining agreement which is of philosophical interest. We must interpret consent not as an end-goal but as a process for the cooperative generation of truth or validity." Seyla Benhabib, 'In the shadow of Aristotle and Hegel. Communicative Ethics and Current Controversies in Practical Philosophy', in *Situating the Self. Gender Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), pp. 27-73 p. 42.

[53] Cf. Schwöbel, 'Konsens III. Ethisch'.

[54] Isolde Karle, *Liebe in der Moderne: Körperlichkeit, Sexualität und Ehe* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2014), p. 103.

[55] Cf. Surall, 'Ethik der Lebensformen', p. 464.

[56] Sven Lewandowski, *Sexualität in den Zeiten funktionaler Differenzierung: Eine systemtheoretische Analyse* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2004), p. 322.

[57] Such a consensus finds its limit at the transition to a criminal offence, for example in the case of cannibalism.

[58] Michael Haspel, 'Sexualität, Sexualethik', in *Evangelisches Soziallexikon*, 8th edition, edited by Martin Honecker, Horst Dahlhaus and Jörg Hübner (Stuttgart et al.: Kohlhammer, 2001), col. 1393-1402, at col. 1397.

challenges - there are no grounds for condemnation or stigmatisation, neither in the social nor in the (labour) legal sphere.

It seems important to me to consider further how sex work can be understood as care work and what ethical and political consequences this would have. For this purpose, a first attempt should be shown here to develop new ethical evaluation patterns of self-determined sex work.

Furthermore, in my opinion, Protestant ethics must stand up for processes of recognition of sex work on all three levels shown - physically, structurally as well as in the area of ways of life - and also introduce its own voice into the political-social discourse.

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Helping Refugees Build a Home – Interactions between Muslim Chaplains and Vulnerable Persons

Hansjörg Schmid

This study focuses on the question of how Muslim chaplains can, through their interventions, exert an influence on the situation of refugees, characterised by vulnerability and loss of home. Based on definitions in social work and anthropology studies, home can be conceptualised as a key anthropological need, comprised of spatial, temporal, relational and spiritual dimensions. Referring to an empirical study on asylum chaplaincy in Switzerland, this study analyses how five Muslim chaplains accompany refugees, how their styles of chaplaincy differ in practice and what effects their interventions have. These empirical results are then brought into conversation with a theoretical framework, to explore the connections between counselling and vulnerability. While it could be argued that referring to the vulnerable situation of refugees reinforces an image of passivity, the co-construction of a home represents a collaborative effort and empowers refugees by mobilising both forces and resources. Chaplains, in particular, can contribute to the relational and spiritual dimensions of home. For refugees, articulating their religious concerns and working together with Muslim chaplains, means they can address the limits of the existing asylum system and demand recognition of cultural diversity.

Introduction

Refugees, who often experience high situational vulnerability, due to the loss of their home, their forced flight, distress, violence, persecution and unclear legal status while awaiting an asylum decision, form a target groups addressed by chaplains. Refugee vulnerability is particularly evident in the transitional situation of host country asylum centres, due to the temporary nature of this 'home' and to the interpersonal relationships formed there. For this reason, it seems obvious to use asylum centres as a starting point for research on interactions between chaplains and refugees. In these centres, host countries usually provide psychosocial services to support refugees. Chaplaincy services are part of such support and countries generally offer them to refugees in response to specific needs[1].

[1] Sarah L. Kimball, Haniya S. Syeda, Houda Chergui, Linda A. Piwowarczyk and Jennie Gould, 'Embedding Chaplaincy Services in Primary Care for Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers: A Boston Pilot Intervention', *Journal of Religion and Health* (2022), pp. 1-10.

Against the background of an empirical study conducted in Switzerland, the following considerations will focus on connections between vulnerability, home and spiritual care. The latter term is used for the wider disciplinary field, whereas its institutional implementation will be referred to as chaplaincy. This paper explores the following questions: what role does home play for refugees, as particularly vulnerable persons? How does interaction with a chaplain influence the situation of refugees? What insights concerning vulnerability result from this process?

The first section of this paper relates the notion of home to the vulnerability of refugees. The second section develops for dimensions of home which serve as a theoretical framework. The third section explores the supportive role chaplaincy can play in home-building, while the fourth section presents the empirical research context and the methodology used in the study. In the fifth section, we analyse how five Muslim chaplains accompany refugees, supported by interview material. The final section brings the empirical results into conversation with our theoretical starting points, to explore connections between counselling and vulnerability.

Home in Relation to the Vulnerability of Refugees

Vulnerability is a key concept when analysing the situation of refugees. It relates to the physical and mental situation of human beings and entails dependence on the care of others[2]. However, due to the broad spectrum of understandings of vulnerability, "this notion has often been discussed in relation to other key concepts"[3] like need, dependency, care or exploitation[4]. Here, it will be related to the concept of "home", as both home and vulnerability are relational, and can therefore complement one another. Many studies on refugees refer to Judith Butler in developing a relational understanding of vulnerability that goes beyond a deficient reading of refugees' vulnerability[5] and its instrumentalization as an "essential marker of asylum policy"[6]. In contrast, according to Butler, vulnerability can reflect a general human condition, focussing on "susceptibility to others that is unwilled, unchosen, that is a condition of our responsiveness to others"[7]. This sense underscores the agency refugees have, which is also relevant to homemaking[8].

Analysing "the nexus between home and vulnerability", Aurora Massa speaks of "home vulnerability"[9] related to different aspects of home. A study on refugees in asylum

[2] Catriona Mackenzie, Wendy Rogers and Susan Dodds, 'What Is Vulnerability and Why Does It Matter for Moral Theory?', in *Vulnerability: New Essays in Ethics and Feminist Philosophy*, edited by Catriona Meckenzie, Wendy Rogers and Susan Dodds (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1-29, at p. 4.
[3] Amalia Gilodi, Isabelle Albert and Birte Nienaber, 'Vulnerability in the Context of Migration: a Critical Overview and a New Conceptual Model', *Human Arenas* (2022), pp. 1-21, at p. 3.
[4] Mackenzie, Rogers and Dodds, 'What Is Vulnerability?', p. 1.
[5] Gilodi, Albert and Nienaber, 'Vulnerability in the Context of Migration', pp. 5-6 and 11-12.
[6] Kate Smith and Louise Waite, 'New and enduring narratives of vulnerability: rethinking stories about the figure of the refugee', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45:13 (2019), pp. 2289-2307, at p. 2303.
[7] Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), pp. 87-88.
[8] Anne Sigfrid Grønseth and Ragne Øwre Thorshaug, 'Struggling for home where home is not meant to be. A study of asylum seekers in reception centers in Norway', *Focaal—Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 92 (2022), pp. 15-30, at p. 17.

centres in Norway refers to "vulnerable home-making"[10], that is, that refugees can often only reach "a precarious stability and a sense of home in a context of ongoing crisis and vulnerability"[11]. A key requirement for a home is security, not least because refugees themselves, or their friends and family members in their countries of origin, can be particularly affected by threats of bodily harm[12]. Security represents a basic human need: in Maslow's pyramid of needs, which has been applied as a tool for refugee counselling[13], security needs take second place, after basic existential needs and before social needs[14]. According to Maslow, security includes physical and emotional safety, but also basic material security. The fulfilment of these basic needs contributes to human well-being[15]. Conversely, it is known that mental health problems in refugees can also arise as a result of their precarious living conditions in host countries[16].

On this basis, a home can be understood as "a construction – something that is complex, multiple and in continual process"[17]. It is characterised by integrity and security, thus comprising the different needs mentioned by Maslow: "Each person has an idea of home that merges place and personality, that goes beyond having four walls and a roof, and that indicates a positive feeling that derives from security, belonging, attachment or familiarity, among other things."[18] However, a home is not always a safe place and therefore always remains ambivalent, with possible positive and negative associations[19]. Beyond its material dimension, personal, emotional and value-oriented aspects are included in the notion of a home.

In the context of migration and flight, the home becomes simultaneously mobile and settled, localised and expandable[20]. In contrast to a planned migration, however, refugees find it much more difficult to navigate their new environment, as their situation is characterised by uncertainty and instability[21]. Differences between their societies of

[10] Grønseth and Thorshaug, 'Struggling for home where home is not meant to be', p. 27.
[11] Massa, "'All we need is a home.'", p. 43.
[12] Lonn and Dantzler, 'A Practical Approach to Counseling Refugees', pp. 67-68.
[13] Marlise R. Lonn and Jamoki Z. Dantzler, 'A Practical Approach to Counseling Refugees: Applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs', *Journal of Counselor Practice* 8:2 (2017), pp. 61-82, at p. 62.
[14] Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), p. 39.
[15] John E. Annison, 'Towards a clearer understanding of the meaning of "home"', *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability* 25:4 (2000), pp. 251-262, at p. 259.
[16] Matthew Hodes, Melisa M. Vasquez, Dimitris Anagnostopoulos, Kalliopi Triantafyllou, Dalia Abdelhady, Karin Weiss, Roman Koposov, Fusun Cuhadaroglu, Johannes Hebebrand and Norbert Skokauskas, 'Refugees in Europe. National Overviews from Key Countries with a Special Focus on Child and Adolescent Mental Health', *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* 27:4 (2018), pp. 389-399, at p. 19.
[17] Helen Taylor, *Refugees and the Meaning of Home: Cypriot Narratives of Loss, Longing and Daily Life in London* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 3.
[18] Boguisa Temple and Rhetta Moran, *Doing Research with Refugees: Issues and Guidelines* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2006), p. 76.
[19] Ulrika Börjesson and Åsa Söderqvist Forkby, 'The concept of home – unaccompanied youths voices and expe-riences', *European Journal of Social Work*, 23:3 (2020), pp. 475-485, at p. 483.
[20] David Ralph and Lynn A. Staehli, 'Home and Migration: Mobilities, Belongings and Identities', *Geography Compass* 5:7 (2011), pp. 517-530, at p. 525.
[21] Hanna Kienzler, Cameron Spence and Thomas Wenzel, 'A Culture-Sensitive and Person-Centred Approach: Understanding and Evaluating Cultural Factors, Social Background and History When Working with Refugees', in *An Uncertain Safety: Integrative Health Care for the 21st Century Refugees*, edited by Thomas Wenzel and Boris Drožđek (Cham: Springer, 2019), pp. 101-116, at pp. 101-102.

origin and highly differentiated and individualised Western societies constitute a supplementary challenge.

Four Dimensions of Home

Based on Taylor (2015)[22], one can distinguish between the spatial, temporal and relational dimensions of home. The material dimension linked to smell, taste, soil, plants, food etc.,[23] as developed by Taylor, will not be included here. Instead, the spatial, temporal and relational dimensions will be complemented by a fourth dimension, the spiritual, which is particularly relevant for the focus of this paper. All four dimensions can be directly related to the situation of refugees in asylum centres, which is the focus of this paper.

In a *spatial* sense, a home is a geographically located place. In asylum centres, refugees find themselves distanced from their original home and in a very particular situation: the living conditions in asylum centres are characterised by spatial confinement, as well as numerous tensions and conflicts in everyday coexistence. Access and distribution of space in the centre is controlled by its administration and management[24], so that refugees only have very limited possibilities to shape the space themselves.

In a *temporal* sense, nostalgia for and idealisation of the former home is evident[25]. Refugees live in a "liminal present"[26], being confronted with an uncertain future. Their hope is to regain a safe home, but it remains uncertain as to whether and where they will find a home, or if they will be able to return to their former home. Refugees therefore find themselves in a transitional situation, characterised on one hand by memories of their homeland, sudden departure and often long and confronting journey, and on the other, by expectations for the future, and by the very everyday experience of waiting in a relatively uneventful situation[27].

In a *relational* sense, beyond the spatial and temporal dimension, home "is constructed from the social interactions, relationships and family/social/economic networks that represent everyday life"[28]. Refugees are often missing family and friendship structures, even if they can sometimes keep contact through social media and other forms of communication. New relationships can be built with other refugees or even with asylum centre staff and caregivers. These relationships are asymmetrical however, due to the staff's specific professional role and limited presence in the centres[29]. In an asylum centre, refugees cannot choose with whom to live, so it can be considered an enforced proximity[30].

[22] Taylor, *Refugees and the Meaning of Home*.
[23] Taylor, *Refugees and the Meaning of Home*, pp. 116-117.
[24] Melanie Hartmann, *Zwischen An- und Ent-Ordnung: Sammelunterkünfte für Geflüchtete als Räume des Politischen* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2020), pp. 264-267.
[25] Eugenia Arvanitis and Nicola Yelland, "Home Means Everything to Me ...': A Study of Young Syrian Refu-gees' Narratives Constructing Home in Greece', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34:1 (2019), pp. 535-554, at p. 551.
[26] Arvanitis and Yelland, "Home Means Everything to Me ...', p. 538.
[27] Natalie Powroznik, *Religion in Flüchtlingsunterkünften. Sozialanthropologische Perspektiven* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2020), p. 84.
[28] Arvanitis and Yelland, "Home Means Everything to Me ...', p. 538.
[29] Hartmann, *Zwischen An- und Ent-Ordnung*, p. 226.
[30] Hartmann, *Zwischen An- und Ent-Ordnung*, p. 209.

In a *spiritual* sense, a key challenge for refugees in the host country turns out to be the "absence of […] externally-provided cultural and religious reference-points"[31]. There is a risk that the spiritual dimension is neglected when care is oriented towards the immediate satisfaction of refugee needs. Spirituality and religiosity can create a sense of belonging and a reference to an overarching meaning. Faith-communities and faith-practice can provide a "spiritual home" which "enables refugees to feel connected without cutting off with their deep bonds with their family and culture of origin"[32]. Narrations of refugees thus often contain ideas of home as a "spiritual place"[33]. This is especially the case for Muslim refugees' ideas of home and identity, which tend to be permeated by religion[34].

We have illustrated that new dynamics of home-construction can occur in all four dimensions for refugees. However, a tension remains: namely that, even though asylum accommodation can become a kind of home, it will never be the home that the refugees left behind[35]. Several empirical studies highlight the importance of the relational dimension for refugees. In a study on refugee minors in Norway, Archambault concludes that the feeling of 'being at home' has not only a spatial but a relational component, and that "[e]ven life in an asylum centre may be defined as 'good', relatively speaking, as long as it meets people's needs in terms of space and relations"[36]. A further study from Sweden highlights the need for unaccompanied refugee minors to build relationships as a counterbalance to experiences of exclusion[37]. Finally, a study on asylum seekers in Italy finds that respondents are most likely to develop a "place attachment" when they enjoy a sense of community[38]. This illustrates that the various dimensions of home are strongly interrelated. Home thus proves to be a very dynamic notion, fragile, but also malleable and variable, especially for refugees in their vulnerability.

Chaplains as a Co-Constructors of a Home for Refugees

Refugees are particularly dependent on orientation, due to their situation in an environment that is largely alien to them, and on supportive accompaniment, which can be provided with different foci by social workers, psychologists or chaplains. The role of chaplains can be precisely to address the various dimensions of home in a holistic sense.

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[31] Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Yousif M. Qasmiyeh, 'Muslim Asylum-Seekers and Refugees: Negotiating Iden-tity, Politics and Religion in the UK', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23:3 (2010), pp. 294-314, at p. 310.

[32] Hugo Kamya, 'Healing from Refugee Trauma. The Significance of Spiritual Beliefs, Faith Community, and Faith-Based Services'[2008], in *Spiritual Resources in Family Therapy*, edited by Froma Walsh (New York: Guildford Press, 2010), pp. 286-300, at p. 294.

[33] Roselinde den Boer, 'Liminal Space in Protracted Exile: The Meaning of Place in Congolese Refugees' Narra-tives of Home and Belonging in Kampala', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 28:4 (2015), pp. 487-504, at p. 500.

[34] Marwa Shoeb, Harvey M. Weinstein and Jodi Halpern, 'Living in Religious Time and Space: Iraqi Refugees in Dearborn, Michigan', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20:3 (2007), pp. 441-460, at p. 443.

[35] Sandra Dudley, 'Feeling at Home: Producing and Consuming Things in Karenni Refugee Camps on The Thai-Burma Border', *Population, Space and Place* 17:6 (2011), pp. 742-755, at p. 752.

[36] Josée Archambault, "It can be good there too': Home and continuity in refugee children's narratives of set-tlement', *Children's Geographies* 10:1 (2012), pp. 35-48, at p. 35.

[37] Börjesson and Söderqvist Forkby, 'The concept of home', p. 477.

[38] Caterina Nicolais *et al.*, 'At Home: Place Attachment and Identity in an Italian Refugee Sample', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18:16 (2021), pp. 1-18.

Due to the high diversity among refugee populations, a universalist model of spiritual care for all, independent of their faith and spirituality, reaches its limits. A "'one size fits all' approach to chaplaincy"[39] cannot respond sufficiently to specific requests of service-users. Empirical studies show that Muslims have "specific types of needs that would remain unaddressed by interfaith chaplaincy services"[40]. Conversely, religious, cultural and linguistic affinity between chaplains and refugees can provide supplementary resources. Several studies confirm that this kind of proximity could be helpful when providing care for refugees: a social anthropological study on refugees in asylum centres concludes that shared belonging can be beneficial because it connects and creates closeness in a foreign place[41] Through this closeness, caregivers can contribute to the refugees' "self-continuity"[42] between their past and present, which, according to numerous studies, is a relevant factor in the development of "place attachment" as a "multidimensional affective bond between people and places, involving a symbolic relationship with the place and the willingness to maintaining proximity with the place"[43]. In addition, through their empathy and closeness, chaplains can help refugees better process the tension between their current daily lives, their hopes and what they have left behind[44].

Although chaplains are only temporarily present in the asylum centre, they can nevertheless participate in the "co-construction of home"[45], both in terms of space and relationships, by conveying home linguistically, culturally and religiously. Precisely because the tension between past and future is unresolvable for the refugees in their current situation, chaplains can play a central role for asylum seekers by building a linguistic, cultural and religious bridge between the situation in the host country and their former home. They can foster interpersonal contacts, build relationships and bring people together through communication. Altogether, previous research confirms the hypothesis that Muslim chaplains' interventions are not only useful for refugee wellbeing but consequently also for peaceful coexistence in asylum centres and the wider society. Thus, the need to further explore how Muslim chaplaincy affects the vulnerability of refugees seems obvious.

Methodological Approach and Context of the Research

This paper is based on an empirical study on Muslim chaplaincy for refugees in Switzerland carried out in 2021. In the Swiss asylum system, refugees usually first stay in one of 20 federal asylum centres while going through the asylum procedure[46]. Since 2016,

[39] Wahiba Abu-Ras and Lance Laird, 'How Muslim and Non-Muslim Chaplains Serve Muslim Patients? Does the Interfaith Chaplaincy Model have Room for Muslims' Experiences?', *Journal of Religion and Health* 50 (2011), pp. 46-61, at p. 55.
[40] Abu-Ras and Laird, 'How Muslim and Non-Muslim Chaplains Serve Muslim Patients?', p. 56.
[41] Powroznik, *Religion in Flüchtlingsunterkünften*, p. 237.
[42] Thomas Albers *et al.*, 'The Role of Place Attachment in Promoting Refugees' Well-Being and Resettlement: A Literature Review', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18 (2021), at p. 4.
[43] Albers *et al.*, 'The Role of Place Attachment in Promoting Refugees', p. 4.
[44] Börjesson and Söderqvist Forkby, 'The concept of home', p. 478.
[45] Börjesson and Söderqvist Forkby, 'The concept of home', p. 483.
[46] State Secretariat for Migration, *Asylum regions and federal asylum centres*, https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/asyl/asylverfahren/asylregionen-baz.html (2019) (accessed 2022-10-21).

Muslim chaplains have been assigned to one federal asylum centre in Zurich, in addition to the Christian chaplains already working there. At the beginning of 2021, the State Secretariat of Migration (SEM) decided to expand the deployment of Muslim chaplains to other federal asylum centres across the country. There were two principal motives for introducing Muslim chaplaincy: the *first* was the relatively high proportion of Muslims among refugees arriving recently in Switzerland, many of whom are from North Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and Eritrea. The idea was that Muslim chaplains would better understand these refugees and thus contribute to their well-being. All of the Muslim chaplains in the project have a migration background, some having come to Switzerland as refugees themselves. Therefore, they shared the experience of living in vulnerable situations with the refugees [47] and, as a result, could better understand their lives. The *second* motive was conflicts among young male refugees, and transgressions into criminality by some, which were related to the situation they were living in and the residents' unclear perspectives . This caused difficulties both in the asylum centres and the surrounding areas. Thus arose the wish that Muslim chaplains could build a bridge between the refugees and the host country and help to de-escalate conflicts. On the basis of many years of interreligious dialogue, the churches also encouraged introducing Muslim chaplaincy and acted as intermediaries, due to their long experience in collaborating with the State Secretariat of Migration.

Before introducing Muslim chaplaincy permanently, the State Secretariat of Migration commissioned an evaluation of this service in federal asylum centres[48]. Conceptually, an approach of "fourth generation evaluation"[49] was followed. Based on a constructivist model of cognition, this takes into account the needs and perspectives of all relevant stakeholders in the process of data collection. This approach allows the evaluation to first explore the diversity of stakeholder claims and perspectives. This can then be extended to stakeholder groups and to working towards a common understanding of the evaluand[50]. Usually, qualitative methods are employed, to explore stakeholders' constructions of meaning as deeply as possible[51]. In this sense, evaluators take an active role in helping stakeholders to engage with and understand each other's different perspectives[52].The role of the evaluators echoes that of learners, who actively contribute to shaping processes of understanding as "change agents"[53]. In this study, 30 guideline-based qualitative interviews[54] were conducted by a small research team directed by the author of this paper. The interviews were to explore how Muslim chaplains see their interventions (mainly but not exclusively addressed at Muslims) and how these affect refugees, both individually and in social interactions at their accommodation. These effects were examined through the perspectives of different stakeholders such as service recipients,

[47] Mackenzie, Rogers and Dodds, 'What Is Vulnerability?', p. 15.
[48] Hansjörg Schmid, Amir Sheikzadegan and Aude Zurbuchen. *Muslimische Seelsorge in Bundesasylzentren. Evaluation des Pilotprojekts zuhanden des Staatssekretariats für Migration* (SZIG/CSIS Studies 6), Freiburg: Schweizerisches Zentrum für Islam und Gesellschaft, 2022.
[49] Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *Fourth generation evaluation* (London: Sage Publications, 1989).
[50] Guba and Lincoln, *Fourth generation evaluation*, pp. 50, 205-207.
[51] Guba and Lincoln, *Fourth generation evaluation*, p. 259.
[52] Guba and Lincoln, *Fourth generation evaluation*, pp. 55-56.
[53] Guba and Lincoln, *Fourth generation evaluation*, p. 261.
[54] Svend Brinkmann, *Qualitative Interviewing: Understanding Qualitative Research* (New York: Oxford Univer-sity Press, 2013); Irving Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006 [1991]).

Christian chaplains, nurses, security services and other staff who were interviewed. The research design had been developed in a previous study[55].

For this paper, interviews with five Muslim chaplains were selected and analysed with a specific focus. As three chaplains who had recently started their job were interviewed twice in the evaluation study, a total of eight interviews made up the bulk of the empirical material for our analysis. While they all participated in the same project of asylum chaplaincy, they have had different experiences and apply different styles of intervention. These interviews are focused on the narrations, self-presentations and self-assessments of the chaplains and illustrate both intersections and differences within the stakeholder group of Muslim chaplains. This focus on counsellors' points of view and self-assessments responds to a desideratum in refugee research[56]. As part of a qualitative content analysis of the interviews[57], passages were selected in which the chaplains reflect on their intervention with the refugees. With a view to obtaining a spectrum of different perspectives and approaches, eleven passages were chosen for this paper, according to the principle of maximum variation[58]. The quotations have been translated as precisely as possible from German and French into English. These passages were subject to a detailed analysis, the selected results of which are presented below. The theoretical perspective on home and vulnerability flowed into the interpretation.

An Empirical Exploration of Refugee Chaplains' Interventions

Having presented our theoretical considerations and the state of research, empirical examples will now be used to examine how chaplains' interventions relate to refugee vulnerability and may contribute to their sense of home-building[59].

Building Relationships with the Chaplain, Fellows and God

The first aspect we will examine concerns the way chaplains understand their service and what role the religious dimension plays therein. One of the chaplains presented chaplaincy as a personal accompaniment, offered to a diverse spectrum of recipients, including both Muslims and non-Muslims:

> "Each day I am in the asylum centre, I meet with many people, men, women, Muslims, non-Muslims, and I accompany them, I give them comfort when they are sad, also hope when they have no hope, for example. I give them prayers, if they seek proximity to God, I answer their questions; after that, I can also say a prayer with them." (Chaplain 1, Interview I)

Each time the chaplain uses the verb "to give", he is indicating the three gifts the refugees receive from him: hope, comfort and prayer. In each case, a situation of distress can be transformed and overcome. The three elements of hope, comfort and prayer can be seen as

[55] Hansjörg Schmid and Amir Sheikzadegan. 'A Muslim Chaplaincy für Asylum-Seekers? Results from an Evaluation Research', *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 74 (2020), pp. 124-132.
[56] Lonn and Dantzler, 'A Practical Approach to Counseling Refugees', p. 77.
[57] Margrit Schreier, *Qualitative content analysis in practice* (London: Sage Publications, 2012).
[58] Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002).
[59] Quotations from the interviews are indicated with in-text references mentioning the chaplain in an anonymised way. Due to the formative character of the research, two interviews were conducted with each chaplain enabling thus progressive reflection. In each case, the number of the interview is also indicated.

constitutive elements of a home. The relational, as well as spiritual, dimensions of a home are evoked in the above quote by the special emphasis it places on prayer, linking it to the relationship with God. The prayer mentioned here does not refer to the ritual prayer but to the informal one (*duʿāʾ*), representing an important aspect of Muslim chaplains' practice[60]. Whereas comfort and hope engage the refugees as recipients, with the prayer, the chaplain refers to a common action ("with them") that helps refugees construct this relationship with God.

Another chaplain focused on interactions with the refugees and reflected on factors which facilitate communication:

> "Yes, we are with them. [...] Most of the people who come to me are Muslims. They ask me for advice, tell me their story and so on. Perhaps they have more trust in me, perhaps also the Arabic language facilitates communication a lot, especially for those who speak Arabic. So, I also use my religious background to reassure them, to comfort them, to give them hope, and that is essential for them. [It is crucial] to have their trust because they can't tell me things if they don't trust me." (Chaplain 2, Interview I)

This chaplain uses the expression of "being with" the refugees, which is often referred to as a core notion of spiritual care[61]. The quote then mentions the refugees' actions ("come", "ask", "tell"). The chaplain goes on to describe the relationship with recipients as a relationship of trust. Two factors nourish this trust: the Arabic language and religious knowledge, which facilitates the transmission of comfort and hope. This demonstrates how a trusting relationship can contribute to home-building in the spiritual and linguistic dimensions; which, in turn, provides a basis for the refugees to tell their - often painful - story.

However, language and religion are not the only tools for building a relationship of trust. One of the chaplains highlighted his practice of playing football with the refugees, which integrates physical and group dynamic aspects. As the chaplain explained, for him, playing football is complementary to a conversationally oriented approach, offering another way of building up relationships and a basis for other types of exchange: "This helps me a lot in creating relationships." (Chaplain 3, Interview I) Compared to his colleagues, this chaplain was also more careful concerning the role of religion and spirituality:

> "We are not in charge of people's spirituality. It's mainly listening, it's mainly orientation, it's mainly support. [...] So religion and spirituality are really anecdotal, so to speak. It remains very intimate and confidential. [...] We really try to keep this aspect of intervention religiously neutral, to avoid the Muslim/not-Muslim polarisation." (Chaplain 3, Interview I)

As can be seen here, he distances himself from a strong focus on spirituality and characterises chaplaincy as the three activities of listening, providing orientation and giving support. The two reasons he gives for the spiritual reserve he shows are his personal character and the risk of creating cleavages between Muslims and non-Muslims. An earlier study explored chaplains' intentions to avoid reproducing hostile images of the religious other, to assist in overcoming negative experiences from the home countries and creating

[60] Sophie Gilliat-Ray, Muhammad Mansur Ali and Stephen Pattison, *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy* (Farn-ham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 81-84.
[61] Steve Nolan, "'He Needs to Talk!": A Chaplain's Case Study of Nonreligious Spiritual Care', *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* 22:1 (2016), pp. 1-16, at p. 14.

a trans-religious community in asylum centres[62]. A further factor may be the context of Western Switzerland, where this chaplain works, and where religion is mainly considered a private affair. However, in a follow-up interview conducted some months later, the same chaplain articulated his reflection on spirituality in a slightly different way:

> "Of course, spiritual accompaniment remains a key element in all of this, because it's combined with assistance for the return to their home country, defusing violence, crises, the search for alternatives. All of this always involves a small dose of spirituality, of belief, and it is...well, a variable dosage, because everything depends on the person you are talking to, the person you are dealing with." (Chaplain 3, Interview II)

Yet he still speaks of a "small dose" which should be "variable". This highlights the person-centred and non-judgmental approach of chaplaincy implemented here[63]. The scale of spirituality is defined by the refugee's request. In this sense, the spiritual dimension in the construction of a home is not considered according to the chaplains' ideas, but according to the refugees' needs. The chaplain names four functions of spirituality: helping refugees when they have to return, de-escalating violence, responding to crises, and discovering alternative perceptions of their situation. Spirituality is thus not an aim in itself but related to a particular life situation, the refugees' vulnerable condition and an intended outcome. This is a cautious way of contributing to the construction and nurturing of a spiritual home. Below, however, it also becomes apparent that this depends on the individual chaplain and how he or she relates to spirituality and religion.

Conflicts and Directive Interventions by Chaplains

A second aspect to consider relates to conflicts, either in the sense of the refugees' personal struggle, or conflicts which occur in the asylum centre. As mentioned previously, various conflicts were a significant motivation for authorities to introduce Muslim chaplaincy. One of the chaplains specified that the refugees' uncertainty about their home is a source of distress for them:

> "There are fears about the asylum procedure. You don't know what will happen in the future, whether they stay or go back home. And there is also the fact that people are psychologically burdened anyway." (Chaplain 4, Interview I)

In this statement, the refugees' situation is characterised by instability in a temporal sense, but their former home remains a point of reference. In a follow-up interview, the same chaplain spoke in a more detailed way about conflicts as a threat to a secure home and the contribution chaplaincy makes to de-escalation:

> "If I am there and I notice that a conflict is about to emerge, then I intervene and take the person aside and talk to him. I try to understand why he reacts the way he does. And as a Muslim, I always conclude every conversation with: 'You must be an example, give a good image of Islam. Islam is peace, Islam is helping others, is understanding others, avoiding conflicts, avoiding problems.' I give a few hadiths and then I try to tell the person clearly that there are rules that you must follow and that not following these rules is not good." (Chaplain 4, Interview II)

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[62] Hansjörg Schmid. 'Interfaith Chaplaincy in a Post-Secular Context', *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 30:2 (2020), pp. 163-185.

[63] Gilliat-Ray, Ali and Pattison, *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy*, p. 85.

This chaplain describes his intervention with verbs which progress from a more empathic approach to intervening in a more directive and normative way: being there, noticing, talking, understanding, concluding, giving, trying, intervening. At the centre is a quotation, a kind of slogan: here is the role model of the chaplain and, connected to this, a certain understanding of Islam is assumed. This "must" of self-commitment expected from all Muslims, including the chaplain himself and his conversation partner, is followed by the generalised "must" of obligation aimed at residents about observing rules (which are not explicitly indicated as Islamic). On one hand, this shows the contribution chaplains make to stabilising the home with the help of rules. However, there is a risk of paternalism[64], when the chaplain addresses a service recipient in such a normative way. By prescribing a certain normative understanding of Islam, the chaplain goes beyond an understanding of non-directive and person-centred spiritual care, which can be seen as "counterproductive in working with Muslim clients,"[65] as the chaplain is already positioned as an authority from whom guidance is expected. This reveals a tension between the role of a companion for refugees and that of a conflict mediator in the service of the institution. The quotation also illustrates how, within the specific framework of the asylum-centre, refugees, as well as chaplains, have to adapt to regulations that they can only shape on a very limited scale.

Another chaplain is more critical of understanding chaplaincy as a tool for conflict de-escalation, through emphasising rules and order:

> "So, chaplaincy is, of course, not primarily about preventing conflicts, but about supporting people in what they have perhaps experienced or what is going on inside them. But of course, it is also a kind of overcoming of conflict." (Chaplain 5, Interview I)

This chaplain emphasises the relevance of her service to the experiences and the inner life of service recipients. Finally, she acknowledges that her way of intervening can be understood as coping with conflict in an indirect way.

Unlike his female colleague, another chaplain advocates some flexibility in applying a more normative stance:

> "I present myself as an imam to some people – not to everybody – but to some people that I want to have a strong influence on. I reserve the imam's hat for this level of influence. For people who ask me for religious advice, who are looking for answers to religious questions, I need to say that I have this hat on. I put it on to tell them that I have answers that are based on [religious] texts and references. That way, they accept my answers." (Chaplain 2, Interview II)

Here, the imam-role is used to have an impact on refugees or in relation to specific religious issues. The imam is considered as an authority, with the listening and receptive counselling role being complemented by more active interventions. The religious advice uttered wearing an "imam's hat" is related to the refugees' "looking for answers", which may help to provide clarity and stabilise their spiritual home. A more authoritative role as chaplain may also meet specific expectations refugees have. Empirical studies show that religious

[64] Mackenzie, Rogers and Dodds, 'What Is Vulnerability?', p. 15.
[65] G. Hussein Rassool, *Islamic Counselling. An Introduction to Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge), p. 129.

authorities are particularly important in Muslim countries[66]. This includes these persons giving advice, and it is obvious that such an expectation is at least partly projected onto the chaplains by service-users in Swiss asylum centres.

Sharing Memories with the Chaplain and the Transformative Power of "another logic"

A third focus highlights reflections on the effect chaplains' interventions have. One imam reported a situation in which he supported a refugee in conflict with security staff. In the interview, he first described how he talked to the refugee and then accompanied him to the Securitas office. The chaplain interprets his intervention in this situation as follows:

> "Change of space, we are in another process, there is another logic which is established: there is accompaniment, there is understanding, there is listening, there is sharing. And you arrive at the Securitas desk, which is the control centre, with the computers, ... so you already spend time with the person [the refugee]. You take an interest in how he feels. He feels that everybody rejects him, that nobody cares for him, that he is pursuing something that he never gets." (Chaplain 2, Interview I)

Chaplaincy is described here as "another process" and "another logic". This is linked to a "change of space". This refers to the spatial dimension of home. Space is ordered and controlled by the administration of the centre and the security staff, with whom the refugees often have a conflictual relationship[67]. However, in accompanying the refugees and taking them somewhere else, the chaplain can disrupt the logic of control. This change of space is linked with the receptive activities of understanding, listening and sharing. Another key aspect is dedicating time. The chaplain's intervention can reverse the feelings of rejection, futility and neglect experienced by the refugee. Through the chaplain, the refugees receive what they do not receive from the more functional staff of the asylum centre, what they need in this situation of vulnerability: personal attention, time and interest. The chaplain does not state that he wants to defend the refugee; but the way he interacts with the refugee already reveals a transformation of the situation, even if the security agent's reaction remains the same. In this way, the chaplains also contribute to broadening the understanding of security to the sense of a basic human need for a safe home.

Although a large majority of refugees are men, gender-specific concerns are also articulated time and again, especially by women, who tend to specifically address the female chaplain[68]. The female chaplain quoted below refers to a situation relating to the rape experienced by a woman who spoke to her:

> "So in one case the husband was with her. She had never told him and she was afraid how he would react if he found out. It was a relief for her to be able to pass on something about herself and to deposit it in some way. Because she simply couldn't see any possibility of telling anyone. And that was very, very advantageous for her, it reduced her burden a bit, that she knew someone knew about it." (Chaplain 5, Interview I)

This quote shows a contrast between the fear of being left alone, despite the presence of her husband, and the relief of sharing the burden with the chaplain. The memory and

[66] Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular. Religion and Politics Worldwide*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 148 and 154.
[67] Hartmann, *Zwischen An- und Ent-Ordnung*, pp. 233-234.
[68] Schmid, Sheikzadegan and Zurbuchen, *Muslimische Seelsorge in Bundesasylzentren*, p. 48.

burden she shared seem to reduce her vulnerability. The chaplain is the one to whom the woman can tell something that she cannot tell anyone else, not even her husband. This interaction indicates a high scale of trust towards the chaplain, as already discussed above. In this specific case, the chaplain's gender can also be seen to be "enabling"[69]. A relationship of closeness and a community of remembrance is created here, which provides some relief for the woman. Such aspects can contribute to the construction of a home, by healing wounds and relieving pain. Nonetheless, a certain element of vulnerability remains.

Perspectives for Vulnerability, Home and Spiritual Care in an Interreligious Context

Analysing our empirical material has given a broad insight into the chaplains' perspectives on their interventions and relationships with refugees. Chaplaincy is mainly understood as accompaniment, listening and support. However, differences in the perceptions and approaches of the chaplains have become apparent.

While four chaplains primarily pursue a conversation-oriented approach, one chaplain chooses less conventional approaches, for example by playing sport with the refugees, to create interactions and achieve relaxation. This is a way of sharing everyday life, which results in conversational opportunities: it could be seen as a kind of street-work chaplaincy. The emphasis on spirituality also varies. While all chaplains agree that spirituality should be dosed according to the needs of the refugees, they weigh it differently. One chaplain sees spirituality as being more in the personal sphere, others see it as a means of building a relationship with refugees. One chaplain derives a requirement for exemplary conduct and an ethical obligation from belonging to Islam, and in this way tries to dissuade refugees from deviant behaviour. Finally, chaplains differ in the extent to which they see conflict de-escalation as their task. While one chaplain tends to distance herself from this function, the other chaplains assume this task and even use their religious authority to exert a positive influence on the refugees and to contribute to the peaceful coexistence through religious norms. However, the fact that religious authority should be used with caution must be taken into account, as various minorities from Muslim contexts have had negative experiences with strongly normative references to "Islam" and are therefore extremely sensitive and vulnerable to such use of religious authority.

Coming back to the idea of a home, as one of the Christian chaplains articulated, the introduction of Muslim chaplaincy into an asylum centre already conveys the message to Muslim refugees that: "You have your place here."[70] It therefore contributes to their structural integration. Beyond this, the analysis showed many links between the chaplain's interventions and the four dimensions of a home: spatial, material, temporal and relational.

Concerning the spatial dimension, as shown previously, chaplains can intervene in conflictual situations concerning space. However, they are also subordinate to the asylum-centre regime and have limited capacity to make changes. In some asylum centres, the spatial arrangements were also precarious, in that there was no permanent retreat room available for counselling conversations[71]. Where such a room exists, the material dimension of home, as postulated by Taylor, is also evident, e.g. present in the form of Qur'ans, prayer carpets and other objects of religious practice, usually provided by the

[69] Gilliat-Ray, Ali and Pattison, *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy*, p. 93.
[70] Schmid, Sheikzadegan and Zurbuchen, *Muslimische Seelsorge in Bundesasylzentren*, p. 30.
[71] Schmid, Sheikzadegan and Zurbuchen, *Muslimische Seelsorge in Bundesasylzentren*, pp. 81-82.

chaplains. Concerning the temporal dimension, refugees can share their memories and hopes with the chaplains, which provides them with some emotional (?) relief. In situations of hopelessness, chaplains may provide and nourish hope. Above all, they can help to ensure that the refugees have positive experiences when interacting with them, and this helps to stabilise the refugees' situation. In terms of the relational dimension, chaplains' engagement with refugees is characterised by a particularly high level of trust, distinguishing theirs from other relationships. Concerning the spiritual dimension, chaplains help to strengthen the relationship with God, share moments of prayer with the refugees, answer religious questions, give advice and remind them of religious norms. Interventions by chaplains are a transformative force for the refugees. They contribute to alternative perceptions and interactions in the refugee centres, in order to make them more home-like.

Overall, the supportive role of chaplains in home-building becomes evident, even if they cannot respond to all of the refugees' needs. A lack that may be identified is that links and relationships to a faith-community or the wider society outside the asylum centres are not particularly encouraged during the asylum procedure period, as in most cases it is very uncertain whether the refugees will be able to stay. Against this background, the function of chaplains who have a role in the centres, but come from 'outside', is of particular importance. While their interventions are linked to all four dimensions of home, both the relational and spiritual dimensions serve as a foundation – in one case also described as relational, towards God. This can be linked to a correlational approach which has been developed for Muslim chaplaincy[72]. The empirical examples cited also show that the usual methods of conversation-oriented spiritual care and non-directive counselling have their limits, and that chaplains in the specific field of asylum centres also act, or are expected to act, as conflict mediators and religious authorities. Here, both cultural backgrounds and the vulnerability and woundedness of refugees play a central role, requiring chaplains to adopt specifically adapted approaches.

One limitation of the material analysed is that it examines in a rather structural manner how Muslim chaplaincy interacts with refugees in the interprofessional context of asylum centres. Within the framework of this study, it was not possible to explore more deeply exactly what spiritual and religious ideas or norms the chaplains use. From the point of view of Muslim chaplaincy, there is still a lack of theological reflection about vulnerability and home[73]. Vulnerability implies a spiritual openness, yet chaplains need to be careful not to exploit this situation, and to consider the agency of the refugees. Co-construction of a home means a collaborative effort and implies that refugees are empowered by the mobilisation of forces and resources. When chaplains largely apply a person-centred approach, they do not impose themselves, but focus on the interests of those they care for in the best possible way. The chaplaincy case therefore demonstrates the kind of collaborative action which can form a counterweight to the stereotype of passive refugees. In this sense, their vulnerability can be seen as paradoxical. As Judith Butler highlights: "vulnerability is neither fully passive nor fully active, but operating in a

[72] Nazila Isgandarova, 'The correlational approach to Islamic spiritual care', *Tidsskirft om islam & kristendom* 16:1 (2016), pp. 15-28.
[73] Muna Tatari, 'Vulnerabilität – Ein vernachlässigter Aspekt muslimischer Theologie und Anthropologie', *Reli-gionen unterwegs* 25:3 (2019), pp. 19-23.

middle ground"[74]. Therefore, a concept of spiritual care is required that takes into account both the active and passive facets of vulnerability. Such a conceptual approach would require further research, in which the refugees' perspective is more strongly taken into consideration.

Furthermore, the question arises as to what role chaplains play in asylum centres, where they participate in how they function without being able to fundamentally question things. As one study highlights, exposure to the asylum reception system in European countries often increases refugees' vulnerability[75]. A more structural reflection could refer to a political theology of vulnerability showing sensitive to mechanisms of social exclusion, which is also exacerbated by the accommodation in refugee centres[76]. However, this structural dimension is already indirectly present in the case of Muslim chaplaincy: by articulating their religious concerns and working together with Muslim chaplains, refugees address the limits of the existing asylum system and demand the recognition of cultural diversity. This is also about working against the unequal distribution of vulnerability which concerns refugees in a particular way. Yet, as the empirical analyses have shown, the tension between autonomy and relationality, self-determination and dependence on help and support remains structurally irresolvable.

Chaplaincy based on this irresolvable tension might be about asking questions without getting full answers, but it nonetheless keeps alive a desire that can be seen as a key factor of religion and spirituality:

"In a sense, the ethical stance consists […] in asking the question 'Who are you?' and continuing to ask it without any expectation of a full or final answer. The other to whom I pose this question will not be captured by any answer that might arrive to satisfy it. So if there is, in the question, a desire for recognition, this desire will be under an obligation to keep itself alive as desire and not to resolve itself."[77]

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[74]Judith Butler, 'Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance', in *Vulnerability in Resistance*, edited by Judith But-ler, Zeynep Gambetti and Leticia Sabsay (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), pp. 12-27, at pp. 25-26.

[75] Massa, "'All we need is a home.'", p. 34.

[76] Michaela Neulinger, *Zwischen Dolorismus und Perfektionismus: Konturen einer politischen Theologie der Verwundbarkeit* (Paderborn: Brill/Schöningh, 2018), p. 228.

[77] Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, p. 43.

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Portraiture and Anthropocentrism

Stephen S. Bush

In an age in which anthropocentrism is increasingly under fire, the investment of the artistic tradition in that paradigm deserves particular attention. Portraiture is especially significant, as it seems to be the anthropocentric art form par excellence. It seems to reinforce key features of anthropocentrism: the distinction of the human from the nonhuman and the superiority of the former over the latter. We can pursue these questions most effectively if we distinguish descriptive ("weak") anthropocentrism from normative ("strong") anthropocentrism. The former involves some sort of focus on humans, the latter combines this with claims about their superiority over the nonhuman. Certain works by influential portraitists, such as Pablo Picasso, Frida Kahlo, and Ana Mendieta, contest both weak and strong anthropocentrism. Other portraits seem to be involved in weak anthropocentrism, but not necessarily strong anthropocentrism. Considering the artwork of Alice Neel and the philosophy of Judith Butler, I argue that such works have an important ethical role to play in orienting us in our relationships with humans, precisely in resisting strong anthropocentrism even in expressing weak anthropocentrism.

Introduction

In contemporary ethics, the connections among Western religion, Western philosophy, and anthropocentrism are well established and well known. The connection between Western *art* and anthropocentrism has received less attention. No doubt this owes something to a general neglect of art in ethics, but it is not as though art has been removed from ethical reflection altogether. Art is a prime vehicle for the expression and perpetuation of values, including moral and political values. It is a preeminent medium for our moral and political imagination. As such, it deserves (and to be sure has received some measure of) scrutiny and appreciation by ethicists. In an age of pollution and climate catastrophe, the ecological implications of our artistic inheritance warrant increased consideration.

Christianity and Eurocentric philosophy have both historically employed hierarchical dualisms: God over man; man over nature; male over female; mind over matter; spirit over body; and so on. This constellation of binaries has helped perpetuate a variety of attitudes that

are anthropocentric in that they hold that humans are categorically different from and morally superior to the nonhuman world. Privileging the human over the nonhuman has fostered ecological exploitation and instrumentalization to catastrophic results. Political efforts to address climate change in a meaningful way have faltered against the preeminent value we assign to human activities, human economies, and human societies.

The Western artistic tradition for most of its history has been thoroughly intertwined with philosophy and religion and expressed their binaries in compelling, accessible forms that have profoundly shaped the popular imagination.[1] Christian art, obviously, is *theo*centric, but it is so in a way that enforces anthropocentrism: by portraying God anthropomorphically, by depicting humans as the special object of God's concern, and by uniting humanity and God in the incarnation. Rembrandt's (1606-1669) *Ascension* (1636) is a clear example. Christ is in the upper center portion of the canvas, bathed in light, looking upward to heaven and attended by angels. The human and material world surround him from below. Clear hierarchies of divine/human/nonhuman and spirit/matter are depicted both from top to bottom and from center to periphery. In all the most common subjects of Christian iconography, whether creation, the Annunciation, Jesus's baptism, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, or any of the many portrayals of saints and biblical stories, the human figure is central. This is not to say there are no exceptions, but this has been the predominant historical tendency. Outside Christian art, anthropocentrism prevailed in the focus on human figures and human dramas, or in the case of mythological paintings, on gods typically portrayed in human form. Even when humans are not centered, as in landscape painting, the human spectator's gaze is. Landscape painting "places an objectified nature under the gaze of a human subject," implementing a "static, linear view point" that results in an "illusion of mastery over nature."[2] Indeed, as John Berger argues in *Ways of Seeing*, oil painting characteristically presents its subject matter as available for and accessible to the possessive, mastering gaze of the human viewer. The detail that oil painting makes possible allows for a realism that presents the objects as belonging to the owner of the painting.[3] Denis Cosgrove expands on the point: "Realist representation of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface through linear perspective … gives the eye absolute mastery over space … Visually space is rendered the property of the individual detached observer, from whose divine location it is a dependent, appropriated object … The adoption of linear perspective as the guarantor of pictorial realism was contemporary with those other realist techniques of painting: oils, framing and production for a market of mobile, small canvases. In this respect perspective may be regarded as one of a

[1] In speaking of the "Western artistic tradition" I do not mean to imply that the category is unproblematic or hermetically isolated from other artistic traditions, I just mean to signal that I do not mean for my claims to apply to, for example, Japanese, Chinese, or African art, among other traditions.
[2] Joanna Page, "Planetary Art beyond the Human: Rethinking Agency in the Anthropocene," The Anthropocene Review 7, no. 3 (2020): 289. Influential early texts on the implicatedness of landscape painting in the mastering gaze are Denis Cosgrove, Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape (London: Croom Helm, 1984); Gillian Rose, Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1993). For a helpful overview of the discussion, see Gunhild Setten, "Landscapes of Gaze and Practice," Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift - Norwegian Journal of Geography 57 (2003): 134–40.
[3] John Berger, Ways of Seeing (New York: Penguin, 1990), chap. 5.

number of techniques which allowed for the visual representation of a bourgeois, rationalist conception of the world."[4]

With these thoughts in mind, we can speak of an anthropocentric gaze, just as art historians and scholars of visual culture have been speaking of the "male gaze" and other kinds of "gazes" for some decades.[5] The literature on the gaze is complex, but it has largely been characterized by the idea that the gaze involves a subject position, that of the spectator, and the way in which what it spectates serves to reinforce the privilege of the subject position. Typically the result is a relation of power-over: the subject is exercising power over that upon which they look. So the male gaze involves a presupposed heterosexual male viewer, and a portrayal of a woman under that paradigm will often show her as a passive object for the viewer's sexual desire, serving to buttress their masculine identity. Importantly, the gaze is a "structural feature" of the artwork, a normative matter, a "kind of response … that some pictures *prescribe* to their viewers," which obtains even if it is resisted, ignored, or viewed from the perspective of some other subject position (e.g., a woman or a gay man).[6]

The anthropocentric gaze, then, will be one that depicts humans as the subject matter of preeminent importance. When human figures are involved, they will be shown as inherently valuable and more so than the nonhuman surroundings. Artworks will present nonhuman objects as available for the pleasure, mastery, and ownership of the implied viewer. The anthropocentric gaze is bound up with the male gaze, and specifically the white male gaze. Both instantiate a controlling, mastering disposition on the part of the implied viewer. For example, as Gillian Rose argues, landscape painting often feminized the nonhuman world. "Woman and Nature often share the same topography of passivity and stillness … the same sense of visual power as well as pleasure is at work as the eye traverses both field and flesh: the masculine gaze is of knowledge and desire."[7] Realism and linear perspective, and the resulting ocular mastery over the subject matter, have been and continue to be central devices for the anthropocentric gaze.

If the anthropocentric gaze presents humans as the privileged subject matter, portraiture has a strong claim to be the most anthropocentric genre. Its subject is typically human. Indeed, in some philosophical accounts of portraiture, it is necessary that the subject be human. Cynthia Freeland, for example, claims that portraiture has three essential features. It portrays an actual living being with (1) a recognizable physical body; (2) an inner life; and (3) a conscious presentation of oneself to the artist. This third criterion requires an

[4] Denis Cosgrove, "Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea," in Reading Human Geography: The Poetics and Politics of Inquiry, ed. Trevor Barnes and Derek Gregory (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997), 328–29.

[5] Especially influential in these conversations has been Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Screen 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6–18. For overviews of the notion of the gaze in art history and visual culture studies, see Margaret Olin, "Gaze," in Critical Terms for Art History, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 318–29; Susanne von Falkenhausen, Beyond the Mirror: Seeing in Art History and Visual Culture Studies, trans. Nicholas Grindell (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2020), chap. 5.

[6] Wheaton, A. W., "Feminist Philosophy of Art," Philosophy Compass 3, no. 5 (2008): 878, 889n12.

[7] Gillian Rose, "Looking at Landscape: The Uneasy Pleasures of Power," in Reading Human Geography: The Poetics and Politics of Inquiry, ed. Trevor Barnes and Derek Gregory (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997), 350–51.

understanding of artistic representation that Freeland doubts nonhuman animals can attain.[8] Whether or not Freeland is right about this, at least we can acknowledge that humans are the usual subjects of the genre. More so, portraiture typically presents the human as separate from its surroundings and as the focal point of the painting, conveying the categorical differentiation of the human from the nonhuman and the superiority of the human over the non-human.

Ecological Art and Ethics

Ecological ethicists have challenged the anthropocentric gaze by emphasizing the interrelatedness and entanglement of the human with the nonhuman. In contrast to liberal, humanistic, and rationalistic notions of agency as pertaining to individual rational subjects, ecological approaches conceive of agency as pertaining to assemblages that consist of humans, artifacts, objects, and nonhuman animals operating collectively. As Jane Bennett says, "Assemblages are ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within."[9] The human has whatever agential capacities it has only in virtue of its participation in ecosystems and collectives. In Jasbir Puar's words, "Assemblages do not privilege bodies as human, nor as residing within a human animal/nonhuman animal binary. Along with a de-exceptionalizing of human bodies, multiple forms of matter can be bodies—bodies of water, cities, institutions, and so on. Matter is an actor … not a 'thing' but a doing."[10] Assemblage theory undermines anthropocentrism by muddying the distinction between humans and nonhumans. It can acknowledge that this distinction is sometimes relevant, but it does not see humans as categorically separate from nonhumans. Humans are constituted by their interrelationship with the nonhuman. In the absence of some firm ontological dualism between the human and the nonhuman, it does not make sense to speak of human superiority over the nonhuman. Rather than emphasizing capacities of humans that have traditionally been regarded as signs of human supremacy (language, morality, rationality, tool-use, agency, consciousness), ecological thinking acknowledges that not all humans possess these capacities and many nonhumans do possess certain of them. This is not to devalue humans, nor does to evacuate markers such as consciousness and language of their moral significance. But it does situate humans as necessarily existing in relation with the nonhuman in such a way that elevates the value we assign to the nonhuman and sees the value and being of humans and nonhumans as entangled. The ethical ramification is to attend not just to human flourishing, but to the flourishing of ecosystems and all the various beings that inhabit them. The political ideal I associate with ecological flourishing is ecological non-domination. In the history of political thought, non-domination, associated with the republican political tradition, has been an ideal that has been

[8] Cynthia A. Freeland, Portraits and Persons: A Philosophical Inquiry (Oxford ; Oxford University Press, 2010), chap. 1.
[9] Jane Bennett, Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010), 23–24.
[10] Jasbir Puar, "'I Would Rather Be a Cyborg than a Goddess': Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory," PhiloSOPHIA: A Journal of Continental Feminism 2, no. 1 (2012): 50.

applied to how humans relate to other humans.[11] According to Philip Pettit, an important figure in the contemporary revival of republican thought, republicans understand domination in a particular way, as involving a situation where some party is in a position such that they can interfere with the lives of others, whether they actually do so or not. In Pettit's account, classical liberal thought views actual interference as the relevant political harm, whereas republican thought sees the mere capacity to interfere, whether exercised or not, as in and of itself a harm. A republican society will implement laws and policies to prevent any party from acquiring the degree of power such that they would be in a position to interfere with others, and it will view such laws as a protection of freedom, not an incursion against it. In ecological non-domination, we are concerned not just about human vulnerability to domination but also nonhuman vulnerability to domination by humans.[12] Sharon Krause understands republican freedom as the capacity to "live upon one's own terms" and domination as "to live at the mere mercy of another."[13] Since nonhuman things "have terms of existence that are unique to them," we can understand living upon one's own terms as opposed to terms dictated by another as an ideal that applies to nonhumans.[14]

Contemporary artists express ecological values in artworks in various ways. Many convey the significance of nonhuman entities. Many indicate the interrelatedness of humans and nonhumans. Many attempt to undermine the anthropocentric gaze. Another common motif is to portray the vulnerability of nonhuman beings to industrial production and consumerism. We can consider some examples. For Stephen Gill's *The Pillar* series (2015-2019), the photographer pointed a motion-detecting camera toward a wooden pillar on his Swedish property. The birds in the resulting photographs are in many cases not conventionally framed or poised, thus disrupting the human gaze.[15] Chris Jordan's *Midway: Message from the Gyre* series (2009-present) (which is featured in Paul Schraeder's 2017 film *First Reformed*), shows the hauntingly beautiful outlines of decaying corpses of albatrosses, which encircle the mass of plastic waste that they had fatally ingested.[16] Daniel Lie's installations incorporate organic materials that grow, decay, and die over the course of their exhibition. Human artifacts exist in dynamic and transforming interrelationships with organic and inorganic materials. These and many other ecologically minded art works contest anthropocentrism by turning our

[11] See for example, Philip Pettit, Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1997). Pettit (9-10) acknowledges that many left-liberals will share more with republicanism, as he portrays it, than with more libertarian liberals. He retains the republican/liberal distinction, however, in order to emphasize the different conceptual basis from which republicans of his sort and left-liberals arrive at their common positions: the difference between freedom as "immunity to arbitrary control" and freedom as non-interference. I follow him on this matter.

[12] Sharon R. Krause, "Environmental Domination," Political Theory 48, no. 4 (2020): 443–68; Bennett, Vibrant Matter; Jane Bennett, The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2001); Karen Michelle Barad, Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007).

[13] Krause, "Environmental Domination," 454.

[14] Krause, 455.

[15] I owe this example to Michael Putnam, who has written compellingly about Gill's Pillar series in his Brown University dissertation, "Reverence the Stones: The Ethics of Environmental Attention" (PhD Dissertation, Providence, RI, Brown University, forthcoming).

[16] Sarah Stewart-Kroeker discusses the problematic aspects of beautifying ecological destruction in relation to Jordan's photographs in La Terre Martyre (Geneva, Switzerland: Labor et Fides, 2022).

attention away from the human. In doing so, they are vital contributions to contemporary ethical practice. They dethrone the human either by eliminating its presence or decentering its gaze.

Weak and Strong Anthropocentrism

But what are the prospects for portraiture in these regards? And why might it matter? In order to get at these questions with clarity, we should speak about the nature of anthropocentrism with more precision. Ben Mylius has helpfully drawn a distinction between descriptive anthropocentrism and normative anthropocentrism (and subtypes of each).[17] Descriptive anthropocentrism does not explicitly indicate that humans are of superior value to nonhumans, but in various ways it takes the human as the primary frame of reference. One way to be descriptively anthropocentric is to be anthropocentric by *omission*, which involves considerations of the human that do not include significant reference to the nonhuman contexts in which the human exists.[18] For convenience, I will sometimes refer to descriptive anthropocentrism by omission as "weak anthropocentrism." Another way to be descriptively anthropocentric is as a matter of *separation*, which is to say, presenting the human as different from the nonhuman not as a matter of degree, but as a matter of kind, which oftentimes implies some sort of metaphysical difference.[19] This categorical differentiation does not necessarily imply superiority (which would be normative anthropocentrism), but obviously it lends itself toward that. Normative anthropocentrism (for our purposes, we can set aside Mylius's discussion of "passive normative anthropocentrism," and so I will refer to what he calls "actively normative anthropocentrism" simply as "normative anthropocentrism" or "strong anthropocentrism") affirms that the human is not just different from, but superior to, the nonhuman.[20] We are now in a position to distinguish between gazes that are descriptively anthropocentric and ones that are normatively anthropocentric.

It is not a straightforward matter to transpose the visual features of specific portrait paintings into the specifications of descriptive by omission anthropocentrism, descriptive by separation anthropocentrism, and normative anthropocentrism. But it is safe to say that all three of these have been active in the genre as a whole, and we can be most confident about the two varieties of descriptive anthropocentrism. Nevertheless, there have been examples of portraits that clearly refuse all three of these versions of anthropocentrism. Cubist portraiture is an obvious place to start, as cubism rejects the linear perspective characteristic of the anthropocentric gaze. In Pablo Picasso's (1881-1973) *Portrait of a Woman* (1910), for example, the figure is barely legible. The fragmented forms of the woman and the background impinge on each other. The distinction between the human and the nonhuman is utterly abandoned. Also consider three of Frida Kahlo's (1907-1954) self-portraits, all of which depict the human and the nonhuman in mutually constitutive relationship. In *The Wounded Deer* (1946), Kahlo portrays her head on the body of a deer, shot with arrows, her version of the Saint Sebastian motif in Christian art. Here we have not only the vulnerability of Kahlo herself and animal life,

[17] Ben Mylius, "Three Types of Anthropocentrism," Environmental Philosophy 15, no. 2 (2018): 159–94.
[18] Mylius, 171–73.
[19] Mylius, 181–83.
[20] Mylius, 185.

human and non, but an identification of the human with a nonhuman animal. In *Roots* (1946), her body is depicted with her torso open and her spine as a plant stem that emerges from her. In *The Broken Column* (1944), we see Kahlo's torso, once more opened up, and an architectural column, fractured, in place of her spine. The broken column and the nails piercing her flesh testify specifically to an automobile accident that left her in excruciating pain for the rest of her life, but more generally, signify the vulnerability of the body. We can also take into consideration some of the photographic self-portraits of Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta (1948-1985), from her *Silueta* series. In *Tree of Life* (1976), Mendieta covers her body in mud and stood before a tree, blending into it with camouflage. In another image from that series (1979), she pays homage to Kahlo's *Roots* by positioning her body among the roots of a tree.[21] In *Image from Yagul* (1973), Mendieta lies nude in a pre-Columbian grave in Mexico, covered in flowers, as though her decomposing body is nourishing the plants. My point is not to reduce Kahlo or Mendieta to a generic ecocentrism. The works of both were profoundly expressive of their Latina identities and their specific biographies of tragedy and trauma. But their expressions of their distinctive identities did take have powerful ecological implications with broad significance. For Kahlo and Mendieta, in keeping with ecological theorists like Karen Barad and Jane Bennett, the human and the nonhuman exist in relationships of entanglement and mutual constitution, as features of larger assemblages, not discrete, self-contained entities.[22] As Mendieta said, "My art is the way I reestablish the bonds that tie me to the universe. It is a return to the maternal source through my earth/body sculptures, with which I become at one with the earth."[23] The self-portraits in question reject both descriptive and normative anthropocentrism. They do not omit the nonhuman context or portray the human as separate from it. They portray the enmeshment of the human in the nonhuman in ways that refuse any suggestion that the human is superior to the nonhuman.

Nonanthropocentric artworks like those of Kahlo, Mendieta, and Picasso have an important ethical role to play in our cultural imagination, precisely in rejecting both weak and strong anthropocentrism. It is worth considering, though, the status and significance of portraiture that is weakly, but not strongly, anthropocentric. The fact is that in our daily lives, we undertake many activities in a mode that takes place within the weak anthropocentric paradigm. Mylius acknowledges that our cognitive capacities are limited in such ways that we often times have to attend to something without regard to the surrounding context simply in order to register the pertinent information by filtering other things out.[24] If I am in an intense conversation with a friend or colleague, listening to a speech, participating in a seminar discussion, or delivering a lecture, my attention is often on my human correspondents to an almost exclusive extent. I am wholly absorbed in what they are saying and/or their reaction to what I am saying. I am not at that moment denying the embeddedness of my interlocutors in a nonhuman context, but neither am I attending to that context, it is all I can do to keep up with what others are saying and how they are responding to me. This is not a unique feature

[21] See Gambari, Olga, "Magical Body, Political Body," in Ana Mendieta: She Got Love, ed. Beatrice Merz, Bilingual ed (Milano, Italy: Skira, 2013), 25, 42–45.
[22] Laura E. Pérez, Eros Ideologies: Writings on Art, Spirituality, and the Decolonial (Duke University Press, 2019), chap. 12.
[23] Gambari, Olga, "Magical Body, Political Body," 24.
[24] Mylius, "Three Types of Anthropocentrism," 173.

of human-to-human interactions, so it is not in and of itself a signal of a general disposition to attend more conscientiously to humans than nonhumans. Many of our tasks and activities, including those involving nonhuman entities, require a kind of attention, an absorption, that is so focused as to screen out peripheral matters.

If absorptive interactions with other humans is a necessary and frequent feature of our daily lives, then it requires ethical reflection, both as a matter of how we relate to humans but also in terms of how those interhuman attitudes relate to our ecological attitudes. If in our relations with other humans we are controlling and mastering, then we will very likely be so in relation to nonhumans. This is not to say that first we must take on the task of relating properly to humans and only subsequently can we consider how we relate to nonhumans. Rather it is to highlight the importance of addressing controlling and mastering dispositions in whatever guise they appear. Thus, even a nonanthropocentric ethicist or artist has a stake in how people relate to other people, an encounter that will often come in the weak anthropocentric paradigm. In order for weakly anthropocentric social interactions not to foster strong anthropocentrism, we must be able to move easily between an absorptive, focused mode and a contextualizing, more holistic mode. We can't let our occasional instances of focusing on the human allow us to lose sight more generally of the ontological entanglement of the human with the nonhuman. This could mean reflecting on the significance of climate change in our conversations and plans, as opposed to proceeding as though everything will continue on its present course. It might mean thinking about and discussing the ecological impacts of our activities and plans. It might mean drawing attention to the various forms of ecological interdependence our lifestyles involve. The fact that some of the time our horizon of concern and attention is limited to humans shouldn't lead to a generalized pattern of living in such a narrow horizon.

In principle, then, we might think that there could be portraiture that is weakly anthropocentric, but not normatively anthropocentric. Is this a possibility? Mylius claims that "*a paradigm that is descriptively anthropocentric cannot be used to develop an ethics that is actively normatively nonanthropocentric* … A descriptively anthropocentric paradigm *lacks the intellectual resources to develop anything other than an anthropocentric ethics*."[25] Extending this consideration to visual art, we might think then that a weak anthropocentric gaze can do no other than facilitate a strong anthropocentric gaze.

Alice Neel's Unfinished Style

To explore this question, I turn to one of the greatest portraitists of the twentieth century, Alice Neel (1900-1984). Working in an era dominated by abstract art and male artists, Neel remained resolutely committed to portraying the human figure, and she did so with an eye for ordinary people and a style that combined expressivism and social realism. Traditionally in portraiture, the one commissioning the portrait wants to immortalize the sitter's wealth, status, virtue, and power. Thus, portraiture is implicated in the ideology of the ruling class, which, since the dawn of the age of capital, has meant burnishing the sheen of the reputations of those especially responsible for colonialism, patriarchy, and class exploitation. And that is the very group that

[25] Mylius, 186. Italics in original.

has proved most responsible for pollution and climate change. Neel in contrast painted ordinary people from her working-class neighborhood, Spanish Harlem, from various races, classes, and walks of life. Prominent among her oeuvre are portraits of labor organizers and civil rights activists. She painted nudes of pregnant women, a virtually unprecedented theme in art history, and a woman giving birth, giving prominence to matters of special concern to women's experience. She also portrayed affirmatively women's, and her own, sexuality, as opposed to the tendency in art history to render the female as a sexual object. She depicted aging and disability with a compassionate eye.

To be sure, Neel was an avowed humanist, not a posthumanist ecological artist. Neel's career spanned a crucial period in American art in which abstract art gained prominence (e.g., Rothko, Newman, Pollock), whereas she remained resolutely engaged in figural painting.[26] She explicitly linked this commitment to her humanism. "I am against abstract and non-objective art because such art shows a hatred of human beings. It is an attempt to eliminate people from art, and as such is bound to fail."[27] Elsewhere, Neel qualified her estimation of abstraction. "I'm not against abstraction. Do you know what I'm against? Saying that man himself had no importance. … I am a humanist and that's what I see and that's what I paint."[28] Neel's humanism clearly was rooted in a concern for the dignity of human beings, especially those being degraded by social forces of violence and capitalism.[29] Her prioritization of the dignity of oppressed people renders her humanism well expressed by Anne Phillips' construal of humanism as fundamentally a commitment to the moral and political equality of humans.[30]

Neel's portraits are weakly anthropocentric. Not that she entirely omits context, but clearly it is minimal in comparison to the attention she gives to humans. Despite this and despite her humanism, I want to advance the claim that certain of Neel's artworks undermine the anthropocentric gaze by undermining the controlling, mastering disposition that is characteristic of that gaze and by portraying humans as porous and open, as opposed to superior and enclosed. She accomplishes this principally through her use of two stylistic features: partiality and incompleteness. Along the way, I will point out comparisons between Neel's artistic vision and the philosophy of Judith Butler.

To see the distinctive ethical implications of Neel's style, consider how power typically operates in the relation between the subject and viewer of a portrait. We have already broached the topic of the mastering, possessive spectatorial gaze characteristic of oil painting in general. As John Berger says, "To have a thing painted and put on a canvas is not unlike buying it and

[26] It is worth noting that Neel herself preferred not to think of herself as a portrait painter, but rather a painter of "pictures of people." This does not indicate that Neel's paintings were not actually portraits (they were), but does give a sense of her critical attitude toward the historical genre of portrait painting. Kelly Baum and Randall Griffey, "Anarchic Humanist," in Alice Neel: People Come First, ed. Kelly Baum and Randall Griffey (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2021), 14.
[27] Quoted in Julia Bryan-Wilson, "Alice Neel's 'Good Abstract Qualities,'" in Alice Neel: People Come First, ed. Kelly Baum and Randall Griffey (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2021), 104.
[28] Quoted in Phoebe Hoban, Alice Neel: The Art of Not Sitting Pretty (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2010), 178. Indeed, Neel's portraits contained striking abstract elements, as explored in Mira Schor, "Some Notes on Women and Abstraction and a Curious Case History: Alice Neel as a Great Abstract Painter," Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies 17, no. 2 (2006): 132–60; Bryan-Wilson, "Alice Neel's 'Good Abstract Qualities.'"
[29] Baum and Griffey, "Anarchic Humanist," 13.
[30] Anne Phillips, The Politics of the Human (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

putting it in your house."[31] In Berger's account, the age of traditional oil painting, which he dates from the sixteenth century until the impressionists (the periodization reflects that Berger regards oil painting as a way of seeing, not just an artistic medium), fosters the possessive gaze of the wealthy in one or both of two ways: First, it depicts in highly realistic presentation objects or domains that the spectator either does own or can own. Or if not own, at least have mastery over. Portraits, still lifes, and landscapes all present a range of objects, including humans, nonhuman animals, artifacts, plants, and terrain as accessible to the viewer. Second, oil painting affirms the social status and values of the spectator. It is art about the wealthy for the wealthy, whether they are the aristocrats or the bourgeoisie that emerged in the decline of aristocracy: "Works of art in earlier traditions celebrated wealth. But wealth was then a symbol of a fixed social or divine order. Oil painting celebrated a new kind of wealth—which was dynamic and which found its only sanction in the supreme buying of power."[32] To be sure, there are plenty of exceptions to this in oil painting over that time range, but the possessive gaze is, for Berger, a primary feature of the medium. To extend Berger's analysis, we can say that traditional oil painting has an epistemological dimension: it presents its objects as knowable to the viewer. "Knowledge and desire," as Rose puts it.[33] (Again, there are plenty of exceptions.) We are meant to understand what we behold, it is there for our pleasure. The realistic textures of objects convey their tangibility and accessibility to us. What we see is there for us to touch, taste, see, buy, and know.

Portraiture has two features that distinguish it in relation to other genres. First, as Freeland notes, it typically involves a real person who is conscious of the artist's endeavor to depict them. Thus, they are conscious that the work will be displayed before an audience. This institutes a dynamic relationship between the sitter and the audience. Second, at least in regard to formal portraiture, the aim of the sitter and artist is to convey the wealth and power of the sitter to the audience. Such portraits are commissioned by the wealthy and powerful to portray wealthy and powerful individuals *as* wealthy and powerful. And virtuous, of course. Thus unlike a still life or a reclining nude, the portrayed subject is not there to be purchased or employed as an instrument of the pleasure of the spectator. They are there to impress the viewer with their status. But nevertheless, they are still available to the gaze of the viewer as much as any painted object.[34] The portrayed individual is there for us as a knowable, coherent, bounded whole. And so there is a sort of bidirectional contest for domination between the painted subject and the viewer. "The traces of status in the poses, gestures, and accoutrements of portraiture enabled viewers to respond in a way that tested their own perceived superiority over, inferiority to, or affinity with the subjects of the portraits."[35] The realism of the painting allows us into the intimate space of the powerful individual, as though they are at our disposal, as though we could run our hands across their forearm as easily as we could caress a lemon peel in a Dutch still life. And on the other hand, their status demands distance and wants our deference—at times, seemingly expecting the viewer to cower before them. In any case, the

[31] Berger, Ways of Seeing, 83.
[32] Berger, 90.
[33] Rose, "Looking at Landscape," 351.
[34] Berger describes this as a paradox of intimacy and distance that plagues formal portraiture. Berger, Ways of Seeing, 97.
[35] Shearer West, Portraiture, Oxford History of Art. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 102–3.

result of the contest is to reinforce the ideology of the wealthy and the powerful, both for the commissioner of the portrait who identifies with the superior social class and for the lower-status viewer, who marvels at the authority of the rich. (Informal portraits and self-portraits have a different logic, of course.)

Neel employs two artistic techniques that disrupt this contentious exchange and the possessive gaze characteristic of portraiture. First, in many (but not all) of her works, there is an unevenness in detail across the canvas. For example, in a painting of Nancy Selvage (*Nancy Selvage*, 1967), a friend of Neel's daughter, Neel gives particular attention to the eyes, nose, lips, and chin, in terms of the precision of the lines and shading, whereas the dress and arms are rendered with much less specificity. We don't see much in the way of folds of the fabric of the dress, for example, and the shading of her clothing places each color over broad areas, with hasty, long brush strokes. The details of the individual and her clothes are not uniformly rendered, as they would be in a more realist style. The disparities in detail direct our attention. We are led to focus on the face and engage the sitter's gaze looking back at us. People wear clothes to make an impression on those who encounter them, they seek to convey something about their personal taste and their social status in what their wear. In this portrait, Neel minimized whatever effect Selvage's apparel might have in order for us to encounter her personality in her visage. She looks at us intently, confidently … perhaps with a slight hint of bemusement. She is young and regards her future expectantly. Her eyes are slightly offset, giving the impression that she is simultaneously looking at the viewer and above them, addressing her spectator as an equal but also looking beyond them.

In contrast to the possessive, mastering gaze, which would have the object of our attention be uniformly and entirely accessible, Neel's technique emphasizes the partiality of our grasp of each other. Our knowledge of the other is always incomplete. Certain features of their character we know with precision, but there are always obscurities and mysteries, unknown qualities. We can never take in the whole exhaustively. When we interact with others, we so often classify them into particular social roles and assume to know their values and perspectives. We come into social relationships with biases and prejudices that operate in accordance with how we classify others. We are talking here about concerning ourselves with others as a though they were, in the words of Jacques Derrida, a "*role that is played* rather than with this unique person whose secret remains hidden behind the social mask."[36] A proper appreciation for the partiality of our understanding of the other counsels us to respect the other's irreducible particularity and to adopt a posture of curiosity and uncertainty that allows them to express themselves in ways that unsettle our preconceptions. It counsels a stance of listening and observing in our social interactions. As Emmanuel Levinas says, "The strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions, is precisely accomplished as a calling into question of my spontaneity, as ethics … is concretely produced as the calling into question of the same by the other."[37] Rather than idealizing a godlike omniscience by which we would suppose ourselves to know what is best for the other, this sort of encounter idealizes a humble orientation of openness and sensitivity to the other's

[36] Jacques Derrida, The Gift of Death & Literature in Secret, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 36.
[37] Emmanuel Levinas, Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 43.

own account of their preferences and desires. Politically, it invites us not to regard the body politic as a collection of blocs of shared identities, but as an assemblage of complex beings who don't neatly fit into any of the prescribed social or political categories. It invites us to support policies and laws that protect and allow to flourish the unique singularity of others, as opposed to institutions that would dominate, instrumentalize, or reduce them to a social role.

Neel's technique of partiality sets up a very different relationship between the spectator and the painted individual than the possessive or mastering gaze does. Rather than a contestation for domination, there is mutual vulnerability. We do not have a possessive grasp over the subject, nor they over us. We must acknowledge our epistemic limitation, and accommodate ourselves to our imperfect grasp of our social world and all the susceptibilities that such uncertainty entails. The portrayed subject, for their part, exists as incomplete, not fully formed, and present to our gaze as such. We do not encounter each other as two fully formed sovereign subjects, but as imperfect beings trying to sort out our place in this world together.

A second feature of Neel's painting style is that in a good number of her works, including this portrait of Selvage, the painting is intentionally left incomplete. Selvage's right arm and her hands aren't just rendered in less detail than her face, they are not rendered at all, except in bare, sketchy outline, with unpainted canvas underneath. Neel began employing this unfinished technique in her 1965 portrait of James Hunter. Hunter had been drafted into the Vietnam War and was set to leave in a week when Neel encountered him and asked him to sit for a portrait. He never returned for the second sitting, and Neel signed the painting, declaring it finished. In this particular context, the incompletion obviously evokes the physical and psychological toll that war takes, damaging psyche and body, and each fatality is a person who has been disappeared from life.

But when she employs the unfinished style more broadly, different implications emerge. There is a vulnerability depicted here not just to war, but to the social and material conditions more generally of living. We are not fully formed substances that are impervious to harm, but rather beings who are exposed to and penetrable by the environment that surrounds us. Considering the status of unfinished artworks in the artistic tradition broadly, Kelly Baum, Andrea Bayer, and Sheena Wagstaff make three relevant observations. First, they point out the link between the unfinishedness of a work and mortality, a particular sort of vulnerability that all living beings share. Second, they note the artist's disavowal of their own mastery of the subject that takes place in an unfinished work, which is "unsettled, uncertain, provisional, unresolved, and open to change." Third, there is the way that unfinished works invite the "active engagement of the viewer's imagination."[38] These features of Neel's unfinished works reinforce the ideas discussed above, pertaining to the partiality and non-mastery of the gaze that these paintings invoke. But further, the unfinishedness of Neel's works indicates the tenuousness of the boundary between subject and surroundings, between human and nonhuman. We are accustomed to thinking of our skin as the boundary between ourself and the outside world, as a barrier that keeps intact our internal organs. We extend this barrier with clothes, which encircle us with additional protection. In leaving portions of the figure

[38] Kelly Baum, Andrea Bayer, and Sheena Wagstaff, "Introduction: An Unfinished History of Art," in Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible, ed. Baum, Kelly, Bayer, Andrea, and Wagstaff, Sheena (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2016), 13–14.

incomplete, with neither skin nor clothes, Neel portrays us as permeable. We are not an intact substance that refuses the encroachment of any and all other substances, rather we exist airily, open to our environment, enmeshed in it and by it. We encounter Neel's portrayed subjects as porous, rather than as coherent and bounded. The subject dissipates into the unpainted canvas, which shows through their invisible body parts. In this respect, these paintings challenge the separation of the human from the nonhuman and thus the superiority of the human over the nonhuman.

I see in these two features of Neel's work some attunements with the philosophy of Judith Butler. Like Neel, Butler displays strong humanistic tendencies, but like Neel, it is a humanism of common vulnerability rather than of rationality or moral prowess. Bonnie Honig describes Butler's ethics as a "universal humanist ethics of lamentation."[39] In *Frames of War*, *Precarious Life*, and elsewhere, Butler has written about precarity as an essential feature of human life.[40] Butler contrasts the precarity of our existence, which we all share although it is differentially distributed across lines of race, class, and ethnicity, to the ideal of sovereign subjectivity. Idealizing sovereign subjectivity would emphasize the self as a centered, bounded independent subject that takes a self-defensive and often aggressive posture toward the surrounding world. In contrast, what we need according to Butler is a proper recognition of the ways in which we are necessarily relational beings constituted by our interdependence with each other. As such, we are vulnerable to the qualities of these relationships, and to the social frames in which we live our lives. Butler writes, "After all, if my survivability depends on a relation to others … without whom I cannot exist, then my existence is not mine alone, but is to be found outside myself, in the set of relations that precede and exceed the boundaries of who I am. If I have a boundary at all, or if a boundary can be said to belong to me, it is only because I have become separated from others, and it is only on condition of this separation that I can relate to them at all … a negotiation in which I am bound to you in my separateness."[41] Butler hopes that a proper recognition of our mutual interrelatedness will foster responsive attention to the ways in which vulnerabilities are unequally distributed across social bodies, resulting in some being more precarious than others; she hopes it will foster non-violent coalitional politics to contest such injustices. Neel's painting, in its partiality and incompletion, supports just such a politics.

Conclusion

Neel's and Butler's works both involve a special attention to the human. They are weakly anthropocentric. Neither, however, implies a strong anthropocentrism, in that neither advances the idea that the human is categorically different from or has superior value to the nonhuman. This feature of their work challenges the idea that descriptive anthropocentrism can only give rise to a normative anthropocentric ethics. Neel and Butler focus on the human, to be sure, but they do so in a way that emphasizes vulnerability and interdependence, not

[39] Bonnie Honig, Antigone, Interrupted (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 30–32, 42.
[40] Judith Butler, Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable? (London; New York: Verso, 2009); Judith Butler, Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence (London; New York: Verso, 2004).
[41] Butler, Frames of War, 44. See also 18, 23, 31, 43, 44, 52.

supremacy. Given that we necessarily involve ourselves on regular occasions in forms of attention that involve a special focus on the human, it is important to reflect upon how we regard the human when we are doing so. As independent and sovereign? As an abject subject of our desirous gaze and as exhaustively knowable? Or as vulnerable, interdependent, and resistant to an all-knowing grasp? In presenting the latter option, Neel (and Butler) delineate a vision of the human that complicates any simplistic divisiveness between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. Their work, while not ecocentric, conduces well to an ecological mindedness that recognizes the special attention we so often give humans without reifying that into an ontological dualism.

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