Pragmatism and War

3

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4

Table of Contents

5

INTRODUCTION

Donald J Morse

The recent war in Ukraine has reminded Europe and all the West, if a reminder was ever needed, that the death and destruction of war are always closer to home than you realize. Events we may have naively felt were part of the past—such as war in Europe or the present danger of nuclear war—have now resurfaced as inescapably real and genuine threats of present-day life.

Philosophy since its near inception with Plato has always, in one sense, entailed a strong opposition to war. In the opening pages of Plato's *Republic*, which sets the frame for the entire book, and for Plato's philosophy in general, Socrates and Glaucon are going back into the city after having attended a religious festival (a place from which they might have expected to find wisdom), when suddenly Polemarchus sends his slave over to stop Socrates and to make Socrates stay put, so that Polemarchus can engage him. When Polemarchus catches up to Socrates, Polemarchus tells Socrates that the group Polemarchus is with is larger in number than the group Socrates is with. Socrates had better stop and not hurry back to town, Polemarchus tells him, because, if he does not, Polemarchus and his group will simply overpower Socrates, using force to make Socrates obey. But Socrates quickly reminds Polemarchus that there is another option besides using force, which is to convince the person through the use of reason. But convincing someone by reason, they all come to realize, only works if the person is willing to listen.

Philosophy takes place through reason, language, and dialogue. War, by contrast, employs brute force, violence, and irrational will. *Force* versus *reason*—that is the fundamental contrast. One is oppressive, the other is not; it is participatory, liberating. War involves physical force; it seeks destruction and death. It creates a nightmare world. Philosophy stands fast as the universal call for a reasonable world. Philosophy favors life, shared meanings and values, stressing the importance of dialogue and harmonious human interaction. The true philosopher does listen; they are open to being convinced by the other, if the reasons are good. Philosophy is a power against force, a power *different* than force, *other* than force, and the mere existence and practice of philosophy, as the ineluctable power of reason, is a standing refutation of war, and the irrefutable proof of another possibility.

But if philosophy has nearly always in some sense been opposed to war, philosophers themselves have not always practiced their vocation in this respect. If war is something inescapably real, as the Russian war against Ukraine certainly is, then perhaps the explanation for the few numbers of philosophers who address war (let alone address it as a fundamental concern within their philosophy) is that philosophers have historically focused on the ideal overmuch, with their philosopher's proverbial head in the clouds rather than seeing the ground right before them where they walk. Theory dominates over practice; the ideal over the real; and the urgent, profoundly important issue of war is elided.

We know that Pragmatism is different; that it is one of the most important and influential traditions at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth helping philosophy to get out of its idealist rut. It has called on traditional philosophy to face reality and, what is more, to engage reality, and to engage it, moreover, with what philosophy especially has at its disposal: creative intelligence. As a philosophical tradition, Pragmatism aims to address our everyday problems.

Pragmatism is uniquely situated, therefore, to address the problem of war. And pragmatism has been before where we are now: there is a long and instructive heritage of pragmatist philosophers confronting war, including William James' opposition to the American invasion of the Philippines; John Dewey's careful responses to both World Wars (especially World War I), and his campaign for "the Outlawry of War;" and W. E. B. Dubois' uncovering of the daily war of white supremacists against African Americans and others. Above all, Jane Addams showed us pragmatism in action, as Marily Fisher reminds us, especially concerning the problem of war. Addams even won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 for her efforts.

And so, the question naturally arises: How can Pragmatism help us today? What are the Pragmatists saying today about war, about present-day wars and the threats of war? What is their teaching today regarding our wars today? The Russian invasion of the Ukrainian nation, and the subsequent war in Ukraine, virtually call out for a response from all philosophies engaged in life and the world. The present war demands a response from pragmatist philosophy in particular. What insights does Pragmatism offer us?

When it comes to answering this question, however, we encounter an unexpected difficulty, almost a paradox. Never were there more pragmatists existing than there are today, academically speaking, and yet never have pragmatists been more silent on the real problems of the day, including, quite noticeability, the terrible problem of war. The call for papers for this special issue of Pragmatism Today, whose topic is "Pragmatism and War," yielded too few responses, even during the period when the Russian-Ukraine war is raging; and, in raging, cries out for a response especially from Pragmatists, as we have seen.

While there are, no doubt, many possible explanations for this very limited response, nonetheless it remains a possibility—I would argue a distinct possibility—that Pragmatists today are shirking their responsibility as pragmatists. For it is not simply this volume of *Pragmatism Today*—which is, after all, only a finite and limited venue—in which we can notice a lack of the pragmatist's response to the problem of war, but also, we can see from a survey of the literature just how little bona fide pragmatists in these times respond to war, offer solutions to what is surely one of the most pressing problems today.

My suspicion—which, of course, it would be improper for me to try to prove in this venue—is that the larger number of pragmatists today are, as I mentioned, academics. While I would not go so far as to maintain that academics kills the spirit of philosophy, as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche say, I would argue that academics can stifle the philosophical spirit. For the professionalized nature of the disciplines carries requirements of its own—as, for example, to publish or perish, or to get good evaluations from students, etc., —which are not necessarily the requirements demanded by the discipline itself. It can so happen, therefore, that in the mad rush to succeed in the Academic World, Pragmatist professors will spin their wheels explaining in detail how pragmatists should respond to the world's ills, rather than, as pragmatists, responding to the world's ills themselves. Of course, to be a professor or a scholar of pragmatism does not mean that you must be a pragmatist; however, it can often happen that a scholar who toils immensely on a Philosophy—that is, the reason they have so much invested in that Philosophy—is because they do themselves believe in it. Then, too, the obvious place to find Pragmatist Philosophers is in academia, in the form of professors and scholars.

Two pragmatists who do not shirk their responsibility as pragmatists, and who do address the problem of war, are to be found within this special issue of *Pragmatism Today*. The insights these two philosophers gain by bringing Pragmatism to bear on the problem of war in our times—insights about both Pragmatism and War—are, in each case, highly instructive. John Lachs, in the first essay, extends his own special version of pragmatism, which he calls "Stoic Pragmatism," to the problem of why human beings fight wars. Lachs finds that we need optimism in our approach to life, and to war, but also "cold realism." Lach presents his pragmatism as a new and much-needed philosophy for us to live by. In the second essay, Albert Dikovich examines the Russian-Ukrainian War through the lens of pragmatism. He finds that pragmatism, like phenomenology, is a philosophy that bids us to be sympathetic and open to the experience of others, including to their feelings of unwonted pain, and in this way, pragmatism can help us to perceive what is wrong with war. Ukraine, but not Russia, Dikovich says, is pragmatic, and so democratic, rather than authoritarian, as

Russia is. Ukraine, and not Russia, represents morality in this war, a viable way forward for human beings and for the prosecution of war.

What we see in these two essays is pragmatism today regenerating itself—coming to life despite the death-effect of academic philosophy—and responding to some of the real problems we face today. We find philosophy fulfilling its mission as philosophy, bringing creative reason to bear in opposition to force, opening new possibilities to humankind's otherwise perennial, mistaken choice of force, aggression, and war.

ON WAR

PRAGMATISM AND WAR

John Lachs

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War is the armed conflict of nations or states with one another. Although violence has accompanied the efforts needed for war, without rationale and a measure of central control, aggression rarely succeeds.

It is attractive to suppose that the love of fighting is bred into the human psyche. This idea gains plausibility from our insatiable desire for watching sports. But our devotion to contests is not an embrace of war, or else the human race would have long become extinct. Individuals can get involved in wars as leaders or soldiers, yet it is not an individual activity. No one can start a private war just as no one can secure the benefits of private sunsets. The moral landscape around war would be a lot simpler if we could let the martial few do the fighting while we got on with the ordinary tasks of life. That, presumably, was the advantage of the Medieval custom of jousting by individuals to keep the casualties of war to a minimum.

The moment mediation enters the scene, moral relations change: everyone becomes a soldier or is compelled in some other way to contribute to the war effort. Imagine how much death and destruction could have been avoided if we had refused to participate even in any one of the Twentieth Century wars. But this is idle speculation distanced from the social, economic and especially the power realities of the day.

The purpose of wars ranges from the humiliation to the annihilation of one of the combatant states.

Even though we speak loosely of a war on cancer and of waging war on inequality, the core activity in war is to defeat an armed enemy. What counts as victory can differ from case to case: the Allied Forces in the Second World War demanded unconditional surrender while Israel was satisfied with the right to exist. The same variability shows itself as states reach for the moral high ground in the justification offered for the war: some present ancient grievances while others claim to restore the moral balance of the universe. The speed with which nations resort to force is indicative of *their* moral development, so we must be careful to assess their claims rather than to accept them at face value.

One can reasonably ask what motivates people to risk their comfortable lives in the search for military glory. The obvious and obviously wrong answer is that glory is attractive and their lives are not. Human motivation tends to be complicated and the early stages of conflict, with their cheap victories, can readily create wrong expectations. Contempt for the aggressors can lead to miscalculations and when they realize that they face not a battle but a sustained war, they tend to back off, declaring victory. The recent Russian invasion of Ukraine appears to be of this sort.

Much war revolves around territorial disputes; others seek justification in the name of liberating kinfolk from alien influence. The most vicious fighting occurs when a religious or ideological issue is at stake; absolute truth requires absolute sacrifice. What starts as wanton cruelty soon becomes the systematic terrorization of civilians, attempting to break the spirit of the nation. Prior to the war the parties agree on what must not be done: cheerful lists of basic decency circulate and are endorsed by the parties who will soon disregard them. Once the war begins, it is a free-for-all and the threat to haul offenders to international criminal courts is an empty promise.

This is where pragmatism comes in. There is a sense in which American thought is idealistic to a fault and that is often attributed to a simple and beautiful pacifism. And indeed there are Americans who think the world is new and all we have to do to participate in this renewal is our share of peaceful growth. The tendency is to offer our best and leave the rest to some cosmic principle or God. Royce, among others, is quite explicit on this point, and William James would like to be if his reality sense allowed it.

Would it not be wonderful for human beings all over the globe to be at peace with one another? The ideal is mighty and may be unattainable; the world is full of nasty people who would be delighted to take advantage of others. Fortunately, there is an element of realism in the conduct of United States foreign policy. It may have land-

ed us in too many wars, but it has also protected us at crucial junctures.

I offer my stoic pragmatism as a shorthand for how to think about important individual and social decisions. The key is to love life and believe that it can deliver more than it currently does. Projects and purposes occupy the minds of pragmatists and this puts them in touch with the future on a continuing basis. As a unique combination of optimistic predictions and cold realism, the contact must be exceptionally difficult to sustain. Yet that is the only way we have of gaining access to belligerent temperaments. The stress is on intelligent changes that, with time, become habits and constitute a better world.

That construction is the ultimate promise of pragmatism. The road to it is strewn with obstacles, but that is to be expected of a philosophy that aims to transform the world. In a small but real way, it has already changed Europe, enabling visitors to travel without a mound of documents and seeking what is of benefit to all.

Stoic pragmatism is a set of principles appropriate for organizing many lives. A tacit pragmatism underlies much of the history of the human race. Mere survival as a goal readily, albeit perhaps only temporarily, converts into the desire for leisure and enjoyment. We imagine primitive warriors and early practitioners of agriculture as wanting to improve their condition in the world. They use whatever tools are available and, from time to time, make small improvements in the arts of war. There may be no conscious effort at general improvement but, as a minimum, failure tends to elicit repeated efforts with better instruments.

Similarly, there are traces of stoic endurance in the early history of humankind. I have in mind not the professional stoics such as Marcus Aurelius, but the nameless multitudes who long suffer in silence and then die. The amount of pain people of the Middle Ages endured is incalculable and even today cancer patients require special fortitude. This does not mean that prior generations abounded in stoic pragmatists or that people then subscribed to the

theory. It does, however, suggest that elements of the theory enjoy support from direct experience.

The most difficult problem for the stoic pragmatist is the decision when to be pragmatic and work for improvement and when to be stoical and simply endure what fate casts our way. A relatively advanced form of cancer might serve as an example. One person, with a lot to live for may well decide to tough it out, paying a high price for a statistically low chance of recovery. Another person, tired of life, may feel that a few extra days are enough of misery. There is no way to condemn either person; motivation for continued life is an individual matter and cannot be commanded.

This does not mean that all decisions are equally good or else there would never be regrets. Unfortunately, as things stand in the world, few choices go unaccompanied by pain. Indefinitely many factors influence the decision to fight for life. One may be habit: sickly people find it natural to be exposed to the full armamentarium of modern medicine. Another consideration may be the opinions of loved ones. Satisfaction with life may add support to either choice. In the end, the decision is likely to come down to the agent's purposes.

A convenient way of sorting purposes is by size. A student who enrolls in college aiming to be a doctor has a huge task taking courses, volunteering and shadowing physicians. At the other extreme, I have to decide on the next word in this sentence. Neither purpose is simple, but the complexity of the former far outstrips that of the latter. Many purposes are time-spanning, requiring stretches of time for actualization.

In an ordered life—and few lives fail to be ordered in this sense—temporally immediate purposes receive attention first and more remote and distant actions are constituted out of them. The suicide must first find his pills and, before then, his way home. Life consists of such nested activities evoked and controlled by nested purposes. The chain of responses affords many points of intervention. The suicide may recall that although his

love rejected him, his editor did not and the prospective physician can withdraw from the program before failing Organic Chemistry.

When direct intervention is difficult or impossible, hope often takes its place. Here again, we deal with distinctions of size from the first-time buyer of a lottery ticket to the cancer patient who waits for the nurse with the syringe. Hopes tend not to be nested; when they create opportunities for intervention, they approximate purposes or incipient actions. In trying to understand decision making, it is essential to affirm that human beings are not automata and often though not always act on the basis of considerations.

Let us take the case of a cancer patient, 69 years old. She was suffering from a form of lymphoma, Stage 4, which was threatening her life. Her physicians agreed that without treatment she had only a month or two to live. Aggressive intervention may bring good results at the price of considerable pain and illness. Nothing could be promised, but prior applications of chemotherapy had extended lifespan by years although it did not successfully cure the disease.

Being a stoic pragmatist, she inquired what good her consenting to treatment would create. Simply being alive is not benefit enough; some purposes must be formed and fulfilled. Her longstanding and continuously enriching relationship with her husband may have been enough to opt for life, but in addition her daughter was scheduled to be married in four months. Moreover, she had reason to hope that upon multiple applications of chemotherapy things would go back to normal.

By comparison with the proactive pragmatic side, stoic endurance offered little. Giving up without a battle seemed shamefully hasty---as if one were afraid of pain. The only thing we must beware of is dishonor and that can be stopped if the treatment becomes intolerable. The patient chose treatment and enjoyed eleven years of nested purposes.

What holds as method on the individual plane, holds also on the level of social life. The theory that fulfillment consists of active membership in a political community has not received the criticism it deserves. The sources of satisfaction suggested—even encouraged—in our world called capitalist are far greater than a strongman can accommodate. Freedom goes hand-in-hand with the freedom to fail, and it is easy to deny its legitimacy on the basis of this cost. Americans tend to want to fight only when nearly all else fails. At the end of hostilities, they hasten back to their private affairs. Their system favors a stoic pragmatist approach with an account of plans and purposes that would be created and others that would be disrupted if these were the only values. Unfortunately, they are not. We are constantly dragged into confrontation with dictators and petty tyrants, and we have not yet learned how to make short shrift of them.

EUROPE, WAR AND THE PATHIC CONDITION. A PHENOMENOLOGICAL AND PRAGMATIST TAKE ON THE CURRENT EVENTS IN UKRAINE

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ABSTRACT: In my paper, I develop a phenomenological and pragmatist reflection on the fragility of liberal democracy's moral foundations in times of war. Following Judith Shklar's conception of the "liberalism of fear", the legitimacy of the liberal-democratic order is seen as grounded in experiences of suffering caused by political violence. It is also assumed that the liberalism of fear delivers an adequate conception of the normative foundations of the European project. With the help of phenomenologists such as Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Michel Henry, the paper ants to philosophically deepen the liberalism of fear by outlining a theory of "pathic evidence" as a normative foundation and the concept of a common "flesh of the political" as a shared moral sensitivity that sets boundaries to political conflict as well as the political imaginary, excluding what I call the production of "monumental meaning". It then examines the question which political conditions are needed for this evidence to become a shared, communal criteria of ethical thought, and considers inner and outer challenges to the transmission and reproduction of this evidence in time, drawing especially on John Dewey's ideas of democratic communication and social intelligence. In the current war, the following problem appears as crucial for the "soul" of European democracies which are confronted with the need to respond to Russia's attack: How can a political morality grounded in pathic evidence be sustained, once it is challenged by an aggressor who, out of cultural and political reasons, shows a higher level of toleration towards violence? Besides aggression from an external foe, there are also temporal dynamics that further the loss of the inhibiting force of pathic evidence from the inside. As it shall be argued, boredom can be such a factor. The paper concludes by drawing conclusions for the current war in Ukraine.

Keywords: Liberalism of Fear, War & Peace, Political Violence, Pragmatism, Phenomenology, Ukraine, Europe

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyze the moral rift that underlies the current political rift between Europe and Putin's Russia. That there is such a rift is indicated by the fact that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has brought back war as a means of politics into the heart of Europe. Banning war as a means of conflict is the most fundamental aim of the European project. "Never again!": this catchphrase of the interwar pacifist movement has become the guiding principle of European Politics, the taboo on war demarcates the line between the politically justifiable and the unjustifiable in the relations of those who are part of this political and ethical community. In the past year, Europeans witnessed in shock how untroubled the Russian head of state seems in starting a spiral of escalation and destruction in pursuing dubious ideological motives, an unreasonable desire for absolute security that really is a pretense for war, and very possibly a profound disgust precisely for the European peace project that he has come to challenge.

I will discuss the question of whether the key difference lies in a certain organizing principle of moral and political judgement, in the availability respectively absence of a certain foundational axiom. I will call it *pathic evidence*. I want to outline this idea by engaging in a discussion with several phenomenological and pragmatist thinkers. I will elaborate the idea of the foundation (Stiftung) of an organizing principle of thought by a historical, bodily experience: the experience of the violence of modern warfare and totalitarian rule. Phenomenology helps to understand the intermingling of the empirical and the transcendental, of the bodily and the ideal in experience, thus enabling to conceive of morality not as founded in *apriori*-concepts or in rational calculation of maximal general advantage, but as sedimentations of past experiences and thus history. Pragmatism helps to conceive of this process as a dialectics of means, ends and the consequences of the application of means that is mediated by certain conditions of communication and a certain constitution of the public.[1] It will be discussed if a difference between two kinds of moral reasoning is rooted in different political systems, the freedom of communication and thus the capacities of making something evident. Democracy and authoritarianism provide different chances for the pathic evidence to become collectively shared. Whereas pathic evidence is – as shall be argued

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[1] The paper thus engages in a dialogue between phenomenological and pragmatist thinking as it has been recently suggested by Sebastian Luft; cf. Luft 2019; cf. also Bourgeois 2002.

– essentially a breakdown of meaning, authoritarianism is marked by the tyrannical stabilization and clinging to a certain political project of meaning, thus by the suppression of pathic evidence. It is a rift in what I call the *flesh of the political;* a rift concerning the appearance of war that itself appears in this war and confronts European politics with a profound moral dilemma. The paper finishes with reflections on the fact the latter not only has to face an exterior that is marked by moral alterity, but an endangerment from the inside. From this *metaethical* standpoint, it is shown that the criteria of ethical thought are fragile and have an innerwordly fate. Thus, the philosophical reflection on the fragility of the moral foundations of the liberal order leads to the political question of securing conditions in which the pathic condition not only survives but might become a common one after the ongoing bloodshed and destruction has come to an end.

1. Pathic Evidence and the Flesh of the Political: Phenomenological Perspectives

If one looks at newer advocacies of liberal democracy such as Richard Rorty's or Judith Shklar's, their key characteristic is that liberal democracy is defended as an arrangement that impedes the bad rather than supports the good. If any comprehensive consensus can be achieved under the conditions on modern pluralist societies, then it is the consensus about the absolutely undesirable (c.f. Michéa 2010). The commonality of practical reason is thus constituted not by a criterion of the right as it has been the case in the philosophical tradition reaching from Plato to the Frankfurt School, but of the universally *wrong*.

For the liberalism of fear, a product of the bloody twentieth century, the wrong on which everyone can be expected to agree has appeared as a consequence of the most uncompromising and fanatical attempts to achieve the good, however this good has been defined. The insight into the absolutely wrong is thus the result of a process in which cer-

tain ethical values and social goals were pursued, in which certain means were applied, which in turn resulted in consequences that forced a revaluation not only of the means, but also the ends themselves. The restriction to the definition of the bad is the result of a process of learning, where the will to perfect the organization of the social has shown to pervert itself in its ardent assertion. If there is a plurality of concepts of the good in a society, every attempt to enforce a particular understanding of the good at the cost of others, has to lead to a state of war in which every good, including the one that one is pursuing in a revolutionary or dictatorial way, is diminished and where the bad flourishes. If one presumes with John Dewey that experience is a process of experimental implementations of practical hypotheses on the relation of ends and means that have to be assessed in light of consequences created by this experimental implementation (Dewey 2004, 59-75), the result of the great political experiments of the 20th century is essentially the evidence of what has to be categorically prevented and not what has to be strived for. The good is a subject of open inquiries conducted by individuals and groups, in which no definitive and consensual answer can be expected to be found. To a certain extent, liberal democracies provide the space for a public, and not only individual and private exercise of inquiry and experimental realization of concepts of the good; but this space is strictly confined according to what the prevention of the universally recognizable bad demands.

The "liberalism of fear", Shklar writes, "concentrates on damage control" (Shklar 1989, 27). It wants to be two steps ahead of the evil lingering and threatening to break into the pacified and secured society; it thus fights the evil with far-sighted precautions and not only with emergency measures. Its categorical imperative is not to repeat the

mistakes of the past. It is a political morality rather of renunciation and even resignation than passionate activism. It inhibits the revolutionary imaginative powers that envision the perfectibility of the social order by reminding the fatal consequences of past great experiments. It prefers languidness to passion, it cools emotions down to a level that is not in danger to erupt into violence by telling the stories of past nationalist enmities and the endless misery of interethnic and interreligious hate. It thus depends on the fact that the memory of the catastrophic results of the big political experiments and great wars of the younger past is preserved and that the images of suffering and pain continue to speak for themselves of the falsity of what has caused them. In Shklar's words: it is on "historical memory" as a "faculty of the human mind that the liberalism of fear draws most heavily" (ibid.).

I call this kind of evidence of the false *pathic evidence* (cf. Dikovich 2020). It is the evidence of what cannot be justified as a means for ends, a price that has to be accepted for the sake of the good. The wrongness of what appears as wrong does not have to be explained or founded; it is evidently incommensurable with any meaningful pursuit of the good. As the evidently senseless, it thus structures the ethical and political imagination, and the production of political meaning. Phenomenologically speaking, the correlate to the pathic evidence as *noema* is the *pathic condition* within the *noematic* consciousness. It is a consciousness affected by what it sees in such a way, that the experienced becomes an organizing principle or *axiom* of its thought and its will. When it thus does reason in favor of a certain path of political action, it eventually will come back to pathic evidence as the final criteria of judgement; the memory of the great wars, of concentration camps, the rule of terror, the millions of dead. The path that has to be taken is always the one that will most probably prevent the repetition of these events and actions.

In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl differentiates between two modes of evidence. *Adequate* evidence is the quality of a certain insight to be *complete*; here, there is no sense of "infectedness of the experience with unfulfilled components, with expectant and attendant meanings" (Husserl 1960, 15) that accompanies the intuition of truth. This quality, however, is hardly ever actualized in experience and philosophical reflection; in fact, Husserl hints at the adequation being more a regulative idea than an achievable quality of evidence: "The question whether adequate evidence does not necessarily lie at infinity may be left open" (ibid.). In contrast, apodictic evidence is one of actualized "absolute indubitability". It is this kind of evidence that elevates a noema to become a primordial, first truth that rests in itself and needs no further explanation, thus a truth of axiomatic status. "An apodictic evidence", as Husserl writes, "is not merely certainty of affairs or affair-complexes [...] evident in it, rather it discloses itself, to a critical reflection, as having the signal peculiarity of being *at the same time the absolute unimaginableness* (inconceivability) of their *non-being*, and thus excluding in advance every doubt as 'objectless', empty" (ibid., 15f.).

Husserl mentions that evidence must not be adequately given to be apodictic (ibid., 16; cf. Schmid 2001). Quite the contrary, this is the regular case for any evidence that philosophical inquiry may reach. Every insight is surrounded by a field obscurity, even in the case of the Cartesian *cogito* it is only known *that it is true*, yet Husserl could dedicate the bigger part of his life work to the question *what that really means*, i.e., what the cogito implies.[2]

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[2] It is therefore only an assessment of the "facticity of the ego" and not "self-transparency" that phenomenological reflection can achieve, as Hans Bernhard Schmid argues; Schmid 2001, 231, 218.

Empirical experience is always accompanied by the "open possibility of becoming doubtful, or of nonbeing, in spite of evidence" (Husserl 1960, 15). It remains in the realm of the merely probable. Pathic evidence is apodictic, yet not *a priori*; the bad had to be historically encountered to become a constitutive criterion of thought. Once it is encountered, it structures ethical thought as that what is necessarily bad and must never be again. There cannot be any context imaginable in which the seen could be legitimated by a higher good for which it serves as a means and enablement; a system of thought that would argue in this way would be the perversion of moral thought. The liberalism of fear is the thought that corresponds to a historically acquired subjective condition; acquired by the affection caused by extreme suffering that is experienced only by a minority, but is seen and known to have taken place by the majority: the horrors not only of totalitarian rule, but also of modern warfare. It is the condition, not of a subject that heroically proves itself and clings to its ends despite enormous defiance and pushbacks, but of a subject that experiences the breakdown of its guiding and meaningful ideas – revolution, the new man, national pride and prestige, the *Herrenmensch*, etc. – in the face of pain: not only pain suffered by oneself, but pain perceived in the faces, gestures and cries of others.

Being result of an τραύμα in the original Greek meaning of the world, of the infliction of a wound and of pain, thus originating in the world, the pathic evidence is not only *a posteriori*, but it can also never be *adequate*, since it is – as all innerwordly givens are – surrounded by an obscure nexus of facts and circumstances concerning its origin. Pathic evidence is objectified as the manifestation of a certain empirical *condition* or *disposition* that is acquired through factual events. For the reflective *cogito*, the pathic evidence is at the same time evidently true and the object of doubt; *ethically true*, that means evident as a criteria for the distinction of good and bad, but at the same time doubtful as to whether it connects with the *real*, i.e. concerning its fate as a innerwordly fact, as a human disposition that has to survive in the world. This is the point where the rupture of realism and idealism, between interiority and exteriority, between morality and necessity, between – in Henry's terminology – the subjective "truth of life" and the "truth of the world" (Henry 1996, 21-70), come into effect in liberal thought. They are expressions of self-doubt. Liberalism differentiates from Christianism by not affirming the former *against* the latter, but by claiming that a society can be built where both are reconciled. However, it is marked by an ever-present insecurity about its core belief. Regarding its origin, it cannot be sure what the pathic condition really is: whether it is not merely a weakness, an uncured τραύμα which has to be overcome in order to keep up with the demands of innerwordly existence. This doesn't mean that the pathic evidence appears as morally untrue; it merely means that morality must not always have the last word in the realm of intersubjectivity, that only a nonviable sentimentality absolutizes its demands and that we have to acknowledge the subsisting state of nature and remain able to act out violence if we don't want the good that we have achieved to become prone to those who do not share our condition.[3]

Following Merleau-Ponty and his interpreter Myriam Revault d'Allonnes, it can be spoken of "la chair du politique" (Revault d'Allonnes 2001; cf. Merleau-Ponty 2007, 170f.), the *flesh of the political*. If we interpret the political in a Schmittian sense, as the field of the antagonistic split between *us* and *them* where conflicting projects and visions of the social are pursued, then it is the constitution

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[3] See i.e. the liberal debate on *Realpolitik*; cf. Bew 2015.

of the flesh that determines how far we are willing and able to go in our political endeavors, what can be a meaningful act in this pursuit, and where the boundaries of the meaningful and justifiable are overstepped. If a political project always has to withstand the pressure that results from the resistance of the political adversary and the unexpected consequences of one's actions, and if it needs a subjective force (i.e. will) to withstand this pressure and hold on to it as a meaningful endeavor, the limit for this force is reached when it comes to a certain intensity of suffering and cruelty. The *pathic* is the subject's experience of its own limitedness, not of the *I can* that Merleau-Ponty describes as the primordial opening of the world (Merleau-Ponty 2006: 171), but of a *I cannot* (cf. Henry 2000a, 247-255) that limits the world and thus gives a structure to it, the *dimensions* in which the subject can unfold itself and where its embeddedness becomes possible. This is also the space where politics as non-violent, contained conflict is realized. It therefore also limits the corporeality of politics, the grade of affection and consumption of the bodies of subjects by politics. The sensing body is protected from politics tyrannical claims to use it for the realization of meaning. The corporeal regime of politics is based on a regime of memory and ethical sensitivity that has pathic evidence at its center. There is a sense of community between adversaries when there is the trust in the sameness of this limitations (cf. Simmons/Wellborn 2022); the sentiment of common limitations is the base for reciprocal trust. The flesh as common element (cf. Henry 2000b, 160-179) thus encompasses and restricts the political as the medium of division.

The use of the term 'flesh' is justified because it is not a purely rational judgement about the bad that is at work here, but an experience that is indeed conditioned and formed by meanings and

thus the sedimentations of a certain culture. Yet it also encompasses the affective and corporeal nature of the subject,[4] since it is only as a being capable of suffering that it can be affected by the sight of pain. One can speak with Michel Henry of the pathic evidence as an experience of "auto-affection" (Henry 2020, 109; Vassilicos 2015); a self-relation that is rooted in a more fundamental layer of existence than thetic consciousness. Pain and suffering as primordial modes of auto-affection of the subject are, according to Henry, essentially experiences of the limits to its capacities (cf. Henry 2003). In what is called pathic evidence here, it is the capacity/incapacity to experience something as actually or potentially meaningful. It is thus the experience of the limitations of thetic, meaning-giving consciousness. The noematic reverse side of this is the evidence of the necessarily meaningless. The flesh is the point where the sphere of meaning and the real connect; the pathic experience is the point where this connection fails, usually in the mode of shock and trauma: where for example traditional notions of soldierly heroism disconnect from the experience of modern warfare, or where the sight of starving farmers disconnects from the idea of a revolutionary eradication of vestiges of the old order.

There is, however, one major problem with the liberalism of fear. It is plausible to deduce an ethics of political self-limitation from the pathic evidence. Yet how should one behave according to it in the face of an *other* that is not only not affected in the same way by the sight of violence, but also has the power and the will to harm me? Will the law of reciprocity in war not force me to apply violence and be cruel in order not to fall victim to the others cruelty? Shklar's essay, which was published just in the

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[4] One can therefore say that the train of thought elaborated in this paper is situated in what is called the "affective turn" in the social sciences and in philosophy; cf. Clough/Halley 2007.

year 1989, is written from the vantage point of a triumphal liberal democracy – triumphant because of the ethically catastrophic results of its alternatives. It locates threats rather on the inside rather than on the outside since the threatening outside really seemed to have vanished, it focuses on radicalism rather than on war.[5] What is new in the current war is the acute sense of vulnerability that has emerged with Russians full scale invasion of Ukraine, it's determination to attack the liberal democratic model with violence on a large scale and with the silent support or at least toleration by new global powers such as China and India.

If the liberalism of fear as civilizational model is grounded in the communality of the pathic condition, then its other is constituted by the lack pathic auto-affection, by the lack of limitation. Rather than primitiveness, *barbarism*[6] is thus a form of monstruous, excessive *ability*; namely the ability to support the sight, the suffering and the causing of pain. The barbarian is the personified dubiety concerning the pathic subjectivity, the menace of the world to devour the moral, the threat that the apodictic might turn out as mere inadequacy of the subject in relation to the necessary. The liberalism of fear has shown paradoxical reactions to this menace: The appearance of the alleged barbarian provoked violence in the name of non-violence, attempts to force upon the others the sameness of the condition by violently breaking their will, thus transgressing exactly those limits which one is aiming to secure. This has been the ugly result of the so called "war on terror", the war of a coalition of Western democracies that was conceived of as a response to the first major disruption of the triumphalist self-assurance

of liberal democracy since the fall of communism, to the acts of religious extremists that showed a shocking willingness to go to carry violence to the extreme – to mass murdering of civilians and suicidal self-sacrifice. It on the one hand created excretions in the form of barbarians among the own ranks, of specialists of violent transgression and humiliation such as the prison guards of Abu-Ghuraib, on the other hand – and more importantly – relied heavily on mediating technological apparatuses that create an ever-greater distance between the doer and the deed, that almost spares the former the sight of the latter. Religious extremists have their heroic and monumental meanings that enable them to do what they do; the post-heroic societies of the West have their high-tech means of sterile killing from the safe distance (cf. Luttwak 1996). Both sides intend to terrorize the other into submission.

2. Democracy and Pain: Pragmatist Continuations

Having departed from the self-reflective stance of phenomenology, we may now shift to a pragmatist perspective on the pathic subject as well as its *other*. Pragmatism's strength lies in situating the subject in specific relations of communication and interaction as well as in cultural and political contexts that condition the constitution and stability of the moral subject and its relation to the world.[7] These conditions have to be taken in consideration if moral reflection should not only bother about the assertion of the validity of its guiding moral principles and values, but also about *making these values work* in the world as it is – a style of moral thought that John Dewey called "thinking which is operative" (Dewey 1929, 271).

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[5] For extrapolations of a Shklarian theory of international relations and war see i.a. Royer 2022 and Stullerova 2022.
[6] Cf. Henry's description of barbarism as a sort of inhibited auto-affection of the living subject; Henry 2020.

[7] See i.e. Dewey's critical examination of the German history of ideas and its political development during World War I that tries to develop the moral motives driving Imperial Germany as a warring party; Dewey 1915.

Since the liberalism of fear depends on the historical memory of events to which it is an answer and reaction, it must reproduce and transmit the condition that was acquired in these historical breakdowns of meaning. This is not only the educative work of culture, but also of economy. Firstly, the pathic evidence is socially instituted as a criterion by the gesture of memorial culture that points at the possible – the suffering that has happened – as that what should become impossible by the social and political order. Thus, the memory of war and suffering becomes a central motive in the artistic production of liberal societies. Yet liberal societies not only rely on the moral sensitivity of their citizens cultivated by the arts, literature, philosophy and religion. One of the key elements is the economic dispositive and the formation of desires. The citizens are also in possession of goods he/she is not willing to risk for whatever great political enterprise that demands violent conflict. For the sake of pacification, liberal societies want to see their citizens in need of certain standards of material well-being.[8] For those who are not able to reach the latter by their own effort, the modern welfare state comes into action.

Thirdly, politics itself is a medium of the pathic. More than any other philosopher, Immanuel Kant is the spiritual father of the European Project. In Kant's philosophy of history, the existing antagonistic and violent mode of politics breaks down, given a reality of warfare that is incommensurable with its constitutive notions. Kant did not reject war categorically, attributing to it certain virtues such as the overcoming of bourgeois egotism to martial culture, thus aligning himself with the German respectively Prussian tradition of heroic political thought

(cf. Fichte 1815). Yet he predicted a future moment where the material and human costs of war would exceed a limit beyond, which no political legitimation of war as a means of solving conflict would be possible anymore. Therefore, the ethical system of militaristic heroism would have to come to an end, its value would become unrealizable, or rather would have to adapt to a new, juridified, and thus pacified political reality. By speaking of nature as the "great artist" that would "make harmony spring from human discord, even against the will of man" (Kant 1903, 143; cf. Ertl 2019). Kant leaves here the apriorism of his philosophy and refers to the sub-rational, sentient element of human being that we called, following Merleau-Ponty, the flesh.

However, Kant's choice of words suggests that he sees some kind of natural law operating in human history, that the point where war loses all possible meaningfulness is in a way programmed into the human constitution. Thus, the pathic experience of war would be nothing but a natural reflex caused by overwhelming suffering – suffering either experienced in catastrophic events or anticipated and made evident by intellectuals that, according to Kant, might be able to spare humanity the fate of having to painfully learn from great errors.

Yet it is clear that the level of tolerance for violence is variable and not fixed, due to a constant, trans-temporal anthropological constitution of men and women. The ability to tolerate, and even appreciate, the sight of extreme violence is dependent on cultural resources of meaning. It was probably Rousseau, who as the first modern thinker, saw the correlation between different grades of sensitivity towards pain and different forms of government, and thus integrated the sensitization for the pain of others into his program for the education of the democratic citizen outlined in his *Emile* (cf. Rousseau 1979, 211-355; Revault d'Allonnes 2008,

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[8] Liberal theoreticians have therefore lamented that liberal peace is secured only to the price of the preponderance of shallow material desires; cf. Bolz 2002.

34-44). What Rousseau envisages here is solidarity as an ethical and affective bond merely *within* the state: the suffering subject for which Rousseau's *citoyen* is able and ready to sympathize with is the *concitoyen.* One can see Rousseau as an intellectual predecessor of the political thought of Richard Rorty, who conceives of the maxim of the reduction of pain and cruelty as the core of a liberal, humanistic and reformist ethos (cf. Rorty 1989, 141-198). The liberalism not only of fear, but of solidarity admits the public showing of vulnerability – in diametrical contrast to an older liberalism of heroic self-assertion in which the suffering individual cannot expect its grievances to be acknowledged. The progressive sensitization for pain becomes possible because of the freedom of every individual to articulate its grievances, and fight for the public's recognition of the latter as defects that must be overcome. What enables this shared sensitivity is thus democratic communication. Needless to say, the question of what can be legitimately called suffering remains controversial, thus creating a rift within the consensus of the principle that intense suffering has to be prevented.

However, the dependence of the pathic "flesh of the political" on communication is not only to be found in the interior relations of the polis, but also on those to its outside. The affinity between a social order characterized by political liberties and the pathic condition was already understood by Kant. Kant did not speak of democracy, but of the republican constitution of the state, yet what he meant by that is a political order that is legitimized by protecting the freedom of the governed; a task that is not accomplishable for the state without the freedom of expression and public discussion. According to Kant, it is not only in relation to inflictions of harm in the interior of the polity that the republican political order supports a growing awareness; it is in relation to the dealings with other states, and thus in relation to war, that he speaks of the superior sensitivity towards violence in republics.[9] As the German philosopher famously argues in his writing *On Perpetual Peace*, only the "republican constitution apart from the soundness of its origin, since it arose from the pure source of the concept of right, has also the prospect of attaining the desired result, namely, perpetual peace". The reason is the following:

> If, as must be so under this constitution, the consent of the subjects is required to determine whether there shall be war or not, nothing is more natural than that they should weigh the matter well, before undertaking such a bad business. For in decreeing war, they would of necessity be resolving to bring down the miseries of war upon their country. This implies: they must fight themselves; they must hand over the costs of the war out of their own property; they must do their poor best to make good the devastation which it leaves behind; and finally, as a crowning ill, they have to accept a burden of debt which will embitter even peace itself, and which they can never pay off on account of the new wars which are always impending. (Kant 1903, 122f.)

It is not only the possibility, and therefore necessity, to take responsibility for securing one's own wellbeing that will make the citizen of the republic refrain from every act of war that is not absolutely inevitable in order so safeguard the latter, but the very possibility to freely discuss the costs of war. In Republics, the consciousness about what has happened, the possibility to express and share the pain experienced and thus the chances for individuals to be collectively formed by the experience of violence and pain, is very different compared to societies where the state has control over the collective processing of what has happened. Because war is an endeavor that has to be backed up by meaning as a force that motivates actions (Clausewitz 1908, 27-45), autocratic regimes use tyrannical means to stabilize this meaning, that is en-

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[9] On Kant's Theory of Peace see i. a. Doyle 1983. The empirical verification of the "democratic peace theory" and thus of Kant's assumptions is a widely debated question today. It suffices to say that there are empirical data that back the democratic peace theory; cf. Gelditsch 1992.

dangered by the reality that differs more and more from what was envisioned when the war was begun. Modern instruments of communication and visualization can both create a common perception of the face of war and thus create shared evidence or be used to cover and alternate the reality.[10] In autocracies, the means of production of shared evidence are exceedingly monopolized and used to promote a certain narrative, image and ideology. Individuals who experience what must not happen according to the guiding ideology, must remain publicly silent and alone with their memories; the possibility to witness itself is taken away from the subject; beginning with the confiscation of the personal smartphones of the soldiers to ever expanding censorship to the absurd language regime that permits this war to be called by its name.

It is clear that such a regime of stabilization of meaning can be very efficient, yet never be total in the sense that there rest informal channels of transmission that it cannot close, and that democracies tend to adapt such a regime themselves as the costs of war rise. And of course, political liberties do not guarantee that people do not fall for false promises and illusory expectations concerning war. But as long as democratic – or, in Kant's terms, republican – freedoms determine the way a people deals with war, at least there is the chance that this happens in an intelligent way. The means of unmasking the great illusion are given – even though, however, this only happens after the evil deed is done, in retrospect, as an accounting for past mistakes. Meaningless wars are mistakes of a magnitude that their usual consequence is the removal of political leaders and governments. Obviously, authoritarianism is defined by the fact that stepping aside for someone else is not an option for the rulers. The more it becomes thus clear that a war as a means of politics has been started on the base of miscalculations and

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[10] Susan Sontag has thoroughly written about the technical innovations that made such shared evidence possible; Sontag 2013.

illusions, the greater the effort to stabilize an image of what is happening favorable for the rulers.

For pragmatists such as John Dewey, *intelligence* is the key criterion for the evaluation of political systems. Intelligence is a mode of dealing with problems, whether they are of scientific, ethical or social and political. Intelligence is defined by a non-dogmatic, inquiring, and experimental as well as dialogical approach to challenges, that occur in research or in practical action (cf. Dewey 1977). It is constituted by the readiness to put into question, what is considered as valid, whenever something unexpected and incongruous with one's guiding assumptions occurs. As mentioned before, in the field of practical action, this means that the ideas guiding our actions should be constantly reevaluated in view of the consequences that arise in the process of pursuing them.

It is its possibility to develop social intelligence that in Dewey's view sets democracy apart from other systems of government (cf. Dewey 1954, 208-210). Social intelligence evolves in public discussion. The value of democratic freedoms thus lies in the intelligent dealing with the problems of social organization or collective action that it enables – first and foremost by the possibility to problematize things. Before social problems can be dealt with, they have to be perceived; and the best sensorium by which these problems can be detected are the senses of the subjects themselves.

In the context of (political) morality, the question of normative principles and values and the question of intelligence are inseparable in a Deweyan perspective. The key point of Dewey's moral philosophy is not so much the creation of new normative principles and values or the affirmation of old ones, but the consideration of different conditions of moral thinking and the expansion of control over these (cf. Dewey 1929, 256). It is in this sense that

democracy becomes a demand of moral thought since only under the condition of democratic communication the authentic pursuit of universalist claims immanent to moral norms is possible. It is also the multiperspectivity and inclusiveness of democratic communication that is the strongest – although not necessarily sufficient – antidote to the dogmatic and ideological ossification of morality and the atrophy of moral faculties such as the pathic sensitivity.

Ideally, unrestrained multiperspectivity is needed for the intelligent evaluation of the guiding values, ideas and ends of politics that might in some cases legitimate war as a means. As Dewey has argued time and again, ends can only be intelligently evaluated in the light of the means. By separating ends and means (ibid., 266) – including suffering, death and destruction as costs that have to be paid for the achievement of an end – and making the ends absolute, ideology may seek to stabilize its core concepts such as national honor, the revolutionary liberation of the world and the like. Democracy therefore sets a limit to the possibilities of political and ideological production of meaning since by letting the suffering speak out it sheds light on costs that can hardly be integrated into a legitimizing narrative which builds on lofty ideals and affectively charged notions. Intersubjective communication constitutes the medium by which the intersubjective world is phenomenalized; the tyranny of political and ideological meaning lies in the inhibition of this phenomenalization and therefore in a blind pursuit of monumental endeavors. Even when the point is reached where the catastrophic consequences of one's actions can no longer be neglected and covered up, this does not necessarily mean that a change of mind takes place; for one thing suppressed shame and unwillingness to admit one's own errors may cause the continuation

of the path of destruction, for another thing the collective capacities of interpretation may be crippled to the extent that people will cling even more to the meaning provided by those in power to have at least some means to account for what happens.

Of course, in wartime, governments of all sorts cripple and distort this sensorium. The most important means here is the cutting of the communicative ties by which the sensed – the reality of war – could be shared. As it has been mentioned before, democracies at war also resort to censorship and other means to suppress "disturbing" information. Yet authoritarianism distorts this sensorium not only during the war, but also in preparation of it as well in its aftermath. Therefore, subjects under authoritarian rule might rather easily accept war as a means of politics, since the consciousness of what has happened is systematically hindered to develop. It is this lack of awareness that evokes most strongly the sentiment of alienation in relation to today's Russia. The relations nourishing the development of social intelligence are cut in two ways; in a synchronous way by cutting the ties of communication between the coexisting subjects, and additionally in a diachronous way by distorting and manipulating the transmission of past experiences through memory. In terms of sheer numbers, the Russians in the Soviet Union were the ethnicity in the Soviet Union that have suffered the greatest losses of human lives in the Second World War.[11] Yet it is obvious that the lessons Russian memory politics has drawn from it are very different from those that are guiding Europe (Malinova 2019; Carleton 2017). It is well known that militarism has been pushed by the Putin regime, that the wars of the past, including the Great Patriotic War, are an ob-

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[11] In terms of proportionality to the overall population, the citizens of the Ukraine Soviet Republic have suffered the highest death toll.

ject of glorification unclouded by the pacifist con-
demnation of war as such. On the contrary, Putin's
propaganda tells Russians that the Great Patriotic
War is a continuous event that has entered a new
phase, that the Nazi-menace against Russia was al-
ways present and has never stopped and that it is
today once again time for a heroic patriotic sacri-
fice. Militaristic *Kitsch* has also done its part in pre-
paring the country for war (cf. Dikovich 2022): The
famous images of children dressed as planes and
tanks with the Z-symbol indicate how far parts of
Russian society have lost touch with the reality of
war. It is simply astonishing that the evocation of an
event as bloody as the war against Nazi-Germany
seemingly does not cause the strongest anxieties
and concerns among the Russian people that for
the most part let themselves be dragged without
resistance into an escalation of violence with an un-
known outcome.

3. How to stay what we are

> way too long the artillery and the tanks stayed si-
> lent in their hangars
>
> way too long the rockets stood waiting and
> aimed in their shafts [...]
>
> someone wrote of the end of history,
>
> that it stopped its flow, rarely waking up, joking
> out of boredom
>
> and where are you, the heroes of the front and the
> heroines of the hinterlands
>
> battling the burdens of separation at the conveyor
> belts
>
> Boris Khersonky

Kant already knew that such a thing as global peace can-
not be hoped for as long as the abilities to perceive the
gruesome reality of war, and thus the pathic breakdown
of the ideologies that underlie these acts of violence, are
blocked by the authoritarian suppression of social intel-
ligence. Before global peace could be established, the

republic as political form and thus liberal conditions for
the development of social intelligence would have to be
universalized. During the high tide of liberal democrat-
ic optimism three decades ago, Kant's dream appeared
more attainable than it had ever been before. In the new
multipolar state of the world, where the fact has to be ac-
cepted that authoritarian regimes have held their ground
and will continue to do so, these hopes are not only shat-
tered; with the war in Ukraine that is not only Putin's war
against the neighbor state, but a war against the West as
a whole, we are forced to face the fact that an adversary
that uses his arsenal of means of manipulation and sup-
pression to keep its population in line with the war effort,
challenges democracies to take up the bloody and ugly
business of war.

In the television series *The Walking Dead*, one
group of villains that the heroes encounter in the
woods of Georgia are the inhabitants of a place
called "Terminus". The heroes of the series, a group
of men, women and a child always on search for a
secure shelter and food after a zombie-apocalypse
has taken place, find signs near railways that sug-
gest that Terminus is a place where humanness has
stayed intact amidst all the violence and anarchy,
and where straying individuals could finally find
peace and security they so desperately long for. Of
course, these hopes are in vain, and the inhabitants
of Terminus – an old, abandoned railway depot –
turn out to be the most gruesome and inhumane of
all the foes the group has encountered so far, luring
people into a trap, slaughtering and finally eating
them. In one scene, the head of the villain group
recounts the sad story his community has gone
through that led to its utter moral corruption. The
offer for sanctuary was at first meant sincerely, but
it was exploited by a group of marauders that raped
and killed the members of the community that was
almost wiped out. The conclusion that was drawn
from the vulnerability that resulted from one's own

good will, and the trust in a common humanness, was to allow oneself no longer any human sentiment towards outsiders. The complete dehumanization of the other is displayed in the act of cannibalism. For the head of the villain community, it was the evil world outside that has forced such a behavior upon the members of Terminus. By the practice of cannibalism, they assimilate themselves completely to the evil outside, they become counterparts to the zombies that have lost all humanness. Of course, the logic of a Hollywood-TV-show demands that such a morally corrupted group has to find a brutal end themselves.

The Zombie-genre, since its appearance in popular culture, has reflected civilizational *Angst* (cf. Drezner 2022). It is the aforementioned deeply rooted doubt of the pathic subject – of the *pathic cogito* – about its own nature that can be seen processed here. Looking at commentaries on the events in Ukraine, one often finds such a sense of an exploited trust and a regret for the vulnerability that resulted from it. Clearly, the willingness of Putin's Russia to start an inevitably very costly war against the largest country of the European continent has come as a surprise to the democratic West. The notion of a common rational cautiousness concerning the destructive forces of modern warfare and a common taboo prohibiting to ever bring back war to Europe has turned out to be illusive. The question now is how to deal with an adversary that is different on the profound level of moral and affective attitude towards war? What kind of relations can be kept up with an adversary that accepts bloodshed among innocent civilians and the sacrifice of so many of its own citizens as a legitimate cost, and even threatens the use of nuclear weapons in order to pursue phantasms of a past empire that should be restored?

To counter any tendencies to step into the trap of the barbarization of the other (cf. Staudigl

2018), and therefore demonize and dehumanize the men and women who execute and support this war of aggression, one has to remind that the main reason for this war is tyranny and the damage to intersubjectivity that are rooted in the latter. In that perspective, the fact the Russian people if not supports, for the most part tolerates Putin's war, is mainly grounded in the systematic deprivation of the possibilities to develop adequate reactions to what is happening. Yet this incapacitation of social intelligence means an enhanced power of the rulers to mobilize their populations for violent adventures. Accordingly, Putin's original assumption seems to have been that the post-heroic West would keep its distance from Ukraine out of fear of an uncontrollable escalation of the conflict. However, one of the most striking effects that the current war has on European societies is the return of political heroism into supposedly post-heroic cultures (cf. Münkler 2007; Bröckling 2020). Today, European political leaders are eager to stress their continuing contribution to the struggle, going so far that the latest EU-summit has taken place in Kyiv, a city inside of a war zone. Western governments appeal to their populations to bear the impending consequences of a severe economic war and engage in a contest of endurance and material sacrifice with Russia. A big part of Europe is sending military aid and upgrading its own arsenal of weapons, with some European countries currently surpassing the U.S. government's military assistance by forming a coalition for the delivery of state of the art war planes to the Ukrainian army (May 2023). Thousands of men and women from Western democratic countries have joined the Ukrainian forces since the beginning of the war, advertisements on YouTube present the partake in the fighting as a heroic adventure to Western audiences. Ukraine, a country at the periphery of Europe, has become the hero

of the Western world in a new struggle between the free world and the autocracies of this world; more, it has become the role model for a Europe that declares to be ready to fight for its values and democratic institutions. Politicians formerly known to take a pacific stance against military buildup and militarism such as members of the German Green Party now voice the most ardent support for military support and armament inside the European Union (cf. Koschorke 2023). A new hardness is displayed as a reaction to the notion that Putin has exploited Europe's naïve pacifism. The war is by some liberals even declared to be a revitalization Europe and the collective West that had already started to crumble under the impact of populism and the rise of new global powers.

How could the pathic condition as it has been described above be maintained under these circumstances? May it well have been nothing but a luxury that some European democracies could enjoy for a few decades which lived under the protective screen of the West's hegemonial power, the USA? Has now begun a new epoch where it can no longer be avoided to get one's hands dirty? Europe and America have, as Robert Kagan and Robert Cooper have argued, lived in separate worlds during the last decades; a "postmodern paradise" where international relations are entirely dominated by international law, diplomatic negotiation and economic cooperation and where war as a means of politics has been eliminated, and a world where brute force remains an indispensable means of self-assertion. Thus, the moral rift that has become evident between Russia and Europe has already existed in a less dramatic version amidst the countries of the global West. In this situation, Europe has regularly spoken as a moral authority, blaming the USA of militarism and imperialistic behavior and laughing about the heroic pathos of American claims to

act as guardian of peace and liberty, while forgetting that itself was part of the zone of security and peace at the center of a world-system guarded by the hegemon with military violence in the peripheries (cf. Kagan 2004; Cooper 2004, 153-187).

Especially after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the universalization of its own post-heroic and post-national politics and culture seemed to be a realistic future perspective to Europeans who now discover that what they have considered as universal values has been nothing more than a provincial affair (cf. Leonard 2023). By projecting its own, merely provincial history on the world as a whole, it has also succumbed to an elusive, Kantian view of historical teleology where a common rationality in politics would arise from the experiences of catastrophes. Heroic politics had thrived in the rest of the world – partly also in the context of the decolonial movements that actively fought against the European occupiers – whilst war-weary Europe had liquidated it's heroic values after two catastrophic wars. According to this view, Europe – especially Western Continental Europe and Germany – has now awakened from a dear daydream and arrived in the only "real" world. It now has to learn that the liberal society cannot be safeguarded by remembering the catastrophic past only. To put it in more Deweyan terms, Europe was guided by values that were spared the contact with the hard realities of global politics and have therefore *never been tested*; their operativity was only an illusion which rested on the blinding out of Europe's privileged situation. In order to be able to withstand in the world, Europe would have to relearn the ability to exert *force* on its enemies; an ability for which Dewey has argued against the pacifist call for the non-involvement of the USA during World War I (cf. Dewey 1980, 266, Dewey 2021, 88). Democracies have to acknowledge the fact that politics does not fully merge into

communication and that it is sometimes indeed the more intelligent path of action to rely on force rather on the power of communication. Europe now stands at the crossroads of either clinging dogmatically to its old pacifist convictions – the political expression of which is the rather helpless idea of resolving the conflict by "speaking with Putin" – or working on the *reconstruction* of its guiding moral principles (cf. Dewey 2004, 92-106).

Yet does the European project, in order to survive, then need itself some sort of heroic and monumental narrative in order to endure the hardships that this great struggle might bring? Will it only persist if it gives up its pathic sentiment and learn to become colder and more distant towards inevitable pain? This would mean more than a mere adaption to a changed situation, it would eventually mean the abolition of its core moral principles and thus nothing less than a moral conversion. Such a conversion could occur as Europe, in order to be able to fight him, adapts to the other that menaces it. Yet by defending itself, it would then also loose itself. The dilemma can be summed up in the question: How can Europe adapt to the new situation and retain its moral core?

It is possible though that the ground for a re-heroization is prepared. In his essay on *Axioms as Postulates* (Schiller 1902), F. C. S. Schiller argued that the truth of the axioms that structure our thinking is not to be sought in a transcendental embedding, or even a reality, that they would reflect, but should be regarded as an effect of their efficiency in laying the groundwork for a coherent and comprehensive systematization of our experiences, interpretations of the world, and thus thoughts. Insofar as they are constitutive elements of the systems that emerge from them, they obtain the quality of *necessity*; insofar as these systems are comprehensive, they appear as *universal*. Thus, no foundational argument could be given for them that would not be circular. Every axiom has the status of a *postulate*: not only the postulation of a singular, isolated proposition, but of the possibility of a system, of a coherent totality of propositions ordered according to the rule or principle established.

If one applies this thought in the field of *praxis*, then it is the life ordered by them from which practical principles receive their axiomatic status. But what would the equivalent to logical coherence be in this case? It shall be proposed here that such a life is one that we can regard, if not as a good life, then at least as a life that has the potential to become good. This actuality of the good, or potentiality to become good, gives validity to the very fundamental principles that organize our life and our striving for that what makes it worth living. "The great axioms and postulates", Schiller writes, "are so ineradicable intertwined with the roots of our being, have so intimately permeated every nook and cranny of our *Weltanschauung*, have been so ingrained in all our habits of thought, that we may practically rely on them to stand fast so long as human thought endures." (ibid., 93) On the one hand, moral axioms and postulates make specific processes and forms of life possible as their foundational principles, on the other hand, it is only in the context of these overarching processes and in view of the experiences and enjoyments that derive from them that the axioms receive their validity.

Schiller tries to show in his essay that the very fundamental categories of our thought are results from an experimental dealing with the world in which some postulates turn out to be more successful in providing a coherent grasp of the world than others. Now the life that is guided by what we call pathic experience is one that takes all necessary precautions to avoid a repetition of what has led to the latter. It is therefore based on the postulation

that certain human experiences are possible, yet not only dispensable, but destructive and incompatible with the good (however the latter is concretely understood). The appeased life that is protected from pain and suffering, from great struggles and sacrifices therefore does not miss out on anything. Fighting and holding to one's ideas in the midst of death and destruction, the faculty to become cold and resistant in the face of the latter, is a human potentiality that adds nothing to the fulfillment of life. It is by encompassing the possibilities of the good that the liberalism of fear proves the validity of its postulates.

Now, profound perturbations of such a mode of life can occur not only when threats from outside impose doubts on a society that its guiding ethical principles may weaken them and make it prone to the aggression of others. They also can come from the inside. Time is of key importance here. The problem with the form of life that develops out of the pathic condition is that the founding experiences of pain tend to fade away. The conservation and transmission of experiences has its limits. Pictures of war and devastation continue to lose their force the more often we look at them, the work of memory must constantly struggle against the tendency to turn into a hollow routine that does not reach the deeper layers of affectivity and moral conscience. The longer the social and political order is successful in protecting its members from the experience of political violence, the more the notion of suffering of war or totalitarian rule becomes abstract. As the fear of the repetition of past catastrophes dissipates, the value of peace is no longer appreciated as before, and the attractiveness of radical ideas and the longing for "great politics" (Nietzsche; cf. Drochon 2017) rises when the precautions that secure a peaceful existence are more and more felt as restrictions to the possibilities of human existence.

Thus, Jan Patočka has spoken of *boredom* as a major threat to the modern techno-scientific civilization that has discovered the universal participation in material wealth as a means of pacification (Patočka 2010, 134f.). The pathic auto-affection of the flesh wears off. Fascism, arguably the quintessential political ideology of boredom, lures individuals to fancy themselves as beasts that are caged and cut from their primordial nature and power. Other, less primitive ideologies such as the political theology of Carl Schmitt, might deplore the liberal-pacifistic forbiddance of the danger in the face of the enemy as the denial of a spiritual level of existence and the ultimate proof of faith.[12] The dissatisfaction with the politics of categorical security and pain-prevention, the metaphysically or theologically founded critique of its shallowness has multiple forms of ideological articulation. In a circle of t*hymotic* and *anti-thymotic* dynamics, the promise of meaning now connects with war – until this promise is disappointed again to a costly price.

There is not only an element of an otherwise intact ethical system that is changed, but the whole system changes due to the circumstance that the very fundamental certainties lose their validity. The change from the liberalism of fear to an ideology of heroism and violence is nothing but the moral reconstitution of the subject. Consequently, the overcoming of liberalism and liberal humanism has been pursued as the overcoming of the "last man" (Nietzsche 1969, 45f.).[13] The last man has, according to Nietzsche, lost, together with the possibility to experience the gravest forms of ills and evils, also the highest forms of happiness and virtue. It is the prom-

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[12] Unsurprisingly, such a criticism can be found in Putin's philosopher of choice, Iwan Iljin, who in his book *Resistance to Evil By Force* attacks Tolstoi as a quintessential thinker of pathic pacifism. Cf. Iljin 2018, 127-142.

[13] Francis Fukuyama famously took up this idea from Nietzsche in the final chapters of *The End of History*; Fukuyama 2006, 300-339.

ise to win back the latter by allowing the former that the revolt against the liberalism of fear makes.

It thus cannot be the negative aspect of fear alone, the progressive prevention of the bad – violence, suffering, humiliation – that binds subjects to liberal democracy as a political mode of life. The stability of the latter also demands positive values and goods that are experienced and achieved in it. The problem here is that liberalism, as it has been argued at the beginning of this essay, is agnostic in relation to the question of the good life. It can only provide basic and general preconditions for the realization of individual or collective conceptions of the good: physical integrity and a certain measure of material security, the liberty of decision to individually pursue a certain idea of the good. By not imposing any great collective endeavors such as wars on the individuals, the liberal order leaves the task to turn one's biological lifetime into a meaningful, goal-oriented, development of the individual.

This task, however, may ask too much of many individuals. The feeling of overburdening by the challenge to give meaning to the life and the time that is secured for the subjects can become a wider cultural trend, a collective phenomenon with social and political repercussions (cf. Nahoum-Grappe 1995). Crises of meaning can become serious social crises if the ways and means by which individuals seek to give meanings to their lives are standardized, yet at the same time inoperative, that is to say disappointing. This is the case if modes of work and consumption are common that lead to satisfaction that, as they are repeatedly experienced, become the subject of tedium or *ennui*. Even greater collective crises of empty lifetime can occur when in modern welfare states, people are liberated from the struggle for survival, yet are deprived of their habitual means to fill their time with activity due to joblessness and material deprivation, that no lon-

ger allow the participation in the standard activities that fill out one's time.

Such crises of meaning and time can turn into a dangerous breeding ground for a politics of monumental meaning. It is this void that nationalist, revolutionist, and other sorts of ideologies regularly try to play on. It is very much compatible with the liberalism of fear that individuals seek the thrill of danger and risk because of the tediousness of a life that is secured and cared for by the institutions of modern society. Peculiarly, often the only way to experience the value of something that is at one's disposal cannot be appreciated anymore unless it is endangered; this is the reason why people put their existence in danger in activities such as extreme sports, audacious business ventures, gambling, extramarital affairs or hooliganism. The pacified liberal society is permeated by energies that it struggles to channel into more or less harmless activities (Fukuyama 2006, 313-339; Hirschman 1977). The longing for the thrill becomes socially and politically dangerous if it is transferred from the individual to the collective sphere; if politics is the medium by which such a longing for the "dangerous life" (cf. Nietzsche 2001, 161) is lived out.

The liberalism of fear may live on resources that it cannot produce (cf. Böckenförde 1967, 92f.), that are only the product of its antagonist, the politics of violence and great meaning and that dissipate over time. Let us assume that somewhere in the future and after terrible bloodshed Fukuyama's prediction, and Kant's hope will become true at last and, the world will organize itself in a global alliance of peaceful republics: The search for peaceful ways of giving life, once it is liberated from suffering and humiliation, a positive content for it would still be a necessity for the liberalism of fear, if it wants to rest on stable axioms, and if it wants to arrive at a historical *Terminus*. It could no longer content itself with

the fact that the ability to search for a meaningful life outside of the mechanisms of consumerism and of the modern culture of labor is the prerogative of a rather small elite. It thus would have to outgrow its fixation on the negative, the liberalism of shared fear would have to develop into a liberalism of shared thriving. Yet it is the fundamental conviction of liberalism that the thriving of individuals is not a competency of the political order.

4. Final Conclusions

It is a speculative, nevertheless legitimate question if events in the recent past, such as the growing tide of populism and nationalism, the radicalization of parts of the middle class during the COVID-19 pandemic, an unheard-of event such as the storm on the capitol, and finally this war motivated by shrill ideological reasons, are symptoms of a collective desire for a great event to interrupt the status quo and to engage in a monumental struggle of any kind. It could well be that a society such as the Russian that has been subjected to the Communist regime of heroic, revolutionary time was especially predisposed to replace the individualistic time regime of liberalism for an ideology that enforces a great collective endeavor such as a war. Hence, Putin's regime wants to offer an alternative ethical and cultural content of life and politics after Russian society's disappointment with Western liberalism, meaning the inability of the masses to fully participate in the way of life that has been displayed to it by the mediums of consumerist production of needs and the frustrating and unattractive perspective of being stuck in the state of a developing country.

As Putin has thrown down the gauntlet to the West, the latter relearns the language of heroism and monumental meaning and to retake the business of cold *Realpolitik* and war. However, this process is ambivalent. Western countries strictly limit their military support to the supply of weapons and know-how, and even here they seem to limit themselves to deliver just enough to enable Ukraine to continue its resistance, but not enough to win the war, since this would provoke the Russian opponent to directly intervene against Ukraine's allies. This means that in a prolonged war of attrition, not only the country is continuously ravaged by Russian bombardment, but also an inevitable brutalization of the population takes place. The longer this takes, the more hate and nationalist fervor will imbue the society and spread its political seed, the more difficult it will be for the country to ever become a "core" part of Europe – the central demand of the Orange revolution and the Maidan-movement. There is a considerable risk that the Ukrainians, once they would have successfully defended themselves and Europe from Russian aggression, would quickly turn from heroes to mere barbarian *foederati* that the centers of wealth and power need for their protection, but whom they regard at the same time as profoundly alien to themselves and whom they thus exclude from their inner circle.

Meanwhile, on the Russian side too, despite all the talk of sacrifice for the motherland, the Russian recruitment strategy shows that Putin's regime tries to enable the most important parts of his political clientele to experience the war from the comfortable position of the bystander and claqueur. Russia is heavily extracting fighting men from the fringes of its territory and its wider sphere of influence: It's in the poorer and remote parts of the country here the recruitment is the most intense (cf. Rastorgujwa 2022). Afghan, Syrian, Serbian mercenaries fill up the Russian ranks, prisoners and of course Chechen units are sent to take the brunt of the most violent fighting. In the Russian occupied parts of the Donetsk Oblast, the shortage of manpower even leads to the recruitment of individuals with mental and physical illnesses

(Stepanenko et al. 2022). Increasingly extensive re-cruitment efforts are disguised to the population with the talk of merely "partial mobilizations" for the so-called "special military operation". Putin seems to acknowledge that the post-heroic mind-set is also rooted in Russian society, especially in the metropoles, and he seems to be eager not to trouble it too abruptly.

For the moment, Europe has to learn to live up to the authoritarianism's means to prepare its pop-ulation for war and violence. The brutal *law of the world* appears in the guise of the Russian invader and calls into question its moral foundations and its very idea of historical rationality. It is of course a manmade world in the which the Russian leader wants to drag democratic Europe, assuming that the latter will not withstand due to its decadent in-ability to generate monumental meaning. Yet so far, the sense of blatant injustice and the solidarity of democracies have enabled Ukraine to survive.

It is doubtful whether Russia will return to the path towards Western "normality". Yet the liberal-ism of fear has no alternative than to hold on to the perspective of a future common ground between the warring sides of the present. If this war that is supported by a large part of Russia's population will eventually cause the fall of Putin and his system, as some still argue (cf. Kasparov/Khodorkovsky 2022), then the prevention of the horrors to be repeated has to emerge as a common project. This project might, however, conflict with the consequent pur-suit of justice and demands a certain forbearance concerning those guilty of having started the vio-lence. For the establishment of a common flesh of the political after the war, the general exhaustion, and the common grief about what has happened will have to suffice as the starting point, rather than the total victory of justice.

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VARIA

THE EVOLUTIONARY BASIS OF MORALITY: COMPARING DEWEY'S AND RORTY'S DARWINIAN THEORIES WITH DAWKINS' PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: Using Richard Dawkins' evolutionary approach to the origins of morality, this paper examines the biological precondition of Dewey and Rorty's ethical theories. Dewey and Rorty disregard the universal, absolute, and necessary ethical theories and instead make morality's ontology contingent, flexible, and relational. They approach ethics in the context of the Darwinian theory of evolution that reduces the distinction between humans and other animals to merely the "complexity of human behavior"; the difference is not of quality or type but of degree or amount of set of propensities. Likewise, Dawkins argues that morality is not abiding by the dictate of the ultimate rational principle but rather a biological tendency to act morally in demanding circumstances. Although Dewey and Rorty characterize morality as an immediate social, practical, behavioral concern for fellow beings and place it beyond the ultimate authority of moral ideals, they leave us with assumptions about morality as a relational reality with biological preconditions. Thus, this paper will make a point, with the help of Dawkins, how morality has a natural or relational origin. Therefore, this paper concludes that considering Dawkins' biological justification of the genesis of morality generally substantiates pragmatical ethics and enables a resolution of a specific practical ethical problem. Nevertheless, it is not to suggest that moral principles are not significant in addressing practical ethical issues.

Keywords: environmental ethics, Dewey, Rorty, Pragmatism, Dawkins

Introduction

Dewey and Rorty discount the universal, absolute, and necessary ethical theories and instead make the ontology of morality contingent, relational, and subject to change. They approach pragmatism ethics in the context of the Darwinian theory of evolution that reduces the distinction between humans and other animals to merely the "complexity of human behaviour"; the difference is not of quality or type but of degree or amount of set of propensities. Non-human animals live by adjusting themselves to the changes in the environment. This adjustment, in human cases, according to Rorty, is

precise "in both physics and ethics - as the search for adjustment, and in particular for that sort of adjustment to our fellow humans which we call 'the search for acceptable justification and eventual agreement"(Rorty, 1999, p. 72). Dewey and Rorty view morality as a practical and social concern grounded in our close relationships with others, and they reject the notion of fixed moral ideals. However, they acknowledge that morality is a relational reality influenced by biological factors. However, it does not mean these two pragmatists replace ethical absolutism with biological reductionism. They never argue that ethical judgments and moral behaviors are solely the results of our biological makeup and natural selection; instead, they insist that morality as a social phenomenon has biological preconditions. Dewey stresses that natural processes and instincts that animals inherit are not only the things that prompt moral behavior but also form the substance of moral conduct. To completely weaken these natural processes and instincts would decrease the effectiveness of moral behavior rather than simply redirecting them toward a particular goal (Dewey, 1898, p. 332). In line with this, Alexander Krémer contends, "Morals and morality are not identical with their biological basis, as the roof and the walls are not identical with the foundation of the house"(Krémer, 2018, p. 33). Dewey, Krémer, and Rorty admit the biological precondition of morality. However, they insist that biological impulse, desire, and inclination fall short of defining moral norms in advanced social reality and modern societies. Thus, this paper will make a point, with the help of Dawkins, how morality has a natural or biological origin. Dawkins argues that morality is not abiding by the dictate of the ultimate rational principle but rather a biological tendency to act morally in demanding circumstances. As a Darwinian biologist, Dawkins provides detailed illustrations about the biological origins of morality.

Associating the basis of ethics with Darwinian evolutionary theory that works by "natural selection seems ill-suited to explain feelings of morality, decency, empathy and pity" because natural selection consists of selfish and competitive urges that want to prevail at the

expense of others (Dawkins, 2006a, p. 215). Nevertheless, Dawkins spells out this common misunderstanding of *natural selection* to show that Darwinian evolutionary theory can accommodate moral sentiments. What is ignorant and indifferent to moral sentiment in the evolutionary process is the "selfish gene," not the individual organism or animal, because the latter "do not make exact copies of themselves, and do not compete in a pool of such self-replicating entities"(Dawkins, 2006a, p. 216). Through culture, language, and experience, humans form a web of relationships with others in specific surroundings, enabling them to distinguish between harmful and no harmful practices. Eventually, this experiential knowledge (which precedes the development of moral faculty) is used for self-awareness (Hauser, 2006). Marc Hauser emphasizes that self-awareness is the first step to being a moral agent. Developing a sense of self (Self-knowledge) concerning other fellow beings enables us to evaluate our actions and judgments. Self-knowledge concerning others motivates us to feel their pain and pleasure; "it allows us to build an autobiographical sketch, storing and recollecting memories to guide future behavior"(Hauser 2006,183). Rorty approaches this sociobiological understanding of the self from an ethical perspective. He contends that developing moral sentiment- including empathy, compassion, fairness, or a sense of right and wrong- is nothing but enlarging and varying the set of others in self-understanding. Because being responsible, compassionate, self-scarifying, kind, caring, and loving to immediate others (family members or relatives) is not a mere moral obligation but also a natural one(1999).

From a philosophical perspective, the role of *others* in self-understanding is noticed in Hegel. Here by others, we are refereeing people who differed from us by their accidental identities, who are out-groups for our linguistic, cultural, religious, and tribal or ethnic identities. If we regard the other-self as an alien and a distant being, eventually, we may be morally indifferent toward them. In contrast, if we treat the other-self as a being with sim-

ilar ontology and destiny, we realize that the others and their contingent manifestations complement our mode of being.   Recognizing others (as Hegel reminds us) as a mirror image of ourselves and the sources of self-realization justifies the reason for living in one state as a political community and dispensing with conflicts. One cannot get self-knowledge by examining her feeling, culture, preference, and capacity, for all these can be done relationally. Because one does not live in a vacuum from other selves, she cannot analyze the solitary self and draw meaningful conclusions. Instead, her introspection must be founded on assessing relationships with others (Berenson, 1982, p. 77).

Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic shows that consciousness needs other selves to achieve self-consciousness. He argues that "Self-consciousness is faced by another self-consciousness; it has come out of itself. This has a twofold significance: first, it has lost itself, for it finds itself as an other being; secondly, in doing so, it has superseded the other, for it does not see the other as an essential being, but in the other sees its own self" (Hegel, 2009, p. 111). Before confronting the two selves (the master and the slave), each was conscious/aware of itself but unconscious of the other. "Each is confident of itself, but not of the other, and hence its own assurance has no truth" (2009, 111-13). Then, each was frantic to gain acceptance from the other; each tried to assure the objectivity of its existence by compelling the other to accept it. After the two independent consciousnesses engage in an all-out fight for recognition, the Master-Slave connection is eventually preserved. Each tries to control and define everything to its liking and standards. The confrontation "climaxes in a "life and death struggle" and one's victory over the other"; the victor becomes the autonomous master, and the loser the dependent slave(Solomon, 1983, p. 446). Even though one is fighting to destroy the other, the master allows the slave to survive because he needs objective recognition from the slave. However, the bondage is not functioning as intended by the master.

Because although the slave grows conscious of himself via his work, the master is left dependent on the slave for his necessities; and the master does not acquire "unforced acknowledgment." As a result, the only method for the master to gain recognition from a free individual is to liberate the slave; after that, both parties engage in "mutual recognition" or become relational.

Rorty quantifies the other selves (out-group) as those with whom we have certain relationships. Being moral toward these people is the beginning of the development of moral behavior. "The term moral obligation becomes increasingly less appropriate to the degree to which we identify with those whom we help: the degree to which we mention them when telling ourselves stories about who we are, the degree to which their story is also our story" (Rorty, 1999, p. 79). This implies that one cannot define or identify himself /herself without referring to sociohistorical relations with others. Thus, morality, as Rorty underlines, is a sentiment or concern for people in our circle rather than embracing ethical standards and applying them to our choices and judgments. Rorty explicitly discards the metaphysical appropriation of morality (noticeably Kantian and Platonic ethics), for it treats the self "non-relationally, as capable of existing independently of any concern for others, as a cold psychopath needing to be constrained to take account of other people's needs" (Ibid, YEAR, 77). According to Rorty, the Platonic, Cartesian, and Kantian self is encouraged to detach from nature and fellow beings, motivated to rely entirely on reason in her appraisal and understanding. Traditional moral philosophy distinguishes between genuine and false selves.

The one hears the "call of conscience," while the latter is only self-interested. For Rorty, the self is not just pure reason or senseless but rather a bundle of desire and inconsistent personality, i.e., selfhood is being formed. Any self can contain several contradictory selves of discordant dispositions (ibid). In this sense, the human self is beyond any fixed principle and escapes any theoretical definition of itself; it is always in the process of confronting new frontiers of reality. The personality, inclination, values, and desire change as the new frontier of reality present itself. Dewey and Rorty accept humans' incremental, evolutionary moves in biology, ethics, and culture. For them, morality is human behavior that has biological material. Dewey further relates moral sentiments with rudimentary biological impulses; and contends, "These impulses and tendencies need to be modified. They need to be curbed and restrained". What matter is how alteration and restraint affect our self-assertion impulses and whether they are compatible with our animal nature. We should not hide our animal origins or attempt to suppress them altogether. Dewey concludes that our animal nature is not a foe of morality because it is an essential part of our existence. "Whatever is necessary to life, we may fairly assume to have some relevancy to moral living"(1898, p. 330). In what follows, we present Dawkins' justification for the biological origin of morality to substantiate the biological precondition of morality as entertained by Dewey and Rorty.

Biological Root of Mortality

Richard Dawkins, in his famous book, *the God Delusion*, detaches the root of morality from divine and absolute principles and provides it a Darwinian origin. As a Darwinian biologist, he challenges the claim of theologians that human beings have derived moral principles from God or religious scripture. Being good or ethical to gain "God's approval and reward or to avoid his disapproval and punishment is not morality; that is just sucking up, apple-polishing, looking over your shoulder at the great surveillance camera in the sky, or the still small wiretap inside your head, monitoring your every move, even your every base thought"(Dawkins, 2006a, p. 226). Acting morally to gain praise or escape censure from a higher power is not authentic morality. Instead, it only strives to gain favors or avoid punishment by remaining aware that it is constantly being watched and observed. The real

sense of morality is discovered without external pressure or imaginary fear.

Dawkins also stands with Dewey and Rorty against ethical absolutism. Morality based on absolute principles derived from scripture or pure reason (a direct attack on Kantian ethics) cannot solve practical moral problems. For instance, "it is not always wrong to put a terminally ill patient out of her misery at her own request; or it not always wrong to kill an embryo"(Dawkins, 2006a, p. 232). The justification for the rightness or wrongness of an action should not merely come from its theoretical or theological validity. However, the evaluation must also consider the practical aspect of the action. A Moral theory should not be "more philosophical and less committed than moral deliberation; it needs to consider the people's custom, traditions, styles of justification, criticism, protest, revolt, conversion, and resolution"(Baier 1985,236). In light of Baier's view, because morality is determined by our mode of being and our reactions to specific actions and behavior, it is always in flux of change. We cannot have fixed social law that serves indefinitely. What we need to do in terms of its (social law's) impermanence is justify it. In this regard, Rorty makes an analogy between science and moral ethics to show that scientific inquiry and moral judgment aims not to arrive at absolute truth but to provide a better justification. He continues to say that the problem with aiming for truth is that we would have yet to learn when we got there, even if we did. However, we might strive for more significant rationale and reassurance.

Similarly, we cannot aim for 'doing what is right' because we would never know if we have succeeded. Long after we are gone, better knowledgeable and more sophisticated people may judge our actions as catastrophic mistakes, just as they may deem our scientific convictions to be intelligible only through the lens of an outdated paradigm (Rorty, 1999, p. 82). Thus, Rorty reminds us that the justification we would give to our moral evaluation need not refer to the fixed or essential principles; the development of morality cannot be judged according to these ideals but in light of its ability to incorporate various moral patients. "Moral progress is a matter of wider and wider sympathy. It is not a matter of rising above the sentimental to the rational" (ibid).

Now let us see Dawkins' biological approaches to morality's root to validate morality's progressive nature. Once Dawkins disregards absolutism and divine claims in ethical principles, he examines morality in the Darwinian framework. At first glance, especially for some of us who are professionally far from evolutionary biology, the Darwinian evolutionary theory appears to be devoid of moral sentiment; we rather immediately believe that his theory only favors selfish and exploitative disposition for the strongest(in his theory) is allowed to live and preserve its own species at the expense of the unfit. Dawkins presumes our misperception of Darwinian natural selection as though it can only explain hunger, fear, and sexual desire, which directly impact our ability to survive or maintain our genetic makeup. However, where do we get the feeling of pity we have when we see an orphaned child crying or an animal whimpering in agony? To address such a question, Dawkins evaluates the theory of natural selection by examining how it operates on organisms and genes during the evolutionary process. The natural selection theory appears amoral at the genetic level, for genes are selfish to survive and intolerant of rival genes. However, if we approach the theory at the level of the organism, it has a seed for moral feelings. Selfishness is typically a trait of the gene that survives and makes it via natural selection in the hierarchy of life. Dawkins continues to argue,

> It is the gene that, in the form of information, either survives for many generations or does not. Unlike the gene, the organism, the group, and the species are not the right kind of entity to serve as a unit in this sense because they do not make exact copies of themselves and do not compete in a pool of such self-replicating entities. That is precisely what genes do, and that is the - essentially logical - justification for singling the gene out as the unit of 'selfishness' in the unique Darwinian sense of selfish(2006a, pp. 215–216)

The concept that is made clear is that the "unit" (gene) displays selfishness or self-centeredness rather than the individual organism, the living communities, or the species. The gene prioritizes its desire for survival and is indifferent to moral considerations. Dawkins contends that genes do not necessarily exhibit selfish behavior and can ensure survival by promoting altruistic behavior in organisms. Caring for one's children is the most obvious example of kin selection, but it is not the only one. Many insects and some vertebrates, such as naked mole rats, meerkats, and woodpeckers, have developed species in which older siblings care for younger siblings, as they share similar genetic traits (Ibid).

Dewey, in his examination of Professor Huxley's lecture on "evolution and ethics," elaborates on the doctrine of "survival of the fittest" at the cosmic (biological) and ethical (social) levels. The cosmic process involves "struggle and conflict," whereas the ethical process is centered on empathy and collaboration. While the cosmic process leads to the survival of the strongest, the ethical process aims to ensure that as many individuals as possible can survive and thrive. Dewey ethnicizes or socializes the term "fit"; and argues that if we consider fit to mean the ability to conform to the current social structure, including all of its customs, requirements, and values, then we can argue that the "most fitting" individual under these circumstances is also the most excellent one (Dewey1898, 323). Dewey cautions against strictly adhering to the principle of survival of the fittest, as it would lead to the annihilation of individuals who are weak, sickly, defective, or insane. Dewey's analysis of the concept of fitness is a manifestation of his pragmatic approach to ethics. He appraises fitness based on an individual's ability to adapt to changes, including anticipated variations. Because our world is constantly evolving, it is important to assess one's suitability for the future rather than just based on current circumstances, which may not last. If someone is only suited to the present situation, they may not be able to adapt and thrive in the future. "A part of his fitness will consist in that very flexibility which enables him to adjust himself without too much loss to sudden and unexpected changes in his surroundings. Therefore, we have no reason to oppose the ethical and natural processes"(Dewey, 1898, p. 327). The essence of such an argument is that in an ever-changing environment, modifying and adjusting the existing potential, skill, value, knowledge, and perspective is the rule of reality with biological justification at the rudimentary level. That is why Dewey applies the Darwinian selection theory to explain the progressive nature of ethics. He sees no difference between social selection and natural selection. He contends that it is impossible to discern any fundamental difference between how society regulates individual actions through public opinion and education and how natural selection operates. Both processes involve the promotion of certain behaviors and the suppression of others. Though the "struggle for existence" has been resolved in advanced human society, a form of selection is still moving. In other words, public opinion and education significantly promote and encourage certain behaviors while discouraging and punishing others consistently (Ibid, YEAR, 336). Updating the evaluation matrix and adjusting the manner of living in response to current and future demand is still working at both natural and social progress. Dewey assumes that the latter is in charge of checking and regulating the former (which tends to protect its existence and species solely at the expense of the other) in such a way that it contributes to the overall good. The following statement from Dewey shows the necessity of ethical or social correction of the biological force that sets animals in a struggle for existence.

> Like the gardener's activity, the ethical process is a constant struggle. We can never allow things to go on of themselves. If we do, the result is retrogression. Therefore, oversight, vigilance, and constant interference with conditions, as they are, are necessary to maintain the moral order, as they are to keep up the garden (Dewey, 1898, p. 324).

Dewey's perspective on ethics and moral development is based on an evolutionary view that rejects the traditional claims of moral philosophy that aim for moral absolutism and "immunity to change." Traditional philosophical eth-

ics was characterized by its rigidity and lack of self-reflection, making it unable to adapt to new challenges. It relied on dogmatic methods to uncover and justify fixed moral goals and principles, which limited its ability to respond to changing circumstances. It prioritized the pursuit of certainty, stability, and simplicity over practical service to ordinary people by attempting to reduce the multitude of moral insights to a single, inflexible principle (Anderson, 2023). Instead, Dewey prefers to adopt a Darwinian way of thinking on ethics, morality, and philosophy. In his analysis of "the influence of Darwin on philosophy," he confirms that "Darwinian logic" enables traditional philosophy to shift its methods and motives from abstract concepts to concrete, practical concerns. Rather than simply creating something for its own sake, it focuses on how that creation serves a specific purpose. This shift also recognizes that things are constantly changing and evolving, shaped by the circumstances and intelligence involved. Rather than striving for some ultimate goal of perfection or good, the focus is on the incremental improvements that can be made in the present to promote justice and happiness. Neglecting these practical concerns will lead to destruction and missed opportunities (Dewey, 2016, p. 5). He saw philosophy as a means of solving actual issues and improving people's lives rather than an academic endeavor apart from everyday concerns. He stated that philosophy should be concerned with assisting people in adapting to their surroundings and making the most of their experiences, similar to how creatures adapt to their surroundings through natural selection. In general, Dewey's Darwinian approach to philosophy emphasized the need to understand human cognition and behavior in a practical, adaptable, and evolutionary context.

The new paradigm opened by Darwin in human inquiries makes philosophy "responsible" and forces it to acknowledge its limitedness and fallibility. Dewey claims that, against the intellectual tendency before Darwin (which strives for perfection and infallibility), when we attempt to create an idealized and logical understanding of the vast universe, it is an admission of our limitations in comprehending the specific issues that pertain to us. Throughout history, humanity has struggled with this limitation and has consequently shifted the weight of responsibility to a higher power they deemed more capable than they are. Dewey suggests that adopting a Darwinian approach to philosophy can revitalize it and make it a valuable tool for identifying and understanding the significant conflicts that arise in life. Doing so can provide insight into effectively addressing these conflicts and serve as a method for ethical and political analysis and prediction. He concludes that the scientific revolution that culminated in the publication of "Origin of Species" has been the most influential force in contemporary thought, dismantling old questions and paving the way for new methods, goals, and challenges. It has been a powerful agent of change that has catalyzed the emergence of new problems and sparked new intellectual pursuits (Dewey, 2016, pp. 6-7).

Dewey's rejection of meta-ethics shows his commitment to situational, specific, practical, and context-dependent ethics. The latter embraces the "natural selection" principles that adjust its appraisal and objectives according to the new environmental and situational challenge. Ethics deals with real-life situations and moral behavior is influenced by various factors, such as the actions taken, the intended outcomes, the motives of the individuals involved, their environment, and cultural and religious beliefs. As a result, more than simply establishing logical validity is required to address ethical issues. Thus, it is more reasonable to establish a biological basis for moral sentiment as ethical ideas and principles are not static but rather undergo continuous transformation and adaptation under changing societal circumstances and experiences.

Now let us turn back to Dawkins to justify the influence of evolution on the development of morality. How does evolutionary biology explain the moral origin of animals? Dawkins identifies three biological traits of animals as the

foundation of morality. The first is kin-altruism behavior, the second is reciprocal altruism, and the third is reputation or advertisement of superiority. Kin-altruism refers to a gene's tendency to " reduce its own fitness but boosts the fitness of its relatives" who are supposed to have a similar gene. As a result, the behavior may ultimately increase the number of copies of the altruistic gene present in the next generation and hence the occurrence of the altruistic behavior itself(Jane & Eberhard, 2011). As Jane and Eberhard tell us, Kin-altruism works on the likelihood that other organisms are similar in bearing identical genes. Dawkins also has a similar perception of *kin-altruism* and argues that animals often exhibit altruistic behavior towards their close relatives due to the high probability of sharing similar genetic traits. This can include caring for one another, defending them, sharing resources, and warning of potential dangers(2006, 217). Kin-altruism involves one group of individuals willingly reducing their fitness to benefit another group within the same group. It means kin-altruism considers the ratio of the increase in fitness for the recipient compared to the decrease in fitness for the donor, using the degree of relatedness between the two individuals (Uyenoyama & Feldman, 1980, p. 381). This helping behavior has evolutionary bases, and the gene that facilitates this behavior calculates if it gets more fitness and copy of itself than in the altruist individual. Richard Joyce gives an example of the calculative tendency of genes. He says that from the gene's perspective, sacrificing one's own life to save several descendants, siblings, or cousins who also have a similar gene is a worthwhile trade-off (2007, p. 19). Though it is not large enough to accommodate non-kin cooperation, kin-altruism can explain the biological origins of moral behavior.

Broder than kin-altruism, reciprocal altruism (a kind of agreement that 'you aid me, and I will reciprocate the favor') incorporates the social behavior and the moral sentiments of moral agents. It is more border, for it works among non-kin selves; it is applied to mutually beneficial exchanges between individuals who are not necessarily related. These individuals, Dawkins emphasis, are into the trade "because of asymmetries in needs and in capacities to meet them"(2006a, p. 217). It is true between different species, where these differences are more pronounced. Asymmetries in physical and brain power, skill, capacity, and natural tendency are a base for forming both human and non-human communities. Here is a typical biology class example of reciprocal altruism recalled by Dawkins: The hunter and the smith have a mutually beneficial relationship, where the hunter provides the smith with meat in exchange for a spear.

Similarly, the bee and the flower are in a deal where the bee obtains nectar from the flower, and the flower gets pollinated. Dawkins (2006) and Joyce (2007) suggest that the norm or social behavior, responsibility, and accountability we exhibit in the community result from genetic dictation. Natural selection favors genes that lead to giving behavior in situations where there is a need and opportunity for giving, as well as the ability to solicit help when in need. It also favors individuals who can remember obligations, hold grudges, monitor exchange relationships, and punish those who take without giving in return (Dawkins, 2006, p. 217)(Joyce, 2007, p. 30). However, reciprocal altruism is pure mutualism that counts only the benefits each party gets. How does mutualism develop into morality? Atran (2013) and Baumard et al. (2013) relate mutualism with morality and argue that the mutualistic model of morality proposes that morality stems from an environmental adaptation that promotes equal sharing of costs and benefits of cooperation among individuals. This leads to developing a distinct sense of fairness as a moral principle. This model offers a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of morality, including unselfish behavior in economic games, cooperation with strangers, and cultural prohibitions against actions that go against short-term utilitarian interests. Thus, in light of Atran's view, mutualism highlights the role of cooperation and fairness in developing moral principles (Atran, 2013, p. 4; Baumard et al., 2013, p. 59).

However, the aforementioned biological behaviors (kin-altruism, reciprocal altruism, and mutualism) are materials for morality (Krémer, 2018), which is not powerful enough to define morality considerably. That is why Dewey and Krémer call for social, cultural, and practical intervention to biological behaviors or "animal promptings" (to use Dewey's phrase) to direct them towards full-fledged morality. Unless these natural impulses are checked and controlled by rational moral agents who can learn from experience and direct those instincts to genuine morality, they become involved with immoral acts and behaviors, for behaviors at the genetic level (as Dawkins justifies) or impulses and interests at animal level (as Dewey sort outs) are selfish.   In *The Selfish Gene*, Dawkins explains why our biological "nature" needs to be nurtured. Building a society where individuals work together towards a shared goal through generous and selfless collaboration is less facilitated by biological factors. This is because the prevailing characteristic of a successful gene is typically focused on uncompromising self-interest, which tends to manifest in self-centered behavior among individuals (Dawkins, 2006b, p. 2). Krémer captures this fact when he argues that the "biological moral foundation" is not similar to morality at an advanced (societal) level, as the house's basis is not similar to its roof and wall. Fortunately, human beings can alter the pattern and behaviors of the gene by reflective culture. It is inaccurate to assume that genetically inherited traits are always unchangeable and permanent. Although our genes may predispose us to certain behaviors or tendencies, we are not necessarily bound to follow them throughout our lives. For instance, while our genes may direct us to act in a self-centered way, we still can choose to behave differently (Dawkins, 2006b, p. 3). Peter Corning, an evolution scientist, strengthens the biological origin of ethics and argues that there is a positive aspect to our moral impulses in that they have a "biological foundation." However, the negative aspect is that these impulses are not well aligned with the "good of the species" and tend to

be "highly selective," "inconsistent," and self-interested. Luckily, we have formal and informal rewards and punishments systems to uphold and strengthen our ethical standards. While some individuals may act spontaneously per ethical norms, others may require persuasion for the "general welfare" (Corning, 1997, p. 325).

The third rationale that prompts Dawkins to drive morality from evolutionary biology is the reputation-craving propensity of humans and non-human animals. Reputation is a social reward for bravery, loyalty, generosity, perseverance, success, and other praised social actions. Reputation in human society plays a significant role by motivating members to conform to the community's norms, rules, and beliefs. Both Dawkins and Joyce acknowledge this truth and contend that the drive to be praised and the motivation to achieve glory, as well as the fear of being criticized and facing disgrace, collectively provide a significant impetus for the growth of moral and ethical values in society (Dawkins 2006, 218 &Richard Joyce 2007,32). These researchers are reminiscent of Amotz Zahavi's bird experiment, which found that animals, like people, show behavior that earns them a reputation. Zahavi and his team study the babblers and observe that babblers alarm the dangers and feed others to earn a reputation. Two factors lead Zahavi to conclude that what babblers do is not an act of altruism but rather an appeal to reputation. (1) The birds "actively compete for the dangerous role of sentinel"; (2) when a subordinate bird offers food to a dominant one, the apparent charity is viciously rejected (Amotz Zahavi et al., 2011, PAGE).

Dawkins concludes that animals' three biological propensities (kin-altruism, reciprocal altruism or mutualism, and craving for reputation) are the foundation of advanced moral sentiments and social norms. His treatment of ethics, in line with pragmatism, embraces relational ethics that are more sentimental than rational. There is less doubt that the behaviors mentioned above can fit with ancient homogenous communities. Genetic tendencies toward altruism or morality would have favored early

humans via all three routes. However, how evolutionary biology explains morality in modern society? Given the urban nature of modern society, where many of us live in crowded cities, surrounded by strangers rather than family and encountering people we may never see again, why do we maintain our morality towards one another, including those from different social groups? Dawkins gives a Darwinian answer to this question. The most effective way for natural selection to incorporate certain behaviors in ancestral times was to "install rules of thumb in the brain." These heuristics continue to affect us today, even when they no longer align with their original purposes. As Dawkins highlights, natural selection inherently favors rules of thumb that promote the survival and replication of the genes that created them (Dawkins, 2006, p. 222).

Dewey (1898), Dawkins (2006b), Corning (1997) Kremer (2018) agree on the importance of social institutions for influencing natural inclination and the development of morality. Both these pragmatists and biologists stress that a functioning "ethical science" should aim to reconcile biological traits or activities required to preserve the individual and its species and social welfare. This would ensure that individual self-interests align with the interests of others. "While this goal is challenging, it is based on biological fundamentals consistent with Darwinian principles. It could also serve as a general framework for addressing specific ethical issues" (Corning, 1997, PAGE).

Relational Ethics Against Moral absolutism

So far, we have tried to argue (with the help of evolutionary biologists and pragmatist thinkers) against the claims of meta-ethics that strive to rationalize the existence of absolute and universal ethical principles, applicable, regardless of socio-cultural and conditional differences. For brevity, moral absolutism holds that specific moral standards are objectively right or wrong and cannot be altered or compromised based on personal beliefs or situational circumstances. One example of such a rule is the belief that killing an innocent human is always wrong (Rawls, 2022). In what follows, we present pragmatists' reasons (mainly Rorty's relational ethics) for discarding moral absolutism. Such absolute guidance of morality is not accepted by pragmatical ethical theory, for it is impracticable and makes humans a slave of ideals. Dewey dispenses with the idea of determining the moral status of an action based solely on one principle in teleological, deontological, and virtue ethics, for all these fail to assume the growth, change, and practicality of actions. He insists that conduct makes up all of our actions. As a result, we should reject theories that see morality as only concerned with refining our intentions, building a virtuous character, striving for an unattainable ideal, or following supernatural directives, and instead recognize the authority of moral obligations (Hildebrand, 2021). Because ethics, he suggests, should involve examining real-life, complex situations, this examination may draw upon theoretical principles to form testable suggestions based on practical experience. Dewey's rejection of moral absolutism extends his critiques of the traditional metaphysics that strive to answer multiple practical questions with single and fixed ideals. According to William James, the idea that reality is permanent is inaccurate, and it is not necessary or possible to completely understand it. James and Dewey emphasize that our understanding of the world is limited and can be expanded upon as it evolves and changes. At some point in the future, it may be more plausible that there is a single source of knowledge and understanding. However, for now, we must also consider the possibility that this is not the case (James, 2020).

Rorty accepts all of this and applies it to his relational ethics. He finds a similar pattern between scientific progress and moral progress. He says that scientific advancement is integrating more and more data into a cohesive web of belief: data from microscopes and telescopes with data gathered by the naked eye, data-driven into the open by experiments with data that has always been sitting about. Similarly, moral growth is a function of in-

creasing sympathy. It is not a matter of progressing from the emotive to the rational (Rorty, 1999, p. 77).

Moral progress, according to Rorty, is measured not by its compatibility with meta-ethical principles but by its tendency to broaden moral standings. As Darwinian biologists suggest, morality evolved when our ancestors were still in a relatively small clan or tribal circle. However, because of its evolutionary nature, it could transcend kinship relationships. Dawkins calls this cross-kinship cooperation or morality a "misfire" of natural selection or "precious mistakes." Let us follow his logic to understand how cross-kinship morality (the morality in the modern world) results from the misfiring of natural selection. Here is his justification, natural selection built altruistic desires into our brains alongside sexual, hunger, and xenophobia urges in evolutionary times when humans lived in tiny and stable bands like baboons. Couples who understand that "the ultimate reason for their sexual urges is procreation," for example, do not eliminate sexual urges even when the woman is on a pill. Sexual desire is an independent force, an urge that exists independently of its ultimate rationale. The same is true of the urge to be kind—to altruism, generosity, empathy, and pity toward those in another group (2006a, p. 222). This precious mistake (Dawkins warns to take the word *mistake* only in a Darwinian sense) has evolved into complex modern moral systems.

According to Rorty's relational ethics, in-group cooperation or kin-altruism does not constitute morality. For him, morality begins to emerge when one develops feelings of sympathy and compassion for the out-group. He identifies morality as a "new and controversial custom." The notion that "prudence" is unheroic and morality is heroic is simply the realization that trying something new and untested is riskier than doing what feels natural. That means applying the word "moral" to family members (children, wife, and siblings) appears to be meaningless, for "responding to the needs of family members is the most natural thing in the world" (Rorty, 1999, p. 77). Rorty and Dawkins have a slightly different accounts of our nat-

ural prudence, goodness, and responsibility for our family members. For the former, prudence emerges from our relational self-awareness. It is common for individuals to identify themselves based on their connections with family members. Our needs and those of our family are often interconnected, and our happiness is often tied to their happiness. Therefore, Rorty concludes, we naturally respond in a manner that reflects this interdependence. "Moral development in the individual, and moral progress in the human species as a whole, is a matter of re-marking human selves to enlarge the variety of the relationships that constitute those selves"(Rorty, 1999, p. 79). Dawkins approaches this relational self-awareness from an evolutionary perspective or genetic influences. Both writers believe that our kin-relational sense of self and genetically engineered prudence transcend the tribal circle and expand its borders by integrating all other creatures as moral patients. However, it is worth noticing that though Rorty accepts morality's progressive or evolving nature, he treats it at the societal or community level.

In a nutshell, the evolution of human behavior begins with altruistic acts towards family members in small groups, which influence their interactions with other groups. As understood by Dawkins and Rorty, this progression extends to encompass socio-cultural and racial boundaries. When such behaviors as care, love, responsibility, and collaboration are directed towards individuals outside of one's group, then only the notion of morality rises. If this progress were to be fully realized, the term 'morality' would cease to exist in our language, as there would be no requirement or means to differentiate between actions that align with our instincts and those deemed moral(Rorty, 1999).

Conclusion

Dewy and Rorty challenge universal, absolute, and necessary ethical theories and consider morality as contingent and evolving. They approach ethics pragmatically

through the prism of Darwin's theory of evolution, arguing that ethics or moral sensibility arises from feelings of love, sympathy, and compassion towards close relatives whom one perceives as one defines herself. In contrast to moral absolutism, Rorty's relational ethics concedes the progressive nature of morality, for fixed ideals do not knot it. Morality is about solving issues and offering acceptable justification, not serving authoritative beliefs. Relational ethics, which focuses on addressing ethical problems in practical situations, challenges the idea of absolute moral principles because these principles are rigid and cannot adapt to new and changing circumstances. Evolving among kin groups, relational ethics could transcend tribal, ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences. In modern times, its progress also contemplates the interests, rights, and well-being of non-human beings.

Dawkins explains the biological basis of morality to demonstrate its evolutionary growth. His reasoning is consistent with Rorty and Dewey's ethics that presume biological behaviors as a substrate of morality. However, they openly emphasize the power of social value, culture, and the situation on the development of moral sentiment. By rejecting the ultimate moral principle (whether from deontological, teleological, or virtue ethics), Dawkins examines the origin of morality using Darwinian evolutionary theory. He focuses on three interrelated human behaviors that form the basis of morality in modern societies. First, kin-altruism is a genetic force to be good and beneficent to similar genes at the expense of one's fitness. The second is reciprocal altruism or mutualism, which refers to social behavior in which an individual performs an action that benefits another individual, expecting the other individual to return the favor later. Third, it is a form of cooperation that is based on the idea of mutual benefit rather than solely benefiting the self. The last behavior refers to an urge for reputation, i.e., being cooperative and beneficent to the other to advertise superiority. Thus, it is possible to argue that Dawkins gives a biological justification for Dewey's and Rorty's assertion

that humans' moral behavior has a biological basis.

To conclude, the pragmatists mentioned above and Dawkins as an evolutionary biologist apply the Darwinian way of thinking on morality. In doing so, all discard moral absolutism that denies the evolving tendency of morality. Instead, their moral judgment is derived not from fixed ideals but from a real, practical, and situational necessity.

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THE POSSIBILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS FROM PRAGMATIST PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: This paper shows that pragmatic rationality is crucial in environmental culture, without which the smooth functioning of the environment is possible. The second important lesson from this inquiry is that it is the foundation for a rich understanding of rationality that is open and does not discriminate against any environmental entities. Let us pose these questions as an invitation to further study the question of rationality in the field of environmental ethics. Can we abandon rationality and do something worthwhile? Is it not because of rationality that we are discussing the problem of non-human animals? Do we not need a reason to rebuild the eco-culture that we need?

Keywords: Pragmatism, environmental ethics, applied ethics

Introduction

Clare Palmer considers environmental ethics a catch-all stance covering many ethical perspectives. These ethical positions draw on various traditions, including those of [the pre-Socratics], Plato, Aristotle, Mill, and Moore (Palmer, 2002). Environmental ethics is also categorized as a sub-branch of applied ethics. The field of applied ethics emerged in the context of the discussion in the medical field of ethical issues related to medical practice. The main subdisciplines in applied ethics are business ethics, engineering ethics, environmental ethics, and others. However, environmental ethics differs from other fields of applied ethics because it does not fundamentally center on ethics. Instead, it is more closely related to other branches of traditional philosophy such as metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics, philosophy of science, and social and political philosophy, where different areas of applied ethics are tied to specific subject areas, as subdisciplines in philosophy (Hargrove, 1989).

Moreover, Hargrove also predicted that environmental ethics would disappear as conventional mainstream philosophical subjects become modified and take the problems environmental ethics deals with into account.

When the environment is adequately considered within the mainstream fields of philosophy, there will be less need for environmental ethics as a separate subject. He also warned of the possibility of incorrect conclusions from this projection of the end of environmental ethics and that concluding that it would have little importance within philosophy would be erroneous. He also argued as follows:

No area in applied ethics deals more fundamentally with philosophical issues than environmental ethics. It is a severe challenge to philosophy as a whole because many of the essential elements of any environmental ethic adopted by Western civilization will almost certainly be incompatible with fundamental positions in the history of philosophy. Because the basic assumption in environmental ethics conflicts with basic assumptions of traditional Western philosophy, many philosophers argue that environmental ethics is not philosophical (Hargrove, 1989: 2-3).

To fully understand Western attitudes toward the environment in general, let us begin our examination with Pre-Socratic traditions. According to Hargrove (1989), Early Greek and European philosophies were the most instrumental in determining philosophical attitudes toward the environment. Hargrove divided early European philosophy into the pre-Socratic period and the period after Socrates until the Roman conquest of Greece.

Greek philosophy reached its height with the work of Plato and Aristotle during the beginning of the second period. Indeed, even though these two thinkers greatly influenced Western thought, they worked within already-established philosophical traditions. Therefore, before moving on to Plato and Aristotle, the Pre-Socratic era, which is best divided into three traditions: the Ionian, the Italian, and the pluralist, must be briefly discussed. Pre-Socratic philosophy was almost entirely focused on speculation about the natural world.

Around 600 B.C., Western philosophy began to emerge. Specifically, it was created in Miletus, a city on the western coast of Ionia, in present-day Turkey (Miller & Jensen, 2009). Thales is considered the first Western

45

philosopher (Hargrove, 1989; Miller & Jensen, 2009). Miletean Monism is the term used to describe Thales's thoughts and that of his Miletean followers. This group considers the reality of being one. Thus, everything manifests or is reducible to a single essence or nature (Miller & Jensen, 2009). All Miletean monists tried to answer the question of the nature of ultimate reality.

All early Ionian philosophers were known to associate reality with some perceptible material or something we can see, touch, hear, and smell. Anaximander suggested that an indeterminate material made up reality, perhaps a combination of substances from which the sensory characteristics (hot, cold, wet, and dry) had been separated. Anaximenes considered air an organizing principle for everything else, producing the many things that make us who we are through thickening and thinning. At the same time, Xenophanes chose both earth and water as the ultimate reality. Heraclitus emphasized the mutable or constantly changing nature of things and held that fire was the fundamental reality, which, despite being continuously converted into and out of the other elements, consistently exhibited a divinely prescribed balance and order.

Thales considered the fundamental reality of everything to be water. Miller & Jensen (2009) assumed why Thales believes water is the ultimate reality. First, water is an essential component of all life. Second, it appears that most objects include water. Third, water is all around us. It rises from the earth, falls from the sky, and gathers on windshields. Fourth, this material is more prevalent than any other substance. Fifth, it can be observed that, unlike other common substances, water appears in several forms — a liquid, a solid, and a gas. This metaphysical theory is that water is the one reality that exists, but it was not the last. The successors of Thales each had their ideas on the ultimate reality.

The intellectuals in the Italian tradition showed a different inclination. Everything, according to the Pythagoreans, is a number. The assertion that numbers are the fundamental components of existence may seem strange, and it is not apparent what Pythagoras and his followers meant when they said this. It is evident, however, that the concept draws attention away from the typically perceptible components of the physical universe and toward the intangible, or even nonsensical, structure of things. Parmenides, an Eleatic philosopher, made a strong case for the existence of a single entity that must be constant in all its attributes. Thus, he outright denied the reality of the sensible world with all plurality and motion (Ibid).

The Pluralists, as one might infer from the name of their school, associated reality with a variety of elements while also proposing at least one of them as a candidate for being, making it thus single and unchanging. Empedocles was the first pluralist, proposing the four conventional elements—earth, air, fire, and water—as the fundamental building blocks of everything. In addition, he proposed the concepts of Love and Strife to attract the components together and separate them again in a never-ending cycle. Where the four components are brought together by the pull of Love, a world similar to our own is created. According to Anaxagoras, everything is made up of an infinite number of infinitely divisible particles or seeds, each of which is predominated by a particular attribute and each of which is determined as the sort of object it is by the seeds that predominate in it. However, the whole universe is governed by a pure mind. Leucippus and Democritus proposed the first atomic theory, arguing that everything mechanically develops from the coagulation of an infinite number of irreducible atoms. The Greek word atomos literally translates to "uncuttable," something irreducible (Ibid). The pre-Socratic period was committed mainly to discussions of the nature of motion and change, and it was through this argument that the Western notion of matter took on its ultimate shape.

Heraclitus attempted to build his philosophy on change by asserting that the universe was constantly changing. However, the majority of philosophers at the time were highly concerned about change and even be-

lieved that it was illogical to consider that change could be real. On this subject, Hargrove puts this as follows:

The argument against the change culminated in the philosophy of Parmenides, who believed that something could not come from nothing and that what existed could not cease to exist. What is, is he declared; what is not, is not; what is, can not be, and what is not, cannot be. Since the world of change violated these principles, he concluded that it could not exist and must be an illusion. What existed, Parmenides claimed, must be "without begging, indestructible, entire, single unshakable and endless." He called this the "One," arguing that idea of the world of many objects was just one more illusion. (Hargrove, 1989: 19).

This perspective, according to Hargrove, not only denies the reality of the world but also severely constrains language and cognition. That is, only one thing could be said, "Being is," as the One was the only thing that existed. All other ideas and assertions were absurd because they referred to fictitious objects (Ibid).

As a devoted citizen of Athens, Socrates spent his adult life there, where he engaged in public philosophical discourse and debate on important issues of ethics, politics, religion, and education. Going against conventional wisdom, he reasoned and thought for himself instead of following ancestral. Later philosophers considered significant developments in the history of philosophy to be rooted in Socrates. Philosophical inquiry into life and morals was set on its course by Socrates, who brought philosophy down from the skies to earth. Before him, explanations of celestial and other natural occurrences and the origins and nature of the physical universe were the main concern of philosophy (Cooper, 1998). Socrates changed the paradigm and avoided discussing the relationship between people and the natural world.

Plato developed his own philosophy as a reaction to his predecessors. On the need for true things to be everlasting, lasting, immovable, and unbreakable, Plato concurs with Parmenides. Unlike Parmenides, Plato thinks

that metaphysics and epistemology are possible. Plato claimed that there are forms or ideas that direct how we think and perceive the world. The application of reason could reach these forms and did not exist as such in the realm of experience; rather, it existed outside of it. The shadow cast by the realm of Being fell upon the world of Becoming. The intellectual interacted with the intellectual and physical worlds (Hargrove, 1989).

Building on the permanence and indestructibility of the Forms, Plato could satisfy the Parmenidean requirement for unity and protected knowledge, thought, and language from Parmenides's arguments. He claimed that all forms were logically connected to all other forms as a group subsumed under the ultimate form, that of the Beautiful and the Good. As such, he emphasized the difficulty of the change in epistemology.

Aristotle, however, ultimately developed a metaphysical solution and rejected Plato's division of things into two worlds, the worlds of being and becoming. In Aristotle's thinking, the issue of the chorismos (separation)—a Greek term meaning separation—is the major issue. Aristotle accurately presents Plato as having removed the things that are supposed to be caused from the things that are the ultimate causes of (the forms), placing them in a transcendent universe. Thus, Plato's theory of transcendent forms was denied by Aristotle in favor of the idea of immanent forms, which takes the view that Forms are inside specific sensible things. Aristotle argues that Forms can only be the causes of things if they exist in those things, bridging Plato's unbridgeable gap between forms and sensible objects. Just as there is no inconceivable formless substance, there is also no abstract nature of tableness. There are specific tables out there, like this table, that table, and others (Miller & Jensen, 2009).

In contrast to his predecessors, Aristotle considered that the world as it is perceived is genuine. Put another way, the universe of experience is real. In Aristotle's metaphysics, the world is a vast collection of things constantly changing over an endless amount of time. These

changes are ultimately caused by a movement created and maintained by an eternal source of movement, the Unmoved Mover. Aristotle's physical views were largely guided by this idea. A significant contribution to this perspective came from his conception of teleology or the study of ultimate causes in nature. Understanding the function that something is intended to fulfill, in Aristotle's approach, is the best way to comprehend why it is the way it is. For example, an oak tree is a reason for, or the ultimate cause of, an acorn. Aristotle goes on to say that lesser species are there for the benefit of higher organisms and that they may all be arranged in a hierarchy, with humans at the top because human beings are rational. According to Aristotle, this arrangement is intended to remain in place and not change. Consequently, environmental issues related to alterations are not often discussed (Hargrove, 1989).

Religion, more than philosophy, dominated the medieval era. However, the Christian theological context remained nearly entirely intact in medieval philosophy. The primary goal of medieval philosophers was to reintroduce and incorporate Greek philosophy, notably the works of Plato and Aristotle, into a wholly Christian ideology. From a Christian perspective, God was connected with the Platonic Forms, being not in the world but beyond it (Ibid). Saint Augustine of Hippo and Saint Thomas of Aquinas were the foremost contributors to medieval Christian thinking. Saint Augustine incorporated Plato's philosophy into a Christian framework, while Aquinas contextualized Aristotle's philosophy into Christian ideology. Both Augustine and Aquinas considered that human beings are different from other creatures because they are endowed with the reason (Aquinas, 2014; Salisbury, 2013).

Aristotle's solution to the problem of change led to a tremendously productive period of philosophical and epistemological speculation. This period was significant because it paved the ground for the development of modern science in the 17th century. It may be less evident, though, whether it also paved the way for perspectives on nature that are fundamentally at odds with contemporary environmental thought (Hargrove, 1989).

Hargrove claims that the attitude of the Greek philosophers toward natural phenomena was fundamentally unfriendly because their formation of an ecological viewpoint is prevented by the fundamental premises underlying their philosophical speculation. It prevented them from appreciating the natural world on an aesthetic level. They proposed a view of reality that made the concept of environmental protection difficult to grasp (Ibid).

From the beginning, the Greeks found it nearly impossible to think about the concept of environmental friendliness. For this reason, they could not have appreciated the ecological relationships found in nature. Furthermore, knowledge was understood to be eternal, constant, and permanent. Understanding ecological interactions, on the other hand, requires placing a greater emphasis on impermanent, perishable, and ever-changing objects. Understanding this object may, then, be, at best, a matter of opinion and could be of little use in the quest for the overarching principle guiding the cosmos (Ibid).

The Greeks were also discouraged from practicing first-hand observation due to their understanding of the world's rational organization, which contributed to their lack of ecological awareness. They sought primary principles from which they could infer all other knowledge since the senses were considered to impede the use of reason (Ibid).

Modern philosophy has also played the same role, even if Greek philosophy was the main source of a worldview that hampered the development of real environmental and preservationist views (Ibid). What follows will explore modern environmental ethics.

Modern Environmental Ethics

The modern period of philosophy began in the early 17th century and is understood to include most of the philosophy of the twentieth century. This period may be fur-

ther divided into three sub-divisions: the early modern (1600–1800), ninetieth-century philosophy (1800–1900), and twentieth-century philosophy (1900–[present]). Kelbessa (2011) marks the beginning of the modern history of philosophy with the work of Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and René Descartes (1596–1650). However, uses the term "modern" Kelbessa to refer to contemporary environmental ethics in its 20th- and 21st-century forms. Here, we follow Kelbessa in using the term "modern environmental ethics."

Everything in the world is interconnected with everything else in some way. Leopold (1998), the energy plants absorb from the sun flows through circuits known as biota. All of nature considered a biota pyramid, is divided into several layers. Soil exists at the bottom of the layer. The plant layer depends on the soil, the insect layer depends on plants, and the bird and rodent layer depends on insects. It continues until it reaches the top of the hierarchy of larger predators. The logic of this interdependence regarding food and other needs is called the food chain. Similarly, Joseph Claude Evans (2005) writes that our existence as organic life requires participation in the food chain. Our existence as moral agents requires us to ask ourselves how to participate in all these chains and interact with those who make up them, including ourselves.

While it is natural for beings to influence, humans have drastically intervened everywhere, changing their natural environment, populating it with their artifacts, and reshaping it. Nonetheless, people live in natural environments where resources such as soil, air, water, sunlight, and a favorable climate are matters of life and death (Rolston, 2003).

Human beings are part of nature. Our influence on it, therefore, is no wonder. Because our own impact on nature is natural does not necessarily mean that our impact is good, however. That is, humans could be part of the environment and be responsible for the destruction of other species. Thus, we must develop and retain our understanding of ourselves as an integral part of our environment for guidance and to limit our impact on the rest of the environment in ways that are environmentally friendly (Christine & James, 2010; Kelbessa, 2005). This fact is what brings environmental ethics into being.

Environmental ethics is the theory and practice for proper care, values, and obligations concerning the natural world (Rolston, 2012). It emerged as a new subfield for Western philosophy in the mid-1970s (Brennan & Lo, 2002; Rolston, 2012; Light, 2005; Minteer, 2009;2009; Callicot, 1984; Callicot, 1997). In particular, the term "environmental ethics" comes from an article by Richard Sylvan, published in 1973. In it, the author argues that traditional ethics cannot place an appropriate value on non-human beings as human beings begin with anthropocentric assumptions and use other things as means to achieve human ends. Thus, he suggests, an ethics that could define how people relate to their environment had not been created (Sylvan quoted in Gunn, 2007).

The discipline of environmental ethics was established in response to 1960s crises such as air and river pollution in large cities, soil erosion, the alarmingly rapid depletion of natural resources, and population growth (Callicot & Nelson, 2004).

Human beings are introspective and cautious moral agents. This makes man capable of acting ethically. However, this does not imply that humans are the only valuable beings. Rather, it means that human beings must care for the environment (Ibid). In the following, two dominant approaches in modern environmental ethics are discussed: anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric environmental ethics and different versions of each.

Anthropocentric Environmental Ethics

The ethical theories established in the Western philosophical tradition, beginning with Socrates and Plato and extending through Aristotle's virtue ethics, Kant's deontology, and British utilitarianism, contended over two related issues. First, what is it like to be human, and

second, what does it mean to treat others morally (Evans, 2005)? These positions show a lack of unity among the philosophers, who disagree on fundamental issues while agreeing on the moral importance of human beings. This metaphysical and ethical position that underlies these separate views is known as anthropocentrism. This view is supported and/or exemplified by religious teachings, philosophical arguments, and scientific theories (Ibid).

Anthropocentrism regards the view that human interests matter and that environmental policies and practices are justified to the extent that they promote human interests. According to this view, only humankind has intrinsic value and is an end. So then, animals, plants, forests, wetlands, mountains, and everything else do not have intrinsic value but only insofar as they are instruments to achieve human ends (Gunn, 2007; Minteer, 2009; Callicot, 1984).

Mazzotta and Kline (1995) characterize anthropocentrism as the view that humans are the most important beings in the universe and can interpret the world in terms of their own values and experiences. It logically means that all of nature must be managed and cared for to benefit human beings, sometimes at the expense of other species. To them, the dominant ethical traditions of the West, such as those of Kant, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics, could not serve as a basis for new environmental ethics because they saw nature as a means to an end. They only considered the benefits to human beings, considering others unworthy of recognition, denying that nature had any immediate moral significance.

Anthropocentric ethics holds that humans are the subject and object of ethics. It states that humans are not responsible for environmental objects such as rocks, rivers, animals, plants, and ecosystems. Anthropocentrism steadfastly asserts that humans have only serious responsibilities to each other and seek to preserve other parts of the environment for the benefit that they bring (Rolston, 2003; Mazzotta & Kline, 1995). They also consider humans separate from nature. For example, taking

the utilitarian formula of the greatest good for the most significant number, natural resources are considered only to the extent that they serve human ends (Botzler & Armstrong, 1998).

Botzler and Armstrong (1998) wrote that anthropocentrism takes the philosophical view that ethical principles only apply to humans and that human needs and interests are of the highest importance and even of exclusive value. Therefore, the interest in environmental objects is limited to objects of value to humans.

Norton (1984) identified two primary forms of anthropocentrism: strong and weak anthropocentrism. Strong anthropocentrism expresses all values concerning human beings' perceived preferences. A perceived preference is the want or need of an individual. Norton agrees that strong anthropocentrism is unacceptable but shows a second form of anthropocentrism, namely, weak anthropocentrism, such that a value theory is weakly anthropocentric if all of the values it describes refer to people's own satisfaction with perceived preferences and worldviews that are essential to determining the preferences in question. Intentional preferences are desires or needs that are consistent with rationally accepted worldviews, such as those of scientific theories and metaphysical frameworks. This deliberate preference draws a clear line between strong and weak anthropocentrism (Ibid).

Non-Anthropocentric Environmental

By contrast with the anthropocentric view of the environment, which promotes human hegemony over the environment, non-anthropocentrism sees humans as one part among many of a natural community rather than as its central or essential part. Non-anthropocentrists consider it to be nature that produces all values, including human values. They believe that the natural world has a value that is truly intrinsic and independent of human values (Mazzotta & Kline, 1995).

Anthropocentrism includes biocentrism and eco-

centrism. These branches' objections differ on whether there are intrinsic values in nature at the level of individuals, communities, species, ecosystems, products, or processes that can limit human rights and interests.

Theories of environmental ethics that are not anthropocentric tend to be individualistic or holistic. A non-anthropocentric individualistic environmental ethics find intrinsic value in all conscious animals (sentient-centered ethics) or all living organisms (biocentric ethics). A holistic theory, also called eco-centric ethics, assigns intrinsic value to inorganic environments (ecosystems), types of life (species), and communities of life that interact with all of nature (Martin, 2007). It is worth noting that ecocentrism is based on the idea that the natural world has intrinsic or intrinsic value. According to Botzler and Armstrong (1998), there are two main types of ecocentrism: land ethics and deep ecology. First, Aldo Leopold, an exponent of land ethics, argues that the Golden Rule is constructed to unite people and society while democracy unites society to the individual. However, he claims that there is no ethics concerning the relationship between humans and the earth and its inhabitants, such as animals and plants. For him, exploitation of the land is not only unnecessary but also wrong (Leopold, 1998).

He also argues that ethics are grounded on the single idea that man is a member of a community of interdependent parts. Leopold argues that land ethics changes the role of Homo sapiens from a conqueror to merely another member or citizen of the land community. This implies respect for fellow members of the community and the community itself (Ibid).

Second, the term "deep ecology" was originally coined by Arne Naess in his paper "Shallow and Deep, Long-Term Ecological Movements," in which he distinguishes between shallow and deep ecology. Here, the shallow ecology movement works to combat pollution and resource depletion. Promoting the health and well-being of people in developed countries is at the heart of this movement. For its part, deep ecology re-

jects the image of humans in the environment in favor of images of the relational and holistic field. According to this provision, organisms are entangled in biosphere networks or fields of interrelationships. This perspective also promotes the intrinsic value of living beings, regardless of their instrumental usefulness for human needs, and calls for a radical reorganization of contemporary human society along those lines (Næss, 1973).

According to Devall and Sessions (1998), deep ecology establishes a comprehensive religious and philosophical worldview that goes beyond a limited and superficial approach to environmental issues. The foundation of deep ecology is located in the basic intuition and experience of the self and nature that constitute ecological consciousness. In deep ecology, the study of our place in the terrestrial family includes studying ourselves as part of the organic whole. Beyond our narrow materialistic scientific understanding of reality, reality's spiritual and material aspects merge.

Modern non-anthropocentric environmental ethics are heavily influenced by the very anthropocentrism that it seeks to overcome. New values are slowly developing and released from old contexts. The consideration of the struggle between old and new contexts opens up space for alternative models of contemporary environmental ethics. Instead of seeking to reduce our multiple theories to a single one, it is better to develop a pluralistic and exploratory method (Weston, 1992). Indeed, the attempt to make an ultimate determination is inconceivable. This is because the community of scholars has never come to a complete agreement on the correct direction for progress in this field. Environmental pragmatists hold that the failure of this unified vision to emerge and influence practical policy should make us think, and they have concluded that environmental ethics must consider some new positions and re-evaluate their direction (Light & Katz, 1996). Theoretical perfection, thus, is impossible. We can only co-develop ethics with reformed practices (Weston, 1992).

Environmental pragmatists acknowledge the existence of many values in questions of environmental ethics. They adopt a pluralistic moral perspective as a result, which recognizes the presence of several values and is known as moral pluralism(Venkataraman & Morang, 2015). Moral pluralism in environmental ethics was proposed by Andrew Light, Bryan Norton, and Anthony Weston, three prominent environmental ethicists. It advocates an environmental philosophy that can be applied to practical environmental policies. Moral pluralists, who generally consider themselves environmental pragmatists, consider that there is no single supreme principle that encompasses all issues of environmental practice (Edelglass, 2006).

Moral pluralists recognize that we have moral responsibilities for things like salmon, pets, mountains, children, elms, works of art, fellow citizens, and watersheds. However, they contend that we are bound to these entities by moral obligations arising from different principles. For example, when competing theories, such as animal rights and ecocentrism, produce conflicting results, instead of rejecting one of the given theories outright in favor of pursuing monism, pluralists and environmental pragmatists carefully consider what moral principles are to apply to a particular situation. Instead of seeking to identify a single, always correct, and indisputable metaphysics of morals from among ecocentrism versus anthropocentrism, biocentrism versus sentimentalism, or deep ecology versus social ecology, pluralists and pragmatists emphasize practical policies that can be derived from multiple moral principles (Ibid).

Both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric environmental ethics share the view that environmental entities, as such, are valuable. However, a discrepancy between them immediately arises in terms of the justification of these values. The question of rationality is just as important as the question of the legitimacy of values, as rationality is the tool that makes acceptable explanations possible. Here, there are two camps of philosophers among those who are engaged in environmental ethics: those who are in favor of rationality and those who are against it.

Rationality as a Contested Issue in Environmental Ethics

The question of rationality has been a bone of contention since the birth of environmental ethics. One group of philosophers argues that rationality is the hallmark of humans, giving them an advantage over all other beings. Another group of philosophers, however, argues that although humans are rational, this is not a special trait that provides them with the right to hegemony over other members of the environment.

Immanuel Kant believed that rationality is an essential characteristic of human beings. He claims that they have their own end. That is, it is a meaningful question to ask why animals are there. However, applying such questions to people is trivial and meaningless. Animals have no self-awareness and are merely a means to an end, and such an end will always be a human being. He also argues that our obligations to animals are only indirect. Animal nature is similar to human nature, and doing your duty through animals helps you do your duty to humanity (Kant, 1963). That is, when a man kills a dog because it is unfit for service, he is not neglecting his duty to the dog, as the dog cannot exercise judgment. However, this same act is cruel and inhumane and can negatively affect how we treat our fellow humans (Ibid).

Rene Descartes shares the view that animals lack rationality. He sees animals as simply moving machines. However, when he says machines, he does not simply mean machines, but machines made by the hand of God that are, therefore, of much greater order. They have much more interesting inner workings than the machines invented by human beings. Descartes provides two reasons why animals are moving machines. The first piece of evidence is that they never use words or other signs and never organize like humans to communicate their

thoughts and ideas to others. Some animals, such as magpies, can speak like humans, but they cannot speak languages or compare them as humans can. The second reason is their lack of rationality. For Descartes, the reason is a universal tool that helps us act in the same way in response to a certain set of circumstances. Animals lack the ability to reason and therefore do not act in the way that reasoning makes us act. Of course, some of them can perform certain actions much better than we do. However, it is certain that this machine will fail at other tasks. From this, we can easily conclude that they do not act from knowledge but from the nature of their organs (Descartes & Ariew, 2000).

In a recent article, Alexander Kremer argued that rationality forms the basis of morals and morality. Kremer briefly summarized the works of Peter Singer and Tom Regan to make his point. For Singer and Regan, animals necessarily have moral rights. They use the ability to feel pleasure and pain and the fact of life as criteria for moral standing, respectively. Moreover, they also argued that rationality could not serve as the basis for morals and morality. In contrast to the thinking of two eminent environmental ethicists, Kremer contends that rationality should be the foundation of morals and morality. His two main arguments develop this claim from a (1) logical and experiential perspective and from a (2) historical and ethological one (Kremer, 2018). However, here, the emphasis is given to the first line of reasoning, which has a direct relationship to our current discussion.

Following the first argument, both moral agents and moral choices must be rational; otherwise, it is impossible to speak of morals and morality. Therefore, animals cannot be moral agents because rationality is an essential element of morality, without which it cannot be discussed. Similarly, animals cannot be real moral agents because they cannot know what is good and what is bad in a real moral sense. In this way, morals and morality are not part of the biological basis of animals (Ibid).

However, American philosopher Paul Taylor strongly advocates egalitarian biocentrism in his book Respect for Nature. In this context, egalitarianism refers to opposition to assigning degrees of worth and refers to the equality of all living beings. Taylor claims that placing emphasis on the degree of importance entails discrimination because every living thing has its own unique strengths. For Taylor, every creature has its own value. Thus, we must respect beings with different abilities and potentials. Taylor argues that human beings are not superior to other objects in the environment due to their intelligence. He also notes that, while we cannot avoid some degree of destruction of the natural world in our pursuit of cultural and personal values, developing an attitude of respect for nature can nonetheless allow us to limit ourselves to interfere as little as possible in natural ecosystems and their biota (Taylor, 1986).

Similarly, Val Plumwood argues that the current state of affairs is the product of at least two centuries of a reason-centered, human-centered culture. This has reduced ecological connectivity, which has led to our deployment of destructive behaviors and technologies (Plumwood, 2002). Addressing this requires a deep and true restructuring of culture, one that would rethink and revisits the place of human beings and their relationship to nature. Plumwood believes that reason can play an important role in this rethinking, but it must be a self-critical, benign reason.

Plumwood argues that the responsibility for the current global environmental crisis lies with humans, and it requires a clear and appropriate response. Indeed, technology provides the means needed for sustainable living on and with the planet. She adds that the problem is not limited to a simple increase in knowledge or skills. Instead, an eco-culture is required that not only allows us to assess and fully understand the non-human realm and our dependence on it but also allows us to make the best choices about how we live with and affect the non-human world (Ibid). Here, pragmatic rationality is an important topic, as it relates to the entire idea of rationality.

Pragmatic Rationality

The words pragmatic and pragmatism have two related meanings. On the one hand, being a pragmatist means seeking and practicing what are feasible, not unattainable ideals. Pragmatic people are down-to-earth, rational, sensible, and willing to compromise. A pragmatic person rejects any ideology that adheres to an idea or principle that is never questioned or challenged (Desjardins, 2013).

Pragmatism, on the other hand, is a distinct philosophical tradition developed by American philosophers such as William James and John Dewey in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Philosophical pragmatism is skeptical of monistic theories in both epistemology and ethics. Instead, it focuses on contextually pragmatic explanations of truth and value. Pragmatism is sometimes referred to as radical empiricism. Empiricism asserts that all knowledge comes from experience. Pragmatism emphasizes the characteristics of experience. If we are serious about what we experience, we must recognize that the world that we encounter in experience is a world of diversity, change, and pluralism (Ibid).

Those philosophers who concur with Nietzsche that truth is the will to be a master of multiplicities of sensations, as suggested by Richard Rorty, are referred to as relativists. This term also applies to those who agree with Thomas Kuhn that science should not be considered to progress toward an accurate description of how the world is in itself and to those who agree with William James that the truth is only a means of belief. Philosophers are referred to as relativists in a broader sense when they reject the Greek concept of the difference between the way things are in themselves and the relationships they have with other things, particularly with the wants and interests of humans (Rorty, 1999).

Moreover, Richard Rorty identifies three different definitions of the term rationality. First, rationality is simply the name of an ability that certain beings share to a greater degree than others. For example, squids are more capable than amoebas, people use more language than non-speaking apes, and people armed with modern technology can use it to make themselves more capable than those who are not so armed. In short, rationality refers to the ability to cope with the environment using more complex and subtle control of responses to external stimuli. This is sometimes referred to as a technical reason and sometimes as survival skills. Second, rationality is a special name for additive components that humans have, but that other animals simply do not. It differs in that it can be used in reference to goals other than simple survival. For example, a human being may tell you that it would be better to be dead than to do certain things. Third, rationality is loosely equated with tolerance, the ability to maintain calm in the face of differences from oneself and not react aggressively to those differences. In this form, it is a virtue that enables individuals and communities to coexist peacefully with other individuals and communities, living and creating a new, hybrid way of life that is founded on compromise (Rorty, 1992).

This third definition is directly relevant to the issue at hand. A range of opposing ideas and opinions exist in contemporary environmental ethics, as has been described. In this context, pragmatists unequivocally state that all fields of study—including those in natural science and the social sciences, politics, and philosophy—are concerned with improving life. It is also crucial to consider the examples Desjardins provides in support of this claim. If we asked a doctor which of the many different therapies you provide is the greatest for defending and maintaining good health, we could expect to hear that none and each is. The best response varies by circumstance; no one answer is the best under all circumstances (Desjardins, 2013). To reach a consensus among environmental ethicists regarding what should be done, what goals should be attained, and what measures should be adopted regarding our environment, it is crucial to apply pragmatic reasoning.

For some philosophers, rationality is essentially a human privilege. This perspective can be supported. However, this does not mean that people are free from moral responsibility and can simply intervene with nature as desired. Rationality and the exploitation of non-human animals are not mutually compatible if rationality is used in a responsible way. It is fruitless to search for things that human beings have the same as other animals or for moral considerations bearing on non-human animals are fruitless efforts because it is possible to recognize clear differences while acting harmoniously.

Conclusion

The perspective of modern environmental ethics was used in this study to describe the development of thought in the 20th and 21st centuries. However, from pre-Socratic times until the present, this phenomenon has profoundly formed and affected many different ethical traditions.

Early natural (pre-Socratic) philosophers placed a strong emphasis on the study of natural objects, and they tended to believe that one particular natural object formed the ultimate source of reality. None of them focused on the relationship of human beings to the environment. In Socrates, the subject of philosophy merely changed from natural objects to human beings.

According to Plato, the only thing that is truly knowable or an appropriate object of knowledge is Being. We are unable to fully comprehend the relative and changing world of Becoming that is all around us. We only have ideas about this world because we do not understand it.

Unlike his predecessors, Aristotle at least affirms the reality of this world of experience. In addition, according to his teleological conception, everything exists with respect to a certain end. According to him, lower organisms exist to support higher organisms. Due to human beings' rational nature, of humans, all other organisms exist for their benefit. While Aristotle's theory is entirely anthropocentric, it considers non-human animals.

Philosophers contextualized and incorporated Plato's and Aristotle's writings within the Christian framework during the Middle Ages. Christian teachings dominated attitudes toward the environment during this time. Accordingly, due to their rationality and similarity to God, humans are to be considered superior to other aspects of the environment. Of course, philosophical arguments are used to justify such Christian ideas.

Anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric approaches are the two primary pillars of contemporary environmental ethics. The proponents of these approaches concur on the logical existence of value. Here, values are divided into two groups: intrinsic and extrinsic. The former represents worth for its own sake, whereas the latter represents a value that pertains to a particular purpose. The anthropocentrists hold that only humans have intrinsic value. However, the natural world has intrinsic value that is independent of human values for non-anthropocentrists.

Furthermore, in addition to debates over value, the discourse of rationality has a dubious place in environmental ethics. From this emerge two camps of philosophers: pro-rationality and anti-rationality. Pro-rationality philosophers consider rationality to be a special privilege of human beings. This perspective has been developed and supported by a range of philosophers from the pre-Socratics to Plato and Aristotle, from the Middle age to the modern period. In all these traditions, human beings are hegemonic due to this special tool. However, if we analyze this closely, the view has a devastating impact on human beings' relationship with other environmental entities. In the pre-Socratic traditions, although rationality was used as a special tool, the discourse of the environment was not worthy of discussion. This was the case in the medieval period as well.

Among the anti-rational philosophers, rationality should not be seen as a distinguishing characteristic of human beings. Singer and Regan can be categorized within this category. Although those thinkers use different

criteria for moral consideration, they deny that reason is a special privilege of human beings.

The pragmatic form of rationality can be applied to resolve the above argument. Of course, the reason is best viewed with a wide philosophical lens as a tool that supports the achievement of particular objectives. Pragmatic rationality can be used as a technique for reconciling divergent viewpoints, values, and methods in environmental ethics.

Moreover, Plumwood asserts that the current global environmental crisis is largely due to a reason-centered culture. She believes that reason, but only a kind and self-critical version of reason can play a significant part in the reconsideration of human-natural connections. This leads to the conclusion that this type of reasoning can be best understood as pragmatic rationality. Because reason, an essential instrument, cannot be abandoned as Singer and Regan did, environmental challenges can thus be resolved through pragmatic reason. Therefore, to adequately address future environmental issues and avert potential tragedies, a pragmatic method of reasoning is vitally required.

Thus, this paper shows that pragmatic rationality is crucial in environmental culture, without which the smooth functioning of the environment is possible. The second important lesson from this inquiry is that it is the foundation for a rich understanding of rationality that is open and does not discriminate against any environmental entities. Let us pose these questions as an invitation to further study the question of rationality in the field of environmental ethics. Can we abandon rationality and do something worthwhile? Is it not because of rationality that we are discussing the problem of non-human animals? Do we not need a reason to rebuild the eco-culture that we need?

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Book review

MIND IN NATURE: JOHN DEWEY, COGNITIVE SCIENCE, AND A NATURALISTIC PHILOSOPHY FOR LIVING

by Mark Johnson and Jay Schulkin (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2023

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It is possible for a book to be a wonderful failure. By that phrase, I do not mean a book which has done a fantastic job failing, but a book which, despite its failure, is a wonderful book. While I would not go so far as to call Mind in Nature a failure, nonetheless the book is not entirely successful, in at least two of its own three terms; but it is at the same time a wonderful book, an excellent, aspiring book, which aims to expand our understanding of John Dewey's philosophy and is a joy to read.

Mind in Nature is wonderful particularly because here we get, if not the long-overdue commentary on *Experience and Nature,* Dewey's masterwork*,* which Pragmatist scholars are waiting for, the closest thing to such a commentary out there. The book aims to provide a rich, detailed account of *Experience and Nature* which validates the authors' claim—validates it for both Analytic and Continental Philosophers, who are their intended audience—that *Experience and Nature* is "one of the most important philosophical works ever written" (1).

Mind in Nature will be successful, I believe, in persuading Analytic philosophers of the massive importance of John Dewey's *Experience and Nature*, if only Analytic philosophers will listen to reason, and will let themselves see beyond their imperious training, with its firmly entrenched prejudice against so much good philosophy out there, which they are routinely taught to reject and denigrate as "not real philosophy." By demonstrating how "contemporary scientific research from biology, neuroscience, psychology, and cognitive science" can "confirm many of Dewey's most profound insights" in *Experience and Nature*, Johnson and Schulkin do what it takes to convince Analytic

Philosophers of a philosophy's worth: they confirm its main claims by way of science. The authors show also, throughout their book, how, in gaining support from contemporary scientific research in his philosophy, Dewey is not at all to be viewed as Analytic philosophers have "typically viewed" him, namely "as an unclear, nonrigorous[sic] thinker whose prose is obscure, turgid, and ambiguous" (1). The authors demonstrate that Dewey is a clear and rigorous thinker whose arguments are sound and whose work is rationally compelling; and that his main ideas in 1929 were prescient, validated by the best science of our time in the early to mid 21st century. Analytic philosophers should be well on board after reading and reflecting on *Mind as Nature*, provided, as I say, that they can shed the traditional prejudices of their schooling and approach Dewey with an open mind.

Where *Mind in Nature* will not be successful, however, is in convincing Continental Philosophers of its thesis; and this is not the fault, I think, of either Dewey or the Continental Philosopher. For precisely where *Mind in Nature* falls short is in demonstrating something certainly true of Dewey's philosophy for anyone who cares to study it carefully: that those people are wrong who say that Dewey's philosophy is "overly scientistic and not existentially engaged" (1). Dewey's philosophy, in other words, is *not* overly scientist and it *is* existentially engaged, especially in *Experience and Nature*, but you would not come to this conclusion (or would not sufficiently appreciate this conclusion) by reading *Mind in Nature* alone, as the authors suppose you would. I will explain why I say this in what follows in terms of a general description of the book's aims, how it goes about trying to achieve these aims, and how the final results do not, at least in two main senses, meet those aims.

Johnson and Schulkin recognize that we are currently amid a Pragmatism Renaissance, yet one that still leaves both Analytic and Continental Philosophers unconvinced (pp. 1-2), and it is in relation to this nuanced background that they set forth their book's thesis, which is "three-fold." "Our main thesis," they say, "is threefold: (1) that in *Experience and Nature* Dewey presents the

most important and compelling naturalistic philosophy ever penned, (2) that a good deal of contemporary science and philosophy supports and enriches Dewey's philosophical perspective, thereby confirming our generous assessment of his work, and (3) that Dewey gives us a profound philosophy to live by" (p. 2).

Johnson and Schulkin organize their endeavor around ten chapters. The first nine chapters are taken up with explaining and defending Dewey's version of naturalistic philosophy as it appears in *Experience and Nature.* Working through Dewey's great text, *Mind in Nature* explains, in the first nine chapters, what Dewey means by experience (and why he starts from experience); it explains Dewey's naturalized metaphysics, which can account for mind, and then meaning and thought, entirely in naturalistic terms. The book further explains how consciousness, for Dewey, emerges from mind; how knowing itself occurs solely in nature, as does the self, and the book explains the central role of aesthetics in the emergence and functioning of mind, consciousness, meaning, and knowing. Then, in the last chapter, called "Living with Naturalism," the authors approach the topic of what difference Dewey's naturalistic account of mind, meaning, and thought makes in human life as we live it and understand it.

In these first nine chapters, devoted to explaining and defending Dewey's naturalism in *Experience and Nature*, the authors do demonstrate that contemporary research in a wide variety of scientific fields time and again confirms Dewey's specific claims about how, precisely, mind, meaning, and thought are parts of nature. If an aspect of mind, for example, occurs as a phase of our qualitative experience, like the "anxiety" (111) we experience within what Dewey famously calls a "problematic situation" (or in its preceding state of being an "indeterminate situation"), and if we actively inquire to more precisely characterize and to rectify the indeterminate situation, then the biological account of our "bio-behavioral systems" is the explanation for

that qualitative experience of addressing indeterminate situations: what is going on here, the authors claim, is that we are obeying the biological "need-search-satisfaction" imperative (111). Such a biological account of the immediate experience, the authors assure us, captures the reality of what is occurring when we have an anxious, unsettled experience. Referring to this immediate, qualitatively felt experience, the authors say: "It is all about" the biological processes (i.e., "the sense of irritation and unease that characterizes a doubtful, indeterminate situation, is rooted in the biology of the organism. It is all about the recurring phases of appetitive search and consummatory satisfaction, as a means to survival and wellbeing") (111). This phrase bears repeating: *it is all about* biology. The immediate experience is all about what the scientific narrative says it is about.

Indeed, delving even more deeply into the biological explanation of the processes involved, namely at the chemical and neuronal levels, the authors claim that our anxiety in a *qualitatively utterly unique* situation (for this is what Dewey says each situation is) actually involves "diverse chemical modulators, such as peptides, neuropeptides, steroids, and neurotransmitters across both the brain and the major body and organ systems" (112). The idea is that these "diverse chemical modulators" (the appropriate scientific research being cited) can be said to "ground" (111) or underlay the situation, and in an entirely naturalistic manner all the way through: from out of these chemical modulators, etc., there emerges, through a continuous process of development, with "no need to postulate supernatural or transcendent agents, entities, causes, or forces" (3), the actual experience of anxiety and indeterminacy that constitutes the qualitatively unique situation.

This is where *Mind in Nature* excels, and then gravely errs. The book takes us through each of the main aspects of *Experience and Nature* and provides compelling evidence for Dewey's claims. The supporting evidence derives largely from the sciences, as I mentioned, but not

entirely so. An excellent chapter, Chapter 8 "The Aesthetics of Life and Mind," draws on supporting experiences from the arts and from phenomenological descriptions of aesthetic experience in order to show that aesthetic experience actually forms the basis of all our meaningful experience (a claim that prima facie is opposed to the authors' previous claims that chemical and biological processes form the basis of all our meaningful experience: for prima facie an aesthetic experience—such as the bittersweet melancholy of a Mahler symphony—is not the firing of neurons—which is a glop of mucus with electrical charges running through it). In any case, this is where the authors' book excels, in working through key details of *Experience and Nature*, chapter by chapter of Dewey's work, and offering a compelling, insightful defense of Dewey's claims that is drawn from contemporary research, especially his claims for the emergence of mind and consciousness from naturistic processes exclusively. *Mind in Nature* is particularly good at clarifying many of Dewey's more difficult concepts and maneuvers in *Experience and Nature*. Moreover, *Mind in Nature* is comprehensive, showing how the various details of Dewey's text fit together to form a single naturalistic philosophy. For instance, by taking "activity" as a central feature of Dewey's naturalistic vision (22) and then explaining activity further in terms of the processes of "homeostasis and allostasis in the maintenance of life" (24), particularly in terms of the different levels or "plateaus" of an emergent consciousness, the authors provide a helpful general framework for understanding Dewey's vision in terms of which its specific details now more readily fall into place. This aspect of their work will help any reader of Dewey's text, at whatever level of expertise, to make sense of any number of the key details of *Experience and Nature,* which the reader might have overlooked or failed to understand. The result of Johnson and Shulkin's efforts in more general terms is then the presentation of a comprehensive and defensible naturalistic philosophy, which succeeds in demonstrating the great explanatory power of which naturalistic philosophy is capable. *Mind in Nature*, incidentally, is also contagious in its effect of communicating the great respect, and the reasons for it, which the authors have for *Experience and Nature,* which Dewey's book richly deserves.

Does *Mind in Nature* succeed in showing, as per the first strand of its thesis, that Dewey's text is "the most important and compelling" version of naturalistic philosophy out there? One cannot say that it does succeed here, for the simple reason that the book does not compare (nor even mention) the naturalistic philosophy which obviously is the closest competitor for that title, Whitehead's *Process and Reality*. In fact, *Mind in Nature* does not proceed at all by comparing Dewey's naturalistic philosophy in *Experience and Nature* with any other competing accounts of naturalistic philosophies, so *Mind in Nature* can hardly be said to show that Dewey's naturalistic philosophy is better than any others (i.e., that it is "the most" important and compelling naturalism out there). Perhaps this part of the thesis of *Mind in Nature* should have been reworked, later, considering what the book does (i.e., it offers *an* account of Dewey's naturalism).

In terms of the second thesis*, Mind in Nature* does succeed wonderfully well, as I have already intimated. It shows us how much contemporary scientific research helps to confirm Dewey's major revolutionary claims in *Experience and Nature* for a vision of the human condition that overcomes entirely the mind/body dualism.

My biggest reservation concerning *Mind in Nature* pertains to the third strand of the book's three-fold thesis, namely the idea that the authors will have successfully shown that Dewey's philosophy in *Experience and Nature "*gives us a profound philosophy to live by." I believe without reservation that Dewey does give us a profound philosophy to live by. Only, I do not believe that *Mind in Nature* shows this, nor that it strives to show this in the right way. This aspect of *Mind in Nature* is also the part of their work which I believe will

leave Continental Philosophers most unconvinced as well.

The trouble centers around the authors' attempted refutation of the claim that Dewey's philosophy is "overly scientistic and not existentially engaged" (1). The problem is that *Mind in Nature* presents us with an overall picture of Dewey's philosophy which *is* overly scientific and is *not* existentially engaged. The book is quite correct in the statement of its second chapter, "It All Starts with Experience." (Although oddly missing is any reference to Hegel's famous Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which is the ultimate statement and precursor to this major theme of how to start in philosophy and in philosophy books: it would be like discussing the fact that philosophy begins in wonder but failing to mention either Plato or Aristotle who set the frame for this kind of discourse). For Dewey, "experience" is, indeed, the starting point. Yet time and time again the authors confuse "experience," in its conception and as the starting point, with what Dewey in *Quest for Certainty* calls "the scientific object." When they say "experience," they too often mean, incoherently, the scientific object.

The major error is that the scientific object cannot serve as the basis of the experience, as the authors keep trying to make it do. At most, it can be a useful account (an instance of knowledge) for talking about our immediate experience sometimes, in some relevant cases of inquiry; but it cannot ever be equated with the reality of what is happening. For Dewey, reality and knowledge are not the same: what is real and what is known are not the same (Dewey fundamentally rejects the copy theory of knowledge).

Another way to explain this point is to keep in mind that, for Dewey, experience is, indeed, the starting point, but it is also the ending point (of his philosophy and specifically of an act of inquiry). Experience, for him, is real; but it is not necessarily (in any given conclusion to an act of inquiry) what is true. What Dewey means by experience is clear: any given, present, immediate, and qualitatively unique situation. In some acts of inquiry,

it is helpful and correct (it helps to resolve some indeterminate situation) to describe what is going on in that situation in terms of the scientific object. But we must never confuse the scientific object (that is, the content of any judgment, the content of any conclusion of any act of inquiry) for the immediate, qualitatively unique, and real situation, which is always "had." Our immediate experience is always "had" and felt in a unique way, and it is never reducible to how we conceptualize it or to any conclusions we form about it in any of our acts of inquiry (even scientific conclusions in our experimentally controlled acts of inquiry). (Again, knowledge and the real of the immediate experience in a situation are not the same for Dewey). What ends up being knowledge in some contexts—such as the scientific object in scientific contexts—is what we say about the immediate experience that has happened, in some specific pertinent cases, to help us to transform some unique indeterminate situation into a determinate one. Indeed, Dewey (as a pragmatist, and as an advocate of instrumentalism in particular) insists that any abstraction—even the abstraction of the scientific object like a "neuron"—is only a tool that functions (when it functions well) to return us to the immediate, unique, and concrete (non-abstract) situation we are in, to the immediate experience, which will now be more enriched and intensified by the addition of the action that is brought about by the action's being directed by how the abstraction specifies (i.e., intelligently).

What follows from Dewey's position (and something that he insists upon) is that multiple, different accounts of what is the case can all be equally true, although for different situations, for he means that multiple, different accounts of the content of judgment that ends up transforming an indeterminate situation to a determinate situation, in any given act of inquiry, will differ (see, for example, the opening paragraphs of Chapter 8 "The Naturalization of Intelligence" in the *Quest for Certainty*. Indeed, it is this approach to the truth which Dewey claims can help him to avoid the many con-

troversies surrounding the existence of so many different approaches in epistemology to the question of what knowledge is). In short, there is no warrant in Dewey's philosophy for thinking, in advance, that the scientific object is any better or truer an account of the qualitatively unique situation we find ourselves in than is any other kind of account. It all depends on the needs of the unique situation, on how inquiry operates there. It all starts— and ends—with experience.

This point about not confusing the known object for the experience "had" is point 101 of *the Quest for Certainty*. It is also found throughout *Experience and Nature*. It is this point which the authors miss, and it renders their account of Dewey too scientistic. For the authors do seem to hold that neurons firing in the brain, for instance, really are the basis of what is going on for us in any and every response to a problematic situation, rather than seeing this account of neurons as only a useful way, at times, and only for certain purposes, to speak about the immediately irreducible, unique experience you are having (111-112).

They hold this, for example, even after they quote Dewey admonishing us not to hold this: "The situation as such is not and cannot be stated or made explicit... The situation cannot present itself as an element in a proposition" (58). They then go right on to state (as the element of a proposition) that "the neuroscience of control mechanisms" can make explicit what the situation is (58).

To be more precise, for Dewey, the *reality* is the qualitative experience, not the scientific object (accounting for it). That account is *knowledge* helping us in a situation of inquiry thinking about the situation-- knowledge which is instrumental to helping us to return to the original qualitative situation in a better or more useful way, helping to make the situation more clear or less troublesome, for example—but this account of the situation is *not* the reality of the situation, is not the reality of what is happening. That reality, the reality, is (as per Dewey's "postulate of immediate experience") just "what it is

experienced as being" (not any one object of knowledge about it, which only functions to aid the immediate, qualitative experience). This point is what Dewey's *Quest for Certainty* demonstrates again and again. It is also present in *Experience and Nature*. (Thus, Dewey's stated aim in *Experience and Nature*, for example, is "creating and promoting a respect for concrete human experience and its potentialities" (See *Experience and Nature*, end of chapter one). *Mind in Nature* misses this fundamental point entirely. The book thereby sinks back into the very reductionism that Dewey seeks to avoid.

Here I fear the scientist among them has spoken, but not the philosopher. For nothing else in Johnson's brilliant and extensive body of work should be leading to this mistake—a body of work far too rich, sophisticated, and knowledgeable to have fallen into this major misinterpretation of Dewey's philosophy.

The related issue to this scientific reductionism is the level of existential engagement the authors can draw out of Dewey's philosophy. Quite admirably, they show what, at a fundamental level, Dewey's overcoming of the mind/body dualism really means (at least, in existentialist terms). It means, they say, that "we are never radically alienated from nature." Dewey's naturalism "makes it possible to be 'at home in the world'" (71). "Mind can be seen to develop naturally and to learn the meaning of what is experienced" (71). If only the book had dedicated more than one chapter to explaining in what way Dewey overcomes the profound and persistent problem of human alienation!

The scientism of their approach emerges here to undermine their account of the existential aspects of Dewey's philosophy. The authors' treatment of *anxiety*, which I discussed above, is a case in point for the claim that *Mind in Nature* will not be convincing many Continental Philosophers that Dewey's naturalism offers us a philosophy to live by. For what the authors say about anxiety, if you recall, is that "it is all about" the biological and even chemical

processes involved in its production. But for Dewey, as for existentialists, the experience of anxiety is 'had;' it is a quality that pervades a situation. You miss what Dewey is saying and lessen the force of the reality of the experience of anxiety that is "had" by reducing it to chemical terms (for Dewey's naturalist metaphysics, the experience is revelatory of what nature is; it is not something reducible to your account of nature).

And, for the existentialists, to be sure, *anxiety* is precisely not an experience that falls into the need-search-satisfaction model. Heidegger, for instance, stresses in "What is Metaphysics?" that there is no explicable cause of anxiety, as there is for fear. We feel anxiety in the face of the world in general, in terms of "beings as a whole." We are made aware of the possibility that we could be nothing— we become aware of death, in other words—and there is no solution for this. We experience the most awful dread; we tremble and break down and are shattered, undergoing a kind of inescapable animal panic in general at the nature of our situation and existence as such. To refer to all this—to refer to anxiety and dread and being shattered at the prospect of death—as a chemical process (using phrases like chemical modulators" and "neuropeptides" and "allostais", or even need and search) is about as un-existential as you can get! Indeed, if anything, an existentialist who sees this reductionism at work here is likely to write it off as just one more way to evade existential anxiety by turning it into an abstraction: "Death is just a natural, chemical process. Don't worry."

Which brings us more directly to the matter of death. The authors want to persuade us, as the third strand of their three-fold thesis, that their version of Dewey's naturalism provides a philosophy to live by. Quite appropriately, then, the authors try to resist, although only at the end of their book, the common belief that naturalistic philosophy is useless for helping people to understand death. The authors' message about death? "It's 'Lights Out' for us.'" (228). In other words, there is nothing here that we did not already know about death. So far, the common

belief seems to be correct: *this* account of (Dewey's) naturalistic philosophy, at any rate, does seem to be useless on the topic of death.

The authors do add that, even though we will all die, and everything eventually will become nothing, ourselves and our precious loved ones included, we can still find things that matter to us while we are alive. (Incidentally, note that, when discussing Camus's Meursault, who asserts that "Nothing matters," *Mind in Nature* surreptitiously substitutes the true question of whether anything matters with the very different question of whether anything "lasting" matters, 229). The authors say that in response to Meursault (and to the most powerful and devastatingly honest part of *The Stranger*) death is not so bad, because we can still find things in life that matter to us. But can we? Is it not begging the question to say so? If the realization of death makes us understand that nothing matters, is it not begging the question to assert in response that something matters? If "the dark wind of death" levels everything that might matter in life, then that means everything, and then Meursault is right that nothing matters. The dark wind levels even the profound insights that Dewey and Holmes give about being connected to nature or being a link in the chain of humanity together with others. Or is the idea that Meursault is wrong when he says that the fact of death means that nothing matters? But if he is wrong, the authors have not shown it. (And how then do the authors account for Meursault and, I dare say, for the deep truth that is contained in the passage about the levelling wind?). The authors have not proven Meursault is wrong when he says that death destroys all meaning in life (and the meaning of life). They have simply asserted at the very close of the book the somewhat facile view that, though death is truly terrible, nonetheless we can still find things that matter to us while we are alive, and that this makes life okay. If that is all Dewey can offer us in *Experience and Nature* by way of an existentially rich, naturalistic philosophy to live by, especially in response to the profound problem of

human mortality, then Dewey's book surely is not what the authors claim that it is: one of the most important philosophical works ever written. Yet I do believe that *Experience and Nature* is as important as the authors say it is. I can only conclude, therefore, that as wonderful and insightful as *Mind in Nature* is, there is something else entirely different yet to be said about why *Experience and Nature* is such an important work and especially about the profound existential insights it contains.

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